

FARM MANAGEMENT

Top Dressing and Cultivating Alfalfa

I have a field seeded last spring with about 20 lbs. of alfalfa at once, along with a nurse crop of oats. Owing to the dry weather the stand of alfalfa is very thin in some places, but in parts of the field it is good enough to tempt me to leave it down. I am now cutting the oats and intend to top dress the field with manure as soon as an opportunity comes like to know if there is danger of injuring the alfalfa plants by discing or harrowing immediately after the manure has been applied.—J. W. K. Gilegarry Co., Ont.

There would be great danger of completely ruining the young alfalfa plants should you attempt to disc or harrow this field. To top dress with manure, if applied with a manure spreader and not too heavily, would be good practice and should materially benefit the young plants.

You are well advised in keeping this stand of alfalfa such as you have. Should the weather prove favorable from this time forward in all probability it will develop and prove to be a satisfactory stand. The thin places may be renovated next spring if such attention is necessary, and even a comparatively light stand of alfalfa will give a considerable yield more than one would expect since when the plants stood out and take advantage of available room.

Any cultivating, discing or harrowing of this stand we would not advise to be practised until next spring, and then only experimentally until the value of such cultivation be proved in your own particular case.

Do Not Pasture Alfalfa

Hy. Glendinning, Ontario Co., Ont.

We hear much nowadays as to the hardness of the alfalfa plant. If such information leads any of us to indiscriminate pasturing, such advice is very bad. Alfalfa, which is to be carried over for another year should not be pastured close at any time, particularly if horses. Stock should be allowed only in winter on any account. When the crown is killed by close pasturing, the field is done. Alfalfa is not as hardy as some would have us believe. It needs good care and will yield a profit for such care.

I have pastured alfalfa and excellent pasture it makes, but good judgment must be used. We have practised turning our cows into the alfalfa field when it was a couple of feet high for 1½ to two hours a day. When the alfalfa was eaten down to about six inches high, however, no more pasturing was allowed, and the alfalfa went into the winter with six inches of stubble for protection.

Compulsory Road Dragging

It has come to the inevitable end in Iowa. The farmer will not use the road drag voluntarily. The Legislature has made road dragging compulsory. A one-mile tax has been provided on all property in the township and it can be used for no other purpose. A supervisor may be hired and 50 cents a mile is the rate for dragging.

Whatever may be the aim of road of the future, to-day it is a road over vast stretches of Iowa country. It is folly to talk hard road dragging, many sections, remove from the material, just as it is to refuse to build hard roads when the material lies at hand. The road drag has proved the simplest, cheapest and most effective means of maintaining and improving dirt roads. It is so simple and cheap that road owners decline to use it. The farmer declines to drag his own road probably because he is tired to have

road work done for him. In a great majority of cases he is not willing to do this extra work in order to improve his road. This is probably the explanation of his neglect.

When so simple, effective and cheap a means of road maintenance is not used by local road authorities nothing is left but the application of the law. The Iowa legislators have acted wisely in enforcing road drag. It is a sad commentary on the business sense of road officials, but it is to be hoped that other states will follow the example, until the road drag becomes a familiar object not only on dirt roads but gravel and macadam roads as well. Nothing will so easily and cheaply maintain the life and comfortable use of a gravel and macadam road as the drag.—Breder's Gazette.

How to Destroy English Sparrows

In its economic relations the English sparrow among birds is comparable to the rat among mammals. It is cunning, destructive, and filthy. It destroys small fruits, as cherries, grapes, pears, and is also destructive buds and flowers of cultivated trees, shrubs, and vines. In the garden it eats seeds as they ripen, and nips off tender young vegetables as they appear above ground, peas and lettuce being especially subject to attack. It damages wheat and other grains when newly sown, ripening, and in shocks.

It reduces the numbers of some of our most useful native species, such as bluebirds, house wrens, purple martins, tree swallows, cliff swallows, and barn swallows, by destroying the eggs and young and by usurping the nesting places. It attacks other familiar native birds, as the robin, wren, red-eyed vireo, and catbird. Unlike our native birds whose places it usurps, it has no song, but is noisy and vituperative. It defiles buildings and ornamental trees, shrubs, and vines with its excrement and with its bulky nests.

DESTROY THE SPARROW

The most effective method of preventing the increase of sparrows in a locality is to destroy their nests at intervals of 10 or 12 days throughout the breeding season. Occasionally they build large covered nests in trees, but as a rule they build open nests in bird houses, cornices, waterspouts, and similar places. While it is often difficult to reach nests with the hand, they can usually be torn down by means of a long pole having an iron hook at the tip. By a concerted and continued movement to destroy every nest after the eggs are laid, English sparrows in any locality may be gradually reduced without resorting to shot or poison.

Where the use of poison is not prohibited by law, it may be effectively used to reduce the number of sparrows. Of the different poisons tested, the most satisfactory is strychnia sulphate. Wheat has proved to be a good bait. The grain should be regularly supplied at the baiting stations until the birds have become accustomed to resort to the place. A good time to put it out is early morning, as the birds are sure to be hungry for breakfast.

AMOUNT OF POISON

In deciding the amount of poisoned wheat to put out at one time, it is well to estimate the number of sparrows frequenting a feeding place and allow about 20 kernels for each sparrow. Although two kernels of bent coated with the solution have been known to kill a sparrow, six or seven kernels are required to insure fatal results. Only as much poison should be put out as is likely to be eaten in one day, as exposure

to moisture reduces its virulence. Furthermore, sparrows that take less than a fatal quantity, or that become frightened by the death of comrades, will forsake a feeding place if poison is kept there constantly. It is better, therefore, to supply poisoned wheat after each poisoning until the birds have recovered confidence.

A poison mixture that has proved very effective is prepared as follows: Put one-eighth ounce of strychnia sulphate into three-fourths of a gill of hot water and boil until dissolved. Mix one and a half teaspoonfuls of starch with a few drops of cold water, add it to the poison solution, and heat till the starch thickens. Pour the hot poisoned starch solution over one quart of wheat and stir until every kernel is coated. Small-kernelled wheat sold as poultry food, if reasonably clean, is preferable to first quality grain, being cheaper and more easily eaten by the sparrows. The first point to make sure of, how-

ever, is that it is English sparrows we are poisoning and not some of our valuable birds.

Skim Milk Paint.

The following receipt for making skim milk paint is from the Scientific American: Stir into one gallon of milk about three pounds of Portland cement, and add sufficient red paint powder to impart a good colour. Any other colour may be used in place of the red. Mix only as used, and keep thoroughly stirred. The milk will hold the paint in suspension, but unless stirring is continued frequently, the cement, being heavier, will settle to the bottom.

Enclosed find \$1 for my renewal to Farm and Dairy for another year. It is a splendid farm paper, and should be in every dairyman's home.—J. M. Young, Middlesex Co., Ont.



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