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## THE PROVISION OF SOILING CROPS FOR DAIRY CATTLE\*

Walter W. Bouley, Middlesex Co., Ont.

### Alfalfa is the Greatest of all Soiling Crops. Good Feed at Low Cost. How it is Handled on a Prize Winning Farm

EVERY dairyman admits that it is the proper thing to do to provide soiling crops for cows. The matter, however, of making this provision is one that a great many of us neglect. I say us because I have neglected it myself, greatly to my sorrow.

It is an admitted fact that once a cow slackens in her milk production from want of proper feed and care, it is almost impossible to get her back to normal during that period of lactation. The summer soiling of cows provides for tiding them over periods of dry pasture and fly time.

#### COWS FRESHEN IN FALL.

In my experience it does not pay to bother much with pasture for cows. We endeavor on our farm to have all the cows that we can (there are always disappointments) freshen in October or November. Then we practically put them into winter quarters and feed ensilage, alfalfa, hay and some grain, which latter will pay in the case of heavily producing cows.

In the spring we endeavor to have a field of new seeding to pasture during part of May, June and July. Then comes a dry time and fly time. If the cows will freshen in October they will be, or ought to be, nearly dry at this time, and when dry they will do well on alfalfa hay, instead of soiling crops, which affords a much easier and, I think, better method of providing for the cow.

But, as I said before, there are always some cows that will not freshen just when one wants them to, and for those that freshen in the spring some kind of soiling crop is required. Here, again, alfalfa has all other crops beaten. Possibly Farm and Dairy readers will think that I am an alfalfa crank; however, I cannot help speaking highly of this wonderful crop.

I have tried most everything, from oats and peas to \$22 a ton bran, and I say again alfalfa has got the lead on them all. Oats and peas come in all right sometimes when sown at intervals, but in some seasons even then they practically ripen together, and then one is left in the lurch till corn is matured enough to cut.

\*This article is another of the series of essays by prize winning farmers that is now being featured weekly in Farm and Dairy. Each prize winner in the Dairy Farms Competition of 1909 is preserving three essays dealing with his own practical experience. A vast fund of most valuable information is in this way being put at the disposal of Farm and Dairy readers. Have you told your friends about these articles? They would profit from them and would thank you for inducing them to subscribe to a paper like Farm and Dairy.

With alfalfa it is different. It will grow, wet or dry, and grow mighty fast, too. Last year we started cutting our alfalfa, for soiling, the second day of July. We kept on cutting off the same piece—three acres—until the latter part of September, at which time we started feeding our ensilage and alfalfa hay (I might just say that we fed alfalfa twice a day, all they could eat, too, to 13 cows, three bulls and several calves, off three acres—almost three months off three acres!). How does that compare with pasture?

Our method of handling this soiling crop, we think, saves a good deal of extra labor. It is quite a task to go out into the field every day with a scythe and cut enough for the number of

the number of stock I have mentioned. By this means we can keep our cows well up in their milk, and the feed does not cost \$22 a ton either.

After we have cut strip after strip of alfalfa for two or three weeks, we can start where we first commenced and keep on in this way till the corn is in the silo. Then we will have lots of feed already cut.

### Alsike Clover as a Money Crop

Alex. Smith, Durham Co., Ont.

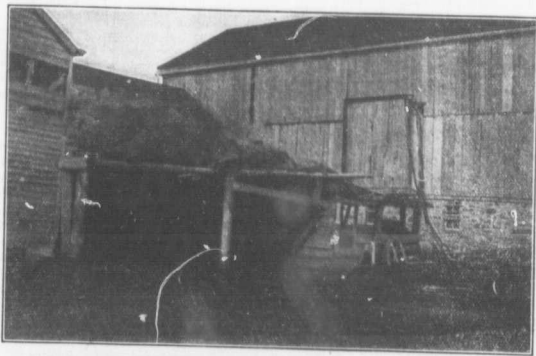
Alsike should neither be cut early in the spring nor pastured. Simply let it grow. One needs to study the time of cutting it for seed. Many farmers allow the early and best seed to drop, in which case they lose it. These men also are liable to cut it in the heat of the day, and under such practice they get discouraged with the crop. The time to cut is when the substance is leaving the stalk under the head, and it is turning brown.

When cutting, if one notices any seed petals falling, and it is necessary to watch closely on this point, the cutting should be discontinued immediately. Cutting should be done early in the morning and late in the evening or on a cloudy day.

Do not on any account turn alsike seed. To turn it means waste. It shells readily. We put ours in very small bunches and should a rain come, it may take a day or two longer to dry out, but it will dry all right. If necessary to move it at all, then lift it on to a dry place. Our alsike from these small bunches is gathered with barley forks, taken to the barn and if possible threshed immediately, and sold as soon as possible and the money gotten out of it while the market is good. Invariably we sell our alsike seed as soon as threshed. The best money is usually gotten from the earliest sales.

Alsike clover seed is one of our main money crops. We always seed it on the poorest fields, not on the rich fields. I am strongly opposed to sowing it after roots, for then it grows to straw at the expense of seed. Many farmers are discouraged with the alsike crop because of having grown it on their richest land and having it grow too much to straw.

Alsike should never be pastured in the fall. It is greatly benefited by a good stiff stubble, which holds the snow. For that reason, we sow it with spring wheat or oats, these crops ordinarily ensuring the desired stiff stubble. It may also be sowed with barley, but in any case the stubble should not be tramped down with stock. We sow from five to six pounds of the best selected seed. We believe in sowing the very best of all kinds of seeds. Alsike needs to be seeded quite thickly, and then one gets a good catch, which crowds out



Many People are Drinking Milk Produced in Surroundings Like, and Even Worse Than, This

While there are many dairy farms in the Province of Ontario that would compare favorably with any on the continent, the Ontario Milk Commission state that about 10 per cent. of the places visited seemed to be totally unfit to be in the business of producing human food. The Commission further states that in the case of probably 60 per cent., an expenditure of \$10 to \$50, and a little extra work, would effect an improvement of 50 per cent. to 75 per cent.

stock we keep, and the work also requires one who can use a scythe a great deal better than I can.

#### METHOD OF HANDLING.

We happen to have two mowers. We take the older one and cut a strip that we think will do for three or four days. Then we take a rake—an old one too, so that we may leave both mower and rake in the field—and rake it up in windrows. Then we load it on to a wagon and draw it to the barn. Now, we have built a scaffold with poles about two feet from the barn floor, and we spread our green alfalfa about two feet thick—no any thicker, but thinner if possible—over this scaffold. Then we will have three or four days' feed for our cows in the barn where it is handy.

To practice this method it takes about one-half a day a week with one man and a team to feed