

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

Waste nothing, that in time of stress you may not want.

Plan to farm for a big acreage in 1918. It is time to start now.

Work the root ground well with horses and save hard labor with the hoe.

Loyal Canada should be a producing, saving and fighting Canada right now.

The farm tractor may yet take the place of a man or two and several teams on Ontario farms.

It is not the farmer who needs educating to the needs of the country half as much as the bulk of urban dwellers do.

Put down some eggs in water glass for next winter. Better yet, arrange to have a few pullets laying next winter.

Lay in a supply of fuel for next winter some time this summer. Transportation difficulties will likely be serious again next winter.

When you build a fence build it of the best and most economical material available. A few fencing facts in this issue will be of interest.

Present-day conditions are leading to a closer study of economic principles, and, let us hope, to a sounder basis of economic national development.

Leaders may come and leaders may go, but the war will go on until democracy wins. Canada is in the fight on the side of right, and there can be no backing up.

The average farmer on a trip to the city sees little evidence of the results of the high cost of living on most of the people who seem to be living higher and faster than ever.

While the cities are sending boys to the country to help on the farms, city businesses advertise in country local papers for country boys to remove to the city and help them.

When grain was one-third the present price, eggs were one-half what they to-day command, and yet some people wonder why eggs should be high. Comparatively speaking they are cheap.

Back-yard garden enthusiasm seemed to run highest at planting time. Backward weather and weeds have made more hoeing necessary, and the hoe is none too popular with some people.

If you have abundance of fruit and vegetables, preserve a large supply for next winter. Canada must conserve all food products so that grains, etc., may be released for the use of the Allies.

A representative of a big business firm recently stated that large firms such as his make a business of "spying out" labor in the rural districts, and that the men coming from the country make the best class of labor they can get. Is it any wonder the farmer is short of help? Other industries steal his efficient help, and in time of crisis attempt to replace it with the kind which is not satisfactory to those industries and could not be to agriculture.

A Few Food-and-Feed Price Facts.

Market price and cost of production are factors in which we are all interested to a greater or less degree. At the moment many people are inclined to blame the farmer for everything in connection with increased prices. It is worth while therefore, in vindication of the farmer and for the enlightenment of the people generally to make a few comparisons with pre-war conditions and prices. We have chosen the last week of May, 1914, (before the war) and the last week of May, 1917, as representative. The figures show something of the increased cost of production. We must remember that Canadian farmers sold the bulk of their wheat, (estimated at 80 per cent.), last fall at an average price of \$1.40 per bushel, and that those farmers, mostly in the West, who have coarse grains for sale, sold them at corresponding prices late in 1916.

Take butter and eggs to begin with. The last week of May, 1914, found creamery butter selling at 24 to 26 cents per pound, and dairy at 23 to 24 cents per pound. The same week 1917 creamery was 43 to 45 cents, and dairy 40 to 43 cents per pound. This is an increase of around 80 per cent. Eggs sold at 23 to 24 cents a dozen three years ago, and 43 to 44 cents this year, an increase of 87 per cent. But let us look at the increase in the price of feed. Wheat was \$1.03 to \$1.04 per bushel the end of May, 1914, and \$2.75 to \$2.80 the same time this year, an increase of nearly 170 per cent., and it takes wheat or its equivalent to produce eggs. Oats were 39 to 40 cents per bushel at the end of May, 1914, and 75 to 77 cents per bushel at the same period 1917, or over 90 per cent. of an increase. Barley sold for 55 to 56 cents in 1914 and \$1.40 to \$1.45 in 1917, an increase of about 155 per cent. American Number 3 yellow corn was 76½ cents per bushel in 1914 and \$1.72½ in 1917, an increase of over 125 per cent. Bran was \$25 per ton in 1914 and \$42 per ton in 1917, showing an increase of nearly 70 per cent. Shorts were \$26 per ton in 1914 and \$45 last week, an increase of 73 per cent. Middlings were \$28 in 1914, and \$48 in 1916, an increase of over 71 per cent. The fact is that while feeds necessary to produce butter and eggs have advanced 70 per cent. to 170 per cent., many running around 125 and 150 per cent., the products themselves have advanced 80 to 87 per cent. Eggs, the production of which requires grains such as wheat, oats, barley, etc., are not, comparatively speaking, produced at anything like the profit to-day as was the case in 1914. They actually sell cheap. Moreover, let us state that the man who thinks hens lay eggs on grass alone never was a successful poultryman.

