

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine.

PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED

ESTABLISHED 1866

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

VOL. XXXIX.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., SEPTEMBER 15, 1904.

No. 625

EDITORIAL.

Save Your Own Seed Corn.

We remember hearing a Farmers' Institute speaker at a meeting last winter say: "If you want seed corn that will be sure to grow, save your own." To that sound advice we would add, if you want to know what variety of corn you are planting, save your own seed. It is very important to grow a sort that has shown itself suited to your farm conditions and your purposes. To very many this year such advice will be of no use, as they have no corn from which seed may be saved, their whole crop having been lost through planting seed that would not grow. On so many farms may be seen a field of Hungarian grass or millet, with a thin scattering of corn-stalks intermixed—the season's history plainly written. The loss has been great. True, a crop of millet is not to be despised, it is very much better than nothing, but it is a poor substitute for corn. With a very little care and labor this heavy loss might have been entirely prevented. Many have so prevented it. We know farmers whose seed grew as well this season as usual; whose seed always grows. Why should not everybody be like these fortunate few? There is no reason whatever.

In saving corn for seed, the first business is selection. The heaviest, longest, best-filled and best-ripened ears should, of course, be chosen. Imperfections, such as empty spaces, not being filled to the point, or the presence of a single grain of smut, should be cause sufficient for rejection. When corn is husked, it is very easy to pick out the best ears without loss of time, but when the whole crop is put into the silo, as is the rapidly increasing custom, selection can be made a day or two before the corn is cut. Let a man go through the corn, two rows at a time, and take out the best, having regard not only to the ear, but also to the stalk on which it grows. As to the benefits arising from such selection, we would refer our readers to the article by Mr. Newman in our last week's issue. Unless the corn is very ripe indeed, the ears should not be broken off, as that causes the grain to shrink, but the stalks should be cut, carried to some open place and shocked. Shocks should be small, so that mould may not form and rot the cob and kill the germ of the grain before it is husked. A half day spent in this way would be more than sufficient for all that an ordinary farmer would need. One hundred ears will plant about three acres. Allowance must be made for a considerable percentage of ears rejected on husking.

After selection comes the care, so that seed may not lose its vitality. Just two things are necessary—dry thoroughly and keep thoroughly dry. Any system by which these conditions are attained will ensure strong-growing seed. But, objects some one, how is it that corn may be kept in a certain way and grow all right nine years out of ten, and in the tenth fail utterly? We reply that conditions were not observed. We remember a case where seed corn for years had been kept hung high up in the granary, until one season, after a hard winter, it had to be replanted. There is no doubt there had been some grain stored there giving off a little moisture, which, combined with the severe cold, killed the seed germ. Most of us will have noticed that it is after an unusually cold winter that there is trouble with seed corn. Crib corn will grow some years, but not after a cold winter. To the

advice given above—"dry and keep dry"—should perhaps be added, to be really safe, do not expose to the extreme severity of the winter. Two methods may be recommended which have been tested, and which may be changed or modified to suit. We assume that two or three husks are left on each ear, and that these are plaited together or tied with binder twine in bunches of ten or a dozen, so that they can be hung:

1. Hang up seed in kitchen used in summer, on hooks in the ceiling, or behind the stove. They will get thoroughly dry there before the stove is moved away in November. Leave hanging there until planting time. In many years' experience we have never known a case of failure, or even weak seed, where this plan was used.

2. Hang up over feed alley in dry barn basement. This plan was adopted by a farmer two years ago, in spite of many shakings of the head of wiseacres, but the seed grew well, both last year and this year. On a test last year, every grain sprouted. The reason probably was that while there must have been some dampness present, the temperature was scarcely ever down to the freezing point.

We have used the terms "weak seed" and "grew well." Is it possible for seed to grow and not grow well? We know that such is the case. We remember an article on this subject years ago in which the writer made the statement that seed corn dried by artificial heat, and kept as it ought to be through the winter, would after planting grow to a height of five inches by the time that ordinary good seed would be but three inches high. This is worth knowing if true. A good start means so much, and from what we have observed we believe it to be quite probable.

