



# FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



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Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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## The Truth About Sweet Clover as a Farm Crop

With Five Years Experience and 100 Acres in the Crop, Mr. G. A. Brodie is an Advocate of Sweet Clover

By F. E. ELLIS.

AT the recent Canadian National Exhibition a group of farmers who had gathered in one of the dairy cattle barns, got into a somewhat heated discussion as to the merits of sweet clover as a farm crop. The most of the disputants held strong opinions pro and con, but were decidedly short on experience. "Well, I am going to follow Dr. Maite up at Ottawa," said one decidedly. "He says that sweet clover is a dangerous weed, and I guess he should know. I am not going to fool with the crop."

"Have you ever grown it?" asked group's chief advocate of sweet clover.

"No," admitted Speaker No. 1.

"Well, I have grown a little and I know that so far it is good."

Then the Halton county man spoke up. "Their experience up at Guelph isn't very satisfactory," said he. "Mr. Whiteside, the foreman of Prof. Zavitz's experimental plots, you know, tells me that he is in somewhat of a quandary to form an opinion on sweet clover. The crop grows all right with him, but according to Mr. Whiteside's story it is almost impossible to cut it without killing the plants. At Guelph this spring they cut different crops of sweet clover at different dates and at different heights, and all of it is so dead now that any plant can be lifted out by the roots with two fingers."

"Perhaps they didn't have the right variety of clover," suggested the sweet clover advocate.

"I asked Mr. Whiteside about that," replied the Halton county man, "and he assured me that they had several varieties, both white and yellow, and that all had been killed in cutting." Then he closed with a very practical suggestion intended principally for the writer as the only representative of the farm press on hand. "Why can't our farm papers give us some real leading on this question?" he said. "Surely there are farmers in the province with experience enough to give a definite answer to the question, 'Is sweet clover a desirable farm crop?'"

Information is Lacking.

I mention this discussion on the fair grounds at Toronto because it is so representative of many discussions regarding sweet clover that I have heard in all parts of the province. Everywhere farmers are interested in the new crop, and everywhere there is the same lack of information as to its real value. Some farmers have grown sweet clover and condemned it. Others, after one or two years' experience, speak of the crop in terms of highest praise. Our agricultural colleges and experimental farms, however, to which we have been accustomed to look for leading when such problems arise, have sounded a very uncertain note. At first the tendency was to utterly condemn the crop. Later, when the public demand for further information made fuller investigations necessary, our public investigators became less

decided in their condemnation of sweet clover. They admitted that cattle would eat it, even that they seemed to like it, although formerly they had pronounced it as distasteful to all kinds of farm stock. Even yet, however, our agricultural authorities have not spoken with any clear voice on the matter. A week or so ago, therefore, when I had an opportunity of visiting one of the most extensive growers of sweet clover in Ontario, along with J. W. Sangster, a York county farmer, and a couple of other agricultural journalists like myself, I was quick to signify my intention of going along. We spent the day with Mr. G. A. Brodie on his farm at Newmarket, 28 miles north of Toronto, and from Mr. Brodie we learned much of the value of sweet clover. But before we tell of Mr. Brodie's experiences with sweet clover it will be well to introduce Mr. Brodie himself—if he needs an introduction.

Mr. Brodie is a gold medalist graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College. He left that institution about the year 1890, and the fact that he carried away the gold medal is all the proof that is needed that he was the best man in his year. Unlike the majority of agricultural graduates who leave the college with honors, however, Mr. Brodie did not accept an official position, but went back to the farm. Since then he has made a name for himself as an importer and breeder of Clydesdale horses, Shorthorn cattle and Shetland ponies. Perhaps he did his best work as a grower of select varieties of seed grains and of Grimm's

and Ontario Variegated alfalfa. When the good farms competitions were instituted in the province, Mr. Brodie entered his farm, and on it secured a gold medal. He is not a plunger, but a safe, conservative farmer who experiments carefully before going extensively into any crop. Five years ago he began to experiment with sweet clover. Each year he has enlarged his acreage until now he has 100 acres of sweet clover scattered over his three farms. His testimony, therefore, is of value to all who are considering sweet clover as a farm crop.

Sweet Clover as a Pasture Crop.

We found Mr. Brodie mounted on the corn binder, cutting a crop that should yield 18 to 20 tons of green corn to the acre. It was one of the best crops of corn we have seen this year. "Way are you such a strong advocate of yellow sweet clover?" we asked Mr. Brodie when the corn binder had been turned over to the hired man.

"Come, and I will show you," said the gold medal farmer, as he led the way down the lane to where a herd of 25 or more dairy Shorthorns were pasturing. "In that pasture field," said he, "there are 22 acres, all of it in sweet clover, seeded a year ago last spring. We have had 25 head of cattle, practically all mature, pasturing it through the whole season. You will notice that they have the run of some good natural pasture as well. Pasturing on the sweet clover, they will produce more milk than on any other kind of pasture with which we have had experience. Here is an instance: One bunch of cows was producing four cans of milk on sweet clover pasture. We turned them from the sweet clover on to the very best of natural grass pasture, which is supposed everywhere to be the very best pasture for milk production. Instead of increasing their flow, however, this bunch of cows had in three days decreased from four to three cans of milk and stayed at the three cans. We turned them back to the sweet clover, and in another three days we were again getting our four cans of milk."

"Yes, this pasture does look rather hard and barren now," replied Mr. Brodie in answer to a question, "but right up to the present the cows have had all they could eat from it. Even yet there is quite a bit of plecting on it. From this date forward, however, I believe, sweet clover pasture will have to be supplemented."

Nearer the buildings, Mr. Brodie had a small field of nine acres, also in sweet clover seeded a year ago last spring. He has had 12 head of young cattle running on this nine acres all summer, except for one week in June, when they were taken off to enable Mr. Brodie to cut a very good crop of hay from the field. The cattle, when we saw them, were in prime condition. Still further justification for their owner's belief that sweet clover is the best of all pasture crops. "It has

### The Truth About Sweet Clover

Is sweet clover deserving of an important place among the farm crops of Canada? Here is a question on which authorities differ. Practical farmers are as far from reaching any unanimous conclusion as are our agricultural advisers. Some regard the crop as a weed. Others are outspoken in their belief that it is of the most valuable of the clovers. How are these conflicting statements to be reconciled?

Only by the acid test of experience can the value of sweet clover be determined. In this issue of Farm and Dairy the experience of Mr. G. A. Brodie is reviewed. Hundreds of others of Our Folks have had more or less experience with the crop. Why not write Farm and Dairy your impressions as to the value of the sweet clover? We would like to know and your experience would be of value to thousands of our readers who are open for more information on the subject. We would all like to know the truth about sweet clover.