

A World's Fair for Farmers

Development of the International Farm Congress and the International Soil Products Exposition

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During the latter part of the 19th Century it was noted that certain farmers located in the Great American Desert or Great Plains region were producing good crops on irrigated or dry land practically every year. Many of these had been making a success of grain growing every year for a decade or more, while their neighbors could only grow crops in wet seasons. This gave rise to the idea that there must be a system of agriculture that would make farming in regions of limited rainfall reasonably sure of results and that successful farmers had found the right method.

The state and federal experiment stations had also been working on dry land investigations. All were working separately and no adequate facilities for comparing notes or discussing common problems were available. Realizing this, Governor McDonald, of Colorado, was prevailed upon to issue a call to the various experiment stations and successful farmers throughout this region to meet in Denver in January, 1907.

An organization was effected which was known as the Transmississippi Dry Farming Congress. The next meeting was held in Salt Lake City, Utah. At this meeting the name was changed to International Dry Farming Congress so that it could include farmers and experimenters from countries other than United States where the rainfall was limited. Representatives were secured from Canada, Central American countries, South Africa, India, China, and Russia. At the congress meetings discussions took place on various subjects, the earlier meetings being confined largely to the development of the science or system of agriculture known as "dry farming." This was defined as the art of science of soil tillage, calculated to cause a maximum amount of precipitation to enter the soil and to conserve it until needed by the growing crops. While different localities and different soils required certain modifications in methods, the general principles were the same, also the development and selection of crops suitable for a limited amount of rainfall. As a means of adding interest to the farming congress the idea was conceived by having an exhibit of products growing under these semi-arid conditions. This was the beginning of the International Soil Products Exposition.

The congress and exposition since 1907 has been held at the following places: Salt Lake City, Utah; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Billings, Montana; Spokane, Washington; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Wichita, Kansas; Denver, Colorado; El Paso, Texas, and Peoria, Illinois.

Outline of Organization

The International Farm Congress is a voluntary membership organization. It is incorporated. Any farmer, or any person interested in the cause of agriculture, may belong. The annual membership fee is one dollar; life membership, \$20.

The congress is not an institution for profit. It aspires only to be self-sustaining financially, and its entire resources are devoted to the development of a better agriculture, the improvement of rural conditions, and the protection and advancement of the farmer's interests in every particular. No commercial interest can ever use the congress for private gain. No land exploitation scheme can secure the assistance of the congress.

Permanent offices are maintained, and the work of the congress is kept up throughout the year. The proceedings of the annual session are published in book form, each volume constituting a valuable addition to the agricultural literature of the times. A monthly magazine is published, known as The Agricultural Review. This is the official bulletin of the congress, carrying a report of its activities, and also reviewing the work of the various agricultural colleges, experiment stations and other similar institutions. This magazine is a

constant source of information on practical and scientific agricultural and allied problems. It is sent regularly to all members in good standing. A lecture bureau is maintained, and the congress through this medium is usually able to furnish speakers, lecturers and organizers for all occasions falling within its scope of endeavor.

The annual congress sessions usually occupy four days and evenings, the program being composed of the very best talent that can be secured. Practical farmers take a prominent part, and altogether these sessions mark the acme of agricultural achievement. Educational, economic, country life and livestock topics also receive careful and liberal attention. The annual sessions, and the columns of the Review are open for discussion of proper topics.



Seager Wheeler
Northern, Sask.



Nick Taltinger
Claresholm, Alta.



W. D. Lang
Indian Head, Sask.



Samuel Larcombe
Birtle, Man.

Some of the Men who have Won Honors for Canada at the International Soil Products Exposition

The Soil Products Exposition

The International Soil Products Exposition is held in conjunction with and under the auspices of the congress. Ten years of ever-increasing success have clearly demonstrated that this is the greatest exposition of soil products in the world. Here are annually displayed the results of modern, scientific, up-to-date farming from twenty states, and from many nations and provinces. Here are to be found those object lessons which exert such a tremendous influence toward a better agriculture. The results of the research work of national and state experiment stations are here displayed in concrete form. Delegates from a majority of the American states, from all the Canadian provinces, and from 20 other countries are always present, to study the exhibits in all lines.