Grand Trunk Secures the Canada Atlantic.

After the ratification by Parliament of the agreement for the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway—Canada's new transcontinental line—the event of the year in Canadian commercial circles is the reported purchase of the Canada Atlantic road by the Grand Trunk. On the part of the latter, this is a master stroke. It gives the G. T. R. an immediate and commanding position in the transportation system of Canada, and when the Grand Trunk Pacific is completed its position will be indeed masterful. Beginning at Swanton, on Lake Champlain, the Canada Atlantic is a very direct and efficient road, through Montreal and Ottawa to Depot Harbor, on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. Depot Harbor is a splendid landing place for northern lake traffic from the West, and is the terminus of the shortest water line from Port Arthur and Fort William to Eastern Canada. The Canada Atlantic has been regarded as one of the most strategic lines of railway in Canada, and is doing a large carrying traffic already. Mr. C. J. Booth was its chief promoter, owner and president. Those who regard public ownership as the solution of the transportation troubles of the country have urged its purchase by the Government, in order to give the Intercolonial a complete and efficient western extension to the great upper lakes, and securing to the country a more controlling grip on the freight situation.

Since the Government has set aside some \$250,000 to complete the surveys and determine the cost of the proposed Georgian Bay canal, that may yet be the favored project to retain a check upon the transportation situation. This

scheme provides for a ship canal via French River (which empties into Georgian Bay a short distance north of Depot Harbor) and Lake Nipissing to the Ottawa River, on which the products of the West would proceed to Montreal.

Letters to a Young Farmer.

You ask me the question: "Can sheep be profitably kept with cattle and other stock on the average one-hundred-acre farm, and about how many, under a system of mixed farming?" There are few farms, in Ontario, at least, on which we believe a small flock may not, by reasonably good management, be profitably kept along with the other ordinary stock generally found on farms in this country. Dry, rolling and well-drained land is best adapted for sheep, and a hilly farm or the hilly parts of a farm may be more profitably utilized with sheep than with any other stock, and while a small flock may be made to pay well on a small farm, the chances are that sheep will yield more profit relatively on a larger acreage, where there is more range and where occasional change of pasture can be given them. In this respect they differ not widely from other stock, for a change, if it be not from bad to worse pasturage, is relished by animals of any class. The objection sometimes advanced by those who make a specialty of dairying, or of fattening cattle by grazing, that sheep bite closely and keep the pasturage too short for cattle, has less foundation in the case of a cultivated farm on which a system of crop rotation is followed than on the Western ranges, where the bunch or buffalo grass is generally short and thin and a very wide range is a necessity. Sheep have no fondness for knee-high pasturage, but prefer the short, sweet nibble, and will leave the long grass to the cattle, while they trim the fence corners and hillsides, eating many weeds which other stock would discard, and thus performing the triple duties of cleaning the farm and growing flesh and wool, in two of which they have the advantage over cattle or other stock. Besides this, they have the advantage of distributing their droppings more evenly over the land than other stock, making them better manure-spreaders, and there is no more fertilizing manure than that made by sheep. It is this quality which has made sheep so popular with the general farmer in England, where the system of hurdling them on green feed, such as vetches, rape and turnips, is practiced, the land being thus manured for following grain crops, while mutton and wool are being rapidly grown. The winter care of sheep is less expensive in labor and feed than that of other stock, as a very plain building serves for their shelter, their fleece protecting them, so that a warm stable would be harmful, unless exceptionally well ventilated. As long as they are dry they are comfortable in the coldest weather. There is no need of cleaning out their pens more than twice in a winter, and where clover hay is provided that is almost sufficient for their winter's supply of feed, though for best results roots should be provided, and in the lambing season a light ration of grain given.

As to the number that may be kept on a farm of one hundred acres, of course much will depend upon the number of other stock kept, but, as a rule, we should say that where dairying is not made a specialty, and not more than eight or ten cows are kept with the average number of young cattle, a flock of fifteen or twenty ewes might be maintained, together with their lambs, in summer, and, say, eight or ten of the best of their ewe lambs in winter, the rest of the increase being