

# The Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR BARN BUILDING.

The winter has fairly settled down upon us, the Christmas season is past, and we have become accustomed to the routine of work that is to be done at this time of the year. If a barn has to be built during the coming spring or summer, now is the time to get ready. There is always a rush and a crush when building operations have actually begun, no matter how carefully preparations have been made; but where there has been lack in this regard, the work and worry are increased out of all seeming proportion to the cause. Careful planning not only saves work and worry, but very materially lessens money expense also.

The question of where to build the barn is probably the first that will arise after building has been decided on. In many cases, of course, there is no room for choice. The present location, or one very near it, is really the best and the only one. But a better might be chosen in some other instances, and would be if thought were given to the question. Too frequently the lament is heard, "I wish I had built in another place. That is what I would have done if I had thought." A barn site should be dry. It ought to be possible, at least, to make it dry by draining, but it is better when the surface water will run away in all directions, and when the subsoil is naturally drained. Whoever has had the experience of having planks in the passageway behind cows floated by the inrush of snow water, as the writer has, will not wish it repeated. Dryness means warmth; to be damp, is to be chilly. In these days, when in almost every new barn the ground floor is reserved for stock, and grain and hay have to be stored in the upper floor, a side-hill location means much in lessening labor of making approach, and in ease of incline up which loads are to be hauled. The advantage of even a slight natural elevation, where such exists, should not be despised, but made use of. The practice of some years ago, of digging the barn site into a side-hill, so that one wall was really a cellar wall, is nowadays rightly condemned. Use can be made of a hill, however, without having the stable, as those were, close and dark. Distance from the house, water supply, convenience to the fields, shelter from winds, are other matters that should receive consideration. The latter point—that of shelter—is specially in our mind at present, because of lately visiting a farm steading so cozily set among hills that, as the owner said, no blizzard could strike them.

In the pioneer days, when the settler managed at last to build a 30 x 50-foot frame barn, he no doubt felt that he was well fixed for barn room; but, as years went by, another of like or greater size had to be added, then a granary, and a lean-to shed here and another there, followed, until, with needed pigpens and chicken houses, there seemed to be no end of building or buildings. Most Ontario farmers who contemplate putting up a barn next summer, have some such a conglomeration to tear down first. To change it all and get everything under one roof, is the ambition. It is possible that this idea of having but one building has been pushed a little too far. There are whispers to that effect. But, whatever form of building is decided upon, the lesson from the restricted room of former days should be remembered, and it should be of sufficient size to house the crop and the stock without overcrowding. The size required will vary, according to the number of acres farmed and the line of farming followed.

In this matter, each man should do his own thinking, and be governed by his own needs.

As most men erect but one set of buildings in their lifetime, they have little past experience to fall back upon, and it is the part of wisdom, therefore, in planning a barn, to get all the help possible from the experience of others. Back numbers of "The Farmer's Advocate" containing barn plans should be looked up, and a few days spent in driving around the country examining new barns and interviewing the owners would be most profitable. Internal arrangement has much to do with the saving of room and of labor. No pains should be spared to get the best in this respect that can be got. While planning to make the most of the room at our disposal, and to have everything so arranged as to lessen labor, the prime necessities of water and air for stock should be kept in mind, and means for their supply provided. The water problem is the least difficult. By means of a continuous trough in front, or individual water basins, stock may have enough always within reach. Some farmers are old-fashioned enough to prefer a water trough in a covered or sheltered yard, believing that the exercise cattle get when turned out for a drink is necessary for the best health, and with these "The Farmer's Advocate" agrees, at least in so far as breeding and growing stock is concerned. Many a man installs a watering system in his stable, and is delighted with the results for the first year or two, especially if from that or any other cause his stock happens to do unusually well that winter, but as years pass he generally concludes that his first impressions were oversanguine. The disadvantages of the plan impress themselves, and the lack of exercise that results from the temptation to keep his animals continuously indoors eventually tells upon the health and vigor of his stock. Of course, where it is a case of watering in the stable, or filling the cattle once a day with ice-cold water in a cold, drafty shed or at a creek, by all means water in the stable. The battle still rages over the best method of ventilation. Many schemes have been tried and abandoned. There is agreement on one point—ventilation is necessary. It is now well understood that the lack of it and of sunlight and exercise is the chief predisposing cause of tuberculosis in cattle. Health cannot be maintained in foul air, and some system of supplying fresh air should form part of every barn plan. The trouble with many ventilating appliances has, no doubt, been that they were not used. Warmth has been preferred to fresh air. Windows made to open, and opened, will ventilate, and all stable windows should be made so, even if some special system of ventilation is installed.