Let us look also at the price of meat. Choice cattle brought \$8.35 to \$8.65 the last week of May, 1914; they sold for \$11.75 to \$12, and a few baby beefs up to \$13 the same week this year. This is an increase of 40 per cent. Milk cows were \$60 to \$115 in 1914, and they were \$100 to \$125 in 1917—very little increase. Choice calves were \$9.50 to \$10.50 in 1914 and \$13 to \$14.50 in 1917, representing an increase of 36 per cent. Yearling lambs were \$8.50 to \$9.50 in 1914 and \$14.50 to \$16 in 1917, an increase of about 73 per cent. Hogs were \$8.40 in 1914 and \$17 to \$17.15 in 1917, or an increase of slightly over 100 per cent.

These figures will bear study. According to the increase in price of feeding stuffs beef was cheaper the last of May, 1917, than the same time in 1914, or, in other words, the producer did not make as big a profit on feed consumed. Yearling lambs were fed on the same basis. Choice veal has increased in price less than any other meat, while hogs have practically doubled. But the heavier grains necessary to hog feeding advanced 155 to 170 per cent. Even oats, used when the pigs are young, went up 90 per cent., and shorts over 70 per cent.

The increased cost of labor is another factor. In the spring of 1914 a man who could drive a team could

be hired for \$1 to \$1.25 per day and board. This spring such men got \$2 and more per day and board.

Note also that wheat shows the biggest price percentage increase of feeds quoted, or of finished products on the market. That is partly (no small part) the work of the speculator. There is also a world shortage. The farmer sold his wheat at \$1.40. He is compelled to buy his shorts at a 70 per cent. increase over normal value, and his flour at from 300 to 400 per cent. above normal market price. Assuming \$1 a normal price for wheat, he got a 40 per cent. increase for his crop. He and the consumer, however, are paying dearly for feed and flour.

These percentage increases reveal also the scarcity or demand, or both, for barley. Barley showed an increase in price of 155 per cent., next to wheat. Probably brewing has made feed dearer for the farmer.

Surely no one would suggest that the farmer was getting too high prices for his products in May, 1914. Taking prices then for feed and for finished farm products, prices of meat, milk, butter and eggs are not too high. We did not go into the price of milk; suffice it to say that the advance has not been sufficient to make dairying more profitable than it formerly was. Good, wholesome milk is about the cheapest article of diet on the Canadian market to-day. Remember then that so long as feed is abnormally high and labor increasingly scarce and expensive, so long must prices remain high, but so far the farmer has not had large profits nor can he make them with feeds and labor at such prices.

These are arguments in favor of stopping food speculation. These arguments are for the farmer and consumer. These are enlightening figures for the latter. The figures are from our own Toronto market reports.

A Spy System.

In talking with the representative of a big American iron works company with Canadian branches a short time ago, we were rather surprised to hear how they secure what he called their "best" labor. We were not surprised at the source of that labor viz. the farm and rural districts, but the secret system of inducing the men cityward was news to us. According to this man, agents in the employ of the company in the United States are sent to the rural districts to look up likely men. It is their duty in casual conversation with farmers' sons and hired men to talk up the work and wages of the company, to make the most of city advantages and country disadvantages, to make farm or rural work of any kind appear hard drudgery at small pay with little chance for recreation, to make the work of the company look light with short days and long hours of fun at night. In some instances these agents hire in the community where men wanted are working. They stay the summer months, they live and converse with the workingmen. By fall they are all ready to go with the agent to the city to get a job with his company. Of course they do not know the agent is in the employ of any company. He is simply a hired man in whom they trust. And the agents like to get young married men with families or young men who are likely to marry because they are steady, and once in the city with its bustle and flare and movies, the men, and particularly their families will never return to the country. It sounds like a fairy tale and yet we have the man's word for its truth. Big manufacturing systems have a spy system for men and it takes men away from the country districts.

Not so very long ago at a meeting of town men with a few farmers in a Western Ontario city where all were interested in increasing production this year, one of the speakers, a manufacturer, in the course of his address mentioned the shortage of labor being experienced in his own factory and used these words: "In spite of our spy system." In spite of the spy system they were