

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL FOR GRAIN

In preparing the soil for future planting, as soon as a crop is harvested double disc the ground over-lapping half the disc. This serves several purposes as it not only forms a mulch and prevents evaporation but it puts the soil in fine condition to allow the rain to penetrate down and in case of a stubble field it mixes the stubble with the soil and as soon as a rain comes starts the stubble decomposing and also germinates weed seeds. Should a heavy rain come after discing it will be necessary to disc again before ploughing; the next process is ploughing, which should be done when the soil is moist and as early as possible.

The depth of ploughing depends on what tools are going to follow the plough. If you have a sub-surface packer, plough seven or eight inches deep following immediately with the packer; if you have no packer do not plough more than five inches deep and follow the plough closely with the harrow; if a heavy rain should come before the winter sets in it will be necessary to again go over the ground with the harrow. Then first thing in the spring as soon as the soil will permit disc and harrow; the field is then ready for seeding.

Ground if not ploughed in the fall should first thing in the spring be double disced. Ground should always be disced before plowing, especially so in the spring; the surface of the soil after laying all winter is more or less solidified and when ploughed before previously disced the surface breaks into coarse pieces which in the course of ploughing get placed at the bottom of the furrow which creates a very unfavorable condition as a lumpy coarse sub-surface retards capillary attraction and allows too much air to mingle with the soil inducing rapid evaporation whereas the disc by its rotary motion pulverizes the surface into the most minute particles which after ploughing are at the bottom of the furrow; and the sub-surface packing, or repeated harrowing with the teeth slanting back forms the fine firm sub-surface necessary to hold the greatest amount of water, most favorable for capillary attraction, and best condition for the growth of the roots of all plants.

The plough should be closely followed by the packer or harrow and the ground is then ready for planting.

GROWING POTATOES IN DRY DISTRICTS

As soon as the potatoes are planted harrow the ground; if the potatoes have been ploughed in, a good plan is to harrow what were planted in the morning before going to dinner and those planted in the afternoon before leaving the field at night, using the harrow with the teeth slanted back. Harrow at intervals of about ten days until the harrow injures the growing plants, then a small tooth weeder can be used.

When the potato plants are too large to use a harrow or weeder then use