

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

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## The Commission on Agricultural Education.

The decision by the Government to appoint a commission on agricultural education has been prompted largely by the steady demand from our best farmers upon the Government for an agricultural college which will enable their sons to keep up with the procession of progressive agriculturists. The appointment of this commission is evidence of an intention to do something along the lines indicated, and should be a matter of congratulation to the whole farming community, and, for that matter, to the country at large. Whether the work of the commission will be beneficial to the farmer or not will, however, depend largely upon its make-up, as to whether the members are in touch with the various phases of agriculture in the Province and with the people making their living by it.

The personnel of such a commission might include representatives from among the most capable and successful agriculturists, who are themselves ardent students of up-to-date agricultural literature, and who realize the necessity for technical training, also from among those now engaged to a greater or less degree in the spread of agricultural knowledge, and from among those engaged in the supervision of teaching methods, as, for example, district school inspectors.

From the announcement of the Minister of Agriculture, this commission will be expected to formulate a workable plan for the guidance of the Government, looking to the advancement of agricultural education and the establishment of an agricultural college.

For the scheme to commend itself to the farmers it must be self-evident that it is a practical one from a dollars-and-cents standpoint, by insuring a more enjoyable life and larger profits than now obtained for the labor and energy expended, as unless the course provided so commends itself to the farmer, students will be few in number. It will be an easy matter to set up a high standard of education, the object of which will be to elevate the profession of agriculture. The idea of elevating or raising the profession is based on the false premise that manual labor is more or less debasing, a fallacy believed in, unfortunately, by some farmers. High standards of education, some people would have us believe are only maintained at universities. An agricultural course could be added on to the university by the endowment of a chair of agriculture. However, it must not be forgotten that the students an agricultural college are calculated to help, first of all, are young men from the farms of our own Province. These young men have had to help on the farms, and owing to the difficulties of pioneering, have had little opportunity for schooling; consequently, university lectures would be away above their heads.

It is acknowledged that specially-trained teachers are required in normal schools, it being considered impracticable to utilize the university courses in the training of teachers. Much more would be impracticable to utilize such courses in connection with a college of agriculture. The argument is used that it would be a saving to have the laboratories, etc., that are provided by the university utilized by the agricultural students. Chemical laboratory methods and even the study of general chemistry are of little practical use to the farmer. A knowledge of the fundamental principles of all that he needs and all that he can hope to accomplish in the time at his disposal. Laboratory work in agricultural chemistry is the field of the specialist.

It must not be forgotten that there is a marked difference looking at the matter from the farmer's standpoint between the investment of money for a medical or legal education and an agricultural education. The person taking up medicine as a profession, study is, as a general rule, devoted to knowledge on the subject, even the fundamental principles,

consequently, a four or five years' course, and its accompanying expenses of time and money, is recognized as essential. With the agricultural student it is different. He comes, or should come, with a knowledge of farm practice to a greater or less degree; consequently, as an investment, a long course of study loaded with geology, chemistry, mathematics, languages, etc., would not be profitable, and, therefore, would not commend itself to the farmer. *Essentials come first*, non-essentials only when time will allow. From what knowledge we possess of the science of agriculture and the farmer's conditions, we submit that the time available for college studies, only short at the best, should be used for technical work with which is blended the principles underlying practice.

It will be noticed that the teaching of live-stock husbandry is referred to as an essential in the plan for a provincial school of agriculture outlined in our issue of March 5th. The reason for considering this subject of such importance is, that farming, to be permanently successful, must include live-stock husbandry. Stock-raising tends to conserve the fertility of the soil, concentrate the products of the farm, thus saving transportation charges, besides avoiding competition with products of unskilled labor in the markets of the world. Conditions in Manitoba are very different to those in Ontario or the Old Country, where, owing to mixed farming being the rule rather than the exception, young men have grown up familiar with the care and management of live stock, whereas in this country, where wheat-growing has been so exclusively followed, the boys who have grown up on the farms have had little or no opportunity to learn anything of the principles of live-stock husbandry.

## Why Not a Judging Institute?

The 1901 Farmers' Institute summer series will soon be on, and the providing of suitable speakers and suitable subjects for discussion will engage the attention of the Department of Agriculture.

The consensus of opinion is always in favor of a judge explaining his awards, so that people may know the reasons for his decisions. A few years ago, a professor of animal husbandry judged cattle at the Industrial, and gave explanatory talks on the awards, a procedure which gave a great deal of satisfaction at the time; in fact, several noted breeders of this Province have repeatedly stated that they learned a great deal about stock, in the way of points, etc., from those explanations. South of the boundary, last year, a new departure was made, namely, the holding of judging institutes, in most cases being held at the close of an agricultural show. The keenest interest was shown, and a repetition of the programme desired in future years. Even had we an agricultural college at which live-stock judging would be taught, numbers would be unable to avail themselves of the instruction. Such could, however, be reached very effectively through the institute.

