

## FARM

*Comment upon farming operations invited.*

### Inoculating Soil for Alfalfa.

The New York (Geneva) Experiment Station published recently in abbreviated bulletin form their conclusions from considerable experimental work on the question of soil inoculation for alfalfa. The results do not favor seed inoculation by means of commercial nitro culture. In the tests eighteen farmers co-operated and reported the result. Each farmer sent to the Station a portion of the seed he intended to sow. These samples were inoculated by soaking in pure cultures of the alfalfa bacteria grown in the Station laboratory and apparently well stocked with vigorous germs. After drying, the seed was returned to its sender and soon sown in part of the field devoted to alfalfa. In all cases check plots were left, and in most cases the growers also used inoculated soil on other plots.

In only two of the eighteen experiments was there any apparent effect from the bacteria upon the inoculated seed, a disappointing and somewhat surprising result.

In farm practice, then, it seems safest to depend on the use of 150 to 300 pounds to the acre of soil from a successful alfalfa field in order to secure the desired bacterial inoculation. Without this inoculation the chances are 4 or 5 to 1 against success, while with it 70 per cent. of the fields gave satisfactory crops. At present, no method of seed inoculation can be recommended.

### Fitting Sheep for the Fairs.

As the show season will soon be here the following advice on fitting sheep for the ring, from Professor Curtiss of Iowa State College, is especially timely:

"Sheep should have good individual excellence of else will fail. Whether the animals to be shown are lambs or older sheep the methods are the same. Lambs will begin eating grain at about a week or ten days, at which time they should have a creep and a feed trough to themselves in which they may have access to a grain ration in the most tempting form. For this purpose a ration consisting of equal parts of wheat, bran and oats, with a little oilmeal added to it, will be found very satisfactory. In addition to the grain ration and the best quantity of hay, clover or alfalfa if it is on hand, it is necessary to provide variety of green feed for the show sheep throughout the season in the most acceptable form.

"There is usually no trouble about a supply of green feed early in the season, while the clover crop is at its best. Following this, a succession of peas, oats, rape, alfalfa, clover aftermath and cabbage should be provided. The kinds of green feed to be used will vary with the locality. The root crops is the most important adjunct. In the northern latitudes the rutabagas or Swede turnips are most acceptable of all root crops.

"During the latter part of the season ground peas should be added to the grain ration as they constitute an excellent feed for finishing sheep in show form with prime quality of flesh. Cracked wheat may also be so used with excellent results. A ration consisting of equal parts of bran, oats, cracked

wheat and ground peas will be found excellent for finishing show sheep. Oilmeal may be used during the early part of the feeding period, but it should be used very sparingly if at all in the finish, as it has a tendency to make soft flesh. For show lambs no single feed will promote growth and development as well as milk, and, like oilmeal, it may be used to the best advantage during the early stages of the feeding. Toward the close the milk may be largely or wholly replaced by grain.

"During the summer months it is very important that show sheep should have cool, clean, well ventilated quarters. These quarters should be bedded with dry, clean straw and the sheep kept absolutely quiet and free from disturbance. They should have the run of a good-sized paddock morning and evening and may be left out in a grass lot all night until the show season approaches. Exercise is another essential to the sheep that are being fitted for the show ring."

### The Amusement Feature at Fairs.

Moralists and would-be moralists at this season of the year generally manage to get in a word somewhere or another about the amusement features of the agricultural fairs, of the wanton immorality of some of the attractions which exhibition managers put on their programs as a drawing card for the public, or the viciousness of some types of the side shows, so-called, that are permitted within the exhibition grounds, and are licensed by the exhibition management to bamboozle its patrons. We haven't heard very much about these matters, at least no serious jolt, since Mr. Clendinning's articles were printed a few months ago. Criticisms on this score, however, are not generally offered before the fairs begin, but if the vicious element at certain fairs is too prominent, some reference is likely to be made in the public press to the matter at the time, to be entirely forgotten before the exhibition season of the next year rolls around.

