

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. *

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EDITORIAL.

Care of Milk in Summer.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a number of pointed letters from practical dairymen dealing with the care of milk on the farm in hot weather. The subject is at once seasonable and important, and we would be glad to hear from others describing in detail plans of airing and cooling milk which they have found successful. If our dairy industry is to grow, with improvement, as it must to keep pace with the times and foreign demand, the work must begin upon the farm. It is absolutely imperative that the cheesemaker and buttermaker be furnished with milk that is pure and sweet, otherwise their most skillful efforts will be frustrated. A few careless dairymen in any locality must not be permitted to damage the whole product of the factory or creamery and inflict injury upon others through the agency of milk that has been improperly cared for. As a rule, the food of the cow in summer, being grass, is satisfactory, though occasionally taints arise from strong-flavored weeds or herbs. Drinking from slimy, green-covered pond holes is a fruitful source of trouble which the intelligent farmer will provide against. Cows must have an abundance of pure water if the milk flow is to be sustained in quantity and quality. Then the air must be kept free from foul odors such as arise from the decaying carcasses of animals that should have been buried, or burned, instead of being left exposed to the air, as is sometimes the case. Our contributors emphasize the importance of cleanliness in the stable or milking yard, and about the milk stand. As soon as possible after the milk is drawn from the cow it should be thoroughly strained. Last season a few cases were reported where slovenly dairy farmers dumped unstrained milk, including hairs, straw and particles of manure, into the cans. After being strained the milk should be thoroughly aired and then cooled—the former part of the process always coming first. The necessity for cleanliness also applies with equal force to the supply for cities and towns, where many infantile disorders in hot weather are traceable to unwholesome milk.

Last season in some sections dairy farmers were flooded with circulars telling them that a few teaspoonfuls of certain preserving preparations put into milk would keep it perfectly sweet for days in the hottest and muggiest weather. The tendency of such teaching is to encourage laziness and the neglect of the various wholesome precautions which have been outlined above. One of these "cure-alls" we turned over to the Dominion Department of Inland Revenue, and under date of Jan. 24th last we received the following communication from the Secretary:

To the FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

GENTLEMEN,—Referring to your communication of the 18th August, ulto., on the subject of the use of preservatives in milk and other dairy products, I am directed by the Honorable the Minister of Inland Revenue to inform you that a sample of "preservative" has been analyzed by Mr. F. T. Harrison, Public Analyst at London, and his report showing that it consists of a mixture of boracic acid and borax was received at the Department on or about the 14th instant.

I am to add that if the Honorable the Minister was called upon to give advice to the general public he would feel inclined to offer that which you gave in the article clipped from the FARMER'S ADVOCATE and enclosed in your letter, which is as follows:

"We again advise dairymen, as we have scores of times before, to let such substances alone and stick to thorough cleanliness in every step of the dairy process, and the use of abundance of pure water, pure air, and pure food."

I remain, sir, Your obedient servant,
WM. HIMSWORTH,
Secretary.

Ottawa.

Wheat versus Stock Raising.

The unsatisfactory appearance of fall wheat in most parts of Ontario, which we regret to learn has suffered more from the winter than we had thought, is another reminder of the uncertainty of that crop, and of the delusion of depending on it to any great extent as a source of revenue from the farm. We would not willingly discourage its cultivation to a moderate extent, as we know that under favorable conditions it can in the average of years be successfully grown in the greater part of the Province. It is a favorite crop with a large proportion of the farmers in these sections on account of its seeding and harvesting coming in at times when other work is not, as a rule, rushing, and its being a nice clean crop to work with, besides being a favorite crop with which to seed to clover and grasses; but its partial and in many cases complete failure this year should serve to teach the lesson that it is not wise to risk many eggs in that basket, and especially unwise to sow wheat on land not suitable for it on account of insufficient drainage, lack of fertility, or an inadequate preparation of the seed-bed. If the conditions are not such that the crop gets a vigorous start and its roots a good hold of the ground before winter, the outlook is doubtful even in the best of years. Its fate depends not altogether upon the character of the winter, for not infrequently, having come safely through that season when steadily covered by snow, it is heavily discounted by alternate freezing and thawing, or by cold, dry winds, during the spring months; but when it fortunately escapes these adversities and realizes the hopes of the farmer in a full crop, its golden heads waving in the wind are a joy to him and to all who feel interested in his welfare, and they are legion.

