

Seeding Stony Land and Sloughs

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

Have a field fenced for pasture, but not broken yet. It is quite stony, and contains some burned out patches. Is there some grass I could sow on this with success to make a permanent pasture, as I do not wish to break this piece?

Have a slough of several acres, plowed this summer, which usually has water standing in it up to the middle of July. What would be the proper thing to sow this in for a late crop, or would it be a good idea to sow it to permanent pasture, as it cannot well be drained?

Alta.

S. J. K.

It is somewhat difficult to get cultivated grasses to grow on unbroken prairie, and where it is possible to break the land I would prefer to do so, and sow the grass seed on the backsetting. Apparently your land is too stony to plow, and the next best thing is to thoroughly disk it, and then sow the grass seed. Brome will give you the most and best pasture; next comes a mixture of timothy and Western rye grass, about five pounds of timothy and twelve pounds of rye grass. This is sufficient for an acre. If brome seed is used it will take fourteen pounds of seed per acre.

I have found that brome grass gives excellent results in slough bottoms. Break up the slough just as soon as it is dry, disk harrow thoroughly, until you are sure that all the sod is killed. Then sow with fourteen pounds of brome grass and harrow. Sow at any season of the year when dry.

M. A. C.

S. A. BEDFORD.

Fodder Corn

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

I notice frequently in THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE that a good many farmers speak highly of corn as a fodder crop. As I have no experience with corn, I would like to know the best variety to grow for fodder, and the best method of handling it; there being no corn cutting machines in this part and no corn grown as yet; also when it should be cut, and is it any use as a horse feed? I was thinking of trying some for winter feed for oxen and cows. I have been told there is a lot of waste, as cattle will not eat the stalks unless it is cut up for ensilage.

Sask.

H. C. S.

Among the varieties of corn recommended for this country are Northwestern Dent, Golden Dent, Longfellow Yellow Flint and North Dakota White Dent. The first named, generally, is to be preferred. It comes nearer maturing in an average season than any of the others, and makes the most satisfactory fodder. James Murray, superintendent of the experimental farm, Brandon, says of the varieties grown there :

"The varieties of corn grown in field lots this year were Mercer, Golden Dent and Northwestern Dent. These varieties are not the heaviest producers of fodder, but yield a good return and reach a stage of maturity that makes them more valuable for feed than the large growing late kinds. Of the three varieties grown this year for the bulk of our fodder, the Northwestern Dent gave the most satisfactory crop, producing 10 tons per acre, and being nearer ripe than the others. This variety will, under good conditions, grow from 7 to 10 feet high, and by being sown by the 20th of May will have the grain firm on the cob by the 1st of September. In order to cob properly the stalks should not be closer than nine inches to twelve inches in the row, and the rows at least three feet apart." This variety will probably be found most satisfactory for your locality."

Corn is most useful if made into silage. Stock of all kinds eat silage readily and consume practically the entire stalk. Cut and cured in the field and fed cut or uncut a considerable proportion is wasted, the thick, pithy stalks not being eaten. A few farmers in the West have built silos and grow corn in large quantities for fodder, but the practice is not much followed yet. It has been demonstrated, however, that corn matures sufficiently to make satisfactory silage, and that there is no reason why the silo

should not come into as general use here as in the South and East.

Where no harvester is at hand the corn would have to be cut by hand. Some use a grain binder where small patches are to be handled, but it is pretty hard on the machine. Cured in the field it should be shocked in good-sized shocks, and allowed to cure. When dry it may be stacked near the stables, or left in the field and hauled in as needed. If run through a cutting box, stock will eat it more readily, but much of the thick stalks will be wasted.

Corn is an excellent fodder for all classes of stock. Cows and oxen will do well on it. Horses relish it quite as much. Corn fodder field-cured has a feeding value about equal to timothy hay.

Dry Farming in Alberta

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

The publications of the Dry Farming Congress have been very interesting to me. This is my seventh year in Alberta. It is the first in which the rainfall has been less than the crops required, but our rains always begun late in the spring or early summer. In two previous years there was no rain till I began to fear that the grain sown was not likely to germinate in time to make a crop, but in both of these years the June rains started the crops so vigorously that the yield was good.