This exposition is thoroughly standardized, and is recognized by states, nations, countries, districts, and by the foremost manufacturing and industrial concerns of the world. The latest and most improved farm implements and machinery are displayed and demonstrated at this exposition. Progressive farmers can well afford to, and do, travel hundreds of miles to attend, as they are thereby enabled to keep fully abreast of all development affecting agriculture and allied industries. Premiums, medals and diplomas are awarded on all classes of exhibits. The congress compiles and publishes results of experimental and research work; not only its own, but the best that is accomplished by government, state and other stations, and by individuals.

In addition to the regular membership, delegates to the annual congress sessions are appointed from every locality interested in the work of the organization.

Manitoba's Participation in the Exposition

Previous to 1917 an official representative had been sent from Manitoba to the congress, but never before had Manitoba participated to as great an extent as last year. In the latter part of July the Manitoba department of agriculture instructed the writer to collect individual exhibits and enter them in the various classes at Peoria. Mr. S. Larcombe, of Birtle, who had been successful up to that time in producing the best sample of wheat in the province, was also asked to prepare an individual farmer's exhibit. The Superintendent of the Immigration and Colonization branch, who was seeking immigration from the state of Illinois, planned to put on a large provincial exhibit to advertise the province. While the three men worked individually on their own portion of the exhibit, they all co-operated when it came to shipping and putting up the exhibits. Many interesting incidents might be cited in regard to the fair, which would be of great interest to any farmer or business man in Manitoba, and he would be repaid both in education and enthusiasm for the West by making a visit to one of these international fairs.

Manitoba's Plan for Next Year

The department of agriculture of Manitoba is anxious to carry on the work started last season and believes that it will be one means of helping increased production in the West, because the competition will always influence a man to his best efforts. It is desired to have competition in individual classes by farmers from all over the province. If they have an exceptionally good sample of grain, sheaf of fodder or roots, or vegetables, they should get in communication with S. T. Newton, Extension Service, Department of Agriculture, Winnipeg. It is also the intention to put on a provincial exhibit. A committee has been formed to look after this work, and they are desirous of obtaining the assistance of every farmer and vegetable grower in the province. If each individual farmer in Manitoba will feel the responsibility of advertising his province and undertake to supply us with the best of some one crop there is no doubt but that the little "postage stamp province" can carry off the honors from the states in the south.

CORN A SUBSTITUTE FOR SUMMERFALLOW

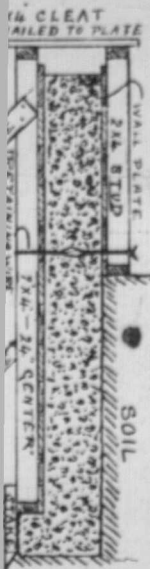
The experimental work at Brandon Experimental Farm, as well as the practical experience of many Manitoba farmers, has shown that fodder corn can be made to take the place of summerfallow with good success. In 1917, a season of extreme drought, a field of wheat on corn land at Brandon yielded 28 bushels per acre, a field on summerfallow nearby yielded 21 1-3 bushels per acre. In 1915, the corresponding fields in the same rotations yielded 40 bushels per acre on corn land and 32 bushels per acre on summerfallow. These are not exceptional cases but are quite the usual result obtained.

Not only is the yield of wheat maintained or even increased by the substitution of corn, but the cost of production is greatly decreased. The corn fodder pays for the use of the land and for the work applied during the year of summertillage. When wheat is grown on summerfallow the interest on the value of the land for an idle year and the cost of the work of summerfallowing should be counted in determining the cost of production. But when corn is used, the corn fodder pays for these costs and the following wheat crop has only the costs of its own year of growth to pay for. In this way the cost per bushel of growing wheat after corn is found to be from one-half to two-thirds what it is on summerfallow.

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Improving Seed Grain by Hand Selection. Seager Wheeler at Work on his Farm at Northern, Sask.



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