

# THE PRAIRIE.

(ILLUSTRATED)

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**WEEKLY JOURNAL OF INTEREST TO ALL.**


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ERNEST BEAUFORT, Manager.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 1891.

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SOME weeks ago we were asked about the growth of alfalfa. A correspondent has kindly sent us a clipping from the *Northwestern Agriculturist*, which we think will be valuable. The article says:—In the spring of 1887, I bought fifteen pounds of alfalfa seed for \$2.50. I told my man to prepare one acre of ground on my farm in Cass county, North Dakota, and sow the seed the middle of May. He did so, and in July following we had our first crop of alfalfa. It was mown close to the ground, and fed green to cattle, horses, mules and hogs; all ate it and none was wasted. In August of that year we cut the second crop and fed it likewise. The two crops that year must have made two tons to the acre, had it been cured like other grass.

In the fall of each year I put on a light coat of manure to strengthen the roots and protect it from severe frosts, but as yet I have seen no signs of winter killing and last fall it was thicker and stronger than at any time since 1887. Each of the last two years it has given me three good crops, cutting about one ton at each mowing.

Alfalfa seems to do well in dry weather. What it will do in wet seasons I cannot say.

The spring of 1889 was tough on tame grasses, as well as cereals, but my acre of alfalfa was ready to cut the first of June, and it stood on the ground about as heavy as any previous spring, while my pastures did not show a growth of grass over half an inch high at the time.

Alfalfa grows about eight inches high before you can discover any preparation to seed and then is the most favorable time to cut it for hay.

I regard the growing of alfalfa as an important matter for our farmers to look into, and the sooner they get a ten acre field or more the better for them.

The land should be plowed deep early in the fall and again late in the spring. Harrow down thoroughly and roll with a good heavy iron roller until it is well packed, and then sow fifteen pounds of seed to an acre, and keep well covered every fall with short and well-made manure, and you are sure of a crop.

Another correspondent says that a good crop of alfalfa can be grown the first year. Deep and thorough plowing is necessary, and the harrow should thoroughly pulverize the soil. If a press drill is used, fifteen to twenty pounds are sufficient to seed one acre; if sown broadcast, twenty-five to thirty pounds.

Regarding alfalfa as a good fertilizer, we learn that experiments in the past few years has demonstrated for the fact that alfalfa is the very best fertilizer known to agriculture. Clover has been accepted as the best and is so thought to be to-day over most parts of America. Alfalfa is the best green fertilizer, since it contains the most nitrogen. There would be but little difference as between it and clover, were it not the fact that the better fertilizer is the root of the plant and of which alfalfa is possessed of three times as much as clover or any other of the grass or grain plants. In many places we have witnessed where a crop of alfalfa had been turned under and the land planted to wheat and the result was forty-five bushels of grain by the side of land not so treated which produced but fifteen bushels. A field of alfalfa turned under on Wheat Ridge last summer produced 400 bushels of potatoes to the acre, while the average of land not so fertilized produced but 160 bushels.



THE Dakota "Exodus" is in full blast and will probably be in full blaster before long. The fatal "mortgage" rope, which has so long held the poor farmers of that cyclone cultivating district close to the land they were fruitlessly endeavoring to make pay, has been severed by the late action of the C.P.R. Come along, friends! there is good land and plenty of it in the Canadian Northwest that is capable of supporting yourselves and your families if you will but work. Don't forget the address: N. W. T., CANADA. Lots of room.