

Stock and Dairy.

Indian Corn as a Fodder Crop in England.

Indian corn as a cereal grain cannot be grown to advantage in England, there not being sun enough to mature the plant. But its culture as a fodder crop is found to be practicable and profitable. Experiments have been made as to the possibility of preserving the corn stalks in a green state, by burying them in trenches, the same as potatoes, mangolds and other bulbous-rooted fodder plants. The plan is said to succeed admirably, and a recent number of the *Mark Lane Express* informs us that this season many breeders and feeders will, in the absence of other fodder crops, through the drought, make ample provision by storing the green maize for the support of their stock of cattle through the winter months.

This will be regarded as a "new wrinkle" in the treatment of Indian corn by the farmers of this continent, who have long made use of dried corn stalks for winter fodder, but, so far as we know, have never dreamed of its preservation in a green and succulent condition for winter feeding. Its value as an appetizer, and as a diet for milch cows, can hardly be over-estimated, and we see no reason why the process is not just as available in this country as in England. In the hope that some of our farmers will be thereby induced to try the experiment, we append the directions given by the English agricultural journal above mentioned:

The process of storing is simple enough. A long, wide and deep trench is dug, from three to four yards deep (this appears to us unnecessarily deep), in a dry and healthy soil, and of a width in proportion to the depth. Taking into account the subsidence of the mass thus deposited in the crude green state, a good bed of straw must be laid at the bottom, and on the top and sides the trench must also be covered over thickly with straw, or boards, if they are at hand, to protect the whole mass from the rain, which, if allowed to reach the plants, would destroy their nutritive quality. There is a difference of opinion, and, of course, of practice, as to the state in which the green maize should be pitted. Some prefer cutting it up into short pieces, the chief objection to that mode being the time and labor expended in the operation at a season of the year when such requisites are especially valuable. The process, in fact, appears to be unnecessary, as the fermentation of the store will by its own weight be complete without the outlay of any such extra labor.

Beginning with the deposit of the seed, this should be got through as soon as the frosts of spring are considered to be over—say the latter end of May or later, but certainly not earlier. The maize should be sown in rows, closer or wider according to the soil, not very close, the plant being large itself, and the foliage broad and heavy. It will be ready in July or August, care being taken not to wait till the plant is matured, but whilst the cobs are still in the milky state, and the whole plant in the most nutritive condition. We do not find that any salt is used in the deposition of the mass, but we certainly should be inclined to add a proportion of that most useful condiment, as both agreeable to the cattle and promotive of health and quick feeding. The greatest care must be taken to guard against the rain; and there must be provided a good straw covering, with over that a coat of earth, laid on ridgeways and beaten down hard. Attention also must be paid to the subsidence of the whole body of the maize, which will require looking to daily, and the covering adjusted according to circumstances. In this respect the pitting of maize differs from that of potatoes and other roots which suffer no subsidence, or at most a very inconsiderable one; but maize in its most florid state contains a large proportion of moisture, causing rapid and copious fermentation, which, whilst it condenses the whole mass, renders it, if carefully attended to, more nutritive and palatable.

We now repeat the precautions that must be employed: 1st, Sow as early as the spring frosts will allow; 2nd, If for preserving, cut whilst the grain is in the most milky state; 3rd, Place in the trench carefully, with a good bed of straw at bottom; 4th, Carefully cover with straw, as much like the thatching as possible, then with earth, beaten down smooth and ridgeways; 5th, Watch well while the subsidence is progressing, and when the fermentation has subsided, give a coat of earth to keep out the rain, which must be the chief care in the business.

Storing and Feeding Rutabagas.

The following letter to the *Michigan Farmer*, by Mr. J. R. Hendryx, contains many valuable hints on storing and feeding rutabagas to stock. We take the liberty to bring this forward at this time for the double reason that the time now draws near at hand for planting, and, as the writer affirms, they contribute in a large degree to the general health and well doing of cattle or sheep during our long winters, we think the roots ought to be more generally cultivated:—

"You ask me to tell your numerous readers how to harvest, secure and feed Swedish turnips, or rutabagas, so that they may know something of what the whole cost is, and what they have got to do with them after they have grown them—so here is my practice.

"I leave them in the ground as late in the fall season as will give time to secure them before hard frosts, as they will grow even after a moderate frost—that is to say, the bulb will grow while ever it can extract anything from the leaves. Take a sharp hoe and clip the tops, so as to leave two rows of the roots in one row of tops. Take a rake or four-tined fork, and throw the tops into small bunches; then with a common potato hook haul the two rows of rutabagas into one. This is very quickly done. Make a bed for a pit by hoeing the dirt out so as to leave a basin, say from six to seven feet wide, and as long as you like. Haul your turnips and throw them in. Pile up as high as you can make them lie, making at the same time as sharp a ridge as you can. Cover well with good dry straw, the straw being put on as straight as though it was a thatch. Cover this with earth not to exceed six or seven inches. Beat down as hard and as smooth as you can by spading the earth with the back of the shovel. Ventilate the top of the pit once in every eight or ten feet, by placing a round stick, say three or four inches in diameter, endwise in the top of the pit through the straw. Stamp the earth well around the sticks, and then take them out carefully, leaving the hole open clear to the turnips. Leave it in this condition until the severe cold weather comes, and then cover the vent holes with a little stable manure. If the pile is not broken into or used during the winter, as soon as the severe weather is past, take off the cover and most of the earth and open the vent holes, and thus leave the pit till wanted for use.

