

FARM MANAGEMENT

What to do with Thin Meadows

T. G. Raynor, Seed Division, Ottawa.

There is always a good deal of speculation as to how this or that crop is likely to pan out during the season. Perhaps with no crop is there more speculation than with our meadows as to the prospect for hay or pasture; so much depends upon them. With about three million acres of the ten million acres under cultivation in Ontario in meadow the hay and pasture crop is of no inconsiderable importance.

Speculation was rife this winter when ice covered so many meadows whether or not much of the seed would be smothered out. These fears, however, have been allayed now that spring has really come and the meadows are promising well on the start. There may be some critical times in store for them yet which we cannot foresee. They may be safeguarded to some extent and it will be the pur-

will pay to sow some extra timothy and alsike over these patches.

WHEN MEADOWS ARE MORE BOUND Old meadows may sometimes be mowed. This is quite often due to insufficient drainage. A thorough harrowing with a sharp toothed harrow or even a disk run over such a meadow at not too much of an angle will pay. Some extra seed and stable manure will also pay.

The kind of seed used may have some influence. One should adapt the kind of grass and clover seed to the nature of the soil to be seeded.

If meadows weren't pastured too closely in the autumn and more after-math were left, not only would the grass start up more quickly in the spring, but the crop of hay would be much heavier.

This year in seeding new meadows with Ontario grown seed it will pay to use fully one-third more seed than is usual, as much of the seed will not grow or if it does grow, it will produce rather weak plants. Let the clover meadows get all started before pasturing and plan to keep some of the second growth for seed.



Not Yet, But Soon—If Fine Weather Continues

An outdoor milking scene snapped for Farm and Dairy Near Hamilton, Ont., last summer.

pose of this article to suggest some ways for doing it.

CAUSES FOR THIN MEADOWS In the first place, what are the causes of thin meadows? I would say first that too little seed is used in the seeding process. When, as we have observed in former articles, 12 pounds of red clover an acre only means one seed for about every two square inches, 12 pounds of timothy an acre only about two seeds a square inch, about one square inch, it will be realized by many farmers that they have been using too little seed to get the best results. If the new meadow shows any signs of this it is good practice to sow a little extra seed as early in the spring as the meadow is dry enough to run over it with a light iron harrow. On stony meadows this harrowing will loosen up many rolling stones that will either have to be pitched off or rolled in right away while the ground is soft in order to run a mower over it where intended for hay. It is good practice to use a comparatively heavy roller on all meadows as early in the spring as the meadow will carry a team without any great injury to it.

In meadows two years old this rolling is splendid practice. There the winter often kills clover by heaving with the frost and even the timothy stools are more or less raised. They will make a quicker start when they are pressed into the soil. And by the way this heaving may be another reason for thin meadows.

In some meadows the depressions on the surface of the field act as pockets for a good deal of water which freezes, and often smothered out the seeding. Unless these patches are removed, weeds will take possession. It

How to Use the Roller

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The roller is commonly looked upon as the implement whereby to give the finishing touch. It is just at this point, however, that the greatest danger lies. It is as an operation after seeding that rolling is, on the average, of least value. There are, of course, conditions when it is advisable to roll after seeding, but the true value of this implement lies in its usefulness as a means of preparing the land preparatory to seeding, as already mentioned in connection with harrowing.

The use of the roller in preparing sod land for grain or corn is much to be commended, and it is here that this implement is of the greatest value to the farmer. In certain soils, as for instance, mucky or peaty soils, it is often advisable to roll once or twice before seeding, and two or more times after seeding; this more particularly, if the land is to be seeded down to grass or clover, at the same time as when sown to grain.

WHEN ROLLING CONSERVES MOISTURE

No land should be rolled after seeding if the surface is at all damp. The surface should be allowed to dry a few days before the roller is put on. Rolling in this way a few days or even two or three weeks after the grain is up, breaks the crust, forms a mulch, and so helps to conserve moisture.

On light soils, rolling is an essential operation after seeding to insure quick germination of both grain and grass seeds. Here again, however, it is often advisable to roll a second time two or three weeks after the grain is up. This helps firm the soil and breaks the crust as before stated.

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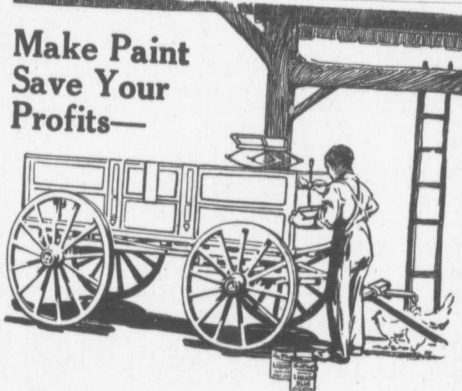
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