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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

"Persevere and
Succeed."

Established
1866

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No. 905

EDITORIAL.

Reports from many sections of Eastern Canada agree that the winter is passing most agreeably; not too cold, and with fine sleighing that facilitates trade and makes business brisk. The snow jacket is generally regarded as the precursor of good crops the coming season.

We commend the manner of account-keeping that Alfred Hutchinson, of Wellington Co., adopted with his pig-feeding, as calculated to let light into the recesses of profit and loss in farming. Note how Mr. Hutchinson's attention has been drawn to the value of skim milk!

The conditions of the building-plans competition, announced in "The Farmer's Advocate" of January 13th (see page 42), have been broadened to include plans and descriptions of barns erected in 1908. The contest was at first restricted to plans of buildings put up in 1909, but it was realized that this might exclude many good modern buildings, hence the change.

Live hogs have touched 9½ cents in Montreal. An Ontario farmer submits figures showing that he has produced them at a feed cost of 5 cents. That leaves a pretty nice profit, and would, even if 2½ cents were deducted from the above-named selling price. But what good would twenty-cent prices be to the man with no hogs to sell? Some Canadian farmers have been missing a good thing in the pork line.

Prosperity has its perils. There is the temptation to excessive expenditure, and, what is still more dangerous, to speculation in schemes outside the farm, in order to the more speedy accumulation of wealth. Just now, as during the past year, farmers are pestered through the mails with all sorts of seductive propositions to invest their surplus in stocks and shares of every imaginable sort. The kindling-box is the best place for most of this literature.

Data collected at cheese factories all over Western Ontario for two years in succession, show that where the whey is pasteurized the liquid going into the patrons' cans contains twice as large a percentage of butter-fat as where the whey is not pasteurized. The fat thus saved figures out to 22 pounds per ton of cheese made. Five cents a pound is a conservative estimate to place on the feeding value of that fat. This would be \$1.10 per ton of cheese, or more than the whole cost of pasteurizing the whey. There is, besides, the saving of considerable loss of sugar through fermentation, the destruction of tuberculosis and other disease-producing bacilli.

Nearly a hundred thousand more head of stock were marketed in and through Toronto stock-yards in 1909 than in 1908, and the average value per cwt. has been estimated a dollar higher. This perhaps is a slight exaggeration. Our own reporter, the most diligent and accurate reviewer of the Toronto market, estimated, in his special Christmas-number review, that cattle of all classes of butchers and exporters had realized 50 cents per cwt. more. Similar comparisons, he added, might be made in regard to sheep, lambs and calves, while hogs were from \$1.50 to \$1.75, and even \$2.00, above the figures of the corresponding dates in the previous year.

Nearly five hundred and sixty million dollars is the estimated value of the live stock in Canada last year, being an increase of 27,790,000 over the estimate for 1908.

In a recent issue "The Farmer's Advocate" devoted an article to a discussion of the causes of the remarkable rise in the price of farm products, one view being that consumption had got ahead of supply, and another that gold—the basis of all our circulation—had become plentiful and cheap, and, therefore, it took more of it to buy a given quantity of food. The latter view has lately been endorsed by a number of experts in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. A study of Canadian markets and prices goes to show, however, that there is a combination of keen demand with which food supplies do not keep pace, and naturally prices rule high.

How long will the effect of manuring last? This point is suggested by a correspondent, who cites a case where a two-acre strip, manured for potatoes, at the rate of 25 tons per acre, showed marked results in a wheat crop seven years later. Still more remarkable, he states that for thirty-six years his crops have always been more marked on a certain old building site. We have all observed instances of this kind, going to prove the lasting effect of manure and humus. We should like to learn of other such cases from those who can relate the facts accurately, and, if possible, give results in bushels and tons. These facts bear distinctly upon the instructive discussion on the value of manure.

