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FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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EDITORIAL

Early Seeding

Extremely spring-like weather in the middle of March is an unusual condition in the Canadian West. However, such is the case in 1910. So prolonged has been the mildness that farmers on high, light land in various parts of the three prairie provinces are induced to begin seeding operations.

"Get your seed in early" is a popular slogan. It is, as a general rule, sound advice; but like any other good thing it can be overdone. The man who completes his seeding early usually has better crops than the neighbor who wastes valuable time and does not get the seed all in until June. But the sowing of valuable seed in Western Canada in March is a different proposition. Under certain conditions it may be advisable. If the weather continues mild long enough to induce germination of the seed and a cold spell follows, however, the folly of such practice will be only too much in evidence, unless a very propitious snow fall accompanies the drop in temperature and protects the tender plantlets. In any event the crop is very likely to receive a setback that will reduce the yield and not at all be conducive to early maturity.

However, the fact that considerable risk attends the sowing of the seed does not mean that no one should go on the fields. Harrows always should be used as early as possible in order to break the surface crust and form a fine mulch on the top to conserve the moisture that has soaked in since last season's crop was removed. In most cases the best plan is to expend energies thoroughly preparing the seed bed. If the surface is stirred a greater proportion of the precipitation of the

near future will be absorbed, and there is little danger of there being any ground for considering that early surface cultivation is energy wasted.

It sounds nice to have your name jotted down as being among the first in a district to have seed in the ground. However, the man who waits at least until April to undertake this part of his farming operations usually is as far ahead as the one who starts earlier.

Size and Quantity of Seed

The sowing of grain crops as discussed by the average farmer entails the scattering of a certain quantity per acre regardless of the size of the kernels. Even the experimental farms send out a certain number of pounds with general instructions to sow on a certain area. All varieties of the same crop are put on the same area without any regard to the size of the kernels characteristic of that variety or of the sample.

When time is taken to consider intelligently the matter of seeding, the wisdom of regulating the quantity per acre according to the size of the kernel is plainly apparent. Some effort should be made to control the number of wheat, oat or barley plants on a given area, just as the gardener controls the number of cabbages, cauliflowers or tomatoes in his patch.

It does not require much argument to convince those who are acquainted with cereal varieties that the practice of sowing the same quantities of Preston as Red Fife wheat, of Abundance as Joannette oats, or of two-rowed as six-rowed barley is not rational. Since Preston wheat, Abundance oats and two-rowed barleys, generally speaking, are larger than the other varieties mentioned, it is only reasonable to conclude that the seed must be applied in greater quantities per acre in order to have an equal number of plants to a given area. The same arguments hold good in regard to large or small samples of the same variety.

Whether you believe in thick seeding or not be consistent and make the quantity conform to the size of the kernels.

The Wheat Situation

Wheat, after two months' bombardment by bulls and bears, is practically unchanged in price, and is entering the spring season with about as much strength as it entered the new year. The present season has been a remarkable one in many ways. Wheat started out last fall with a good show of strength, apparently too much strength for after harvest, and holders have been hanging on and trying to realize on their expectations ever since.

At present, after running without much movement all winter, wheat seems a little on the

upturn; that is to say, it should go up a little, if half of what the bull faction is saying is true. Apparently the American winter crop is somewhat damaged, and the southwest is unlikely to reap as much wheat in 1910 as it did in 1909. That is all the bulls have to figure on just yet, but in a few weeks something definite ought to be known of the European situation. The crop reports from there now circulating are two or three months old, and refer to conditions before winter set in. After conditions there are figured out and we have the spring wheat area of North America to figure on there may be some movement to wheat, and if European conditions are unchanged and good seeding weather falls to the spring wheat country, it is probable the cereal will go lower; but for the present, according to all the rules of the game, wheat during the next few weeks ought to be some stronger, and if it does advance, it will probably pay to sell. It has not paid yet this season to hold, and as there are a few million bushels still in producers' hands in the West the market situation for the next month or so should be carefully watched. There is a lot of bear material coming into sight, and wheat cannot stand a tremendous lot of bear influence just now.

Mexican Demand for Alberta Red

No question at the present time is of greater importance to the Alberta husbandman than the west as an outlet for Alberta's products. The province, situated as it is, will have to face high freight charges as long as her products are shipped eastward. Until this difficulty is overcome it will be impossible to compete with other grain raising districts on the American continent. Alberta is a province of profitable crop yields, but it is not business to depend upon these yields to make up a vast difference in freight, if Alberta lands are to compete with other grain raising districts.

The fact that not ten per cent. of last year's crop exported from Alberta went eastward, and this in the face of poor storage facilities on the western coast, should be considered as of some importance for the betterment of conditions. It has been stated recently that during the past ten months 200,000 bushels of wheat have been shipped to Mexican ports through Vancouver, and that many more bushels would have gone south had it been possible to obtain the wheat. Quite a trade is being worked up with Mexico, and while it is doubtless a permanent market it is quoted by some to be uncertain and fluctuating. The government of that country has placed a duty on foreign wheat, which duty is maintained only so long each year as the home product fills the requirements of the country, after which foreign grains enter free. However, during the eighteen months from December,