Many people seem able to pick out a good animal, but if questioned *why* and *wherefore*, are stumped.

While no course, either at a college or an institute, will make expert judges, live-stock judging classes will undoubtedly put many persons on the right path so that they may go ahead for themselves.

A few months ago, a two weeks' judging school was held at the Iowa State Agricultural College, for farmers, of whom over 380 registered, 320 being in attendance. Some noted stock men took the course, such men as Converse, the Red Poll man, and W. A. McHenry, the Angus breeder. If such a course was beneficial to such breeders, and they state it was, how much greater would be the value of similar elementary instruction to our farmers!

The requirements for a judging institute are not many. A building, skating rink, for example, two or three head of stock, and a man that understands the work, and can make other people understand, would be all that is necessary. The institution of such meetings would undoubtedly tend to increase the rapidly growing interest in institute meetings.

## Farm Siftings.

The seeding once over, those barn plans will be used, and the material gathered during the winter or previous months will be placed in position and made to take shape in some form or other, either as basement barn, hogpen, horse stable, poultry pen, dairy house, or what not. Building calls for the exercise of considerable thought. Such things as the lighting, ventilation and convenience should all be thought of, in addition to the cost, location and general outline. In these days of germs, the farmer should not overlook the importance of that anti-germ—sunlight. Don't have your stables like dungeons. In some basement stables you see nothing but black darkness the first few minutes you are in them. A little later, after your optics gets accustomed to the gloom, you are able to see the outlines of the interior dimly. One cannot reasonably expect growing animals to thrive in such a place. Put potatoes there, and when they sprout, notice the washy appearance of the growth; the effect will be even more detrimental to animals. Put window lights along the whole south side of barn, and a few on the other side. Let the south windows be large ones. The ventilation of stables in Manitoba requires considerable thought and attention before satisfactory systems are obtained. The ADVOCATE columns have contained descriptions of several; look them over before installing any system. A noted authority says "one of the surest indications of an improperly ventilated stable is the condensation of moisture on the walls, ceiling and floors. It is sometimes remarked that cement floors and stone basements draw moisture; the truth is, the ventilation is insufficient."

One frequently sees what would be funny things, if they were not bound to be disastrous, in horse-breeding. A case in point: In a livery barn one day there happened to be two stallions—one, a trotting horse, a Nutwood, so his driver said. If the statement was correct, that noted old sire would, I am certain, neigh in disgust at his light-limbed, shallow-middled, lath-like descendant. It is doubtful if this degenerate had a record; anyhow, it's dollars to doughnuts that one mile would suit him better than three or more. The other stallion was a Hackney, well put up, a thick fellow, and a pretty good actor. The third party was a little broncho mare, ewe-necked, with a scary look, a fair middle, and a drooped, peaked rump; but such was the irony of fate, that the mare was bred to the Nutwood degenerate instead of to the shapely horse, and one chance, however small, of improving the broncho stock was forever lost. It does not, however, follow that all Standard-bred stallions are bad sires, or that all Hackney stallions are good ones. Conformation, as well as breeding, must be taken into consideration.

Sore shoulders are common nowadays. Watch the harness, that it fits the animal wearing it. You might bathe the shoulders with cold water in which some salt has been dissolved, or a dram of tannic acid to the pint of rain water.

Go easy with that colt on the harrows or seeder. The work doubtless is a great aid in breaking it in. Be very careful that this beginner walks and draws straight in the collar, or you may have to call your veterinarian to treat a case of shoulder-slip or sweeney.

We do not expect a dry summer; still, it is just as well to be prepared: so would it not be a good idea to sow some corn and millet? A few mangels or sugar beets will be just the thing for the milch cows next winter.

Look closely after the foals as soon as born, and if dropped in the loose box, dress the navels with some antiseptic daily carbolic solution or even a powder of iodoform and boracic acid, equal parts; except for that, don't give medicines to the foals unless under the directions of a competent man.

A common deformity in hand-fed calves is pot-belliedness, due to the milk fed them being cold or sour. The use of the cream separator (not the aquatic dilution take) will tend to dispose of the first cause; clean pails, in place of swill buckets, will aid in overcoming the second cause.

Separator skim milk is a valuable food, because it can be fed at the natural milk temperature. It needs, however, some adjunct, such as flaxseed or corn meal, to make up for the fat taken out by the machine. The use of the cream separator on the farm means saving of butter fat and work, and also better calves, the latter not to be despised.