Quality of Corn Fodder.

The *Boston Journal of Chemistry* gives the results of some experiments, intended to show the great superiority of corn fodder when cultivated in drills, with plenty of air and light, over that raised by broadcast sowing in a dense mass. That journal says:

"Stalks were collected from a field where the seed was sown broadcast, and also stalks growing in drills upon the same field, and they were dried in a drying closet to expel the moisture. Both specimens were planted at the same time (the 6th of May), and it was found that the plants from the broadcast sowing contained 92 per cent. of water, those from drills 83 per cent. of water. Thus it was shown that the difference of solid matter in the two was as 8 to 17 per cent. The solid matter was composed of starch, gum, sugar, and woody fibre. There was almost an entire absence of sugar and gum in the stalks from the broadcast sowing, while the stalks that had grown under the influence of light and air held these nutrient principles in considerable quantities. The stalks were collected at the period of growth just before the ear begins to form, a period when most farmers begin to cut the fodder for their cows."

There were some influences not taken into the account, which should have been included, among which is the greater degree of rapidity with which the plants approach maturity and become richer in quality when well cultivated, as every good farmer knows, the ears ripening earlier on the best cultivated land, and later on that which is infested with weeds. The broadcast fodder, therefore, should have been examined later than the other, to give a fair test, and the result might have afforded less difference between the two. The same rule, however, undoubtedly applies to corn plants as to grape vines and fruit trees, where large leaves and well developed shoots give a richer product in fruit than a crowded mass of small foliage. But there are opposing advantages on both sides; for when the stalks grow so thick that no ears can form, they are so small and soft that cattle will eat the whole, and in doing so, probably obtain more food from a given weight of fodder, than when the stalk are large and coarse, and the leaves only are stripped from them by the cattle, leaving all the stalks with the sugar they contain untouched.

The course we have adopted for the past twenty years may perhaps be regarded as a sort of compromise between the two—namely, to sow the fodder so thickly in drills or furrows that the stalks will be small enough for the cattle to eat them, but giving the plants while growing the advantages of good horse cultivation. They often bear small ears, but little grain. The quantity sown is two or three bushels per acre.

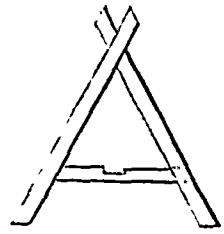
The *Journal of Chemistry* further states that stalks cut before reaching a certain stage of growth, are deficient in nutriment, and therefore they should not be cut too early, and that the best time is usually four or five weeks after inflorescence. We have generally adopted the rule to cut when the edges of the leaves show the first indications of dying from age, and while the great mass of the leaves are yet green. If farmers will chew a portion of the stalk at the different degrees of maturity, the sweetness of the taste will enable close observes to judge with some accuracy when the fodder is richest and best.

In order to secure the greatest amount of benefit from corn planted exclusively for fodder, our experience has led us to adopt the following rules: 1st. To sow so thickly that cattle will eat the fine stalks. 2nd. To sow in drills, so that horse culture may be freely given. 3rd. To cut at the right time, as already designated. 4th and last, but not least, to cure as perfectly as possible, inasmuch as sweet green fodder is better than black, water-soaked, half fermented or mouldy fodder.

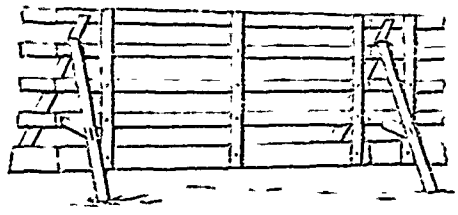
We need more experiments to determine the right degree of thickness for sowing the seed, so as to get the greatest amount of valuable food from an acre, and the difference in nutriment afforded at all different periods of the inflorescence.—*Country Gentleman.*

A Patent Fence.

The fence of which we are now about to speak has been practically tested under our own observation, and we have become satisfied of its merits. We refer to "Alex. Weir's Portable Fence," to which was awarded an especial prize at the Provincial Exhibition, 1870.



This fence is 4½ feet in height. The bottom board in each panel is 7 inches wide, first space above is 4 inches, second board from the ground is 5 inches wide, second space 6 inches, third board 4 inches, third space 7 inches, fourth board 4 inches, fourth space 9 inches, and fifth board four inches wide.



The battens at each end of the panels are laid across 18 inches from the end of the boards, and the battens are held to the boards by one wrought nail through each intersection, driven home and carefully clenched.

The posts or braces are made from sawn scantling, 2 by 4 inches, and are 5 feet long. These are halved together at an angle of 55 degrees, crossing at 3 inches from the top, so as to resemble somewhat the letter A, with slight projections at the top.

The cross strip joining these braces near the bottom is 1 inch by 4 inches, and is framed into the posts with a dovetail. The upper side of the mortice in the post is one foot six inches from the end of the posts. In the centre of the upper edge of this cross-piece is a notch 2 inches long by 1 inch deep, into which locks a notch 1 inch deep and one inch long on the lower edge of the second boards from the bottom of the ends of each of two panels.

There is also a beveled notch cut on the lower side of each upper board, so as to allow the two to lock securely in the upper angle of the framed posts.

The advantages that are claimed for this fence, and by practical experience we feel justified in saying that these claims are realized, are the ease with which the fence can be laid, for we can put it out upon the snow when we are not pressed for time; also it is easily made, and does not need the services of a mechanic. Moreover, by removing a single panel, we have a passage-way at any part of the enclosure, through which a team and waggon, or reaping machine, may pass out—often in hauling in saving much time, which might have been lost by having to go round to the usual gate.

With lumber obtained for $10 a thousand, the fence costs exactly 65 cents a rod. We have had a panel exposed by itself upon an elevated spot, to the high winds that have prevailed during the last two months, and they have been unable to shift it.

Altogether we can cordially recommend the fence, and until a better shall be patented, we think our farmers in want of a portable fence may with advantage buy Weir's patent.

IRRIGATION.—A writer in the *Farmer and Artisan* speaks thus of irrigation: "Having a small country mill, with several acres of low land stretching out below it, I have for several years irrigated a number of acres at a nominal expense. I extended a small ditch from the flume which supplies my mill, around the edge of the valley, and made little gates at convenient distances through which I can turn any desired amount of water, at any time when my crop requires it. I have found that by judicious watering the land just before planting, my crops grow luxuriantly through ordinary droughts, when the same class of land, not watered thoroughly in the spring, suffers severely. The land irrigated is not strictly bottom land—is never overflowed by the stream running through it, though not of course as thrifty as rolling upland. I find that the lands thus irrigated produce more without manure than my best uplands under the highest cultivation. I am therefore a strong advocate of irrigation, and would urge all farmers who have so much as a single acre lying so as to admit of it, to apply the same system.