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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

Have you commenced keeping books?

Is your cropping system planned for 1912?

Why are you farming—to die rich or to live well?

Are warm stables an advantage in feeding steers?

What does it cost you to produce a hundred-weight of milk?

How is the silage turning out? Was it tramped well at filling?

Have you done everything economically profitable to get the chickens laying?

Can any money be made raising two-year-old stockers for sale? How much, and how?

What can you make barnyard manure worth to you per load? Are you wasting any of it?

Have you commenced weighing and recording every cow's night and morning yield of milk?

About what acreage of your farm is non-productive—or worse—through small, irregular fields or "snake" fences?

Are there any adequate reasons why there should not be more sheep kept in your district, and if so, what are they?

What advantages has your neighborhood as a place in which to live and farm over any other with which you are acquainted?

How many pounds of hay and straw are your horses eating per day? How do their rations correspond with recognized standards?

What is the most serious obstacle you have encountered in making your farming operations and farm life satisfactory and financially profitable?

What crop or farm produce paid you best during 1911? Is a specialty being made of any crop or product in your district, and with what result?

Reviewing the past for lessons it teaches, and welcoming the future for the hope it holds, what valuable experience have you gleaned from the season of 1911?

In view of the high prices of all kinds of feeding stuffs, what extra precautions are you taking with your feeding operations, that they may yield the most profitable returns?

Is the breeding of good horses receiving the attention which it merits in your district. If not, what do you consider the best possible means of improvement in existing conditions?

What percentage of the farm implements and machinery in your neighborhood is wintering without suitable shelter, and what do you estimate the yearly deterioration in value from such neglect?

In what condition are the highways in your locality? Does it pay you to use them in their present state? What are you going to do this season to improve them? What use has been made of the split-log drag?

Chores.

Chores are the most regular and the most important work on the farm—at least, on one where stock is maintained. On an ordinary hundred acres, carrying, say, four horses and twenty-five cattle, besides pigs, chickens, and perhaps a flock of sheep, it pretty nearly keeps one man busy during the short winter day doing chores, hauling out manure, and looking after the hundred odd jobs which require attention from time to time. As a rule, the chores are done cheerfully, or, at the worst, in a matter-of-course manner, but occasionally, on a Sunday afternoon, when one has to don his overalls three or four hours after "dressing up," or on some week day when one is visiting and has to leave at three or four o'clock, or when he wants to take a trip and feels tied down by chores, or on a stormy January morning when the bed feels warm, and, most of all, during "spring-fever" days, just before the cattle have been turned to grass, one experiences an impulse of impatience at it all, and wonders if he isn't a fool to go through this humdrum day after day, feeding crops to make manure to grow bigger crops to feed more stock to make more manure. At such times, too, if he pursues his train of thought very far, he begins to wonder what there is in it, anyway, and perhaps has visions of a job in town, where the chores consist in shaking down the furnace, throwing in more coal, shovelling walks, and filling the teakettle from a tap at the sink. It is very alluring—in prospect—and even the most resolute devotee of country life is subject to these moods.

It is nature's periodic rebellion against incessant grind. She calls for change and rest with a call so loud that only a money-grubber or a person supremely in love with animals and farm life can fail to recognize the imperious demand. It is true that an unlettered person who has never known much of intellectual culture or social intercourse can content himself stolidly as a companion of the animals under his care, and be it understood that many of these herdsmen possess fine traits of character, but, all the same, they dwarf some of the best elements of their nature. It is not well for man to live continually as a companion of the beasts, and one is foolish to do it voluntarily. Human nature and human character make diverse demands, which should be met so far as reasonably possible.

There is argument in the foregoing, not against farm life, but against making farm life unnecessarily monotonous. Unbroken routine is deadening to ambition, destructive of keen mental edge, and physically enervating. Routine tapers quickly into Rut. Chores we must have on stock and dairy farms, but they should be expedited by every practicable convenience one can afford. Milking we cannot get around, but stable-cleaning can be shortened and rendered easier by litter carriers; feeding by silos, silage carts, and trough mangers (dropping from feed-alley floors). Hay, straw and meal should be easily accessible through chutes, and feed chests conveniently placed. Young cattle and steers should be fed loose, and their pens cleaned once a week or twice a month. Pigs should have raised sleeping places, and poultry should be fed grit, bran and oyster-shell from hoppers. By these and other means, mostly inexpensive, the routine work can be greatly lightened; and if one keeps a man by the year, purposely providing some winter employment in the way of teaming and improvements, so that the employee may earn his wages and occasionally relieve his

employer of routine work, the chores will be divested of their most objectionable features.

Attending to thrifty stock in a well-arranged barn, where the work is not unduly onerous, is a pleasure with which the city man has no diversions that can compare. It has its exacting side, of course, but what has not? It is really not harder to get up at 5.30 than at 8 a.m., and a morning's chores in overalls are not more formidable to a farmer than attending to the furnace is to his city cousin. We speak from experience of both. In either instance, it is a case of getting at it. And there are compensations. Compared to the town man's hollow holidays and leisure hours, what keen pleasure to really study the care and feeding of a herd of cows, to feed them faithfully and watch the ultimate response, some of it not realized until the feed has begun to tell on the system of a run-down herd! What music is the grunt of a well-podded steer! What satisfaction the gambols of a hearty, growing calf, the tight curl of a thrifty pig's tail, the sleek coat of a stout farm team, or the well-satisfied singing of a busy flock of laying pullets! Money cannot measure the gratification of these things, and no painstaking is accounted too great to achieve them.

For, after all, painstaking does it. One may throw feed to his stock like water, but unless intelligence, interest and watchfulness go with the feed, results will fall short of the mark. "The eye of the master fattens his cattle," as the German adage hath it, and what nationality apply this better than the Teutons? What is the use of spending much time and money growing crops, unless one makes the value out of them by careful feeding? In the extra lies the profit every time. The manure, if cared for properly, pays for the labor, usually, and often more. The profit consisteth in the extra gains or yields obtained by intelligence, interest and care.

Chores, then, while they should be lightened where possible, are to the true stockman, who makes pets of his charges, a labor of pride and love, and of all farm work the most important, involving, as they do, a cashing in of the summer's crops. By regularity, system and convenience, the load of routine may be lightened, and profits at the same time increased. Look well to the chores.

Give the Old Orchard a Chance.

In previous issues we have discussed certain points suggested by the results of our demonstration orchard work. We have endeavored to point out the decided advantage possessed by an enterprising farmer with an orchard on his own farm over a company depending upon precarious, inefficient and sometimes untrustworthy hired help to care for its widely-scattered propositions. We have also sought to emphasize the trend of market demand towards superior-quality fruit, referring in this connection to the universal preference of our own customers for that peerless general-purpose winter apple, the Northern Spy.

A word remains to be spoken regarding the possibility of rejuvenating the many abandoned and many more near-abandoned orchards which cumber the ground and render landscapes unsightly in so many vicinities. Will it pay to take these in hand, prune, cultivate, spray, and try to produce paying crops of fruit? Upon this point our own work cannot yet be cited as conclusive evidence, seeing that neither of our abandoned-orchard propositions has yet been placed upon a paying