

CROP ROTATIONS FOR THE DRY FARMING DISTRICTS OF CANADA

BY

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That certain crops do better when following after certain other crops, has long been known, but farm practices, especially in a country where the soil is very fertile, seldom keep pace with knowledge in these matters. Conditions on the prairies have been such as to obviate, in some measure, the need for careful agricultural methods, but as our country grows older it becomes demonstrated more and more that practices, profitable in the early days of settlement, are not going to prove profitable in the time to come. Attention for the past few years has therefore been turned to the introduction and study of methods of crop production that will not only give larger returns for the capital and labour involved but will at the same time conserve soil fertility in such a way as to establish a permanent system of agriculture.

The problems that confront the farmer in the dry-farming districts of Canada are, of course, quite different from those which require his attention in the East. While, in the Prairie Provinces the revenue from grain growing will for a time be the chief source of income to the great majority of settlers, the need for a greater diversity of crops is becoming more urgent year after year. Mixed farming must be the ultimate goal, but whether grain growing or the production of crops suitable for the maintenance of live stock be the aim, the first great essential in any system of agriculture that may be evolved is a suitable rotation of crops.

The Dominion Experimental Farms have for a number of years past been paying special attention to the value of rotations in crop production. To meet present needs in connection with the growing of cereals some purely grain production rotations are being tested, and in anticipation of the requirements of the future, forage crops for live stock are being introduced in various combinations and in gradually increasing proportions.

Below is a description of the rotations that are now being tested.

GRAIN FARMING ROTATIONS.

ROTATION "A" (GRAIN CONTINUOUSLY).

Continuous cropping to grain may for a time produce very good profits. It is not a practice to be recommended, however, for yields show a gradual falling off, as the method is both exhaustive of fertility and moisture and ineffective in the control of noxious weeds.

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