

APPLICATION OF FERTILIZERS.

The successful use of fertilizers depends largely on the method of application. Uniformity and evenness of distribution on the land is all important. It is common where Nitrate of Soda has been used as a top dressing to see lines or patches of darker green and stronger growth, especially in the case of a hay or cereal crop. This is due to the uneven distribution of the supply of nitrogen and represents where the Nitrate of Soda fell thicker during the process of sowing. To obtain even distribution by hand it is necessary to increase the bulk of fertilizer to at least 10 cwt. per acre by adding sand, fine earth or ashes and to divide the mixture into two parts. Application is then accomplished in like manner to the sowing of seed broadcast, one part of the mixture being sown lengthwise and the other part crosswise.

The use of a machine for sowing fertilizers will always accomplish better and quicker work. There should, however, be sufficient work of the kind on the farm to justify the expense of such a purchase. Many types of machines are made and nearly all work well, provided the fertilizers are fine and dry. Those machines, however, which possess moving parts working in the fertilizers are very apt to clog when sowing a mixture of a wet or sticky nature.

Sowing fertilizers broadcast is as a rule preferable to sowing in the drill. Broadcasting is quicker and brings about more even distribution. Thus, the crop grows more uniform and with a more extensive healthy root, than when the manure is concentrated immediately under the plants.

WHEN TO APPLY FERTILIZERS.

Broadly speaking, the time of application will depend upon the nature of the fertilizer, together with the use for which it is required and the nature of the crop.

Farmyard manure and insoluble organic fertilizers in general can be applied with advantage in the late fall. Before these can become available to the plant they must undergo a process of decomposition or decay. By applying in the fall there is not only a saving of time in the spring, but decomposition sets in without delay and the possible benefits to be derived that season are thereby increased. To obtain the full action of Lime and Basic Slag during the next season their application is also made in the fall.

Usually all soluble fertilizers are applied in the spring. Except in the case of Nitrate of Soda, the best time is about two weeks before seeding or planting. This will permit of the fertilizers being thoroughly mixed with the soil during the working up of the seed bed and any injurious effects which accompany immediate application are avoided.

In order to reduce loss by leaching to a minimum, Nitrate of Soda is best applied as a top dressing after the young plants have appeared above ground and when the growth needs stimulating.

Always select a calm day for sowing fertilizers. Early morning and sundown when the wind is low are the most suitable times.