

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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Agents for "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal," Winnipeg, Man.

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ence with the Director. Or, the Veterinary Director-General might require facilities to determine some point in relation to the health of animals. Or the Seed Branch should be getting busy promoting the introduction of fodder crops like alfalfa; by means that have never been undertaken yet. And is it not possible to have the enormous but somewhat promiscuous distribution of seed grains, etc., from the Experimental Farm reorganized upon more specific and helpful lines? What seems needed, then, is to co-ordinate the staff. To effect an adequate rearrangement in divisions or branches would mean raising and equalizing the status of a number of very capable men in the inside service, and lessen somewhat the pressure of executive duties upon Director Grisdale by placing a little more upon the Deputy Minister and the heads of the various divisions or branches already referred to, that would number probably ten or a dozen. Increasing their responsibilities and status would doubtless have a stimulating effect upon their activities. The existing system has served a useful purpose, but has outgrown efficiency, and now is the time to begin building upon broader and better foundations.

In many sections of the country good seed grain promises to be very scarce next spring. Would it not be advisable to clean out enough for seed now, before much of the best of it has been fed to the stock? Such a practice would at least have the advantage of a chance of making a selection from the bin containing the cleanest and the plumpest seed. This can then be used, and there is less danger of a spring snout.

Evidence accumulates that close housing of fattening cattle is an unnecessary expense. From wind, rain and snow, with a dry place to stand down, is about all that is required in the winter stabling. Particularly is this true where close feeding is practiced.

Counting up the Cost.

A. McNeill, Chief of the Fruit Division in the Dominion Department of Agriculture, in an address before the Bedford, P. Q., Dairymen's Association, exhibited the accompanying chart, showing the comparative cost of production and average price obtained for leading grains, timothy hay, butter and apples. It suggests a useful line of thought at this season of the year, when the field work is over and people have time to reckon up where they stand by discovering just what has been realized from their crops. The chart was arranged with the object of showing what should enter into such calculations.

COST AND PRICE OF CERTAIN FARM PRODUCTS.	
Average Yield Per Acre.	Price per Unit.
Wheat, 13 bush.	\$ 2.50
Oats, 23 bush.	\$ 2.50
Corn, 28 bush.	\$ 2.50
Timothy, 1 ton.	\$ 2.50
Butter, 35 lbs.	\$ 2.50
Apples, 80 brls.	\$ 5.00
Fixed Charges:	
Interest, 5 per cent.	.50
Taxes, Fences, etc.	.50
Current Expenses:	
Plowing, seeding	2.00
Seed	.20
After cultivation	2.00
Harvesting, threshing	1.12
Hauling to market	.70
Plant food removed with the crops:	
Potash, 5 cents per lb.	1.10
Phosphoric acid, 6 cents per lb.	.96
Nitrogen, 15 cents per lb.	4.98
Total cost per acre	\$16.06
Cost per bushel, ton, lb., bbl.	.57
Cost, including fixed charges and current expenses only	.32
Cost if yield is 50 per cent. greater	.49
Usual price received by farmer	.35

Under the head of "fixed charges" are included cost of interest, fencing, roadmaking, repairing buildings, and general depreciation in value. Under "plant food removed" is reckoned the value of potash, phosphates, salts and nitrogen, at usual market prices. Leaving out exceptional circumstances, Mr. McNeill pointed out that selling hay or grain was exceedingly foolish, even considering present high prices. If butter is sold, the case is very much improved, inasmuch as the farmer is selling practically no plant food, and then an allowance is to be made for the value of the by-products, skim milk and manure. These two items would bring the profits on butter several cents higher and show dairying to be a fairly profitable line of farming.

