

TREATMENT FIRST YEAR

The field should be clipped with a mower when the alfalfa and weeds are about six inches high, and the clippings may remain on the field to form a mulch. This will hold the weeds in check. For the alfalfa it is best to have the cutting bar of the mower set so that it will not injure the crown of the plant. It is advisable to clip two or three times during the summer. The last clipping should not be later than the 15th August, because considerable growth should remain on the field as a winter protection.

PASTURE

It is highly desirable to keep stock from grazing on alfalfa the first year. In fact, alfalfa should not be pastured excessively at any time, and no grazing should be contemplated until the crop is thoroughly established and the plant roots well developed. The field should be at its best the third or fourth year after seeding. Pasturing close the first year will have a tendency to injure the alfalfa crowns, and where the stock are allowed to run at will, the surface of the field may be roughened by tramping when the soil is wet.

CURING ALFALFA HAY

There will be no hay the first year. The second year the alfalfa will be ready for cutting, and two crops will be available during the growing season. To get the best quality of hay the cutting must be done when the plants start to blossom which will be the latter part of June the first time, and early in August for the second time. It may be well to repeat that the crop should not be cut late in the season. In curing the hay, care should be taken to save as many of the leaves as possible. Alfalfa should not remain exposed in the swath for any length of time. When partially cured it should be placed in small cocks, remaining in this position until cured thoroughly, at which time it can be placed in the stack, or mow.

SEED PRODUCTION

Where seed is to be produced a hardy variety such as Grimm should be used. The seed should be sown in drills thirty inches apart and inter-tilled to control the weeds. Other than this it should receive the same treatment as for fodder the first season. The second year seed can be produced. After the pods are nearly all ripe the crop can be cut with a mower having two or three men following with forks rolling the alfalfa into bundles and placing them out the way of the horses the next round. When it has become thoroughly dry it is ready to thresh. This can be done to best advantage with a clover huller. Where one of these cannot be obtained, the alfalfa can be put through the grain separator, some of the seeds will be threshed but most of the pods will be unbroken. Some of the best farmers report success in running these pods through the feed grinder with the plates not set too close. After the pods are broken the seed can be cleaned through a fanning mill.



Alfalfa Plot in Central Manitoba