

Farm Experiences

RED RIVER VALLEY CORN

Corn for feed has been grown in the Emerson district for the last ten years. Some had tried it before that time, but owing to not being able to get the proper varieties, it was largely experimental. Since then it has become more general and on some of the farms here it is a regular part of the crop just as much as timothy or alfalfa. Field corn is grown here principally, altho it is grown as a fodder crop and is fed both to horses and other stock. The reason I grow field corn instead of fodder corn is that while the fodder corn bulks up more, the field corn, by maturing or partly maturing ears makes it a much better and more satisfactory feed. It is not good for the horses when work starts, because it loosens them up too much. For the same reason it is particularly good for the horses to correct so much dry feed thru our long winter, fed once a day. It seems just right, reduces the quantity of oats used and does away with the need of a laxative in the shape of bran. I feed it to the cows twice daily and they eat it up clean, every stalk of it.

With regard to the land most suitable for corn growing, I have had no other actual experience than that of my own land, which is a medium heavy clay loam. I farm in the Red River Valley. Others to the west of me, where it is the usual black prairie soil, with some alkali in it, tell me corn does nearly as well with them. Some four years ago several quarter sections west of here that were badly infested with wild oats and perennial sow thistle, were put into corn. I saw the crop several times. It did well, producing a large amount of feed which sold readily in the field for \$5.00 a load. The land was well cultivated and has been in wheat and oats ever since. It has grown the best crops I ever knew it to produce and the crops are nearly free of wild oats and sow thistle. This corn was planted with a corn drill and harvested with a corn harvester. The corn was from 12 to 18 inches shorter than that grown on the Red River land, but since this prairie land is worth about \$10 less per acre and considering the corn practically cleaned it of weeds, the value of corn on farms in this country is very strongly demonstrated.

Preparing Corn Land

In preparing my corn ground I fall plow generally land that has had wheat and then oats. I spring disc it and well harrow it at least twice to kill annual weeds. Then I mark it off with a home-made marker. An 18 foot 2 by 4, with four pegs in it, will do this job with a steady team and a good driver. Then I plant with a hand planter and it is astonishing how much ground can be covered in a day in this way. If I was putting in over 10 acres I would get a corn planter. I have also put in two or three acres with just a stretched line and hand planter. My son put in several acres with his drill by stopping all but four spouts. This did very well, but was from 12 to 18 inches shorter than my own, which was planted in hills and also was several days later. Then, while you can cultivate one way, you must use the hand hoe between the hills. I use a horse cultivator for the long rows. The varieties I use are "Improved Squaw." This always ripens, but does not make nearly as much forage and of course is not as good as some other varieties, outside of obtaining the ripe ears. I generally put in about 15 pounds of this and for the rest I use "North-west Dent" or "Longfellow." I can ripen "Northwest Dent" almost every year, but am not so successful with "Longfellow." Both have their advantages. The "Dent" is better and stronger feed because the ears ripen earlier. The "Longfellow" gives more bulk, as it grows about 12 to 18 inches taller. The ears are also much longer. I plant rows four feet apart each way and it takes about a peck to the acre of seed, setting my planter to drop three to five kernels to the hill. I have never tested my seed before sowing it. I buy the best I can get direct from a reliable seed house and have never had a failure in germination.

Danger from Frost

I usually start corn planting about May 15. If the season is wet or back-

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE?

We welcome contributions to this page from our readers. Each article should relate to one subject only; it should be the actual experience of the writer and should not exceed 500 words in length. Every farmer has some particular way of doing a thing which saves him time and which his fellow farmers could make use of to advantage. If you have a "good thing," would it not be a generous act to tell your friends about it? All the readers of The Guide are friends, so make this a place for "swapping" ideas. If you have nothing else to write about, give your experiences on any of the following subjects:

What work can be most profitably done on the roads in the spring? How can roads in your district be best maintained?

Which way have you found to be the most profitable in marketing your grain? By the load at the elevator, consigned to a commission firm, on the track, or how?

When do you figure on having your cows freshen? And why?

What provision do you make for succulent crops for your pigs during the summer? What crops do you sow, and when and how for this purpose?

How have you made provision for a plentiful water supply on your farm? Did you have any difficulty finding water? What method did you adopt or what led you to dig your well where you found water?

Have you an Automobile? If so, how much does it cost you to run it? Is it more economical than a team of drivers? Do you consider it a good investment for the farmer?

How much did you make feeding steers during the past winter? What did you feed, how much and so on?

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ward, perhaps a little later, but a man must use his own judgment. But I have found on my land that corn will not come again if frozen hard in the spring, while a slight frost in the fall does not materially hurt its feed value. I plant about three to four inches deep. I go over it at least twice with the horse cultivator, always reversing the way each time, and with the hoe whenever I see that it needs it and time is available. Some years it requires more cultivation than others. The grower must be the judge of this. "I do not know how long it takes field corn to mature. Squaw corn takes about 86 to 90 days to really ripen. The other varieties take longer. I have never let it ripen. I leave it till after the first frost, which is generally a slight one. I have never made silage of it. At present I have no silo, but I like the corn to harden before cutting, otherwise it is apt to mildew. Up to last year I cut it by hand, using an old-fashioned bill hook. This has weight and cuts low down, leaving the ground in better shape for the next crop. It cuts the whole hill at one or two cuts, holding the corn in one arm and the bill hook in the other. Then put five or six hills together and bind with binder twine. Last year, 1914, I cut with a corn cutter. It was quicker, but made no better job. Where some of the stalks had gone down thru high winds and