During the sleighing season is the time to get material hauled. The question of what material to use has reference chiefly to the lower story, the upper part being usually of frame and lumber, old timber and boards being made use of as much as possible. So far as the stable floor is concerned, opinions are agreed, cement is best. For durability, saving of liquid manure, comfort in working, and economy, it is unrivalled. Different materials are used for building the wall—stone, large hollow bricks, cement blocks, and solid cement-concrete—each of which has its advocates. There is no doubt that hollow bricks or cement blocks will make a dry, warm wall, and the better insulated and the warmer the wall, the greater the amount of ventilation that may be allowed without unduly lowering temperature. Of course, the freer the ventilation, the better is the air and the drier the internal atmosphere. Solid concrete has two advantages, viz., strength and cheapness. Some favor a low foundation wall,

with double-board wall above it, as being both cheaper and better than solid masonry or concrete, and insuring a drier stable atmosphere. Whatever material may be thought best to use, a good deal of teaming needs to be done; and now, while both men and horses are less busy than usual, is the time when it can be most easily done. Now, also, is the time to discuss the subject through "The Farmer's Advocate," and experience, especially as to the newer forms of building material, will be welcomed. The barn question is by no means exhausted.

#### RAISE THE STANDARD OF STOCK.

Present conditions of the pure-bred live-stock industry in Canada are peculiarly favorable to a general policy of improvement of the character of our stock in all lines. The financial stringency, which has so seriously affected business in the United States, our best market for most classes of breeding stock in recent years, has rendered breeders here more dependent upon the home market for the disposition of their surplus stock; and, fortunately, the financial flurry which is hampering commercial enterprises in this country to a considerable extent, is affecting the general farmer less than any other class of the community. Prices for most products of the farm are ruling high, and those who have for sale grain or hay, orchard, dairy or poultry products, receive profitable prices for such commodities, for the reason that these are necessities, and the rapid growth of our towns and cities has created an increasing home demand for them. But it should be constantly borne in mind that it is only the best quality of all the products named that bring the top prices. People are becoming more critical of the class of product they buy, and inferior offerings bring inferior prices. It is also true that inferior stock make poor returns for the food they consume, and which has a substantial cash value if it were sold instead of being fed. The temporary falling off of the foreign demand for our pure-bred stock naturally has the effect of lowering prices for the time being, and to that extent adversely affects breeders who have had prosperous conditions for the past decade, and have no serious cause for complaint now that there is a temporary lull in the market demand for their product. But this extremity of the breeders opens an opportunity for the general farmer to secure improved stock at a cost more nearly his idea of its value, and he will do well to take advantage of the occasion to improve the quality of his stock by the introduction of improved blood, at least to the extent of using only pure-bred sires, thus grading them up to greater usefulness, and he may do well by also securing a few females of a good class as the foundation for a pedigreed herd or flock.

The breeders of pure-bred stock, on the other hand, have an opportunity and a duty to themselves and the country at this juncture, and that is to use the knife more freely on inferior males, a course which will at once tend to raising the standard of the stock and to prevent an oversupply and a glutted market, which accentuates the depression of values, or, at least, of prices procurable.

When practically all the male increase is kept entire, and held for sale for breeding purposes, there must of necessity be a considerable proportion of inferior animals offered, and a breeder lowers his own reputation and damages the character of the breed he handles every time he sells an inferior bull or male animal of any class for breeding purposes. An inferior pure-bred will, as a rule, perpetuate its defects as surely as will