

# FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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## Arbor Day.

Friday, May 5th, has been set apart for the observance of Arbor Day in the Province of Manitoba. It is now several years since one day in the year has been specially set apart as a national tree-planting day, and no doubt the results to many appear very discouraging. However, as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, so the example of a single grove of trees or few rods of shelter belt here and there through the country has its effect, and slowly, but none the less surely, will the celebration of Arbor Day become more and more universally observed. Experience is teaching us the advantages to be derived from the shelter of a grove of trees, and the benefits from a home-making standpoint; it is also teaching us what varieties of trees are best adapted for different purposes, as well as the methods of cultivation and planting essential to success.

One thing is certain, there is no use trying to grow trees unless the soil is well cultivated and sufficient cultivation given to the young plantation to keep down weeds and grass and retain moisture in the soil for the nourishment of the trees. Unless the land where it is desired to have the trees is thoroughly well prepared, it will be a saving of time to postpone the planting for a year and prepare the ground; in which case Arbor Day can be as loyally observed in preparing land for a future grove as in the planting of it. Elsewhere in this issue will be found some interesting articles on shelter and avenue tree-planting, and also on the planting and cultivation of small fruits.

## Cultivation.

In this and previous issues we publish a number of letters, giving the practical experience of old and successful farmers in soil cultivation and seeding in this western land. The consensus of opinion is that prairie land should be broken as shallow as possible, and the work done in June backset a little deeper as soon as the sod is well rotted, well harrowed, and seeded with a press drill. In cases where there is little sod or where the land is very lumpy, so that thin breaking is impossible, good results may follow deeper breaking, followed by disking to produce as fine a seed-bed as possible. Rolling the breaking is always helpful in hastening the rotting.

In handling old land, summer-fallowing every third or fourth year is almost universally recommended, especially in the western part of the Province and Assiniboia. Apart from keeping down weeds, the fallow is necessary to firm the land and retain moisture. In plowing in a heavy stubble, either spring or fall, it is difficult to get the land firmed down sufficiently; it is well to burn off the stubble, or if this cannot be done, to cut it as low as possible. In walking over fall plowed ground one frequently sinks to the ankle in hollow spots, showing that the soil has not been packed down. This condition is partly owing to bad plowing, and if more attention were given to the plowing the soil would require less afterwork. An ideal seed-bed calls for a very firm, well packed under layer of soil, with the top inch and a half fine and mellow, to serve as a soil mulch to retain the soil moisture. To assist in obtaining this ideal condition, an implement called a soil-packer is being introduced this year, and from what we can learn from those who have tested it, the machine does what is claimed for it.

Wheat, of course, is the staple, and there promises to be a greatly increased acreage devoted to this crop this year. Owing to the strong demand for good milling oats, and the high price of this cereal, a much larger acreage will be sown, provided enough good seed is procurable. A new linseed oil firm have announced that they will be prepared to take a large quantity of flax this fall, but from past experience with this cereal, it is doubtful if it will be extensively grown. One of the greatest drawbacks with flax-growing is the difficulty of getting seed free from all sorts of noxious weed seeds.

## Cultivation.

SIXTEEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN SOUTH-WESTERN MANITOBA.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

As spring work and seed time is at hand, according to the natural course of events, it would not be out of place to review the past experience of many of us as a good guide to the future operations of this our most prosperous year. I look upon 1899 as one of the record-breakers for bountiful crops, if past history teaches us anything, and I say history always repeats itself. As everyone who has farmed in this Province the past ten or fifteen years knows well that a good summer-fallow will mostly always have a good crop, if there are any good crops to be had that year, I always start to summer-fallow the first of June, when weeds are small. It is a good plan to run the disk harrow over it two weeks before plowing. I generally harrow three times and cultivate once before haying. This past season I had a thirty-five-acre field I only got half cultivated before harvest, the other half after harvest. The half cultivated before haying produced twice as much as the half after harvest. No difference in quality of land—all heavy clay loam.

Next to summer-fallow for a good crop is spring plowing. That can be done before you can get on summer-fallow. It is always desirable to sow fallow as soon as possible, as it is the last to ripen. I roll spring plowing as we plow it, then drag, then sow, roll, and drag again crosswise. I think we all do too little cross-dragging. The Campbell land packer should be a grand implement for spring plowing. We must have a solid, or rather a firm, seed-bed. Light land should not be rolled after seeding, neither should old land where the humus is all exhausted, as it is sure to drift, whether heavy or light.

In sowing, I would if possible drill east and west, as the roots are more shaded from the sun and wind, as our prevailing winds are north-east and south-west. In all cases, I never forget bluestoning well all kinds of seed grain. A change of seed every two years, put on clean or new land, will in nine cases out of ten produce grain free from smut, but it is always safe to bluestone.

