

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

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IN THE DOMINION.

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Growing Winter Wheat.

The greater portion of the harvest has been removed in most districts, and with many the most pressing work following this is the preparation of the land for winter wheat. Winter wheat is a somewhat risky crop, but where the land is put in proper condition, very few failures result. There is a question in the minds of many as to whether or not fall-wheat growing pays on valuable land as well as some other crops. Many others are strongly in favor of the crop, and give several very plausible reasons for growing it. The tendency during the last few years has been to decrease the acreage devoted to the growing of winter wheat in Ontario, but the last two or three years have been an exception. Wheat-growing has experienced a gradual decrease in acreage during the last ten years, the falling-off amounting to about 300,000 acres in Ontario. In 1910 there were, however, about 80,000 acres more than the previous year, and the acreage for all of Canada shows an increase the last two years. Whether or not this increase will be maintained, remains to be seen.

Fall wheat, like most other crops, has its advantages. Among these is the fact that, provided the crop winters well, it lessens the acreage of spring seeding, and the spring is a very busy season, when labor is scarce and time precious; so that if a few acres are sown to wheat, much time is gained. This is perhaps one of the strongest points in favor of the crop.

Then, again, there is the argument that the more different kinds of crops a man grows, the better are his chances, because he is almost certain to get good returns from some of the crops, and with the rest wheat stands a good chance. Mixed farming necessitates the growing of as many of the different grains as possible. There are still those who claim that, to clean land and raise the standard of fertility of the soil, it is necessary to summer-fallow. There are cases where noxious weeds are so prevalent that this system is resorted to, but where good cultivation

and a short rotation of crops have been followed, there is no reason why the farm should become so dirty as to need fallowing. Corn-field tillage will eradicate most weeds, but the crop is not early enough off for wheat. Fallowing is believed now to be an expensive practice, but where a field has been cultivated throughout the summer and has received a fair dressing with barn-yard manure, winter wheat makes a good crop, for it begins growing in the fall, and thus commences to draw upon the plant food, a part of which, and particularly the nitrates, would be lost by leaching if no crop was sown on the field. It is this loss of plant food that is a strong point against fallowing, and, as far as preventing this loss goes, wheat is a good crop for the fallow.

Does it pay to grow wheat on valuable land? This is the question answered in the affirmative by some, and negatively by others. One thing is sure, and that is, any land that will grow wheat well is valuable land. Very few of the growers of grain ever figure out just what it costs them per bushel to produce a crop. According to estimates from over 5,000 reports obtained by the American Bureau of Statistics, the cost of producing a bushel of wheat in 1909, taking the average of each State separately, ranged from 44 cents in Montana, to 96 cents in South Carolina. The cost depends largely on the value of the land, cost of labor, and yield per acre, and, while the cost in South Carolina was high, the price was high enough to make a profit of 30 cents per bushel, while the profit in Montana was 33 cents per bushel. The average yield on the farms reported was 17.2 bushels, which means a profit of a little over five dollars per acre. This is not as big a profit as could be made from some special lines of farming, and many hold that land is more valuable to grow feed for live stock than it is to grow grain to be sold off the farm. Selling grain must be hard on the soil fertility, whereas feeding all of it to the live stock maintains the plant food in the soil.

One thing against the wheat is that it makes a break in the rotation. Short rotations are necessary for clean farming and highest returns, and where wheat is sown it is often placed upon clover sod, and must be sown either on sod, stubble or fallow land. For the best yield the fallow stands first, but few farmers summer-fallow now, so that the wheat must go on either sod or stubble land. Now, it is known to be good practice to place the corn and hoed crops on the sod, and follow these with a cereal, after which it is seeded down. Stubble land is often not suited to the production of a large crop of wheat, and to insure a good crop it is advisable to give the land a dressing with manure. As fall wheat is a satisfactory crop to seed down with, this manuring is twofold in its benefit, for it insures a good crop of wheat, and at the same time improves the chances of the clover being a good catch. Barley stubble seems to be better suited to wheat production than oat stubble. This is to some extent due to the fact that the barley, being harvested earlier, permits of longer and more thorough cultivation.

For those who decide to sow some wheat, it is necessary that they take some means to insure a good crop. If the soil is a clover sod, early plowing after the hay is off, and a thorough working with the disk, cultivator and harrow to get the sod well rotted and the land in good tilth is essential. Very little manure is needed on new clover fields that are in good heart, but if the land is at all poor, a light dressing of manure should be applied. Where the crop is sown on stubble land, manure is always essential, if large yields are expected. Wheat should never be placed on land that is not in good tilth, and the failure or success of the crop depends largely on the cultivation given the soil before sowing, and on the amount of manure applied.

