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NEW SERIES.

The Field.

Early Cut Hay.

The advantages of cutting the hay crop when in its prime state, as regards the nutritive value of the food it is to make, are now in a measure becoming known to intelligent farmers, who are not slow to avail themselves of the benefits of that knowledge, and we may reasonably hope to see the walls of prejudice, so long standing, now slowly but surely crumble away before the light of practical scientific observation.

For a while longer, perhaps, it may be necessary to cut some grass late, in order to supply the whims of city consumers, who can hardly be expected to be any judges of the quality of the food they supply to the animals; but the farmer need not any longer feel out woody fibre, in the form of ripe-cut grass, to his stock, in the vain expectation that they will thrive on it, and some inventive genius will in time construct a machine for grinding up cow-wood to sell for horse-feed to city folks.

But jesting aside, let us tell the farmers that it is a matter of very serious moment to them that they should have their grass cut at just the right time to ensure the largest percentage of nutritive value in the hay made from it. Now, a difference of even ten per cent. in the value of hay may seem a small one, yet that is not all, for we must consider that the less nutritive the more bulky and unpalatable to stock the hay becomes, and that its fattening qualities are thereby lessened in a much greater proportion than its actual loss of nutritive value would seem to imply.

It may seem superfluous, yet in order to prevent mistakes it is necessary to define that by the term "early cut hay" is not meant hay made from grass cut early, in an immature state, but hay made from grass that is cut just at its very prime, when it has attained its full growth, as indicated by the inflorescence or blossom, having passed the

prime, yet not advanced so far towards the completion of the formation of seed as to cause the ripening process (which commences at the base of the seed stalk) to have more than just begun. At this time the whole plant, of whatever kind it may be, clover, timothy, or any other grass, is fullest of saccharine juices, which in a very short time, their office of developing the seed (which is the aim and end of vegetation) having been completed, turn into woody fibre of so much less degree of nutritive value. If the grass is cut just at the right time, which can now be easily and quickly done by the aid of mowing machines, the hay so made is of the very best quality it is possible to obtain.

In Britain, where more attention is paid to obtaining the greatest amount of actual nutritive value of hay to the acre, this practice is almost universally adopted, and in our climate, where the weather is so much more favourable, and the sun more powerful for completing the process of drying out the grass, the practice of early cutting grass for hay is much more easy of accomplishment with successful results. Too early cutting is of no advantage, as unless the grass is sufficiently advanced, as we have previously said, there will be too much shrinkage in drying. Practically, then, the best time to cut for hay is when the blossoms are beginning to fade, and the stalks to harden at the bottom. The use of hay tedders is of great advantage just now, as in order to quickly dry the grass, without evaporating too much of the juice contained in it, the hay should be arid-dried by constant turning and scattering, rather than wilted by exposure to the hot sun. If this matter is properly attended to, one day's tedding will dry hay sufficiently to be put up in cocks, to remain till it sweats a little before being carried to the barn or stack. If this sweating process is properly managed, there will be no danger of the hay afterwards heating in the mow or stack to any injurious extent.

The great trouble with our farmers in hay-making is that they do not, in many cases, make hay at all, but leave nature to make

the hay for them, and instead of obtaining hay of a rich fragrant quality, full of partially dried saccharine juices, they get only burnt grass, out of which the sun, by rapid evaporation, has taken the greater part of the nutritive value.

The more the sap in the grass can be retained, after it has gone through a state of partial fermentation through sweating in the mow, so as to prevent too much heating when in bulk, the better will be the quality of the hay as food for stock.

Some grasses will keep well with less drying than others. Clover requires more time to dry than timothy, and timothy than red-top or mixed meadow grasses. Heating in the mow to a moderate degree does not injure the nutritive qualities of hay for feeding to stock, though it may injure its appearance to sell in the market.

We would strongly urge upon our farmers the advisability of having at least a portion of their hay, especially clover, cut and saved early for home consumption, and those who try the experiment will, like ourselves, be satisfied that it is both more palatable and of greater value for feeding out to stock than what has been cut late and self-cured, as it were, on the stalk, by the changing of its rich juices into hard woody fibre.

Importance of Roots.

We fear there is a tendency to underrate the value of the root crop, and consider that it costs too much in time and labour to be profitable. More than once the subject has been discussed in these columns, by writers who have evidently looked upon the dark side of the question, and so made it appear that the crop actually cost more than the intrinsic value of the roots when gathered into the root cellar.

The object of growing roots is two-fold; first, to grow food for stock of a green succulent nature, such as is evidently needed by them to keep up their health and secure their being in a constantly thriving condition while confined to the stable and yard during the