

Founded 1886

Dates to Sow Clovers

The entire West, and particularly Saskatchewan, has developed a lively interest in clovers and alfalfa. Many who had not formerly given these crops much consideration have busied themselves seeking information this spring. Difficulty in procuring seed and lack of suitable soil on which to sow have been matters of worry in some instances. Anxiety as to the latest date on which these seeds may be sown exists in not a few cases. With the object of obtaining reliable information on this point THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE wrote to several who are in position to give advice. The replies indicate that if the soil is in fair condition and weather conditions normal clovers and alfalfa can be sown in Western Canada without nurse crop any time before July 1. Some have had success from seeding as late as July 12 or 15, or even later.

James Murray, superintendent of the Brandon Experiment Farm, writes: "When the clover is grown without a nurse crop I believe the seeding could be done as late as the middle of July, but when a nurse crop is used the seeding should not be later than June 1. Alfalfa is always grown without a nurse crop in this climate. It is a mistake to sow early in the spring, as soon as the soil can be got ready, as the young alfalfa plants are very tender. Last year we sowed some alfalfa as late as the middle of July, and in spite of the dry weather we got a fairly good catch. I consider the middle of May, or the end of June, the most satisfactory times to sow alfalfa."

Angus Mackay, of the Indian Head Farm, says: "In the past we have had best success sowing grass or clovers late in May and first week in June. This year the season is so early I think it will be advisable to sow about May 15, provided there is rain by that time. A nurse crop should not be sown with clovers or alfalfa; there is not enough moisture in August for the two crops and the clovers are sure to suffer. In addition to want of moisture clovers should be cut once or twice in the season to cause root growth, and this cannot be done with a nurse crop. Alfalfa sown on June 1 last year promises the best crop."

W. H. Fairfield, of the Lethbridge Experimental Farm, advises as follows: "We have not yet had an opportunity here to carry out a test to determine the relative merits of early and late seeding. From my experience and observations in the district I have been led to believe that from about May 15 to 20 is the safest time to sow alfalfa and clover. By sowing at this time one is pretty certain of getting sufficient wet weather to germinate all the seed well. I have known the seed to be planted as late as June 10 or 15 with good results, but one is taking serious chances on not having sufficient wet weather to bring all of the plants up, so I would consider June 10 the very latest date that it would be safe to sow the seed and still have reasonable chances of having a successful crop in Southern Alberta."

"I would not recommend very early seeding, even if the land is in condition, owing to the fact that frost may injure the young plants if they come up too early. Another advantage is gained by later seeding owing to the fact that an opportunity is given to disc the land after weeds have germinated, thus leaving it in a cleaner and better condition to receive the alfalfa or clover seeds."

These suggestions are worthy of consideration by farmers in each of the prairie provinces. We would like to hear from individual farmers as to date of sowing in their localities.

How to Grow Alfalfa

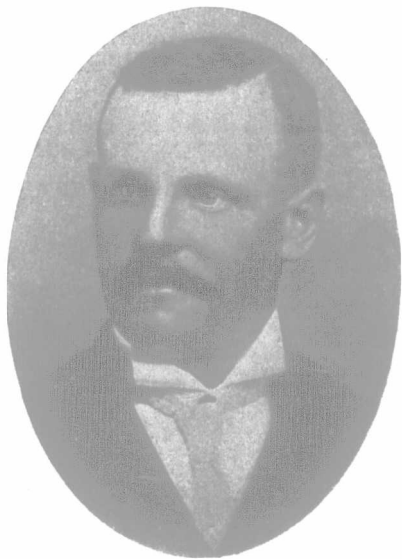
EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Spring is now well advanced and no doubt many of your readers, especially in the province of Saskatchewan, will have decided to grow a plot of alfalfa as a beginning for the competition for the best ten acres of this legume, that we are looking forward to in the year 1914.

As I believe I was the first person to suggest that prizes be given for the best fields of alfalfa, and the competition is now so well known I will show us that alfalfa requires inoculation.

Get about 15 pounds of seed for each acre of give what I consider the most satisfactory way to grow this crop. I do not want people to think that I know everything about growing alfalfa. I have been growing it only for a few years but have made a fair success of it. However, we all must have our learning, and the best way to learn is by growing it. Now, I would suggest to every reader of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, to start with a small plot this year. Each farmer surely has a piece of land suitable for a trial plot. I would suggest taking a piece of land that has been in potatoes or a corner of your summer-fallow. Be careful to select a plot that you think will hold considerable snow in the winter, and still be free from surface water for any length of time in the spring. If such land is not available then manure a piece of stubble land well. Get rid of straw by burning and plow it deep, and work thoroughly. Do not be in a hurry to sow it but wait until the weeds are started and kill by surface cultivation.

