

Farmer's Advocate

and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

Vol. XLV.

Winnipeg, Canada, May 5, 1909.

No. 867

FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL

ESTABLISHED 1866.

Canada's Foremost Agricultural Journal
Published Every Wednesday.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Canada and Great Britain, per annum, in advance \$1.50
" " " " " " (if in arrears) 2.00
United States and Foreign countries, in advance 2.50

Date on label shows time subscription expires.
In accordance with the law, the FARMER'S ADVOCATE
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British Agency, W. W. Chapman, Mowbray House,
Norfolk St., London, W. C., England.

Specimen copies mailed free. Agents wanted.
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FARMER'S ADVOCATE

OF WINNIPEG, LIMITED.

14-16 PRINCESS STREET

WINNIPEG, MAN.

EDITORIAL

Seed-Time and Harvest

A careful and practical consideration of sowing and reaping in all operations, individual, commercial or agricultural, shows that, on the average, much depends on the precautions taken in connection with work done in the early stages. It is so with seeding. Now, that farmers are busying themselves with seeding operations, the importance of thoroughness in all details cannot well be over-impressed. Low-grade seed and slipshod cultivation may give a fair crop, if Providence is kind with rain and other weather conditions. But the thrifty man so prepares his land and so selects his seed that he attains fair returns when the elements have not been so favorable—he has concluded that the cheapest insurance in farm practices is strong, clean seed, planted seasonably in a rich, mellow seed-bed. Continuous cropping, too, without returning plant food to the soil, brings certain disaster. For the next few weeks, however special attention can be given to the quality of seed used, and the soil conditions furnished. For late-sown crops, it may still be possible to apply manure where it is needed.

Specific instructions cannot readily be given for seed-bed preparation. If such were the case, farmers could proceed mechanically, without making use of the brains with which they have been endowed. Experience on the fields reveals to every observant cultivator a certain condition of the soil that gives best results. On many farms this condition can be brought about only by different treatment in different fields, and sometimes in different parts of the same field. In some cases a double stroke of a harrow may be necessary, while in others a judicious use of other implements will give just as good results, with much less labor of men

and teams. Many implements are provided for the work. A selection must be made, depending on the nature of the soil. In some cases it may be advisable to have a variety of implements for cultivation purposes to meet soil conditions brought about by changes of weather.

Lose no time after the land is in fit condition to be worked, but put forth every effort to have thorough work done on every acre. On heavy, rolling land, time may often be saved and a more favorable condition of the seed-bed insured by giving one stroke with the harrow on the high parts, which dry first. This conserves moisture, prevents baking, and expedites the work of preparation when one is ready to go ahead and fit that field for the drill.

The question should not be, "How often should I harrow?"; but, "In what condition is the seed-bed?"

An Experiment Worth Trying

On another page of this issue a number of letters are printed, written by farmers, on the question of harrowing grain. They are unanimously agreed that the practice is a good one, that harrowing after the grain is up is a practical means of weed destruction, is a good way of conserving soil moisture and that it does the grain no harm. To eradicate the weeds and keep the moisture in the soil is the chief end of cultivation. If the weeds can be kept in check and such cultivation given as will prevent the loss of moisture from the soil, save through the crop grown thereon, the land will certainly be in proper condition for seeding.

Harrowing grain is evidently a practice that should not be undertaken too extensively on the start. It is one that each man should determine for himself the value of. Taking another's experience in some cases may be alright, and in the matter of harrowing grain some of us might be inclined to conclude from the unanimity of the testimony offered, that the practice might be profitably followed on our own farms, but it is advisable on general grounds to go a little slow in the matter. What we learn best is learned from personal experience, and experience in matters like this is best gained through experimentation. One should try the harrows first on a small area, and find out from the results obtained from that whether or not, harrowing is as beneficial as some claim it to be. It may be that circumstances and place as to soil, climate and length of the growing season make such harrowing impossible. But the only way to find out is by practical test. If the harrowing of grain after it is up, is as beneficial in so far as eradicating weeds and conserving moisture are concerned, as is claimed, it is worth knowing about and trying. A test certainly is well worth while.

A Growing Alberta Industry

In this issue we are giving considerable publicity to the business of winter-feeding cattle in Alberta. The industry is deserving of extensive discussion. It is only a few years ago since it was impossible to find winter-fed export cattle in any considerable numbers in the province, but now the industry has grown to immense proportions and buyers for at least three large exporting firms are straining every effort to get cattle.

Given ordinarily favorable artificial conditions cattle feeding in the West is bound to increase in extent. The charges against grain that has to be hauled from Alberta to world's markets is so great that grain growing for export will always be at a disadvantage even should the Hudson's Bay route be wholly feasible. The logical outcome of the situation is that the products of Alberta farmers will be marketed in concentrated forms such as beef, butter, pork, etc., and so minimize the charges for transportation. When an Alberta steer goes to England he carries with him several tons of Alberta grass, hay and grain at a lower freight rate than could possibly be had on these materials in their natural state.

All the country should be interested in the development of the cattle feeding industry in Alberta, as its success means additional trade to all classes of our population. And there are many ways in which certain interests can assist in fostering the trade. The provincial and Dominion governments can help the meat dealers operating in the province by a straight forward policy of dealing, the railway companies can render incalculable benefit by putting on a modern service of express stock trains, and feeders can help themselves by a vigilant study of conditions and circumstances looking toward persistent economy in production. With all these agencies operating there is every reason to expect to see large numbers of winter-fed cattle exported from Alberta each spring.

Keepers of National Wealth

Few announcements have met with such general approval as that recently made in the Federal parliament by Hon. Sidney Fisher that the government is about to name a commission to recommend means of conserving our natural resources. As a nation our characteristic sin is waste and lack of appreciation of the value of our supplies of raw material, especially our soil fertility, forests, game, fish, etc. Individually we all think we have developed economic habits but collectively as a people we are only distanced by our cousins south in the rate of dissipation of our national wealth. It would be well for us if we could carry into the administration of our national affairs those characteristics of thrift and

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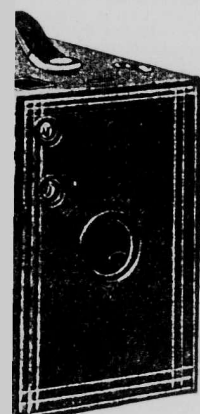
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