splendid for horses in the winter. Then it has other values. It is better to have a crop than a bare summerfallow, and wheat follows it splendidly. I have seen here 40 bushels to the acre of No. 1 wheat after a corn crop, and that is a long way over our average here for summerfallow crops. Now some of its disadvantages. If you leave it out all winter, as most people do, it must be fenced or the cattle and horses running in the fall will give you all kinds of trouble. You can haul it in and stack it in long rows in your hay fence. Last year before it froze up I put it in the cow barn and left the doors open so as to make a thorough draft, and very little of it musted, but this was an extra dry fall. There is another thing I have noticed about it when left out for feed and that is that in the spring, when it thaws and freezes, it largely spoils it for feed. Cattle and horses do not eat it clean like they do that which is placed under cover in the early spring. One of my neighbors who had no hay pasture and was short of grain, carried his sows most of the summer on green cut corn, with a small quantity of barley. I also think, as a change for both horses and cattle in their feed, it has a value apart from its milk and fattening properties. In conclusion, it is a poor crop if you once let the weeds get the start and they are very likely to do so in a dry spring,



Subsequent cultivation of corn should be shallow to avoid disturbing the mass of surface feeding roots peculiar to the corn plant

horses getting into the field, the binder left them and I had to clean it up by hand. I have never saved my own seed so far, but I intend to this year. I saved a few choice ears two or three years ago and sowed them, but I fancied they smutted more than the seed I bought. Perhaps this was because I did not keep the seed carefully enough. I understand it should be kept in the house at a fairly even temperature.

Advantages and Disadvantages

As to its value as feed compared with other fodder crops, it is from two to three times as heavy as any other fodder crop grown in the West. Excepting alfalfa for milk cows, it is the best feed I know of. Also, as before mentioned, it is

for the corn likes hot dry weather, it is slow to start unless the ground is warm and moist.

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CORN IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA

W. H. Fairfield, superintendent of the Lethbridge Experimental farm, gives the following information concerning corn growing in Southern Alberta.

Our experience with the growing of corn for fodder at the Lethbridge Station during the last few years is rather encouraging. The yield of fodder corn planted on summerfallow has averaged from 10 to 12 tons per acre. This is the weight of the green fodder as cut. The

varieties we have used have been Compton's Early, North West Dent, and Longfellow. As a rule these merely reach the silking out stage, but in some seasons, such as the past, we have been able to ripen an occasional ear. Our method of planting is to put the rows about three feet apart, using an ordinary grain drill and stopping up the inter-vening drills.

The only variety that we have been able to ripen every season has been the Squaw. In the Southern part of the province, in the "Chinook wind belt," where there is usually very little snow, we believe this could be grown profitably. The ears, which of course are very small and come out close to the ground, would not be picked, but hogs and other stock could be turned in the field in the fall and early winter and allowed to pasture off the grain. In raising the Squaw corn for this purpose, we believe it would be better to plant in hills from 3 to 3½ feet each way, so as to permit cultivation both ways. An acre of spring plowed stubble land planted last summer with Squaw in hills 3 feet apart each way yielded 16 bushels and 20 pounds of shelled corn. Considering the extremely dry season, we considered this quite satisfactory.

CORN POINTERS

For the Red River Valley, Prof. Bedford, deputy minister of agriculture for Manitoba, says the favorite variety of fodder corn is "Longfellow," outside of the Valley the favorite is "North-western Dent."

Minnesota No. 13 is a new variety of corn which has given good results in some parts of Southern Manitoba. It is a Red Dent Corn.

You can figure on sowing about half a bushel of corn per acre with a grain drill.

Work the land down into the best possible seed bed. Plant in hills if possible 36 inches apart each way. Put from 3 to 5 kernels in each hill, planted about 2 to 2½ inches deep.

Seed as soon as most danger of spring frosts is over and the land is warm, about May 15 and not later than May 24.

Cultivation is the secret of success in corn growing.

Harrow until corn is from six to nine inches high. Send the hired man to do the harrowing. If you do it yourself you will think you are spoiling the crop.

Cultivate deep the first time, but shallow each succeeding cultivation. Corn is a surface feeder. It sends out masses of fibrous roots near the surface, which, if displaced and damaged by deep cultivation, will cause a great loss in the growth of the crop.

MIXED FARMING ADVISABLE

There are two branches which appeal to me as the most profitable in mixed farming, dairy cattle and poultry. There is no animal as productive as the dairy cow and no fowl as the laying hen. The dairy cow will produce in a season its own value and so will the hen. To substantiate this statement my experience follows:—

In the fall of 1908 two cows were purchased, both in calf, and when they freshened one proved to be a good milker, while the other could scarcely feed her calf, so during the summer she was sold to the butcher and the other was kept. In the spring of 1910 she freshened again, and as she was the only cow kept a record was taken and she produced during the season 305 pounds of butter. Her first two calves were heifers, so they were kept, and in 1913, being then three and four years old, they and their mother produced 839 pounds of butter during the season. The average price obtained was 30 cents. This made an average of \$84 per cow, and in addition we had the calves and all the milk we needed for the house.

In the same year, 1913, 125 hens were kept. During the year the returns from eggs, hens and cockerels sold were \$346,

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