

Timely Hints on Farming

MARKETING EGGS

In Minnesota a new idea which has worked well is the marketing of eggs through the creamery. Because of the fact that farmers must take their milk or cream to the creamery at frequent and regular intervals, it is an agency especially well suited to obtaining the egg in a fresh condition from the farmer. As it seems that there must be other creameries so situated that they could readily put their eggs directly in the hands of a retailer in a fair-sized city with only a short shipment, it seems well to describe in detail the methods used in this case. The volume of eggs handled in this way would, of course, probably never become so great as to make them a factor in the mass of eggs now handled commercially.

The eggs are brought by the farmer directly to the creamery when bringing his milk. While this particular creamery is privately owned, it is essentially cooperative, in that its owner and manager is a far-sighted business man with other interests in the village, and he sees that the increased agricultural prosperity of the community will eventually be to his advantage. In consequence he is content to take a small profit to himself and to pay the farmer as liberally as possible for both their cream and eggs. Any patron of the creamery or any other person who will sign a required agreement may market his eggs this way. At present about one hundred and thirty-five farmers are taking advantage of this method of disposing of their eggs. These egg patrons are scattered over quite a wide territory, one man finding it to his advantage to drive in fourteen miles with his eggs.

The agreement reads as follows:

For the privilege of selling eggs to the creamery company and getting a market established for guaranteed fresh eggs, I, the undersigned, hereby pledge myself to comply in every way with the following rules:

I agree to deliver eggs at the creamery that will not be to exceed eight days old and to be picked in (gathered) twice every day.

Eggs to be of uniform size (no under-size or over-size eggs).

Eggs to be clean and to be kept in a cool, dry cellar.

Brown eggs to be put in one carton and white in another, and so marked.

Each egg to be stamped on the side and carton to be stamped on the top.

I agree not to sell any eggs but I have marked with the creamery company's trademark to anyone else but the creamery company, and to return stamps and other supplies that have been furnished, in case I should decide to discontinue to sell eggs to the creamery company.

It is readily discernible from the provisions of this agreement that the aim is to get a grade of uniform, clean, dependable eggs, of reasonable freshness. It might seem that requiring delivery once in eight days would not be frequent enough, but the nights in Minnesota even in summer are said to be usually cool, and this condition, together with the gathering twice a day and the storage in dry, cool cellars, must account for the fact that no complaints have been received on the score of staleness.

The separation of the brown and the white eggs serves two purposes: First, it promotes uniformity and greater attractiveness of appearance, and, second, it encourages the keeping of the breed of hens which lay white eggs, because the owner of the creamery pays during the spring months one cent more for white eggs than for brown. The creamery owner justified this action by the statement that it was his belief that his markets would pay a premium for white eggs in the near future, and that he wished to stimulate the keeping of one class of chickens, so as to insure a more uniform product.

To every person signing the agreement quoted above a small rubber stamp is given for use in stamping the

eggs and the container. This stamp plays an important part in the system of marketing. It contains the name of the creamery, the creamery brand, and a serial number for each producer. By means of the stamp which thus appears on each egg and on each package it is possible to trace the product back to the individual producer, and in consequence to place the blame for any carelessness or poor quality, where it belongs. A repetition of any offense of this nature may be sufficient ground for refusing to handle the eggs of that particular producer.

HAYMAKING

At this season of the year the farmer, and particularly the stock farmer, is interested in the best method of curing and harvesting his hay crop. There are various methods employed in different districts, some with a view to ease and speed in harvesting, while others place more importance on the quality of hay produced, and take more time in curing before harvesting. There is no doubt that the most important consideration is that of quality, and every grower should aim to harvest his hay in the best possible condition.

Some four different phases of hay making are worthy of discussion, viz.: the time of cutting, the method of curing, method of harvesting, and method of storing.

The time of cutting is one of the most important of these, as hay cut too green or allowed to become too ripe cannot be made into as good feed as can hay cut at the proper stage of maturity.

