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## FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL

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## EDITORIAL

### The Price of Wheat

Not in a good many years has the world's first cereal sold at prices, as high as were paid for it during the past few weeks. The advance has been due almost entirely to the shortage in supplies. True, certain prominent grain gamblers in Chicago had a corner, or something of that nature, developed in wheat for May delivery, but no corner could have stood for any time had the world had all the wheat that seemed needed to bread the wheat eaters until a new crop could be drawn upon. We are shorter on wheat this year than most people imagine, shorter than figures seem capable of portraying. If in 1909 there is no heavier crop reaped in the world's wheat fields than were harvested either last year or the year before, wheat prices will touch points that some of us never dreamed they could touch again.

Naturally a short crop year, unless unforeseen circumstances intervene, is followed regularly by a crop of more bountiful dimensions. Indications are that this year the acreage planted to wheat during the next four weeks, in the northern hemisphere, will exceed any area hitherto sown to this crop. A favorable seed time and harvest will mean that the wheat reserves, so seriously depleted during the past twelve months, will be brought back to standard when the crop of 1909 comes into the trade. At the same time there is every indication that wheat next fall will make a better return to the producer, than it has for some time. The speculative element is willing now to buy for September or December delivery at around a hundred and ten. Not a bad outlook for those likely to have the cereal to sell.

### Horizontal and Vertical Hope

Never again to know "cheap" wheat is the prospect that many authorities in the grain trade hold out to us. It is said the recent sensational climb of prices is but the end of a long period of a certain level of values and the beginning of another period of higher prices. It is pointed out that the available wheat land has practically all been brought under cultivation and that the average yield throughout the world is not improving, and especially in the newer countries, while the rate of consumption is continually on the increase.

As has often been remarked to prognosticate the markets is an idle occupation, yet it is expedient to view the situation in the light of experience. Many things will enter into the factor of prices the next few years, if the market is disposed to maintain its present high level. For instance more land will be sown to wheat, which is now devoted to hay, which is not excessively high priced, or that is in pasture producing low priced beef or that is being held for speculative purposes or that may be employed for any other purpose less profitable than growing wheat at one dollar a bushel and upwards. But perhaps the greatest change will be observed in the increase in the average yield per acre, that will result indirectly from higher prices. It is quite within the range of immediate possibilities to raise the low average wheat yield over America of some sixteen bushels to the acre to thirty-two bushels, and then have plenty of room at the top for further advances. Such a yield would not simply double the supply, but would increase the profits by more than 200 per cent. no matter if prices failed to maintain their present high level. The hope of future agriculture strikes downwards into the soil not horizontally with the addition of more acres.

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The report of the second annual convention of the National Live-Stock Association, held at Ottawa, Feb. 5, 6, 7, 1908, has just been issued. It gives in full the address delivered, and papers read before the convention, is a work of 150 pages, containing some valuable information on the pure-bred and commercial live-stock industries.

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If Canadians are anxious to contribute to the strength of the British navy, the best they can do is to provide a liberal supply of bacon and flour. We have the farms to produce these and to produce them is our specialty. We would not expect to grow wheat on Plymouth docks, nor Dreadnoughts on Canadian prairies.

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Boards of trade and women's councils, are advising the government to build Dreadnoughts. The nature of the advice is a measure of the wisdom of the tenderers.

### Observe the Oat Plant

Careful students of our methods of farming have been telling us that we have been making a mistake in our methods of oat seeding, and the experience of careful farmers, who observe, seems to support the impeachment. In this matter of thickness of seeding we need to question the soil and the variety of oats we are sowing. Turning to the soil we have been taught by experience that under average conditions of moisture and fertility, a certain given number of plants to a given area, gives the best returns. When the grain is of average size and of the variety most commonly used, Banner, setting the drill at two bushels to the acre gives us this proper number of plants to the given space. If we observe closely we will see that the number of seeds we have sown does not correspond to the number of plants that the soil will conveniently carry, or with which the oat crop makes the best growth. The stooling habit of the oat plant is depended upon to make up the difference. As a general rule, weather conditions assist the habit of the plant and we get an average stand. But it is this dependance upon weather conditions to favor stooling that is not considered good farming and we are called upon to work away from it by growing varieties that do not stool and by sowing the stooling varieties thicker each year, to eliminate the stooling habit, and so put ourselves beyond the vagaries of the weather man.

Looked at from every standpoint the suggestions are sound. In the highly organized agriculture of Great Britain and Europe, where moisture is more plentiful than in Canada, farmers consider that they cannot take chances on grain stooling but sow thickly enough to get a maximum stand without stooling. Where the charges against land in the way of rent, manures etc., amount to about \$25 an acre before the crop is up, we may reasonably assume that methods of cultivation and seeding best calculated to produce a big crop are reduced to an exact science and, with this experience before us, we may well question if our own methods may not be improved.

### The Uses of Corn

If you can tell a Scottish farmer by his crop of "neeps," a German by his large cabbage patch, an Irishman by his luxuriant potato crop, you can also distinguish an American farmer by his field of corn. Corn seems to be one of the compliments of American country life. Strangely the international boundary seems to arrest the northward march of King Corn, irrespective of the favorable local conditions that may be found far to the north of American territory. The American corn fields extend right up to the north side of North Dakota, thus demonstrating that the crop can be grown in the most adverse conditions that

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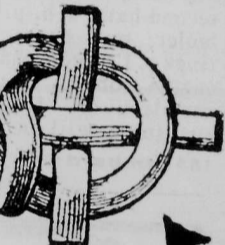
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