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EDITORIAL.

Resolutions for 1904.

The beginning of a new year is a favorite time with many for forming new and good resolutions. These are in order at any season, and never more so than at the present; and provided an honest effort be made to carry them into practice, good resolutions are helpful in all the relations of life—in building up character, in subduing selfishness, in respecting the rights of others, and in cultivating the spirit of goodwill to all men—characteristics which tend to the well-being of the citizen, and to success in any legitimate undertaking. The farmer, in relation to his business, does well to take stock at this time; to arrive at an intelligent understanding of his financial position, and to lay plans for improvements in his methods and management.

It may safely be said that the best of farmers do not farm as well as they know how, while many do not know how to farm as well as they would like. So there is room for all to improve. There are a good many little leaks in management, which if stopped would make a very considerable difference in the financial returns of the year. Economy in the use of time is an important factor in farming—doing the right thing at the right time as nearly as possible, and doing the most important thing first. The Germans have a saying, "Never do the second thing first," which is worth thinking about. "Do what your hands find to do, and do it well," is another useful injunction. To fall into a slipshod way of doing things, or to work without regard to system or regularity, is an unfortunate habit, and well accounts for lack of success in any line of business. Feeding farm stock, especially fattening animals, or milking cows regularly at the same minute, as nearly as possible, makes a wide difference in the profitable gain of weight of flesh or milk. Milking the cows at exactly the same time each morning and evening, and by the same person, accounts for a large increase in the product of milk and butter over the careless methods of many who imagine that the milk being there it makes little difference whether the milking be delayed an hour or two or done an hour or two earlier than the usual time.

"Stripping" the cows thoroughly has been proven by experiments a very profitable practice, the last of the milk being by far the richest in butter-fat. It pays well to study the question of economical feeding, and to put one's acquired knowledge on that point into practice. High-priced foods, or such as would sell for a high price, are too often squandered by feeding them heavily to stock, when cheaper foods mixed with them would make the high-priced article go much further, making more economical gains in meat or milk.

In fattening cattle, experiments have shown conclusively that a light grain ration in the early stages of feeding are much more profitable than a heavy feeding of rich foods, which are more profitably fed in the finishing period, and that a longer feeding term may thus be made more profitable than a short feeding course. Experience has also satisfied most feeders of cattle, either for beef or dairy purposes, that well-ma-

tured corn silage is an economical and profitable food, owing to the very large tonnage per acre it is possible to grow, and the succulent and palatable nature of the food, as well as its substantial feeding value. Wherever corn can be successfully grown nearly to maturity, it will be wise to make provision for building a silo and growing this crop.

A cheaply and easily-grown crop, and a valuable forage crop for the pasturing—in late summer and autumn—of sheep, hogs and young cattle, is rape. Provision may well be made for a small field or two of this crop, where such stock is kept.

The importance of improving the quality and character of the live stock kept on the farm is becoming more and more a live subject, and farmers do well to grade their stock up to a better class by the use of pure-bred sires of the best type and by weeding out such animals as are not making satisfactory returns for the food they consume. A set of spring scales costs but little, and if kept in the stable and used to ascertain exactly what each cow is producing in pounds of milk, samples of the milk being tested occasionally for butter-fat, will clearly indicate which cows are making money for their owner and which are robbers, or barely paying for their board. The cost of production in all lines of farm work, it goes without saying, largely determines the profit or loss in the transaction, as it does in any process of manufacture, and the aim should be to reduce the cost to a minimum; and this is not to be secured by skimping, but by doing everything well, and in the matter of feeding farm stock, by feeding generously, for in this, as in many other things, the proverb proves true, that "There is that scattereth and yet increases, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

Liberal treatment of the land, as well as of the live stock, will be found to pay best in the long run. Skimping the cultivation in the preparation of the seed-bed is almost certain to lower the quantity and quality of the harvest, yield, and over-cropping without rest and restoration of the fertility of the land will have the same ill-effect on the crop returns. Carelessness or indifference in the matter of providing clean, sound seed, also tends more than most people are willing to believe to lower the standard of quality and bulk of the crop.

These are but a few out of many points that might be mentioned on which there is room for improvement in the practice of many farmers, as will be freely admitted, and they are presented in a spirit of well-wishing, rather than of fault-finding, in the hope of stimulating to the resolve to improve in these and other features of the work of the farm, making of even the mistakes and failures of the past stepping-stones to better management in the year upon which we have entered.

In the intervals between hauling wood and hay and doing chores, a by no means uninteresting and a profitable way of occupying the farmer's time would be to take a look over the harness, fix up little stitches that can be done at home, and arrange the more serious repairs to be sent to the harness-maker on the first trip to town.

Improvement of Fairs.

As the season for holding the annual meetings of Agricultural Societies and Fair Associations is approaching, the members of such societies will do well to consider what can be done to make the fairs more attractive, popular and useful. With all our boasted progress in many lines of farmers' organizations, we fear it cannot be claimed that in management and practical helpfulness to the class of the community in whose interest they were instituted, the average township or county show has made any appreciable advancement over the fairs of thirty years ago. Indeed, we believe it is safe to say that no other institution in connection with agriculture in this country has made so little improvement during that time as the fairs system. The cause of this state of things, we believe, is largely the indifference of the people. The annual meetings of Agricultural Societies, as a rule, are very sparsely attended, showing that the people generally take little interest in the work of the society, while of the few who do attend a considerable proportion are often of the class that like office better than work, and are more ornamental than useful, their re-election from year to year being easily effected where there is so much indifference on the part of the membership. There are, we freely admit, many honorable exceptions where public-spirited men give generously of their time and means to advance the interest of the society. What is needed is a revival of interest on the part of farmers in general in the work of the Agricultural Societies and of the fairs, which in the past have exerted a useful influence in stimulating competition and improvement in character of live stock in the country, and in many other lines of agricultural production; and the revival must commence in the annual meetings, in the election of progressive, public-spirited men as officers and directors, who will devote a reasonable amount of time to the study and introduction of useful and improved features into the fairs. That this can be done with gratifying success has been proven in late years by the record of a few of the county fairs in Ontario; notably that of Norfolk County, where, through the businesslike and intelligent efforts of a live secretary and manager, and a sympathetic and capable board of directors, a purely agricultural show has been successfully conducted financially, as well as socially, economically, and in the best interest of the farming community. What has been done in one county may be done in another by the use of the same methods, and we counsel fair boards throughout the country to enquire into and adopt up-to-date methods of management, and so to raise the standard of our shows as to make them what they were intended to be, and what they may be, really useful and helpful institutions in the country, instead of being, as too many are, mere horse-racing events, and sources of amusement of anything but an elevating character, and a lamentable misappropriation of the funds placed at the disposal of the directorate.

Indispensable.

Please find enclosed order of \$1.50, for renewal of "Farmer's Advocate" for 1904. Impossible to do without it. Many thanks for knife.

Leeds Co., Ont.

C. E. BARBER.