

About the Farm

Farming and Grit

Making a living on a farm does not consist solely sucking in ozone, rolling in blossoming clover, and picking pears. There is a crop of blisters, backaches, muddy boots, washouts, bugs and droughts. One never makes a change in life without giving up some thing he likes and taking some he does not like. He must strike a balance, go where he finds the greater good and bear with grit and patience the unpleasant part.

The city man who has not pluck should stay in the shop or at his desk, for on the farm he will find life-size environment that will hit him with appalling regularity on every soft spot he owns. He will miss the street cars, electric lights, vaudeville, people. He may resent slowness, physical tiredness, inconvenience, stillness. Getting back to the land is profitable, peculiarly and spiritually, only to those who care more for independence than for steam heat and granitoid walks or think more of health than of musical comedy; or would rather accumulate a competence for their old age than have the privilege of street cars and jostle.

The successful farmer must be willing to work until his muscles get sore, and then work until they get strong; to learn of simple folk, and be neighborly with people who have lived in a different way; to wait for seed-time and harvest. Also he must be able to forget the amusements he has left behind and the annoyance he has found, until the slow current of country life gets hold of him, and the sweet spirit of the open place envelopes him. Then will he have found a home, and the land will have found one more man to feed the nations.—Exchange.

Improving Poor Grass Land

Poor grass lands may be greatly improved by proper treatment. Professor Somerville has secured excellent results at Denton Hill, near Newhaven, England, by his treatment of a typical Down farm long known as "Poverty Bottom." In a recent issue of the London Times his work is described as follows:

"Ever since he initiated the systematic improvement of old grass land introduced the plan, now common, of measuring the influences of manure dressings by the gain in live weight of the animals grazing on the experimental enclosures at Cockle Park, in the early nineties, Dr. Somerville has devoted much attention to tackling difficult problems in renewing worn-out pastures. Long search in many counties for a suitable site ended in his purchase five years ago of the 530-acre holding on the bare Sussex Downs, which he has already transformed by the simplest of processes and at a moderate expenditure, from a semi-barren tract into productive pastures, carrying to advantage more than twice the number of sheep that formerly eked out a miserable existence, and permitting the introduction of cattle on to the pastures.

"The only material employed was basic slag. The addition of a potash manure proved to be unnecessary, although it is often helpful on land of this kind. It would be unwise to conclude that basic slag would be equally successful on all soils and in all localities, but it is noteworthy that the remarkable results obtained at the Northumberland station have here been reproduced.

"Dr. Somerville's Down farm is an interesting study in other respects besides the use of basic slag. It emphasizes the importance of careful discrimination in the conversion of grass to tillage, the only process by which the national need of a greater proportion of plowed land can be met. On this, as on most other holdings, there is a liberal extent of grass in an intermediate stage of development which could be restored to tillage at no great risk. But there is also old pasture which it would be unwise to disturb without making a careful reckoning of the probable consequences. The difference between the really old and the younger pastures in the response made to the artificial fertilizers is one of the most striking lessons of the experiment. It demonstrates the virtue of age in grass land, and suggests the conclusion that no old turf, however poor, should be broken as long as an acre of more recent formation remains untillied."

Exterminating Couch Grass

When the land for the Experimental Station now located at Morden, Man., was purchased in 1915, it was found to be badly infected with couch grass (also called quack, twitch or quick, grass).

In an effort to exterminate this weed, sixty-five acres of that part of the farm which appeared to be the worst infested was treated as follows:

About the first of June, it was ploughed four inches deep and well harrowed. The spring tooth cultivator was then used, serving to draw the roots well to the top of the ground. Next a chain harrow was employed. This implement brought all the loose grass to the surface and left it in large rolls all over the field. These rolls were then forked into heaps to dry and were burned about August 1.

Immediately after this the land was again ploughed and again given the treatment outlined above, and was finally ploughed a third time late in the fall.

In the spring of 1916, it was well harrowed, then sown and cross-sown with barley at the rate of 1½ bushels per acre each way. There was a good crop of grain and it was almost impossible to find a blade of couch grass on the whole area.

Poultry Arbor Day

Just as "every dog has his day," so every chicken louse has its day. It is impossible for poultry to thrive in unsanitary conditions, and it is far easier to raise lice and mites than it is to raise chickens. Vermin and disease thrive in poorly kept houses and yards. On many farms the principal trouble with poor results from the poultry flock may be credited to bad management. Many people attempt to cover up their own mismanagement in condemning the fowls, but if such persons give the fowls a square deal and keep them in comfortable quarters they will be surprised at the returns in egg production. Sanitation means good health and profitable returns. At least once every year there should be an arbor day in the poultry yards. The essentials of poultry hygiene and sanitation include: clean houses, clean air, clean food, clean water, clean yards and clean range, clean incubators and brooders, and finally, clean birds outside and inside. These are the essentials which should be kept in mind throughout the year.

One of the most important essentials is to keep a clean house and a clean yard and range. This will do much toward cleanliness in other lines. Just as warm weather is approaching particular attention should be given to cleanliness in the house. Be very positive that the roosting and nesting quarters in your house are free from lice and mites. As soon as the breeding season is over make it a point of cleaning the house out thoroughly, following it with a white-washing. Exercise as much care in the cleaning of your poultry house as the best housewife does in cleaning her own house.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Poultry House

The house must provide plenty of light and fresh air and it must be dry and draught-proof. Aside from this it must also be clean. Every poultry house and coop should be cleaned thoroughly at least once every year. Furthermore, every poultry house and coop should be disinfected regularly throughout the year, more often in warm weather than in cold weather. To clean the poultry house remove the litter and scrape the floor thoroughly. Then wash the floor, roosting quarters, nesting quarters and all other parts of the building, using a scrubbing brush if necessary to remove all of the dirt. To make sure that the house is cleaned thoroughly give it another washing over all parts of the interior. After the second washing, if done properly, the house is ready to be disinfected. To disinfect the house it is necessary to spray or apply with a scrubbing brush a good disinfectant. The disinfectant should be applied twice, allowing time between for it to dry. Some good disinfectants include the commercial coal tar products and carbolic acid. A five per cent. solution

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