

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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Established
1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875.

Vol. XLIV.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MARCH 11, 1909

No. 859

EDITORIAL.

Lightning Attraction and Protection.

A correspondent of "The Farmer's Advocate" advances a theory that the lightning-bolt is attracted by sub-surface springs. We fail to see that this is of any practical importance, even if true, for it would cost more to ascertain positively the absence of such a vein than to protect one's buildings with rods, as many borings would be necessary to settle the point, and many successive choices might be required to find a safe site. The only point that remains, then, is the scientific one, as to whether flowing springs are the controlling factor in attracting the lightning. While such may be an attraction, experts are not disposed to regard sub-surface streams as the only or even the main magnet. It is considered that certain mineral formation is more likely to be the target. In any case, it is quite well established that, whatever the influence which draws it hither or thither, the lightning, in reaching the ground, may be deflected or guided in its course by anything which is a good lightning conductor—for instance, a steel or copper wire. High objects of almost any kind, and particularly solitary ones, such as a country church, a barn or a lone tree in a pasture field, are especially liable to be struck. In cities, lightning damage is much less common than in the country, notwithstanding the immensely greater property value per acre. Whatever the attraction, there is no doubt it pays to rod farm buildings, unless they are metal-roofed and metal-sided, in which case rods are unnecessary. Even a metal roof, with ground connection, is quite safe. Lightning originates a very large proportion of the blazes which occasion such loss in country districts, and, while the proportion of fires attributable to this cause is not usually so high as in the case cited by our correspondent, it is sufficiently large to warrant every farmer protecting his buildings, either with rods or otherwise, as indicated above.

Power Outfits for Plowing.

Farmers in Eastern Canada often have heard or read of the speed with which soil can be turned over with a power outfit, but few have studied the question from an economic standpoint for use on their farms. An article on another page of this issue shows the actual cost of plowing by steam last fall on an Ontario farm, one hundred and ten acres being turned over, at an average cost of \$2.39 per acre. With an eight-furrow plow, the work was accomplished in twelve days.

In localities where ways and means of saving labor are an annual source of worry, might it not be advisable for a few neighbors to co-operate in securing an outfit, or in inducing some person to procure an engine and gang? If a few farmers could guarantee work on thirty to sixty acres each, it might be possible to make arrangements as satisfactory as now prevail in threshing. A fair per cent. of the land on the average farm is ready for the plow any day after the crop is removed, and before the ground freezes up. If the plowing could be accomplished in early fall, and autumn cultivation practiced, it would assist in combating weeds, and put the land in first-class condition for spring seeding. One advantage of steam plowing is that it can be performed when the ground is so dry as to be almost impossible for team traction.

A Substitute for Bran.

Every business man prides himself on ability to "know a good thing when he sees it." The up-to-date farmer classes himself in the category of alert business men, and yet many of us spend half a lifetime or more finding out simple secrets which scientifically-informed men have been calling at us from the housetops to stop and examine. Within the memory of men now living, wheat bran was regarded by many as little better than sawdust, and dumped into the river by millers to get rid of it. To-day, bran commands upwards of twenty dollars a ton, and the feeder who declared it not worth hauling home would be laughed out of face.

But history has a penchant for repeating itself, and the attitude of our fathers and grandfathers towards bran is now the attitude of many among us towards alfalfa. If alfalfa were as widely and as thoroughly appreciated as bran, there would be a field or two of it on every stock farm where it can be successfully grown; and no farmer keeping cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry or horses would give up trying short of at least ten successive attempts. If his land were too wet, he would underdrain it; if too sour, he would lime it; if too poor in humus and plant food, he would manure it—anything to grow alfalfa, which is better feed than clover, and, if well cured, is nearly equal to wheat bran in feeding value. It may be not quite so digestible, but the difference is not great. Analysis shows the following comparison:

	% Digest- ible Protein.	% Digestible Carbohydrates.	% Ether Extract
Alfalfa	11.	39.6	1.2
Wheat Bran	12.2	39.2	2.7

From this we see that good alfalfa hay contains practically the same amount of the elements which go to produce heat, fat and energy, and nine-tenths as much of the very important element, protein. When it is explained that the special value of bran, apart from its laxative and diluent properties, is in supplying protein to balance up rations of farm-grown feeds usually deficient in this element, and when it is shown that alfalfa contains within one-tenth as much of this constituent as bran, the immense economy of alfalfa, as a home-grown source of protein, begins to impress one. This is not mere theory. Practice bears it out. The well-known Eastern Ontario dairyman, Henry Glendinning, feeds no bran or grains at all, depending entirely upon alfalfa to supplement his corn silage and other bulky feeds. He obtains good results, and insists that he is producing milk at a rock-bottom feed cost. Others have similar experience.