Purchasers of concentrated commercial feeds, other than the staple grains and their direct by-products, such as bran, middlings, and the like, should acquaint themselves with the provisions of the Commercial Feeding-stuffs Act, which requires all these commercial feeds except the ones specifically excepted in the Act, to be registered and stamped on the sack, or else tagged with the name of the brand, its registration number, the name and address of the manufacturer, and a guarantee of analysis. By familiarizing oneself with the meaning of the guarantee, as anyone will have already done who has followed the feeding articles in this paper, a feeder will be enabled to buy these more or less unfamiliar products and use them to advantage. Read the synopsis of Prof. Harcourt's address before the dairymen at St. Thomas.

The short-course classes at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College have been, by all odds, the most successful in the five-years' history of the institution, having been attended by from 250 to 300 enthusiastic farmers and their sons. In addition, twelve ladies or more have been studying dairying, fruit-growing, poultry-raising and domestic science. Sixty-five of these students hail from Prince Edward Island, 26 from New Brunswick, and about 150 from Nova Scotia, and one from Newfoundland. At no previous short course has so much interest been manifested in fruit-growing, vegetable-gardening, and the various branches of horticulture. Students, not only from the Annapolis Valley, but also from other parts, requested more classes in these subjects than were provided in the course, and these classes were arranged for.

The Farmer's Wood-lot.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a letter on the farm-forest question by J. H. Burns, who condemns in rather relentless style all advice to the farmer to spare the forest. Mr. Burns is certainly to be commended for the terse and vigorous way in which he presents his arguments. His first point, that the idea that forests and wood-lots increased the rainfall has had to be abandoned, is well taken. Instead of being, as he says, an exploded theory, it would probably be more accurate to say that it is in abeyance at present. The theory that, though the amount of rainfall may not be affected by the presence of forest, yet the regularity and even distribution of this annual rainfall is greatly promoted by the presence of trees in a country, is one that has not had to be given up. A most important consideration this, as either prolonged drouth or floods are destructive.

We are glad that we can heartily agree with Mr. Burns on the wisdom of retaining the forests on the uncultivated areas of the country, and of planting wind-breaks for shelter and for beauty near the buildings and the orchard. The fearlessness and hopefulness with which the fuel question is faced is also worthy of admiration, though the steadily increasing cost of the article has evidently not been taken fully into account.

There are some points raised, however, which might well bear further discussion. Anxious as we are that the ground should dry early in spring, so that spring work can be started; on the other hand, all will admit that the season through the soil dries much too quickly. The influence of even a clump of forest here and there in checking the sweep of the wind and retarding this drying process, is doubtless very much greater than is generally supposed. We complain now of the increasing force of the winds, which, owing to the greater clearing off of the timber, dry the earth and beat down the grain, but probably we have but little idea of the extent to which they are modified by even the small amount of forest that still remains. Read the opinions of Dr. Saunders, of the Dominion Experimental Farm, and R. S. Kellogg, of the United States Forest Service, as given in H. R. Macmillan's letter on "Forestry for Farmers."

Will it pay to preserve a wood-lot? That will depend in part on the value that is placed upon land. To suggest that it is worth \$10 to \$50 per year is surely a great over-statement. Though some crops in some seasons might return that amount over expenses, the general average is another thing. We take it that the sum that land will rent for represents the general opinion as to what it is worth per year over and above the expense of working it. Another method of arriving at the value per year that is placed upon land by the public is to compute the yearly interest at a moderate rate on the selling value. By either of these methods it will be found that from three to five dollars per acre per year is a fair value for land, including buildings. At present prices, and at a low estimate, a wood-lot will return per year \$4.00 per acre net in fuel alone. For timber purposes the annual growth would represent a much higher value. If, as is likely, timber continues to rise in price, the profitability of a few acres of forest, even on the best land, is beyond question.

But there is more than mere climatic influence or dollars and cents involved. There is sentiment. Utilitarianism carried to an extreme is the veriest folly. Without sentiment this old world would be but a bleak desert. It is, we believe, a solemn truth that if everything is made