

The Grain Grower's Guide

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Moving the Corn Line North

TIME was when most men looked upon the prairies of the Canadian Northwest as a suburb of the Arctic, fit for occupancy by only fur traders and Indians. Later they admitted that wheat could be raised in the most southern districts of the provinces. And in the last decade they have been forced to acknowledge the superiority of "Manitoba Hard" and look upon Western Canada as not only the "Bread Basket of the Empire," but as the coming bread basket of at least a half of the world.

But Western Canada cannot stop with wheat raising. To insure the fertility of her broad acres she must have cattle and hogs. The dairy and beef industries must be fostered. Men shook their heads, admitted the fact, but queried, "Where's the feed?" Then Western Canada's expert agriculturists got busy and moved the corn line north, demonstrating that really wonderful crops of the peerless fodder could be produced on our fertile plains. True it is that some fairly successful experiments have been made with alfalfa and other forage crops but nevertheless fodder corn is an outstanding cattle feed for the Canadian West.

There is little doubt but that wheat will always be the staple product of Western Canada, but it is certain that corn will become one of the principle supplementary crops. We will never see Western farmers growing more corn, to feed more hogs, to buy more land, to grow more corn, etc., etc., but farmers in the older districts have demonstrated the feeding values of corn and it is just what we need here.

Early Experiences

Experimental work on the production of this crop was begun in the West some fifteen years ago and among the first fields planted and successfully harvested was one sown by Prof. S. A. Bedford, then superintendent of the Brandon experimental farm and now at the Manitoba Agricultural college. A photograph of this field appears with this article. The crop obtained struck Prof. Bedford very favorably and he has continued his experiments, producing crops of fodder corn that would be considered wonderful even in the best sections of the acknowledged corn belt. A point worthy of notice is that the professor has not had a single failure of his corn crops while all the time at the M. A. C. they have been sown on land that is considered very poor for corn crops.

The writer interviewed Prof. Bedford at the college a few days ago and was given a whole lot of pointers on the proper way to plant and care for a crop of fodder corn. In one corner of the professor's office stands a sheaf of corn that is truly wonderful. The stalks are over nine feet high and it stands as an exhibition of what may be done with corn in the Canadian West under proper

Experiments by Leading Western Canadian Agriculturists have proven that Fodder Corn is Profitable Crop

cultural methods. Prof. Bedford was kind enough to review his methods of production and a resume of them follows:

Results at College

The corn crop at the college was not as heavy this year as it was last on account of untoward weather conditions but nevertheless averaged nearly 25 tons per acre. When it is considered that in many of the older sections where fodder corn is one of the regular crops, anything above 12 or 13 tons per acre is considered a good crop, it is understood how satisfactory the crop is here. The variety sown was the Longfellow and the crop was raised practically without rain on a stiff clay loam not supposed to be good corn land. The land was plowed six inches deep last fall and this spring was well mellowed down.

If land intended for corn is the average

about a half bushel of seed to the acre. The seeding can be done with an ordinary grain drill by closing up a sufficient number of spouts. The proper depth to sow is from two to three inches depending upon the dryness of the soil. The dryer the soil the deeper should be the seeding.

A few days after seeding the land should be harrowed again and at least once a week until the corn is three or four inches high. If the sowing has been done according to directions none of the plants will be drawn up by the harrow and the land will be kept clean with very little trouble or expense. If it is desired to keep the land perfectly clean and take the place of summer fallow it will pay to hoe between the plants. This is one of the great advantages of the corn crop on wheat land, that the land may receive all the benefits that it would from summer fallow and yet not be idle. In any case

cured by this method is much to be preferred for milch cows as it keeps them in full flow of milk during the winter months, when swamp hay usually dries them up.

The professor also planted several experimental plots of millet, sorghums, and sugar-cane, all of which constitute valuable fodder crops in the older sections. The results from all were very satisfactory. He also experimented with Marquis wheat. This strain ripened several days earlier than an adjoining plot of Red Fife and gave practically the same yield and apparently the same grade. The alfalfa and other clovers gave good returns and additional fields have been sown.

BACK TO THE LAND

The land question is extending and confirming its hold on the mind of the country. We are only at the beginning of the valuation and already it is engaging more serious attention than any other subject in the world of politics. This is a reason for satisfaction, as well as an inspiration towards further efforts. The power of landlordism has covered the face of this land completely; it has pressed heavily and disastrously on the industry

and life of the nation. But the valuation is an attack on this power, wide enough to touch it at every point, if not strong enough to break it. In and through the valuation itself relief and security can be obtained for the men and women who maintain the nation by their services. Therefore, the deep and wide interest which is being taken in this subject is one of the most blessed and hopeful activities to which a country could give itself. The valuation is proceeding, and the most prominent incidents connected with its progress are the fierce and angry protests of its opponents. This is

good. The controversy over the actual operation and administration of the budget is deepening the impression that was made by its discussion last year.—Land Values (London).

LONDON'S LORD MAYOR

Sir Thomas Vasey Strong was elected lord mayor of London, Sept. 29, without opposition. Sir Thomas is a pronounced temperance advocate and enjoys the distinction of being the first teetotaler chosen as chief magistrate of the metropolis. He was born in 1857 and in 1900 married Lillie, the eldest daughter of the late James Hortnall. Sir Thomas in business has been successful as the head of a paper supply firm. He was knighted while occupying the office of the sheriff of the city of London. He is a director of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution.



Experimental field of fodder corn grown by Prof. S. A. Bedford at the Brandon Experimental Farm in 1895
One of the first cornfields in Western Canada

light loam of the province, fall plowing is not necessary. In that case plowing should be done as early in the spring as possible and the land immediately harrowed and if possible packed at once to retain moisture. The plowing should be fairly deep. If the soil is a stiff clay loam such as prevails in the valley of the Red River, it should be plowed deep in the fall and left rough during the winter. It will then become well mellowed from frost action. The professor dwells very strongly upon the necessity of fall plowing in stiff clay loams.

Harrow Frequently

The field should be harrowed every few days during the spring months to encourage weed seeds, near the surface, to sprout. It is much easier to destroy the weeds before the seed is put in than after. Seeding should be accomplished about May 24, sown in drills three feet apart and seed left from three to six inches apart in the rows. This will take

a one-horse cultivator should be used several times during the season between the rows. This will destroy the weeds, mellow the soil and help to retain the moisture.

[Cut 'Crop' Early]

The crop should always be cut before the first of September for even a slight touch of frost seriously reduces the value of fodder corn and we usually experience a light frost by that time. If the corn is intended for use in a silo it is advisable to allow it to wilt in the field for three or four days before putting it in the silo. This removes the surplus moisture and makes sweeter ensilage. If it intended for fodder it should be carefully stacked in teepee-shaped stacks containing from 500 to 1000 pounds each of dry fodder. The stacks should be tied at the top with binder twine. They will then retain their shape and shed rain and the fodder will come out bright and green any time during the winter. Fodder