Upon looking over the table, we wrote Mr. McNeill, suggesting that possibly the average yields given might be regarded as unduly low, that an allowance for fodders used on the farm might be included, that the butter return was low, the "after-cultivation" item in the case of apples high, and, while the apple-orchard returns were highly favorable, the prospect, in contrast, for the grain-seller is alarmingly disheartening, owing to the "fixed charges." In the course of his valuable reply, Mr. McNeill points out that accepting the low average yields does not affect the argument. The low average yields of that of several of the chief grain-growing states was per report of the U. S. Secretary for Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 1910. The low average yields for oats, wheat and timothy hay are to be noted by consulting the Canadian Census Report. The "fixed charges" column was put at the low average of 16 cents after consulting with the experts of the Department at Ottawa, who decided that this was none too low for the average

Canadian farmer. "It would not do," writes Mr. McNeill, "to take the averages of the man who was making a specialty of any particular product, inasmuch as he is only one in a dozen, perhaps one in a hundred; nor would it do to accept the average that might easily be raised for any of these products, inasmuch as we wish to get at a basis where we may count on what actually is raised. One ton per acre of timothy is a very low yield, and yet I saw several score of acres this year that would not yield one ton. The 80 barrels of apples I arrived at from the answers of several hundred fruit-growers throughout the Dominion, and perhaps it is high for a low average; yet I took more than that this year from trees on my neglected farm that never have been pruned, sprayed or cultivated. However, these averages were taken low, but not lower than the averages of large areas comprising Provinces and States. I wished to make a basis for the farmer a little above the average, and to secure this I have added 50 per cent. to these low large-area averages. This average is, of course, not the high level of first-class farming.

"The item of \$23 in apple orchards included the cultivation, not the after-cultivation, but cultivation, spraying, etc. I have the harvesting and hauling to market separate, and all other expenses are included in the \$23, which I admit is more than is usually spent, but not more than it will cost if it is done at all.

"Straw and cornstalks were not included, inasmuch as they do not materially affect the argument. If they were included in the salable items, it would mean an increase in the plant food removed, and, as a matter of fact, upon the average farm, straw and cornstalks have little or no commercial value as a salable product, and as they are used they do little more than make up for the plant food removed in themselves and for their share of the work of harvesting and housing. In this calculation, the presumption is that the grain is sold off the farm, and, therefore, as far as the particular quantities are concerned, there is no return to the farm.

"I agree that, with the average crop, the prospect is anything but heartening, if we sell grain, and that is the pith of my argument, that a man is on the road to ruin who sells grain and hay. It is only a question of how long his plant food will last. I hope you will note the point that a man, farming in this way, may still accumulate a bank account by working sixteen hours a day and having a wife and children helping him, and counting it all as a day's work. My calculations are all made on a ten-hour day for one man, and not for the whole family. What I am insisting upon is that in the cost of production, fixed charges, current expenses and plant food should all be taken into account, and that the labor should be calculated on the basis of a ten-hour day."

The whole subject, as presented above, might form the basis of a useful discussion in these columns by readers of "The Farmer's Advocate."

Railway versus Ocean Freight Rates.

The Pacific Coast States ship their surplus grain to Europe, rather than to the large markets of the Mississippi Valley, for the freight charges on the 18,000-mile voyage around South America are less than the railroad rates for a haul of some 2,000 miles across the mountains and plains in the United States. In the first part of 1910, the cost of sending wheat from Spokane or Walla Walla to Liverpool, including railroad rates to Portland or Puget Sound, ocean rates, and marine insurance, ranged from 25 to about 30 cents a bushel, while the rate to Chicago from Spokane or Walla Walla was 34.5 cents a bushel, according to a recent bulletin issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, entitled, "Marketing Grain and Live Stock in the Pacific Coast Region." If the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Pacific offer reasonable freight rates, this looks good for Alberta grain-growers, who should be thus enabled to reach European markets at a reasonable cost, once the Panama Canal is completed.

It has been said: "Once get the farmers and their families all working together at something that concerns them all, and we have the beginning of a more stable and a more social community than is likely to exist amid the constant change and bustle of the large towns, where, indeed, some thinkers tell us that not only the family, but also the social life, is largely breaking down." Cooperation on a sound working basis would do this for the farmer. It is worth a trial.