The method of curing is the most important consideration, as the quality of the product depends largely on this. The curing depends to a great extent on the weather, but good weather can not be waited for, and consequently, it is well to be always prepared for bad weather. Most farmers cut the hay in the morning after the dew is nearly all evaporated. In good weather it is found possible, in some cases, to get the hay raked and up in coil toward the evening of the day it is cut. Some leave it in the windrow over night, and coil it, next day after the dew is off; while others who use the loaders never coil it, but leave it in the small windrows until the next afternoon, when it is ready to draw. Some others coil the hay and then throw the coils out, and use the loader on these; but where the loader is used, the hay is usually drawn on the day following the cutting; while in some cases, where the hay is overripe, it is drawn the same day as cut; this latter is not common practice, however.

As the hay loader and side-delivery rake are not very common, the larger part of the hay is still cured in the coil. Cut early in the day, the hay can be, if carefully tedded, raked toward evening and placed in coil, in which condition it will turn rain quite effectively, and if the weather is fine, it is usually drawn on the second or third day after cutting. By coiling the evening after cutting, the hay is not allowed to become injured by the dew, and thus bleaching is prevented. It is found that a very good quality of hay is produced in this way.

CUT WEEDS WITH MOWER

If through accident or neglect you find that stink weed or other annuals have ripened on the summerfallow before you have had time to plow it, and you are saying to yourself: "I had no idea the weeds were so bad," better stop the plow, cut weeds down with the mower, rake them up and burn them. It will be extra work this year, but it will save you extra work in years to come.

HOW TO CURE ALFALFA

Alfalfa should be cut when about one-tenth of the crop is in bloom. This means early cutting, and it has many advantages, for while the early haying weather is sometimes precarious and the process slow, the curing of the hay can be accomplished if care and forethought, as to the amount to be handled each

day, is observed. Late cutting of hay often runs it into the harvesting season, putting everything upside down on the farm.

Quality of Production

A crop of alfalfa, cut early, raked when wilted, caked up and left to sweat, then hauled to the mows with the leaves still adhering, is pleasing to the eye and the pocket, and fragrant and appetizing to the stock. The cows will make better use of the hay and return it through the milk supply. The total cost of curing and putting it in the barn, need not exceed \$10.50 per ton. At any rate, the greater feeding value of early matured hay will justify the extra labor.

Aftermath

Another plea for early cutting is the better, stronger growth of the aftermath. The nearer the first crop comes to maturity, the scantier will be the aftermath. Where the second crop is intended for seed, the difference in yield may amount to more than the total value of the first cutting. Indeed, to insure a seed crop it is necessary to pasture early in the spring or mow early in hay season. Even when intended for pasture or a second crop of hay, the greater yield of aftermath from early cutting will compensate for the extra labor.

An alfalfa crop is at its greatest nutritive value when just past the full bloom stage. It pays to commence cutting, then, a little previous to this time. Don't leave it too late, or you will wind up at your hay season with a good deal of over-ripe, dried out, fibrous feed.

Use of Tedder

The right time to use the tedder is just after the mower has laid the swath. The tedder will shake it up without breaking off the leaves. By keeping the green hay open and loose, the air will dry it evenly. This gives first class hay. Don't use the tedder when the hay is too dry, or you will lose half the value of your crop by the rustling of the leaves. The litter are the most valuable leaves, because they are the means of evaporating the sap and effectually drying it, and also because they are the most valuable part of the crop.

Hay Cocks

Build hay cocks to shed the rain, placing each layer square on top of the other and well rounded off at top, so that the sides droop downwards. Alfalfa coiled on this principle will shed a week's rain with little damage.

Cut in the morning as soon as the dew is off, rake into windrows as soon as well wilted, then the next day, about noon, if the weather is suitable, it will be ready to haul to the barn. The precautions given for cocking will apply if rain is imminent.