My interest in dry farming methods grew out of the fact that these methods induce seed to grow before the rains. I became convinced that by properly working the soil I could induce the crop

that is, where it was worked up at once. In the portion which lay some time in the furrow slice, before being worked, the soil had dried out a good deal, both in the higher and in the lower portions. At present the flax on the portion which was worked up right behind the plow is as fine as I ever saw where the land rolls downward, and fair where it rolls upward. On the portion where the land lay for some time in the furrow slice before being worked, the flax is short and thin throughout.

This dry year has taught me some very surprising things concerning conservation of moisture. The oats in this vicinity are a total failure, except one piece which largely by accident was put in differently from the rest. It will yield somewhere from thirty to forty bushels to the acre. The land is not different from that where the crop has failed either in the texture of the soil, the amount of rain received or in being higher or lower. The seed happened to be put in so as to give it a better chance.

The most surprising thing I noticed during the drouth was this : Part of my grass land was burned over by a prairie fire, leaving it entirely bare to the hot sun during the long, dry spell. After the drouth had lasted for some time I fenced the burned area. There was not a sign of moisture discernible from top to bottom of the post holes. At the same time in the flax where a good dust blanket had been worked up while the furrow slice was still moist, I could both see and feel moisture in the soil two inches below the surface.

Of course, land could be worked so fine that the crop would all lodge in a normal or wet year. The amount of work which is best is a matter of judgment, but no harm could be done by bringing the soil at once after plowing to whatever degree of tillage were deemed desirable. For my part I am resolved that henceforth neither fall nor spring plowing shall dry out before being worked up on my land.

Alta.

W. I. THOMAS.

Earliest Harvest

On the experimental farm at Indian Head harvest commenced August 6th with oats, on the 8th with barley, and on the 9th with wheat, and everything was in stook or in stacks on the 27th, the earliest completed harvest in the farm's history. One variety of wheat (Marquis) and six field lots of barley were threshed from the 25th to the 29th inclusive. The wheat averaged 54 bushels on 5½ acres, and the barley from 54 to 76 bushels per acre.

A Disease of Alfalfa

The Colorado Experiment Station reports progress in the investigation of the new bacterial disease of alfalfa, known as stem blight. The disease appears to have seriously ravaged certain sections of that state, and has proven difficult to deal with or stamp out. It is a stem infection that retards growth and destroys the rich, dark green color of the leaves. A thick viscid fluid oozes from the affected parts of the stem, which dries and blackens. The stems then break easily and much loss results in the handling of an infected crop. No remedy or method for the control of the disease has been worked out.

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The most practical way of putting humus into the soil is to follow a system of crop rotation, growing clover for hay or seed one year in five and feeding it to live stock, saving all manure and returning it to the land with the least possible loss.

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An interesting bulletin on the beet-sugar industry has been issued by the United States department of agriculture. In the United States last year 512,000 tons of beet sugar were produced, which is six more than the highest previous record. The industry is rapidly growing in size and importance, 66 factories being in operation in 1909. The bulletin deals with methods of production and reviews conditions in the industry in all states where beets are grown.

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to start ahead of the rains, especially in years when the rains were late.

My only crop this year at Fox Coulee is a fourteen-acre piece of flax. In the hope of inducing it to start quickly I put twice as much work on the ground before seeding as is commonly put on flax land in this vicinity. In this way almost by accident I prevented a total failure of the crop. Unlike previous years, this year has been very dry. Creeks which would swim a horse last year in the rainy season have never been deep enough this year to wet a horse's knees. Unfortunately, I did not anticipate the drouth, and failed to follow the "Dry Farming" instruction to work the land immediately behind the plow. If I had done so I should have had a bumper crop, instead of a half crop. I am convinced of this for the following reason :

The land all lay in the furrow slice from the beginning to the end of the plowing. At once, when the plowing was finished, the whole fourteen-acre piece was worked up and seeded. It was worked so as to leave a dust blanket for retaining the moisture. When it was plowed first it had dried out considerably, but where it was plowed last it had not had time to dry much before being worked. The growth is very irregular, for until late in August we had no rain of consequence since seeding, leaving the crop almost entirely dependent upon the moisture in the soil at seeding time. The land is rolling prairie, where the roll is downward making it low. There was a fair amount of moisture in the portion worked up right behind the plow and enough to be noticeable on the higher land ;