The present condition of the wheat crop, which none regret more than we do, serves to emphasize the soundness of the doctrine we have advocated—that, in all of Eastern Canada at least, the raising of grain for sale should be regarded as but a secondary consideration; that the raising and feeding of live stock, and the sale of stock and its products, must continue to be, as it is, the principal source of revenue from the farm, and that the raising of grain should mainly be prosecuted for the purpose of feeding stock and the production of meat and milk; and that to the cow and the sow the majority must look for the means of acquiring a living or a competency; while horses, sheep, and poultry may well work in as profitable seconds to the general farmer, and as the leading source of revenue to those whose tastes and qualifications justify them in making a specialty of any one of these lines.

The fact may as well be faced now as later, that the older Provinces cannot compete with the virgin soil of the West in producing wheat, and even if it were practicable to ensure a good crop of this cereal every year, we doubt if, at the average price of the last decade, it can truly be called a paying crop; and even if a steady price of a dollar a bushel were assured, there would be no sense in making it the main product of the farm, since it would necessarily involve selling the fertility of the farm from year to year and the temptation to attempt its production on land totally unfit, from over-cropping and lack of fertility, to produce a paying crop. As a crop to be grown in moderate area in a well-ordered rotation, it is all right, and that is, in our opinion, as far as it can be satisfactorily adopted.

The markets for all classes of live stock are now such as to encourage the raising of as many young animals as can be well kept, and it will be found more profitable, taking one year with another, to devote special attention to that branch of the work of the farm. To that end, one of the first considerations should be the growing of such crops as will furnish the necessary food to secure the early maturity and promote the development of the farm stock to a high degree of quality. To get the best returns good feeding must go hand in hand with good breeding. Blood will tell with the feed, but feed will not tell without the blood.

What Shall the Teaching of Agriculture Be?

The synopsis of the address by Prof. James on the teaching of agriculture in the rural public schools of the Province of Ontario, given elsewhere in this issue, recalls attention to the fact that after September next it is to be an obligatory subject on the course. Manitoba grappled in earnest with the question some time ago, Nova Scotia is doing so now, and several of the neighboring States have taken it up in some form of nature study, whereby, for example, plant and insect life are observed and studied. In the past Ontario has had a couple of unsuccessful experiences with the subject, so that it is still passing through a transition stage. While this is the case, we trust it will be so handled that valuable time and effort will not be needlessly lost in the process of reaching right methods. A mistake made at this juncture would be a most serious matter. The pre-eminent importance of agriculture to Canada from a material point of view, no one in his senses can question. Hence, our Provincial educational systems should have some bearing upon a pursuit in which so many are engaged, and upon which so many depend directly or indirectly. To too great an extent our school processes have focussed on passing examinations, and by reason of the nature of the course of studies have accelerated the tendency of the youth to gravitate away from rural life and pursuits. We sincerely desire to see this subject now presented in such a way as to promote a love and respect for nature and agriculture as a calling, and to develop the observation and other faculties of the pupils so as to make them better men and women, and more intelligent and successful in the work of life.

It strikes us at the outset that the great weakness of the Ontario public school course exists in the lack of natural science teaching. Hence it will not be sufficient simply to put "Agriculture" on the rural school list of studies with an examination goad at the end of the year. Its success or failure will largely depend on how it is handled by the teachers. We are not in the counsels of the Minister of Education, but so far as the new regulations to be issued shortly go, a start might be made, say, with the study of insects, plants, soils, and the phenomena of the weather—or, in other words, some simple form of entomology, botany, geology, and meteorology, whereby objects themselves are handled and compared, and their characteristics studied. "Agriculture," or farming, is but the practical application of these and other sciences. It will be a big mistake to attempt too much at the start.

We are convinced, as we pointed out when the matter was before the Provincial Legislature, that the qualifying of the teachers is a prime requisite to complete success, hence, as the old Scotch body puts it, we must get back to "the fundamentals." The high school or collegiate institute course, as it relates to public school teachers, requires a substitution of natural science for the French and Latin occupying so much time at present, and the science should be taught intending teachers with a view to what is to follow. The next step will be the training of the teachers in the model or normal schools, or schools of pedagogy, in order that they may teach these sciences according to the most approved educational methods.

Without professing any expert knowledge of pedagogy, it strikes us that the natural sciences can be used with the very greatest advantage to train the faculties of the youth, to develop their observation, comparison, judgment, reason, discernment and discrimination; in other words, to cultivate their mental powers, so that they will be made acquainted with nature and get on better terms with her by understanding her laws through the inductive process. This will the better enable