Some fail to realize full value from alfalfa because they let it become too mature and woody before cutting, some because they do not cure it aright, some few because their stock being unaccustomed to the new feed do not all relish it at first, and many because they do not feed it judiciously.

To derive best and most economical returns from bran, one would not feed it alone, nor yet as the main part of the ration. This would not be ideal practice, even were it cheap as hay. To make the most of bran, one would feed it as a supplement to balance up other feeds rich in carbohydrates, but deficient in protein. So with alfalfa, only that, being cheaper, it need not be fed so sparingly as bran. But it should not be used alone, for best results. Corn silage and alfalfa make an ideal roughage for milk or beef production. It is likewise adapted to supplement corn fodder, corn meal, timothy and straw, all of which are relatively deficient in protein.

Another point in favor of alfalfa is the large

yields that may be obtained, five tons per acre year after year, without reseeding, being easily obtainable on suitable soil. Fertilizing is not necessary, though beneficial, and may consist of an occasional light dressing of manure, with intervening applications of wood ashes, lime and bone meal. Thus fertilized, on well-drained soil, the alfalfa will draw freely on the nitrogen of the air, produce luxuriantly, and, when plowed up, will leave the land much more fertile than when seeded down.

The point we would reiterate and impress is the economy of home-grown alfalfa as a substitute in part, at least, for purchased bran. There is a mint of money for Canadian farmers in this idea. Think of five, or even four, tons of bran produced per acre, with a minimum of labor, and the land finally left richer than at the beginning! Awake to the opportunity! Do not be as those who allowed bran to be turned into the river, thinking it not worth taking home. Well-cured alfalfa is nearly as good a feed as bran, and you can grow and harvest it on your own farm for three or four dollars a ton, if not less. Even supposing the first crop of the season is occasionally lost for lack of good haying weather, there will be profit on the second and third, and usually all three may be secured.

The Sheep-breeders' Petition.

That the petition recently distributed among Canadian sheep-breeders, and commented upon editorially in "The Farmer's Advocate" of February 18th, was not endorsed in its entirety by the generality of those whose signatures were invited, is the candid assurance with which our esteemed friend Mr. Campbell comes forward in this issue. While all are agreed as to the propriety and prudence, from the American standpoint, of an early removal of the United States' thirty-day sheep quarantine, a good many of our breeders objected to that portion of the petition which suggested that, as a quid pro quo, the Canadian Government should offer to lift the embargo on American hogs coming into our packing-houses in bond.

Mr. Campbell is of opinion that our former editorial left it open, to be inferred by uninformed or casual readers, that this suggestion was sanctioned by Canadian sheepmen as a body. No such impression was intended to be conveyed. We merely stated that such a petition had been circulated, and, in referring to the exceptionable request, spoke of "the petitioners," and not of the whole breeding fraternity. If any doubt were left in anyone's mind as to how generally the petition was signed, we take occasion to state that it was by no means unanimous. "The Farmer's Advocate" is aware that a number refused to sign it, while others had subscribed their names without careful reading, and without cognizance of all that was contained, and yet others because they were in sympathy with its main purpose. While this is the case, and while, as Mr. Campbell points out, the petition was not endorsed by resolution at the annual meeting of the Dominion Sheep-breeders' Association, on the other hand, neither was it repudiated or amended, although it had previously been hotly discussed at the Swine-breeders' meeting, and a number of delegates who had attended this session were present at the Sheepmen's deliberations.

We are pleased to accept Mr. Campbell's assurance that he declined to endorse the petition as it was circulated, and are perfectly confident he voices the sentiments of sheepmen generally. The petition was unfortunately framed, though its essential purpose is justifiable and sound, as Canadian flocks have for some months been free of