

Be Careful of the Horse

L. K. Shaw, Wetland Co., Ont.

We have well over \$1,000 invested in horse flesh on our farm. Many farmers have more; some have less; ours is about the average. "We consider it sufficient investment to give it good care. But how many of us are altogether too careless of the important investments that we have in horse flesh."

At two periods of the year particularly do we make mistakes. The most critical period is in the spring when the horse, after months of idleness or very light work, is suddenly called into the most strenuous period, from the horse's standpoint, of the whole year.

Another critical period is now approaching—the time when fall work ceases and the horse is put on winter rations. The rules which I have for my own guidance, and which I now pass on for the consideration of others, may be summed up in two don'ts.

"Don't keep on feeding heavily. I have seen many men make an effort to get their horses in good condition by maintaining work-a-day rations when the horse's work days for the season were over. This puts too great a strain on the digestive organs and is apt to result in all kinds of internal trouble to say nothing of stocking the legs and the various other ills that almost always accompany too liberal rations."

My second rule is, don't stop feeding too suddenly. I believe there are more horse owners in need of this rule than of the former. The rule applies to both feed and exercise.

My horses at present are getting 12 to 15 quarts of oats a day. They are working hard at fall plowing. Their systems are regulated so that the daily demand is equivalent to the food contained in 12 to 15 quarts of oats. Suppose that when plowing is finished next week that I drop the ration to six quarts a day. This would be bound to result in reduced horse flesh and weakness, for the system would still require the food of the 12 quarts or more. It is excreting that much. I will reduce the feed gradually in order that the horse may attain its system to the new conditions.

Nor will I stop all work suddenly. I would much prefer to do half a day's plowing at a time in order to break the horses off of hard work than to plow up to six o'clock one night and then do no more till next spring. For some time yet, also, there is no reason why the horses should not be free to run in the yard or pasture all day. In fact, my horses do a lot of running in the yard all winter.

Thick or Thin Planting of Corn

"I have just been reading an article in a contemporary farm paper advocating the close planting of corn. We are told in the article that the closer corn is planted, the more nutrient we will get per acre. That may be true in the United States, but it is not true in Canada. Close planting of corn has been a curse to Eastern Ontario."

In this uncomprising manner did one of the most successful farmers of Eastern Ontario express himself recently to the editor of Farm and Dairy.

"Here is an experience that proves my point," he continued. "We have had a splendid crop of corn this year. It is just going into the silo, is

rich in ears and makes the best of ensilage. Right across the fence on the adjoining farm is a field of corn on soil just as fertile as ours and sown on a seed bed just as well prepared, that looked beautiful early in the season. It was planted thickly in the row and the rows close together. Then came that dry spell that every farmer will remember. That thickly planted corn stopped growing immediately and with the exception of a few of the outside rows browned all over. It never got over that setback."

"Early in the season that same man remarked of his corn on another nearby farm, 'Huh, the boy is foolish to put up a silo this year. He won't have a crop of corn this season.' The son in question had planted his corn well apart in the row and thinly in the drill. A month later the story was exactly the other way."

"I have travelled pretty extensively in Eastern Ontario," concluded our friend, "and I find that invariably the best farmers are sowing their corn thinly. There must be some reason for this. I would hate to see the advice given in that article followed by many of our farmers."



Picking, Grading and Packing Apples in One of Ontario's Best Orchards

This busy scene is in the orchard of Johnson Bros., Forest, Ont. Mr. Dan Johnson, well known to every fruit grower of his province, may be seen basket in hand in the centre of the illustration. Mr. Johnson has been making a great success of marketing his apples directly through his own agents in Western Canada.

Plowing in Fall or Spring

L. C. Smith, Peel Co., Ont.

I have just been reading an article by an enthusiastic advocate of spring plowing. It seems that the writer, who lives in Middlesex county, has always been an advocate of fall plowing. A year ago this fall, however, he was not able to get all of his corn land plowed and consequently he had an opportunity this summer of comparing the relative merits of fall and spring plowing. He says that the corn on spring plowed land was much superior to that of fall plowing.

This writer then attempts to explain the advantages of spring plowing. He says that corn is a heat loving plant, that it will not germinate at as low a temperature as will other common farm crops. When growth has a chance to start in the spring and is then turned under, there is considerable fermentation. This fermentation warms up the soil and starts the corn off strongly.

This reasoning may be true. Probably it is so far as it goes. I believe, however, that there are many advantages for fall plowing that will more than counterbalance the advantage of quick germination of the seed in the spring.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE QUESTION

As I understand it the only food that is of use to the plant in the early spring is that which is readily available. The tiny corn plant just showing above the ground has very few rootlets, and the more food there is soluble within reach

of those roots, the stronger will be the start the corn gets once it germinates. I believe in following the system that will store a supply of available plant food right next the roots. I not only plow the land intended for corn this fall, but I disk it and ridge it slightly as well. This gives the frosts of winter full play, unavailable plant food is made available and next spring after corn planting there is food right there for the crop.

Another big advantage that I find in fall plowing is one so common as to be hardly in need of repetition; it helps out in the spring rush. Next spring when the snows disappear, we will not only have our land plowed, but we will have it manured as well. Manure is drawn direct from the stable and spread. The work that we do on our land this fall will reduce to that extent the amount necessary next spring.

FALL PLOWING CONSERVES MOISTURE

But to my mind the greatest argument for fall plowing is concerned with moisture conservation. I have seen over and over again the statement that all of the moisture that reaches

the land through the rains of summer is only one-third to one-quarter enough to mature the average crop. It is up to us to conserve the moisture that reaches the land through the rains of the fall and spring and the snows of winter, so that it will be available for the crop. I have often observed that where rain falls on a sod field that it runs off in torrents. I never saw it run off to the same extent on a plowed field. The rough surface of the plowed land seems to absorb the moisture and store it up for future use. Likewise the rough surface holds the snow better than does the sod surface, and this too I regard as an advantage.

Even if it does come down to a question of temperature at germination time, I have an idea that the rapidity with which moisture evaporates

from the plowed surface in the spring will do more to warm up the soil at an early date than will the questionable effect of this fermentation of rotted sod or manure. This is my argument.

One of the greatest causes of the exodus of our young people from the farm is their lack of appreciation of farm life and the beauties of nature in our rural districts. From early childhood the average person hears the farm cried down and some line of profession or other business life suggested as something very attractive. It is only after the child grows up that it learns to appreciate the misconception it has been given. The Rural School Fair movement is designed to counteract the popular opinion that farm life is little more than slavery. It aims to give our children on the farm an inkling of the pleasure of working with nature and learning something about plant and animal life around them. It is the one movement that stimulates more strongly than anything else back to the land idea.—J. E. Smith, B.S.A., Peterboro Co., Ont.

I have no hesitation in saying that at least 60 per cent of the dairy cows of Canada have been injured in heiferhood. Heiferhood is the formative period, the period when nature is doing its best work, and so often men transgress and hinder the developing process that the heifer is injured beyond recovery.—W. F. Stephen, Huntingdon.