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A SUCCESSFUL METHOD OF HANDLING THE CORN CROP

L. C. Palmer, Essex Co., Ont.

A General Outline of the Methods followed by the Most Successful Corn Growers in Essex and Kent Counties—Selection of the Seed—The Soil and its Preparation—Planting and Cultivation with Some Remarks on Underdrainage in These Counties.

THE first requisite in the cultivation of a crop of corn, as in all other crops, is the selection of seed. In this important matter the great majority of the successful corn raisers in Essex and Kent Counties, Ont., make it a rule to pick out the largest and longest ears, other things being equal. The qualities looked for are length of grain, smallness of butts, evenness in diameter from butt to tip, and trueness of type; if the object be to keep the variety pure.

In selecting ears of medium length as recommended by Prof. Klink at the Essex Corn Show last winter, the great majority of successful corn growers in these two counties will be slow to acquiesce.

We grow corn almost exclusively for the grain, the fodder being only a secondary consideration. On the principle that "like begets like," in both the animal and vegetable kingdom, we expect, if the conditions are favorable, that if we plant small ears we will produce small ears and in this way lessen the yield per acre. If we plant corn from large ears we will grow large ears with from 1,000 to 1,200 grains in a cob. If we plant medium or small ears we will look for a crop proportionately smaller.

EARLY MATURING VARIETIES

In a locality where the seasons are shorter and there is danger of the crop not coming to maturity, it would be desirable to select the seed from the early maturing plants, and by continuing this selection for a term of years one could secure an early maturing type or strain from any of the varieties. I would strongly recommend that corn for seed be selected from the standing crop, choosing the largest ears, and, if considered necessary, discarding those showing late maturity. In Essex where all varieties grown to any extent are sure to ripen, earliness of maturity is a secondary consideration.

The seed should be braided and hung up where it will have a free circulation of air especially if the cob is not pretty well cured, but ordinarily, and particularly this present year, corn taken from the crib can be planted with perfect safety.

PREPARATION OF THE SOIL

Almost every soil sufficiently fertile to grow a good crop of cereals will answer for corn, except an impervious white clay. You can not make the land too rich. A clover sod will be an ideal place to plant the corn crop. Give it all the manure you can spare. Plow in the fall or as early in the spring as possible and keep the land well cultivated until planting time, which extends from the 10th of May till the middle of June in this climate. I have planted White Cap Yellow Dent on the 19th of June and did not have a nubbin of soft corn in a field of five acres. By continuous cultivation, for which purpose the disc and

smoothing harrow are used almost universally in this section, the soil is made fine, moisture is retained, and innumerable weeds are germinated and destroyed before the corn is ripe.

Perhaps nine-tenths or more of the corn in Essex is planted with the two-horse planter, and by means of the check chain it is put in rows ac-

A Commission of Farmers will be Sent to Denmark

Acting on the suggestion first made in Farm and Dairy, December 23rd, 1908, and later endorsed by the members of the Dominion Swine Breeders' Association, and which has been strongly urged in these columns for several months, the Dominion Government has decided to send a commission of Canadian farmers to Denmark and Ireland to study the methods of raising and marketing swine. An appropriation of \$10,000, to defray the expenses of the commission was placed in the supplementary estimates by Hon. Sydney Fisher, Dominion Minister of Agriculture, and the money has been voted unanimously by Parliament.

It is expected that the members of the commission will be appointed and that they will leave for Denmark at the earliest possible date. Who the members of the commission will be is not yet known. It is likely that they will not be over seven in number and that they will include farmers from several provinces. When asked in Parliament by Messrs. D. C. Flatt, of Millgrove, E. Brethour of Burford, the members of the Association from the Dominion Swine Breeders' Association, that waited on him, would be appointed to act on the commission that replied: "No. They said that they did not wish swine-breeders to be sent, they preferred that swine feeders should be sent. I would prefer to send farmers who themselves are engaged in the industry rather than officers of my department, whose reports might be criticised and might perhaps not be considered so acceptable."

A report of the discussion that took place in Parliament in regard to this matter appears in another column.

Now that it has been definitely decided to send a commission to Denmark it is to be presumed that Hon. Sydney Fisher, will exercise the greatest possible care in selecting the farmers who will act on the deputation. The success of the work of the commission will depend entirely on the character, experience and ability of the men who already Mr. Fisher is being hounded by men who are anxious to get on the commission. Such men are excellent ones to leave at home. In the meantime, Hon. Mr. Fisher justly is congratulated on his decision to appoint the commission.

as to be cultivated both ways. If the tips and butts are shelled off the cob, and only the corn from the centre of the ear planted, an almost perfect stand of three plants in a hill can be secured from planting with this implement. The general practice is to plant the corn crop in hills 3 ft. 8 inches apart each way, but the two-horse planter can be adjusted to plant from 3 ft., 6 inches to 3 ft., 10 inches each way.

NO. OF PLANTS TO THE HILL

The number of plants to a hill will depend on the fertility of the soil and the moisture available. On our best corn lands with the conditions favorable we consider three plants to the hill, with the hills three feet eight inches apart, about the right way to secure the maximum yield per acre. After the corn is well sprouted and before it gets above the ground I would give the land a thorough good harrowing. Care should be taken to do this before there is danger of breaking off the tender plants. As a rule we do nothing more until the crop is big enough to use the two-horse cultivator, though some harrow with a light harrow after the corn is up. If the rows are straight, as they should be, and the operator uses his machine, with fenders attached skilfully, he can cultivate right up to the hill as close as possible without disturbing the plants. When the plants are small the cultivator should be run as deep as possible without disturbing or covering them. Cultivation should be continued until the crop is coming into tassel, and even after, but all later cultivation should be very shallow so as not to disturb the tender rootlets which draw nourishment from near the surface. The great requirement is to keep the surface broken up and fine in order to hold all the moisture possible in the soil.

UNDERDRAINAGE NEEDED

Perhaps the greatest requirement in the Counties of Essex and Kent to the production of an increased yield in corn, and most other crops, is drainage. In these two counties where the land is so very level underdrainage, if universal, would increase the crop production at least 100 per cent. There is much land so saturated with water that a really good crop can never be got except the spring and summer precipitation happen to come just in right quantity and at the right time. Thousands of acres are reduced nearly every year to half a crop or less, and I have seen whole fields that produced scarcely a nubbin of corn solely on account of an excess of moisture owing to heavy rains after planting.

The White Cap Yellow Dent is probably the most popular variety, as it is sure to ripen, if planted on good soil by the middle of June. It is one of the best yielders of shelled corn to the measured bushel on account of depth of grain on the cob. One hundred bushels of ears of White Cap will give from 65 to 70 bushels of shelled corn and we can not see much difference in earliness between the White Cap and the Flint.

Cows should be salted regularly or better still, have it before them at all times. Salt is a good stimulant, promotes health and creates a good appetite.—N. J. Kuneman, Man. Agri. College.