

Field Crops

PLOWING VS. DISCING

Plowing and discing are two of the most essential features of soil cultivation. To dispense with the former would spell ruin for the farmer while if the latter were abolished at the present day, the loss would be keenly felt in agricultural circles.

Plowing is, and has always been most important for the cultivation of the soil. As far back as history dates the plow has been in use; and though there have been numerous machines devised and put into practice in later days, there has been invented nothing to successfully take its place. Moreover, as plowing requires the greatest labor on the farm and it would long since have been dispensed with if it were possible.

In olden days, the plow was perhaps the only article the farmer possessed to till his land, and a queer old invention it was. However, it served the purpose of breaking up the ground, which was then pulverized and made smooth to a degree with drags of brush.

Since those days, the plow has been developed until we have the modern article simple to a degree, but one that does its work effectually and thoroughly when properly used.

In order to keep the land free of weeds and to get the most out of the soil, it is necessary to periodically turn the top earth down and bring fresh soil to the surface. For this reason, the modern plow cutting strips of land, say from ten to sixteen inches in width, according to the size of the plow, turns them completely over so that the under soil is exposed to the sun, and the weeds, if there are any, are completely buried.

That plowing should be well done is important, and there is no better proof of this than the comparison of farms that are accustomed to be well plowed with others that are poorly plowed. Plowing matches were organized not for the sport they afforded but that an improvement in the character of the work would result from the contests.

Essential as plowing may be, there are other treatments which the soil must pass through before it is in good growing shape. As soon as the land is turned over the use of the plow ends for a time; and from this stage other machines must be used; and of these, the disc forms an important part. The prime purpose for which the disc was devised was to act as a pulverizer; and for this reason, it was first used on newly broken land to pulverize the tough soil and put the land in fair condition for a crop, when backsetting was omitted. Since, however, improvements have been made to the disc, and accessories added, and it is now generally and successfully used as a cultivator both before and after plowing.

In the fall of the year, after the crop is harvested discing the land intended for fallow the ensuing season is a capital plan, and is regularly carried out by many farmers. The stirring up of the soil starts the weeds growing and forms a mulch which preserves the moisture. Early in the spring, as soon as the ground is dry enough for working, discing is again done to loosen the top soil and thus retain the moisture; placing the land in a good condition for plowing when the fallow season arrives.

As a cultivator for summerfallow, the disc has its merits and is widely used as it is a light machine, kills small weeds and aids in packing the soil.

Many farmers who have gone in for twice plowing for fallow now prefer to plow but once and use the disc afterwards, as the double plowing system tends to grow too heavy a crop, and the grain is liable to lodge. It sometimes happens that a farmer through carelessness allows the weeds to get too far advanced on the fallow, and as harvest is approaching, a second plowing is out of the question; so the disc is brought into action. In order to try to cover the long weeds the gear of the disc is set to cut the soil as deeply as possible and the land is thrown into cones making an uneven surface, and even then many of the weeds are left uncovered. The result is that the job is botched.

Occasionally the disc is used in the spring to take the place of the plow. The stubble is sometimes burned off, and the land is discing to render it in shape for the crop. Under favorable conditions

good crops have been taken off in the fall, but as a rule, this method is a failure and the farmer who practices this style of farming too frequently soon has his land polluted with weeds.

Only as a pulverizer and a cultivator has discing proved successful. When it is done in place of plowing the result is a failure. The disc will not take the place of the plow for the simple reason that it does not cut all the soil and does not go deep enough.

Dairy

MAKE CHUMS OF THE HEIFERS

We ought to be on friendly terms with all the calves, but especially with the calf we intend to add to the dairy when she becomes old enough.

We should pet, curry and brush her while she is young. Let's handle all of her feet, and stroke her on one side, then on the other. We want cows that won't flinch at being touched anywhere on the body—cows that never have learned about "the right side."

We'll never lose the time it takes occasionally to slip the halter on this hope of the future herd and teach her to lead, while she is young and easily trained; but if we wait till she brings her first calf before we break her, she'll be so strong, and so unused to being handled, that she may be as unruly as a bucking broncho.

Along with all this training we must give the calves some extra care and plenty of proper food. They must not be made to "rough it" with the grown cattle. A snug, warm place should be so arranged for them that the larger stock cannot molest them, nor cheat them out of their full share of the feed. Good, dry bedding is another pressing essential. Then, there should be a variety of clean, small-grain feeds, and fresh, bright roughage. All these will keep the little Bessie moving right along toward the development of an ideal addition to your dairy herd.

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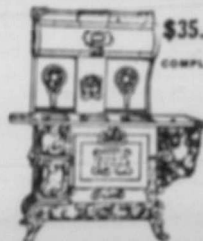
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