

The Illustrated JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

The ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE is the official organ of the Council of agriculture of the Province of Quebec. It is issued Monthly and is designed to include not only in name, but in fact, anything concerned with agriculture, as Stock-Raising, Horticulture, &c., &c.

All matters relating to the reading columns of the Journal must be addressed to Arthur B. Jenner, Esq., Editor of the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE, 4 Lincoln Avenue, Montreal. For subscriptions and advertisements address the Publishers.

Advertisements appear in both Editions, giving a circulation of 55,500 — ENGLISH, 10,000 FRENCH, 45,500

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THE ILLUSTRATED Journal of Agriculture. Montreal, April 1, 1897. The Farm.

NOTE.—The "Journal of Agriculture" will, for the future, contain twenty pages of reading matter instead of sixteen. The Editor would feel obliged to contributors if they would send in their communications by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

FARM-WORK FOR APRIL. Preparation of land—Seed and sowing—Live-Stock.

Many men, many opinions; but every man who does us the honour to read these notes will agree in this; that the first sign of spring is a most welcome sight, after the eye has become weary of the dead monotony of the snow, and the ear is listening eagerly for the first sounds of the birds, whether they come from the crow, the song-sparrow (le rossignol) or the robin (thrush.) (1) Towards the end of this month we may fairly anticipate that the earth will have become visible once more, and the season of seed-time be at hand. Let every farmer, then, take care that he is ready to do his part; that his horses are fit for their arduous labours; that his ploughs, harrows, and other implements are in good trim; for it is a comparatively easy task to keep up work, but to overtake neglected work is a bother, and those who neglected keeping the plough at work during the long open season of last autumn will have plenty of cause, but little time, for repentance this spring. For, supposing, for instance, a man works a farm of 100 arpents in a 7 years rotation; 1 year in hoed-crops, 1 year in grain after grass, 1 year in grain after hoed-crops, and four years in meadow and pasture; it is clear he will have 4 1/2 arpents to plough every year, and the horses and man must step along pretty briskly, the weather must be propitious, and no delays must occur, if that number of arpents can be got over in fewer than 80 working days, and if this be put off till the spring, no wonder that, in our heavy lands, we see men sowing oats as late as the 10th June! We know well that, in some seasons, when the iron hand of the frost is laid

(1) The "rossignol" of Europe is a very different bird.—Ed.

upon the land, at it sometimes is by the middle of November, and stands to its work uninterruptedly for the following five months; in such a case, we know well that fall-ploughing cannot be carried out to its most desirable extent. But this year, such has not been the case. There was plenty of time to do the work, and although the constant rain did at one time make it look as if the plough would have to remain idle in the furrow, still, the desired change did come, and the latter end of the season was better than the former.

And it is owing in great part to the neglect of fall-preparation that so much bad, shallow, wide-furrow ploughing is done in the spring; for, if the season for incessant labour arrives and finds you unprepared to go along with it, every creature, horses, men, and women, will be made to toil every day beyond endurance, not to keep up work, which is, as we said before, an easy, pleasant, lightsome task, but to make up work, which is a toilsome burden. Time was lost when you were idling it away in a season you considered of but little value; and even if you do overtake your work at last, it will be, in great part, toil bestowed in vain, as your seed will not be got into the ground in its proper season, and the yield will inevitably be inferior in both quantity and quality.

SEEDING.—If you happen to be late in sowing grain, you must remember that, though a moderate quantity of seed to the arpent may suffice in the early part of the season, the later the sowing the more seed must be sown, on account of the late sown seed not having time to tiller. If 3 bushels are sufficient for early sowing, say April 20th, 4 bushels will be none too much in the last week in May.

Again, as to the condition of the land and the quantity of seed; ask yourselves this question: is a plant likely to throw out more shafts and to bring them to perfection on a well manured, well harrowed field, or on a field badly worked and badly manured? The answer is so clear that it need not be stated; therefore, the poorer the land and the worse cultivated it is, the more seed should be sown.

PEASE.—If you have a drill, put your pease in with it at least 3 inches deep. Pease must be buried well, or else they grow fluffly, and spindle. Nine pecks of seed to the arpent will not be too much seed.

If any one would only try to sow them in rows, about 27 inches apart, and horse-hoe them every week until they "shake-hands" across the rows, they would tell us news of the crop after harvest.

It is difficult to sow pease too early; if they are deeply sown, they will stand a very hard frost. We have known them laugh at 250 of frost.

WHEAT.—Seven pecks to the arpent sown with the drill, or let into the ground with the grubber, and well worked with the harrows both before and after sowing. Roll with a heavy roller when up.

Harrow both pease and wheat after they have got firmly rooted.

OATS.—Three bushels to the arpent from 2nd April to 10th May. After that, 3 1/2 up to the end of May; and if you must sow in June, do not grudge another half-bushel.

BARLEY.—Two and a-half bushels an arpent to begin with, and 3 bushels later on. No use trying to grow a good sam-

ple of malting barley, unless the land is thoroughly well prepared. New-Zealanders not rarely grow 70 bushels of barley to the Imperial acre: What is a good crop here? M. Séraphin Guevremont, at Sorel, grew, last year, 1896, 46 bushels of grain and pulse—oats, barley, and pease—to the arpent; equal to 35 bushels to the Imperial acre (1) How many other farmers did as well? (1) See his letter, p. 138, Jan. No., 1896.

COWS.—Plenty of milk by the end of April. Autumn calving does not seem to have become popular, which is a pity, as a lot of cows standing idle about the yards and houses is not a profitable look out for the farmer. A month yet to grass; do not turn out, if you can help it, before the pasture has got a fair bite upon it. The damage done to herbage by rubbing off the first blade is unknown. A few pease mixed with the other grain, a fortnight or so after calving, will do your cows a marvellous amount of good, but do not try to force them too soon. We have said so much about the rearing of calves lately, that we need not go over the story again. Read Mr. Farry's article on milk, in this number, and attend to its advice.

SLEEP.—Keep the ewes that have lambed in moderate condition for the first week or two, unless they have been well done by all through the winter, in which case they may be put along pretty freely. People are too apt to half-starve pregnant ewes and cows, and then to feed them up after parturition; a mistake whence come fevers.

SWINE.—Young pigs all over the place now; stop the sows well with skim-milk, whey, and middlings; or, as they are very cheap ground oats. Do not wean too soon; no pigling ought to leave the sow till it is at least 6 weeks old.

HORSES.—Get your plough-teams into regular working order. Hard food and moderate work, with a cold bran-mash once a week, and no going out the following day; colds are often taken after the mash; it seems to open the pores of the skin, somehow or other, so, in our rather large stable in England, it was given always on Saturday nights, and the horses rested the Sundays. Our stables—hunters, carriages-horses, and farm-horses—were always marvellously free from disease, and, whether rightly or wrongly, it was always attributed to this treatment.

LIMING LAND. If you propose to lime any of your land, by no means plough it in; keep it as near the surface as possible. Spread it on land already ploughed, and harrow it in. This is the plan always pursued in Scotland, where they use more lime than would be believed here. We have known of as much as 500 bushels being applied to an acre, and, if it did not pay, we do not think the Scotch farmers would go to such an expense, as they are not people to throw their money away; As Stephens, in "The Book of the Farm," says: Never mind applying lime near manure. Of course, it would not do to mix it with guano, or any ammoniacal fertiliser, but it can do no harm if it is put on the land after dung has been ploughed in, or after a dunged potato-crop has been lifted, etc.

TOO EXPENSIVE.—Can land plaster at \$8 per ton be used economically as an