ALFALFA IN SASKATCHEWAN

Alfalfa growing in Saskatchewan is a topic discussed by many farmers. Valuable information on the subject has been compiled, and issued in pamphlet form by F. Hedley Auld, and John Bracken, professor of the Agricultural college, Saskatoon.

Readers of The Guide can send for a copy of this pamphlet, which will be mailed them free of cost. The following summary is quoted from this last page:

1. The history of alfalfa proves it to be a valuable forage crop, one suited to dry conditions, and adaptable to cold climates.

2. It thrives on all normal soils, but dislikes alkali and acid soils, "wet feet" and "hard pan."

3. Summerfallow or a hard crop should precede alfalfa as a general rule.

4. The "Grimm" and "Turkestan" strains have proved to be the hardiest in the tests that have so far been made.

5. In selecting seed two things to be avoided are noxious weed seed viability and seed of low viability.

6. Sow from 10 to 20 pounds per acre, depending upon viability of seed, condition of soil and method of sowing.

7. Drilling the seed is preferable to broadcasting. If a grass seed attachment for drill cannot be secured use ordinary grain drill with precautions.

8. Inoculate with soil in preference to commercial "pure culture." But in inoculate.

9. Don't take a crop the first year, but "clip" once or twice and leave a good growth in the fall.

10. Cut just after blooming commences, save the leaves and cure in cocks.

11. Experience in other lands teaches that surface cultivation with harrow disc or "renovator" is advisable. We expect to find it so in Saskatchewan.

12. Alfalfa yields more than any other hay crop we have yet found in Saskatchewan.

MILK FEVER IN CATTLE

Milk fever is a disease too well known to a great many farmers. It is a disease peculiar to newly calved cows, and rarely attacks a cow before calving, although sometimes it has been known to do so. It has been a source of great loss to the farmers in the past, because until the last eight or ten years veterinary science had not been able to cope successfully with the treatment of that disease. Changed conditions have appeared on the scene recently, and now we can cope with it.

The cow in your herd that is most predisposed to milk fever is almost invariably the best cow in the herd; she is certainly not a very poor kind of cow. If you have a cow that is a poor milker she is not likely to suffer from milk fever, or if your cows are in poor condition, they are not likely to suffer. The cow that is a heavy milker is most likely to suffer from this disease; therefore, it behooves the man to look after the heavy milking, well-fed cow about calving time. The careful dairyman need hardly ever have a case of milk fever to treat. Ninety-nine cases out of every hundred could be prevented if the cows were carefully handled. If a cow is in good condition and a heavy milker, she should not receive any stimulating food for two weeks before calving; that is to say, she should receive no pea meal or wheat or corn or any heating feed of that kind. A great many dairymen are anxious to bring their cows to the highest condition at calving time, and many a valuable cow's life has been sacrificed because of that idea on the part of her owner. Of course, it is a good practice to bring them up in good condition, but a couple of weeks before they are expected to calve you should feed them on hay, silage or roots, and withhold rich or stimulating food. See to it that a couple of weeks before calving, and a couple of weeks after calving, her bowels are kept in fairly relaxed condition. It may be necessary to give her a couple of doses of salts before and after calving.

Some people milk a newly calved cow out completely, drawing all the milk out of the udder. It is an unnatural condition for a cow's udder to be emptied out completely. In natural conditions the calf does the milking, and you can readily understand a calf would not do that. A calf would take a little milk at a time, and the cow's udder would not be emptied out all at once, and one ought to approach, as nearly as possible, to natural conditions. Consequently the men who milk their cows slightly after calving have gone a long way in arresting the danger of milk fever developing. These are the two most predisposing causes of milk fever, especially stimulating food. It is a bad practice to feed heating and stimulating food to a heavy milking cow in good condition for at least two weeks before the calf is dropped.

President Taft has said that the reciprocity agreement must go through the senate, and that he is willing to remain in Washington till December, if necessary, to fight the matter to a finish.

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