

Cut out the poorest producers and give their feed to the best and have less work and more milk. Make up your mind this spring that you will not milk two cows this season for the milk you should and can get from one good one that is properly fed. This is the only way to make dairying successful and popular.

The poultry business can only be made profitable by cutting out all the old hens. They are not paying their board. The same rule as in dairying applies here. Fewer hens and more eggs will make poultry about the most profitable line of our business.

Seed Selection and Seed Testing

Of all important subjects that concern our farmers, possibly none have received less consideration than that of selecting and testing the seeds we sow each year. Too often we are content to take the grain right from the granary, without giving it even a turn through the fanning mill. We consider this good seed, and expect to reap a bountiful crop. If we do it is because "dame nature" has dealt graciously with us.

The reaping of large crops depends largely on three conditions; productiveness of the soil, sowing the choicest plump seed in fine tilled seed bed, and weather conditions. The two former, to a large extent, are under the control of the agriculturalist. Over the latter he has no control. He should aim to govern his conditions, however, so that he will always be ready to utilize every good day in seed time and harvest to the best possible advantage.

To get this plump seed of strong vitality, possibly no way is better than that of the seed-plot. Commence by selecting a number of the best heads of grain from the field before the grain is cut. These heads should be long and full of plump, well developed grain. When threshed, select from the best grains sufficient to sow a plot, (at the rate of two-thirds the usual quantity an acre, giving opportunity to stool freely) of at least one-quarter of an acre on good soil. From this plot may be secured sufficient choice seed to sow several acres the following season, and from the choicest seed selected from these acres may be had sufficient select seed for the whole farm the second spring. In this way a special variety of grain may be developed, or an old variety improved, so that it will return from 10 to 20 bushels an acre of an increase, over that reaped from the same soil under the ordinary method of selecting seed grain.

This one-fourth of an acre is called the "breeding plot." From this plot may be selected each year, by hand, the largest and best heads of grain for the breeding plot the following year.

If we are not in a position to try the breeding plot system of seed selection, then we must do the next best thing, try the "fanning mill" system. No seed grain should be sown without having been passed, at least, twice through a good fanning mill, and well screened. The difference between profit and loss in reaping a good return, may lay right here, in the failure to select seed of strong vitality.

The vitality of our cereal seeds may be determined by a simple process of seed testing, that is within the reach of every farmer. Take a shallow box, say three inches deep by twelve inches wide, and 20 inches long; put in two inches of fine earth; take promiscuously from the bag of seed to be sown, a small handful of grain; count out one hundred average seeds, and sow in this box, keeping the earth moist, and in a warm place, at an even a temperature, of, say, 70 degrees, as possible. In a few days the grains will have sprouted, and will appear above the soil, coming on so rapidly that you will soon be able to determine the percentage of fertile seeds, also the vitality contained therein, by difference in length of blade of grain.—W.F.S.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY AND GOOD ROADS

The Tenth of a Series of Articles Written by an Editorial Representative of this Paper, who Recently Visited the United States, with the Object of Studying the Free Rural Mail Delivery System.

ONE of the conditions upon which rural free delivery is established in the United States is that the roads, traversed by the carrier, shall be kept in good condition. In some cases this rule is observed. In others it is not.

The proper enforcement of the rule rests with the carriers. If they do not complain about the condition of the roads no other post office official is likely to demand improvements. Many of the carriers do not like to make trouble. They prefer to struggle over bad roads, at certain seasons of the year, than to antagonize the patrons along their routes by forcing them to have money expended on the improvement of the roads. Other carriers, however, are constituted differently. They demand their rights. When they do, an improvement in the roads, generally, follows.

When a carrier finds that the roads on his route are not being kept in good condition he is expected to report the circumstance to the postmaster in charge of the office, where he gets his mail. The postmaster is required to report the circumstances to the members of the township council or to what ever officials may be charged with the responsibility of keeping the roads in good repair. Generally, this leads to the roads being repaired. When, however, no notice is taken of the complaint made by the postmaster, the case is referred to the post office department at Washington. The department then issues a formal notice that unless the roads are improved forthwith the rural delivery service on the route in question will be discontinued. This notice, as a rule, is all that is required to institute hurry-up proceedings to remedy the causes of complaint.

