

BULLETIN LXXIV

RAPE CULTURE

The principal objects of this Bulletin are: 1. To call the attention of the farmers to the value of the rape crop to the agriculture of Canada. 2. To make known to them the various uses to which it may be put, viewed from the standpoint of our experience with it at this station. 3. To speak of the best modes of growing it under our conditions of soil and climate, so far as we have been able to ascertain these up to the present time. Since Bulletin LX was issued we have gained not a little information in reference to the growth of this plant, the uses to which it may be put and the modes of feeding it; the information thus gleaned is made prominent in the Bulletin.

DESCRIPTION OF RAPE. As many persons do not know what rape is, a brief description of the plant may be necessary. It bears a close resemblance to the Swede turnip in the early stages of its growth, but it usually attains a greater height than the turnip and produces more of stem and leaves. It has a fusiform and stringy root while that of the turnip is bulbous. On average soils, when grown in drills it usually reaches the height of from one to two feet, but on soils very rich in vegetable matter it sometimes attains the height of at least three feet. There are several varieties of rape, but the only kind grown as a pasture in this country is known as the Dwarf Essex.

ADAPTABILITY TO CLIMATE. Like the turnip rape is adapted to temperate climates. In all probability it will be found to grow in temperatures that are inclined to be cool rather than warm. It seems to grow more vigorously in our climate in the late rather than the early summer, and it continues to grow until the time of severe frosts when not matured at an earlier period. It is scarcely probable that rape will live through the winter in this latitude and yet retain sufficient vigor to produce a crop of seed the following summer as in Great Britain. In our experience much of it has perished from the intensity of the frosts.

ADAPTABILITY OF SOILS. The most suitable soils for growing rape are fairly moist, free-working loams, rich in organic matter. Black loams are very suitable after the plants once get a start in them owing to the large amount of humus which they contain. Muck swamps when drained yield magnificent crops, and the rape