

BEES ON THE FARM

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After many years of practical experience, and knowing the farmer, his needs and opportunities as I do, this subject appeals to me as one of considerable importance.

There are few fields of profitable labor unworked in these busy days. Only last evening I noticed a heavily leaded advertisement for cast-off preserve tins, and the country side is scoured daily in search of bits of rag or metal. Profit from small things, utilization of waste is the cry, yet the farmer, the most prudent and frugal of our citizens almost entirely fails to seize the opportunity of taking at least a dollar an hour for a little time, to say nothing of the delicious and healthful food which he might so easily place upon his table through bee-keeping.

Now, this is a "condition not a theory." Not one farmer in a hundred has ever tried it, yet the few I have persuaded to take it up, none have failed, and none will.

I have been sharply criticized by some apiarists for "inviting so many into the business." They feared competition. A moment's consideration will show there is no danger of this. The increased use of honey will help, not hurt the market. Make the use of honey as general as it was 100 years ago, and the supply would not equal the demand, and, besides, I do not advise the farmer to start an apiary. I tell him plainly that every colony above five is a damage to him. Up to that number their care will not interfere with his regular work, neither will he need appliances and material the purchase of which will for a time

impair his per cent. of profit. Under this number he will not be likely to be troubled by thousand and one things in the way of complications, entomological and otherwise, that always come to the bee-master.

Here is the plan: An investment that taken one year with another will pay 100 per cent. net profit, and as no dealer or supply manufacturer has, or ever tried, to get a collar on me, I can and shall say just what I mean.

First, buy a good book on the bee and I cannot recommend "Langstroth revised by Dadant," too highly—it fits every place and is as interesting as a novel—then subscribe for The American Bee-Keeper, you will find it a great help and it will keep you "up to date." Read your books carefully and then decide on the kind of hive adapted to your locality. I assume you will produce section honey. Buy the best, I don't care what they cost if the workmanship and material are there. We are planning on 100 per cent. returns, not on a fixed sum, and you must have lots of experience before you can use a poor hive properly, and then you will know better than to try.

While I find the eight-frame the best for my apiary, I should be inclined to advise the ten-frame size for the farmer, as they winter more safely, and he will not lift, carry, or "tier up" enough to make the extra weight of any consequence.

In the matter of outer case, or chaff hive, there is the question of the amount of money you care to invest; anyone can make an outer case from old boxes, but the saving is not great and is often at the expense of the looks of the little apiary, which should be placed very near the house and be an ornament rather than a disfigurement. Also remember that it costs less than nothing to keep hives well covered with good lead paint.