

Crops, Live Stock, and Farm Help

The following information from the May Crop Bulletin on spring conditions of agriculture in the Province, issued by the Ontario Department of Agriculture, will be of interest:—

FALL WHEAT—When the new fall wheat was reported on in November, it was described as having had a good start at seeding time, owing to the excellent condition of the soil and timely rains, and the only fear then expressed was that the young plants had perhaps made too much head. The remarkably open winter, affording little or no covering of snow most of the time, and changes of temperature, varying from extremely mild conditions to intense cold, led growers of fall wheat to fear the outcome. The cold, dry, and generally backward spring was also unfavorable to the crop. However, the general situation in the third week of May may be described as being better than was expected, although reports varied greatly in describing the condition of the fields. Some reports were enthusiastic over the promising state of the crop, while others from the same district speak of failure more or less marked. High lands did well compared with flat or low-lying places, and rich, sharp, well-drained soils also prospered. Fields sown early did much better than those sown in later, and wheat sown on sod was markedly ahead of that grown on stubble land.

CLOVER—Like fall wheat, clover suffered from lack of protection of snow during the winter and much of the crop was heaved, resulting in considerable loss. Low-lying spots were badly winter-killed, and some had to be plowed up. Old fields also showed most injury, the young clover coming through in remarkably good form. Notwithstanding the many complaints of poor fields, there are nearly as many favorable accounts of a splendid showing.

FAULT—Winter losses of orchard trees are smaller than for several years. In various quarters a number of old plum trees are reported as having succumbed, but opinion was expressed that the severe winters of the two or three years immediately preceding was the cause. Except in a few localities in the Lake Erie counties, peaches appear to have sustained but little injury. There has been a generous amount of blossoming on nearly all classes of orchard trees, and should heavy rains keep off during the period of "setting," a large fruit crop may be looked for.

LIVE STOCK—The open winter appears to have favored live stock. There was sufficient provender of all kinds except roots, as many of the turnips rotted; although the backward spring caused an unlooked-for raid to be made upon surplus fodder. Horses came through the winter in splendid condition, except where troubled with a light form of distemper, and the cool, dry weather kept them in good condition during spring work. More mares have been bred of late than formerly, and while some speak of an unusual mortality among colts, the general tone of the reports are favorable in this regard. Owing to the high prices prevailing for horses they are commanding better care and closer attention. Cattle are described as being rather thin, but healthy. Several correspondents claim that this class of live stock was turned out upon the grass this

season before there was a good bite for them. Sheep are now more into favor, and are giving good satisfaction. They would be much more largely kept but for the dog nuisance. Lambs are coming in good and strong, to quote a correspondent. Swine are kept in large numbers, and have wintered well, but there are reports of heavy mortality among spring litters, a large number of young pigs dying when about a month old. But for the fact that many farmers have lost confidence in the stability of the market, the output of hogs would be immensely increased.

FARM SUPPLIES—In every section of the Province there have been enough hay and grain for local needs, but as a rule there is not much to spare, as the feeding of live stock is more engaged in than formerly. The failure of the turnip crop and the necessity of feeding later than usual, owing to the backward spring, also made great inroads on the grain and fodder supply. Most of the fat cattle have been disposed of, but a considerable number of store cattle are on the grass for July and September delivery. Several correspondents claim that there will be left only a sufficient number of cattle on hand for butchers' needs, looking to the future.

FARM LABOR—The quality and cost and not the quantity of labor, is the great question facing the Ontario farmer to-day. The exodus of native sons to the Canadian West and to New Ontario has drained the older parts of the Province of a large number of skilled agricultural workmen, and while the tide of immigration has brought in many to take their place, few of the new-comers prove to be up to the mark from a Canadian standpoint. However, some of them are reported to be "making good," and a more hopeful tone regarding the promise of raw labor is observed; in the remarks of correspondents, rates of wages continue high; in fact, many report that farmers cannot pay such wages and succeed. Enlarged implements and the use of more horses in the field work help some out of the difficulty. Domestic servants are, if possible, harder to secure than ever before.

Potato Diseases and Their Treatment

The United States Department of Agriculture have issued a comprehensive treatise on this topic. The synopsis which follows will be found beneficial to all potato growers.

The principal diseases to which the potato is subject are blight, rot, and scab. There are several kinds of potato rot, which, unfortunately, cannot always be distinguished except by the aid of the microscope. There is an early blight which attacks the leaves and stems, never the tubers.

This appears in the form of dead brown spots on the leaf, which often coalesce and form large areas. This does not usually occur until after the plants are six inches high, but increases with age and reduces the crop from twenty to fifty bushels per acre.

Another trouble often confused with early blight is what is known as tip burn, in which the tips and margins of the leaves become dry and black and roll up. This disease is most troublesome as the plants approach maturity, and is caused by dry, hot weather and lack of moisture in the soil. It is especially destructive on potatoes grown on sandy soil. Sun scald is considered by some students of plant diseases as a form of tip burn. It occurs when a long period of cloudy, wet weather is followed by several dry, hot days.

The injudicious use of Paris green or London purple and other arsenical poisons cause injuries similar to the various blights and are often mistaken for them.

Then there is a late blight, which makes its appearance in warm, moist or muggy weather in August and September. It appears in the form of small brown spots on the leaves, which have the appearance of fine, frost-like mildew. This disease progresses very rapidly. The leaves become blackened and crinkled, as if scorched by fire, and there is a strong odor from the fields. The real cause of this disease is a parasitic fungus, and the frost-like mildew is minute, branching, tree-like plants. These produce spores, which germinate and grow under favorable conditions, producing a crop of spores again in four or five days. This may be followed by rot, especially on wet, heavy soils. This potato blight has no spores which live through the winter, but survives in the tissue of slightly affected tubers. These should under no circumstances be planted.

Again, there is bacterial wilt or wet rot, occurring chiefly in the south. There is also a dry rot which attacks all parts of the plant below the ground. When first due to the potatoes may not have any outward appearance of being affected, but when cut across the stem end there is a ring of brown or black streaks extending from the stem into the flesh. This rot is also caused by a fungus.

Potatoes are also affected with scab, on which we have dwelt recently, and with what is called "rosette," which is a fungus found on the underground parts of various plants, such as carnations, lettuce, and beets, for example. It is called "rosette" because the leaves are clustered like a rosette. The plant is stunted in growth.

Potatoes have a number of insect enemies, among which are the Colorado potato beetle, which need not be described, the flea beetle, and the blister beetle. The blister beetles usually appear in swarms and are very

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