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EDITORIAL

The Seed Growing Business

Growing grain for seeding purposes is one of the most profitable lines of grain production, in which farmers may engage. There is a demand in this country for seed grain, true to variety, and free from noxious weed seeds, which production for this special purpose, however extensively it may be undertaken, will be sometime in catching up with. As a matter of fact, the farmer who has clean land and pure seed has a monopoly more or less of the seed business in his locality, and will likely have in the older settled parts of the country for some time to come. Then there is the increasing interest in good seed stimulating an annually widening market for pure grain for seeding purposes, an interest that is the result largely of the educational efforts put forth by our departments of agriculture, federal and provincial, through the medium of the seed fairs. Everything is working towards a more discriminative demand for seed grain, and the man who sets himself to work seriously to supply his fellow-farmers with a better quality of grain, who works up something of a reputation, if only locally it may be, and keeps progressing continually, is assured of profitable returns from his labor and investment, as well as the pleasure of knowing that he has done something worth doing for his fellows and community. Recently correspondents in different parts of the country, farmers mostly who had won prizes, either in field grain competitions or at seed fairs, have advised us, that the demand in their localities this year, for seed known to be true to name and free from weed seeds, has been such that they might have disposed of almost any quantity of such, at prices in some cases twice what the grain was worth in the market. It pays to use the best seed obtainable and more men each year seem to be finding out the

truth of the old saying that good seed is the basis of good farming. To aid them in finding it out, and to impress them more thoroughly with that truth, our departments of agriculture and Canadian Seed Growers' association are carrying on a most extensive educational campaign, demonstrating the value of the use of good seed on one hand, and, on the other, affording the best possible means for those with clean, pure grain, bringing their products before the buying public. A man has to work a little harder and farm a little better than the ordinary run of men do, if he wants to get results. As a general rule he has to be content with farming a smaller acreage, than the average of his neighbors do, at least if he is in the ordinary kind of neighborhood, where continual warfare has to be waged against the weeds of the entire community, as well as those of his own farm.

But the business holds money-making opportunities worth inquiring into, and, if a man has a new, clean farm, we know of no line he can go into, in grain, that is likely to prove more remunerative than the production of seed for his neighbors, the average of whom is generally trying to spread himself over as much of the earth as he can get legal title to, and needs to purchase clean seed periodically from those who have the foresight to grow it for him.

A Question for Practical Inquiry

In no one line of western agriculture does there seem less information of practical nature available than in the growing of alfalfa and the clovers. Several weeks ago we asked our readers, through our regular inquiry department, to set forth their experiences in the growing of these crops. We have been asking similar question in regard to other subjects, and in all cases had received any number of valued replies. In this case, however, it would seem that little general information in the matter exists. Elsewhere in this number four articles are published, written by practical farmers who have made a success of the clover or alfalfa growing business. They tell how they succeeded in doing what a great many others have failed at, and their methods are well worth considering. We cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of each man trying this thing for himself on his own farm. Ultimately we have either to grow clover or quit farming so we may as well be learning how to grow it. Learning how, entails the carrying on of an experiment. An experiment fully carried out is of advantage far beyond the result attained. The man conducting it gains knowledge in, and enthusiasm for his work far outbalancing the trifling cost of putting the question in point, direct to his own soil and conditions. Start a little clover-growing experiment. That is the advice we are endeavoring to tender.

Potato Growing

This week, in another column, we publish the experiences of farmers who have specialized in the production of potatoes. Potato growing has never been favored much in this country, as a line of general farming. Men here and there have taken it up as a business and made money from the crop, and at the estimated cost of production, and the market value of the commodity after it is produced, potatoes, at present prices, or at average prices year by year, ought to be, and are to those who go about the business right, a profitable line of production.

The chief difficulty to be faced in the potato growing business at the present time is to find a satisfactory market for the kind of potatoes we are producing. As the case stands at present, and as it has stood for sometime, wholesale buyers profess an unwillingness to handle mixed lots of potatoes excepting at lower prices than straight grade stock would sell for. At the same time there is a noticeable unwillingness too, on the part of the same gentlemen to reward the exercise of care and judgment, in growing and marketing the crop by paying a higher price for lots of straight varieties. They want stock of one type and quality, but pay as much for goods that are mixed as they offer for that which is of straight grade. In the matter of selling, it is doubtful if any farm products are in much worse way in Western markets than potatoes.

Among the other disadvantages of potato growing is the rather serious demands it makes on labor. No matter what the conditions are under which the crop is grown, considerable hand work is required, not by any means so much manual labor as the uninitiated grower imagines, but sufficient to make the procuring of it sometimes a matter of difficulty. Both planting and harvesting come at a time when the main crops of the farm are being rushed into the soil or are being gathered in. And potatoes when they are harvested are bulky to handle and store, so all things considered most men have been content to leave potato growing to others who saw profits in that line of production.

At present prices, however, or at average prices, potatoes figure into money rapidly enough to make the growing of them worth intelligent consideration. As a farm crop the potato possesses advantages that are worth looking into. A crop of potatoes properly grown will clear the land of weeds as effectively as summer fallow, and leave it in as good condition for the growing of the succeeding crop. They will bring in more money per acre than wheat or any other grain grown, even under the unfavorable selling conditions of the present. These are some advantages worthy of consideration.