HOW TO FEED.

"I cut with a machine, and feed to cattle and sheep all they will eat. My milch cows give an abundance of sweet milk, and the butter is as sweet and yellow as any fall butter. My sheep are healthy, and the ewes give an abundance of milk for their lambs. I impute this to the use of the turnip in feeding. It is not that the turnip furnishes so much solid food, but it supplies green vegetable matter, which not only helps to digest the dry food which is fed through the winter season, but which also supplies the digestive organs with juices which otherwise it would drain from other parts of the system. This is the real economy of feeding turnips in winter. The turnips utilize all the dry fodder which is fed to cattle and sheep, and in keeping the animals plump and their whole system full, they save much grain and hay, and, besides, they turn the grain and hay into profit, instead of being used without any gain. There is no man who has once wintered his sheep judiciously on turnips as a part of their daily food, more or less according to the season, that will not always grow a few again, if he is not too lazy.

THE TOPS.

"The tops can be mixed with dry straw or corn-stalks to good advantage; but great discretion and care should be used in the mixing. The layers of tops must be very thin, and the straw and stalks thick."

A very valuable mare, whose misfortune it was to have flat feet, used to be shod with ordinary plain shoes, but, going uneasily on pavement, it was thought that leather soles would be an advantage; these were tried, but, instead of being better, she was worse. A friend of the owner suggested that a rim of leather under the shoe, leaving all the middle of the foot free and open, would remedy the defect, and now with this plan she is one of the best steppers in the country.

A new horse disease, epizootic in its character, has broken out in Syracuse, N. Y. Nearly all the horses met in the streets have a cough, which is quite severe and frequent in its spasms. They appear to be "stuffed up," and their breathing is difficult, as if their lungs were severely congested. These attacks come on suddenly and without any premonition.

The Need of Salt.

My observations are that all persons and animals that have come under my notice as consuming abundance of salt, are and have been the most hardy and robust. I lived a strict vegetarian for a number of years, abstaining from the use of condiments, including salt. The only attack of fever I ever had was during this vegetarian life. In my younger days I was an invalid, and supposed I could not eat and digest strong and highly seasoned food. I gradually became a consumer of meats and strong food, requiring much salt, and now I am as robust as any of my family. I now have a family of seven children, who are all hardy and robust, and have all been used to strong and highly seasoned food, using much salt, even so as to excite comment. My views on the use of this article have gradually given way, and every animal under my care has all the salt it will consume. Some years ago I employed a number of Canadians to labor at logging and lumbering. They were the greatest consumers of salt I ever saw, and were the hardest men ever in my employ. I also at different times have boarded gangs of railroad men, and found the most hardy of them were great users of salt. I could give many individual cases, all similar.

At one time I had a flock of sheep which I tried to keep on the no-salt principle. They did not do well, and I had to resort to regular salting. The best and most thrifty pig I ever raised was salted regularly for experiment, and my pigs now have salt in their food, and any one can judge by seeing them whether I am successful in this line. At different times I have owned cows which were voracious feeders, and would consume great quantities of salt; yet they never failed to be easily kept, and were always good milkers. I now have two cows that are greedy eaters of salt. They are both excellent cows, and give good milk in large quantities. I have one cow that is a dainty eater, and will scarcely ever taste salt. She is not so good a cow for milk, and is hard to keep, and will be the first to be sold. When I want to buy a cow, the first thing I want to know is if she is a dainty feeder or otherwise. If she will eat everything given her, she is sure to want plenty of salt, and I am sure of a good cow.

I now have six work horses, all greedy eaters but one; he is dainty and many times off his feed, and will not eat much salt. He is hard to keep, and has to be humored in feeding. I have owned him some years, and he is learning to use more salt, and is more hardy than a year ago; his vigor improves with his appetite. The rest are all good feeders, and one in particular is remarkable for hardness. The mangers of the others are often cleaned and given to her, and she will clean all up, and keep fat and sleek on ordinary feed. She consumes as much salt daily as any other two of the lot. Within sight, as I write, there are a number of young cattle grazing. I can go to this herd and select those that consume the most salt, and I would, if buying from a herd, prefer seeing them salted first.

I have simply given facts coming under my own observation, and do not account for them on any scientific grounds, and it would indeed be singular if mine was an isolated case. What say the experienced and careful stock raisers who read your valuable paper? My experience and conclusions are contrary to my former belief, forced by the best of all proofs—thorough trial.

For fear some may misconstrue my opinions in regard to the use of salt, I will say that I do not think that people or animals can live on salt; I think in some instances too much can be used. I emphatically and earnestly condemn the usual practice of giving salt to animals at stated periods; it is just as unnatural for animals to receive salt in this way as for a person to go without until the craving would cause him to go to the salt barrel and gorge himself. Treat them to food and salt as we do ourselves, and I am assured they will do well. Let any one come into my barn, and he will see at all times a box of salt in each manger for cattle or horses. I never allow these salt boxes to become empty for a day. For hogs I mostly mix a little salt regularly in their feed every day. If hogs are not used to this way of feeding, and by chance get an over-feed of salt, it will surely kill them; but with regular, every day use, in the right quantities, I am sure it promotes health and growth.

So with chickens, only they require still less: never overdose at intervals, or death will follow. The subject is an important one, and I am timid to enter any discussion, but let us have facts and experience; it will hurt no one.—D. R., in *C. Cent.*

Live Stock.

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