

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine.

"PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED."

ESTABLISHED 1866.

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1876.

VOL. XXXIX.

LONDON, ONT., AND WINNIPEG, MAN., JULY 7, 1904.

No. 615

EDITORIAL.

The Central Experimental Farm.

The visitor to the Central Experimental Farm is well repaid by a survey of that institution for the suffering which he undergoes in a drive out from the city of Ottawa over one of the worst pieces of public highway in Canada. If the municipality, or whoever has control of this alleged road, cannot afford to wipe out such a disgrace, the country should pass around the hat for subscriptions, or put enough in the agricultural estimates to provide an object lesson there by the Eastern Good Roads Association.

On a commanding situation to the left as one enters the Farm, a magnificent stone observatory is being erected, which will soon be equipped with the finest telescope in Canada and other apparatus for astronomical and meteorological purposes. It is being placed there owing to the suitability of location. The farm itself has very greatly improved in appearance since the writer's last visit, remarkable progress having been made in the growth of shelter and ornamental trees and hedges. The forest belts and the arboretum are commendable and striking features. The European white birch does not appear to be long lived under Ottawa conditions, as most of them died last year. The Norway maple is a very attractive and dense-headed tree, suitable for lawn purposes. Here and there on the grounds we noticed the blue spruce; a particularly beautiful tree, in striking contrast with the ordinary foliage tint. It is quite hardy. The Hungarian lilac is regarded as one of the best hedge plants, and the Caragana is also highly spoken of. Very many useful lists of trees and shrubs have been published, of service to Canadians in making selections. The work of the director, Dr. Wm. Saunders, and the horticulturist, Mr. W. T. Macoun, in this particular alone, will tell in the beatification of the farm homes of Canada for generations to come.

A feature of the experimental work to which a great deal of attention is now being paid, is that of plant-breeding by Dr. C. E. Saunders (experimentalist), son of the director, a painstaking and indefatigable investigator. In fruits, special efforts, inaugurated some years ago, are being continued, with the object of evolving apples and other fruits in which size and quality will be combined with hardness for the Northwest. The Director points with a great deal of satisfaction to the results of their work in the production of such excellent wheats as Preston and Stanley, with the idea of combining with the good milling qualities of Red Fife, earliness in ripening, which is a great desideratum in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

The demonstrations given in the best methods of handling and applying barnyard manures are already familiar to readers of the "Farmer's Advocate," and entitle the Experimental Farm to the thanks of the agricultural community. Useful work has been done in determining the cost of production of grain and other crops, and of meat and milk. In the individual cow records, the highest profit, labor not included, for the past year was \$63.09, by "Queenie," a grade Guernsey, the food cost of producing one hundred pounds of milk in her case being a fraction over fifty-nine cents. In the case of a grade Short-horn, "Rosy," the cost of producing one hundred pounds of milk was over seventy-two cents, and she showed a profit for the year of only \$17.77, all of which indicates the value of keeping careful records of what cows are doing.

The Agriculturist, Mr. J. H. Grisdale, among

other practical experiments, is continuing the effort to determine the comparative advantage of growing and fattening rations with calves, results being favorable to the latter, though it requires greater skill on the part of the feeder to avoid disturbing the digestive and other functions of the animals. The outdoor treatment of pigs in winter was not found to be economical.

In the poultry department, we observed a good showing of young chicks, incubator hatched, and thriving under the outdoor conditions. Mr. A. G. Gilbert is specializing on winter egg-production work, and the development of individual vigor in the hen, in order to the hatching of a big percentage of strong chicks. He is conducting a campaign against what he designates the "molly-coddling" of hens.

This season, some 32,822 samples of grain and potatoes were sent out for testing by farmers. It strikes us that some of the variety test lists, such as those of potatoes and some of the grains, might well be reduced materially by discarding those demonstrated to be inferior, notwithstanding the fact that persons may occasionally inquire for them. Practical utility should be kept in view, and the cutting out of useless detail. As on other Canadian farms, the war with weeds is incessantly waged on the Central Farm, the irrepressible bindweed appearing in some of the experimental plots, and at one point a few stalks of ox-eye daisy, the latter to be eliminated by hand pulling. Dr. James Fletcher, botanist and entomologist, and Prof. F. T. Shutt, the chemist, whose work has been distinguished by thoroughness over a wide range of practical subjects, were both absent—one in the east, and the other in the West—attending farmers' meetings of an educational character.