While I was in Washington I asked Mr. W. R. Spilman, the superintendent of rural delivery, if the rule requiring the roads to be kept in good repair was enforced. He replied: "Yes, and has been, more or less, all the time. We discontinue the service where roads are not maintained in proper condition. On one occasion we discontinued a route in Texas with the result that the ratepayers had a special election and voted the money that was needed to repair the roads."

TROUBLES OF A CARRIER

A carrier, on one of the routes in New York State, when I asked him if the roads on his route were kept in satisfactory condition, replied that sometimes they were not. "We do not like to complain about them," he said, "because if we do some of the farmers along the route are sure to make it uncomfortable for us. In winter, for instance, when the weather is very cold our hands soon become chilled if we have to take our mittens off often. These patrons know this and they put a bill in their letter box and an order for one or two stamps. We have to leave the right change in the box and, therefore, have to expose our hands. There are other mean little ways in which they get back at us. Of course, our best farmers don't act like this, but there generally are some along each route who are ready to make trouble for us if they think we are the cause of their being taxed more to keep up the roads."

IMPROVEMENTS MADE

In the annual reports of Postmaster General G. B. Cortelyou, for the year ending June 30, 1906, as well as in the report of Fourth Assistant Postmaster General P. V. DeCraw, for the year ending June 30, 1907, reference is made to this matter of road improvement. These reports state in part:

"As a result of the establishment of rural delivery and the necessity for the maintenance of

good roads to insure its continuance, great activity has been displayed in various sections of the country looking to the improvement of road conditions. In cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, systematic efforts have been made to secure the improvement of the roads traversed by rural carriers. Road officials in the States of Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin have asked for and, by instruction of this Department, have obtained information from rural carriers as to the condition of the roads, bridges and culverts upon rural routes, of what materials the roads are composed, how frequently and in what manner they are worked, and what road-building materials are available in each vicinity.

LEGISLATION IN INDIANA

"In some of the States legislative action has been invoked to secure this end. Indiana took the lead in passing a stringent rural-road improvement act. The statute now in force in that State makes it the duty of the road commissioners, township trustees, and road supervisors to keep in repair and passable condition all roads under their jurisdiction on which rural-delivery routes are established and to see that such highways are properly drained and kept free from snowdrifts and obstructions of every kind. Five per cent. of the road funds are required to be set apart each year for carrying into effect the provisions of this law. Failure on the part of any road supervisor to enforce the provisions of the act, after receiving five days' notice of the defective condition of the highways, is made a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not less than \$1 and not more than \$25 a day so long as the defective or impassable condition of the roads is allowed to continue. A law has been passed by the Pennsylvania legislature requiring all public highways to be kept in condition for travel and imposing penalties upon local officials for failure to repair the highways after due notice has been given them. In Virginia, Louisiana, and other States concerted efforts are being made to secure better roads for the rural service.

"An act was passed by the legislature of Tennessee relocating and reclassifying the roads in Giles county, declaring those roads on which rural routes were established to be public highways and requiring all gates to be removed from roads travelled by rural carriers.

"In the northern tier of States, where the winters are severe and much snow falls, great hardship is imposed on carriers and their animals, due to failure to promptly break out the roads when blockaded with snow, and irregular and suspended service results. In some of the States the law requires the underbrush to be cut from roads and roads to be promptly broken out when blockaded with snow. It would greatly improve the winter service on routes if a similar law were enacted by all the States where it is needed.

IDEAL ROADS NOT NECESSARY

"There seems to be a mistaken idea that the rural delivery service requires ideal roads and that they must be macadamized or graveled. This is not the case, but it is required that they shall be kept reasonably smooth, free from washouts and ruts, and properly drained and graded so that they may be traveled by carriers with celerity and safety. While it is desirable, with a view to their permanency, that roads be macadamized or graveled, it has been practically demonstrated that earth roads can be greatly im-