Side shows and amusement features, the circus element as some call it, have been roundly denounced at some time or another by nearly every paper in this country. Preachers have harangued about them from the pulpits, moralists have raved about such things so long and so eloquently, that it is scarcely safe, and certainly not in fashion to express anything but disapproval of such things. But all the same there is not an agricultural show in this country, on the continent or for that matter in the world, that can exist now-a-days without sensational attractions. Not sensational perhaps as attractions go at some of our fairs, but attractions that are separate and entirely distinct from the true function of an agricultural exhibition. We mean of course such things as horse racing, double somersaulting in an automobile, airship competitions, high diving, high kicking, acrobatic performances, pantomime, etc., which as our shows are run now-a-days are as essential to an exhibition's success, as live-stock and farm products, as the bulls, boars and big potatoes are. Gate money is what most fairs in this country have got to have, and since the people who would visit a show to be instructed by inspecting the live-stock and other exhibits are so limited, and as a class contribute very little at the gate anyway, means must be provided to attract the patronage of the public at large, to whom a demonstration in judging on a class of rams or on a bunch of cows is of mighty little interest. It was to gain the support of this class of the community to the fairs that special attractions

were first put on. From the developments which have been made in attraction features in recent years it would appear that this class of the public has largely increased.

There is a lot of nonsense and twaddle talked and written about agricultural shows. Whatever the function of live-stock and agricultural shows was at the outset they have developed into amusement places for the public at large, and places for advertising his stock and products for the breeder and farmer. They may have been educational institutions at some time but they are educational in a very small way only now-a-days. And after all, have not the educational features of shows been over done, not overdone in practice, but in the emphasis which have been placed on this part of the fairs' work by institute lectures, expert judges, harangues in the public press and such like? Some would have us believe that a man can sit around a bull ring all day, watching the judging and storing his mind with useful information. The fact of the matter is that the average man in such a situation will soon become insufferably bored. His technical knowledge of judging may or may not be sufficient to follow the details of the work in the ring, at any rate he becomes tired of the monotony of the judging and seeks amusement elsewhere. Ninety per cent. of the fair visitors are people of this class, and it is in proportion to the activity of the directors in promoting extra attractions to amuse this percentage of their visitors that the success of the fair is measured. The public nowadays is patronizing fairs for amusement first and instruction, if any is to be given, afterwards. The public tendency to favor amusements and to taboo the educational features is to be deplored all right but it's too general and pronounced to be ignored by enterprising show managers who want to see their exhibitions attain to success.

If the public wants amusement the average fair has either got to dish up amusement features on its program or go out of business. The trouble is that there is a difference of opinion as to what kind of amusement the good natured public really wants. Some fair managers seem to have decided that it's questionable side shows, hootchy cootchy dances, low class vaudeville, etc., They have hearkened only to the depraved element about them. Others have the notion that it's horse racing with the bookies handy to take wagers on the nags, that interests the fairs' open handed patrons. From our own experience with fairs in this country, in Ontario and the old land we are going to set forth some of the features which we deem have a proper place in any exhibition's program. Some of these may not be applicable here but they may suggest features that would be.

In the first place we would cut out side shows of all kinds. The great mass of the public doesn't want to inspect the big footed man or the four legged woman, hasn't time to waste on snake charmers wild men from Borneo, cheap vaudeville shows and dancers in feather weight apparel. The society that sells space on its grounds to accommodate such outfits shouldn't be drawing grants from the public treasury. Similarly gambling devices of all kinds should not only be kept off the grounds but the directors of the society should see to it that the town authorities attend to their duties and keep such concerns outside the corporation. An agricultural society should sell the privilege of its grounds only for refreshment booths and such forms of innocent amusement as delights children, merry go rounds, etc. The amusement features for adults should take place before the grand stand, if there is one, in the



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