The time of sowing is also an important factor. Comparatively early sowing usually gives the greatest yields. The exact time of sowing depends on the locality, the latter part of August and up to the middle of September being the general rule of time of sowing. Where the Heslop is in evidence, sowing after September 15th is advisable. It is better that the crop get a good top before winter sets in. Only good plump seed should be sown, and, if all these precautions are taken, a very fair-paying crop should result.

Beauteous New Brunswick.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Unfortunately, in Ontario, as well as in the other Provinces of Canada, the tide of travel takes us westward, and few of us realize how much we miss by our indifference to the attractions of the Maritime Provinces in general, and New Brunswick in particular. While engaged in the work of the Women's Institutes in that Province, I had an excellent opportunity, such as falls to the lot of few, to become acquainted with the Province, and particularly with the agricultural population.

There is a fascination about New Brunswick—the rivers are so large, the hills are so high, and the distances are so great. The gradual slope of the farms on either bank of the rivers, the dense woods, the wonderful inland waterways and the excellent harbors, make New Brunswick one of the most desirable Provinces in our Dominion.

The impressions that I received on my first trip in the Province, from Adam Junction up to Perth, have remained very clear, and it is to this part of the Province that my thoughts turn first. For miles we ran along the shores of the St. John river, and I never saw this river afterwards without feeling that I was getting back home. As far as I have seen, there is no other river in Canada that can compare with this "Rhine of America." The farms slope gradually away from the river, their upper edges covered with spruce woods. All summer long the river is dotted by immense rafts of spruce logs being towed down to mills at St. John.

It is not only in this river that the rafts of logs are to be found, but in every river and stream in the Province large enough to float a log. Millions of feet are taken out of New Brunswick woods each year, and yet the lumberman will tell you that, owing to the rapid growth of the spruce tree, the forests are just as valuable to-day as they ever were, and, after seeing the woods at close range, you can easily believe it. They are a solid mass of vegetation, through which it would be almost impossible to force a path. The gray caribou moss hangs from the branches of the spruce trees, and the thick undergrowth grows to the very edge of the roads. If a cleared piece of land is left ungrazed or uncultivated for a year, it will be covered with small spruce trees, and in ten years be almost as thickly wooded as it originally was.

The New Brunswick woods must be a delight to hunters, for many times in our trip we caught sight of deer, and once saw two moose, like clumsy, overgrown colts, trotting through a piece of half-cleared land which lay along the track. We heard tales of bears and of the giant cats which inhabit the woods in some districts, and making the keeping of sheep an impossibility for the surrounding farmers.

One of the first impressions you get in New Brunswick is, "What a great Province for agriculture!" This impression is particularly strong when going through Carlton County, in the districts surrounding Sussex, and going further inland in the districts back from the St. John River or along the Petitcodiac. Unfortunately, the majority of the farming class in New Brunswick have never proved this impression to be true, probably because they have never been entirely dependent on their farms as a means of support. In the winter, numbers of the men work in the lumber woods, and very often go river-driving in the early summer, and the farm is a secondary consideration. They can make a fair living without farming very ardently, and so the farms are neglected for lumbering in the winter, and very often for fishing in the summer. The farms are often cropped steadily without any regard for the soil or for the advantages of rotation of crops, until much of the land is useless, and will require years to build it up to its old-time fertility. There are many cases, however, where the land has been intelligently worked, and the results prove that, given a fair chance, the greater part of the soil of New Brunswick will yield just as profitable crops as anywhere in the Dominion.

The Government has proved that, with proper care, apples may be grown to great advantage in the Province, and they have established several demonstration orchards which are proving to the farmers that apples cannot only be grown, but can be profitably grown.

The farm homes in New Brunswick are particularly attractive. During my trip through the Province I never saw a stone building, and only twice did I see a brick house. The houses are clapboarded or shingled, and are painted white, with red roofs. Very often the other buildings are white, also, and it seems to give the whole landscape a fresh, clean appearance, when it is dotted with these groups of white buildings. The schools are also painted white, and, in comparison with our stone buildings, are, on the outside, at least, particularly clean and cheerful-looking.

It was the churches of New Brunswick that attracted me particularly. Every couple of miles you pass a church painted white like the other