We expect to have a large number of new settlers this year, quite strange to the ways of procedure to obtain the best results. I have farmed here since 1882. I would break all land as shallow as possible; an inch and one-half is possible in wet years such as this, but never more than two inches. Then backset three inches deeper, and you will have a seed-bed almost like a summer-fallow, provided you harrow when it is moist. I always harrow just after a rain. Backsetting can never be worked easier or better than before there is a crop put in the ground, and it must be backset sometime. Some break three or three and one-half inches and do not backset the first crop. Sometimes a good crop may be gotten that way, especially if the land is on the light side, but in most cases it means a difference of four to five bushels to the acre in favor of backsetting, which would pay for the work, and then it is done.

Now as to rotation of crops, to keep the land in good shape: Two years wheat, one oats, then summer-fallow, and repeat. If possible, burn your stubble, for two reasons. It helps to destroy the sawfly that makes so many white or blank heads in the wheat, especially where it is heavy, and it leaves the land cleaner and moister for the next crop. I would put in no crop on breaking. Potatoes and turnips will do fairly well on breaking, if it is a moist year. It is always best to rent enough land the first year for feed and seed for next year.

JOHN S. THOMSON.

Arthur Municipality, Man.

## The Bull Business.

The trade of breeding bulls in Ontario and Manitoba for shipment to the Western ranges has steadily increased, and is a market that may be counted on, for cattlemen will have to invest more freely from that source in the future if the quality of range beef is to be kept up.

It is much easier to run a bunch of cattle down hill than grade up. To keep up the standard of quality requires persistent attention, especially under the existing conditions on the range, where indiscriminate breeding is difficult to avoid, and where the profits of the business are measured by the absence of cost in production.

The Department of Agriculture at Regina, in conjunction with the Cattle Breeders' Associations of Manitoba and Ontario, deserve commendation in

making arrangements for individual shipments in car lots at a nominal figure of \$5 per head from Manitoba or Ontario to any point west.

This importation of fresh blood is a necessity, notwithstanding the argument of a few that the range-bred bull costs less, leaves more calves, and therefore more money; but loss of quality has to be admitted, which is a dollar consideration too with the salesmen.

With a good selection, and given time to acclimatize and adapt himself to range conditions the average Eastern-bred bull will do as good work as the range-bred animal and leave better results.

Manitoba and Ontario are suited for the trade of raising bulls. Breeders have the advantage of a wide selection in crossing of the best strains, and calves never suffer a setback in growth, which gives size and substance.

To breeders looking to the Western market for disposal, the fact cannot be too strongly impressed that a bull with constitution and one that carries beef is the animal required. The beef and constitution he should have, the show points he may do without.

The severe climatic conditions cattle are exposed to in winter on the range at times demands a type that can most readily withstand it, if the business is to be profitable.

It is constitution and the lack of it that makes the difference of cost in pulling through the winter, nor does it need Western experience to tell that the steer that can "rustle" for himself will be the ripest and first ready for the market.

Another advantage in the beefy type from a range point of view is that cows, while well able to give their calves satisfaction, are less liable to get deranged in their udders from an overflow of milk when calving down on the flush of the grass. Since it often proves inconvenient or difficult to handle them, it destroys their utility to a great extent.

There may be an objection on the part of some that the purely beef type is in opposition to the interests of the dairyman, and this may be partly so, but the export trade in beef as a principal source of income in the Western cattle interests demands it for the present, with so much grazing land still lying idle.

CHAS. MICHIE.

Alberta, N.-W. T.

## Children's Aid Society.

The first annual report of the Children's Aid Society has been issued. The aims and objects of this benevolent institution are fully described in the report, also the constitution and by-laws, etc. A brief account of what has been accomplished elsewhere by kindred societies is also given, with short accounts of some of the children that have been rescued. While the Society is empowered to take children from parents unfit to properly care for them, or rescue children from lives of crime and shame, still only a comparatively small number of the children that are taken into the Home come from this class; most of them are taken from poor parents unable to provide proper food and clothing, or are orphans unprovided for. The operations of the Aid Society are not confined to Winnipeg, but cover the whole Province, and they are ready to take charge of children needing their protection wherever they may be found. In some cases it is necessary to keep children in the Home for some little time for training, etc., but the object is to place them out in Christian homes, where they will be well cared for and where they will have a chance to grow up useful men and women. Any person having information of children who are being abused or neglected anywhere in the Province should communicate with the Secretary, and persons wanting children for adoption would do well to ask for a copy of this annual report, to be had from the Secretary, Dr. E. A. Blakely, Parliament Buildings, Winnipeg.

In speaking at a meeting of grain-growers at Fargo, N. D., lately, the great railway magnate, Mr. J. J. Hill, in advocating better methods in farming, illustrated his point by the following: "Suppose a man had a 100-acre field. The average cost of farming that field in first-class shape would be \$8 per acre. It is not unreasonable to suppose that he should realize 25 bushels per acre. Now, suppose he farms 200 acres with less care and at \$3 less cost per acre, which would be \$5. The average crop from such farming is about 12½ bushels per acre, so he would get the same number of bushels from each farm, every 25 bushels on 100-acre farm costing \$8, while every 25 bushels on 200-acre farm would cost \$10. This clearly demonstrates that good farming pays the biggest profits."