Taken all together, an immense amount of experimental work is in progress, and Dr. Saunders is to be congratulated upon the thoroughness with which it is conducted and the general appearance of the farm. A couple of days can be agreeably and profitably spent there by any one of an enquiring turn of mind in relation to agriculture and its problems.

Crop Rotation.

The term rotation of crops is not merely a scientific phrase, but is rather a designation given to a practice which appears to be all too slow in being adopted. In a series of articles now current in these columns on problems of the soil, the writer deals clearly and forcibly with this subject. His ideas are applicable to the management of all kinds of farms, but are particularly so upon the average one-hundred-acre farm of Eastern Canada. No doubt, as he says, many are following a system of rotation of a certain kind, but it is important that the crops fall in a proper succession so that each may receive the greatest advantage from the cultivation, treatment and characteristics of the preceding one. Anywhere one may go weeds bear evidence to laxity in the management of certain farms, emphasizing the importance of thoroughness in cultivation, and the exercise of good judgment in cropping. We would earnestly urge all our readers to give more than a passing notice to these articles on crop rotation. We would suggest the reading and re-reading of them, a thoughtful study of the principles underlying the practice, and, above all, to make a practical application of them. It is not for want of knowledge on such subjects that our methods are not more advanced, but because of this procrastinating habit so many have fallen into of putting off the test until next year, or until we are better situated.

Prizes for Farms.

The offering of prizes for the best specimens of live stock and farm produce at the local and large fairs is generally acknowledged to have had a beneficial influence in stimulating farmers to the effort to excel in those lines of production by the introduction of improved types of animals and varieties of cereals, roots and vegetables by which not only their own financial condition has been advantaged, but by the dissemination of which the character of our live stock and other produce has been improved, thus enhancing their selling value and adding to the wealth at once of individual farmers and the country as a whole. A day's drive in any district of the country at this season of the year reveals to the observant traveler that there is yet much room for improvement in the methods and system of farming on the part of the average farmers. The signal of distress from wet feet, or the need of drainage, displayed by portions of many fields in the form of the pale yellow leaves of the grain crops; the presence of innumerable weeds allowed to ripen and reproduce their kind, with little effort being put forth to check their spread; the neglect to use preventive measures against insect enemies or destroy them in the incipient stages of their existence, with the resultant deficiency in quantity and quality of the crop; the lack of good judgment or taste in the location of the buildings of the homestead, and of reasonably prompt attention to needed repairs, and the too general indifference to the little touches of neatness and order which make a place attractive and a source of pride and satisfaction to those who call it home, as well as to the passer-by. These are but a few of the many reminders that there is much room for improvement. Happily, these defects do not apply to many farms, and to some farms, few, if any, apply, and yet few farmers will deny that they do not farm as well as they know how, nor keep the home surroundings in as sanitary and tidy a condition, or provide as many comforts and conveniences for the family as they might, with comparatively little cost.

A mental soliloquy along these lines has suggested the question of the practicability of reviving and extending the system formerly conducted by the old Agriculture and Arts Association of Ontario of offering and awarding prizes by some authority for the best managed, cleanest and neatest farm in the township, and, if approved, a sweepstakes prizes for the best managed, cleanest and neatest farm in the county, the township firsts only being considered, and, finally, a grand sweepstakes medal for the best in the Province, the county firsts alone considered. Presuming that this proposition meets with approval, and the question being raised by what authority and under whose auspices and supervision should the scheme be carried out, we suggest that, in the Province of Ontario, where a Provincial Superintendent of Agricultural Societies has been appointed by the Department of Agriculture, the initial steps be taken by this officer, and the necessary funds to form a nucleus for the carrying out of the scheme be provided by the Provincial Government, the local societies contributing a proportion if need be, and having a voice in the preparation of the plan, the basis or standard upon which judgment is to be rendered, and the selection of the judge or judges.

Making all due allowance for the difficulty, owing to the lack of suitable help and other patent disabilities, of doing everything on a farm as one would like to do or have it done, we submit for the consideration of our readers the question of