By all means the most important point is to secure a bag full of soil from an old alfalfa field, for each acre sown, and scatter it over the land. If I remember rightly an article appeared in THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE a short time ago from one of the experimental farms, and I believe the uninoculated plot yielded under 3,000 pounds of hay per acre, while the inoculated plot yielded over 7,000 pounds. This is evidence enough to



PHILIP LEECH, ALFALFA ENTHUSIAST.

some hardy variety, that is, seed grown in a northern climate. You can sow it any way you see fit, but most people will be obliged to broadcast it by hand, and by being a little careful you can get it evenly distributed. Now, should weed seeds appear I would clip it off with the mower, but be very careful not to clip it too close. If there are very few weeds I would suggest that you hand-pull them. If a very rank growth of alfalfa results it might be better to cut it, but I would not cut it late if it is not strong and vigorous. It is better to leave it as it will require to get well started to hold snow in the spring.

I sowed alfalfa on well-prepared land in end of June last and cut a very heavy crop last day of August. At present it is slightly winter-killed in places, perhaps because the snow went so early. It started to grow and then the temperature dropped to zero, killing it slightly in places. To find out all this we must grow it; we must study it and try to learn all we can.

Hardier alfalfa plants will be found, and I do believe that alfalfa will be grown here just as easy as wheat is to-day. Once we get it established it will mean more live stock kept on our farms; more live stock means better farming and better farming more prosperity and better times.

PHILIP LEECH.

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A Manitoba farmer who grows grasses in preference to summer-fallowing writes that during recent dry windy days he has had the satisfaction of seeing no drifting or blowing on his timothy land, while neighbors' well worked fallows were all blowing away.

DAIRY

Seventy Pounds of Milk Per Day

In this busy age when Canada is making a name for herself with big things, water-powers, timber limits, railroads, real estate deals and so on, it is perhaps as well to remind ourselves that the ordinary farm operations occasionally show very big things. We hear now and then of poor cows and low yields of milk, so we need constantly to bear in mind that huge things are accomplished by the proper combination of the brainy dairyman, good feed and the selected cow. We have plenty of good cows in Canada, some that give 10,000, 15,000 and 20,000 pounds milk in a year. One or two big records were made in March by excellent cows, one lot of six in one herd giving a total yield of 9,388 pounds milk, and some giving as much as seventy pounds of milk in one day. Think of it! Enough to supply the needs of 56 ordinary people at the rate of one pint each. Such cows are not picked up every day; they are not average cows, but they are an indication of what is being accomplished by brain work, applied intelligence in dairying. We need to realize that it is perfectly feasible to do a good deal more raising, not only the much needed raising of the general standard of the average cow so that the 3,000 pounder is no longer "in our midst," but the raising of a good many more cows of at least the 10,000-pound type. Dairy records, of milk produced and feed consumed, will soon show which cow in the stable of the dairyman is not worth keeping, and which will respond to more liberal feeding so as to produce milk in abundance. Cow-testing associations will help every dairyman to success. Join the nearest to you or assist in forming a new one.

C. F. W.

Feeding Dairy Cow in Calf

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I note what your correspondent, Mr. Hubbard, says regarding ration for a cow carrying a calf. Perhaps I am not well enough informed along that line to give a proper ration. There are many things entering into the changing of the percentage of butter-fat in a milking cow, and yet feed does not change the fat percentage of a cow once she begins milking. The power of giving a certain and fixed per cent. seems to be born with the calf, as far as food is concerned, or rather in the conception and development of the young, and it is thought that a proper ration fed such a cow must and does increase the secretory fat producing power of the calf, but exactly what ration to feed is not very well understood. It is an established fact that a calf fed all the protein food it can assimilate, and just enough of carbohydrate food to keep it in a healthy condition, that calf will build up a machine that will consume and assimilate large quantities of food, returning the product in milk instead of laying on fat. At the same time if the food were reversed and fat producing food fed the calf would build up a fat producing system. Hence there must be an influence in proper feeding at and before the beginning of the calf life. Two factors enter into the beginning of that life—the male and the female. The feeding, condition and handling of the male and female for an indefinite period prior to copulation must be considered and practiced along the lines of dairying to develop the best dairy calf that that pair can produce. The food of a dairy-developing calf must be the food of the pair to be used long before conception takes place. In fact, it is quite an accepted theory that the elements of a new life are born into the parents. If so, it is well to begin a generation or two ahead of time. Feed is only one factor entering the consideration. Many other factors, quiet, contentment, kind treatment and every environment that goes to increase the percentage of butter-fat at the milking hour must be put into effect at and before conception of both male and female, and during the period of the calf's evolution. All these things enter