

# Irrigation Farming in Sunny Alberta

## Why an Irrigated Farm?

The first question asked by the farmer who has not had previous experience in irrigation is, "Why should I buy an irrigated farm, when I can get land in Western Canada that will grow good crops without irrigation?"

The question demands an answer. Irrigated lands cost more than non-irrigated lands in the same districts (although irrigated lands in Southern Alberta are sold for less money than lands without irrigation in older settled districts). Unless we can satisfy you that irrigated land yields a bigger return on the investment than non-irrigated land, you will not want to engage in irrigation.

It is our purpose to answer the above question, and all who are sincerely interested in an opportunity to farm under the most favorable conditions will find every word herein worth reading. The reasons you should buy an irrigated farm in preference to any other kind of farm cannot be told in a sentence or a page, but here are some points which help to answer the question:

1. The irrigation farmer is not at the mercy of the weather. You wouldn't live in a house without some kind of heating plant, trusting to the moderation of the weather, would you? Then why should you live on a farm with no watering plant, relying on your crop and your prosperity upon the uncertainty of rainfall? By means of his irrigation system the irrigation farmer controls the moisture on his farm just as accurately as you, by means of stoves or furnace, control the temperature in your home.

2. The irrigation farmer gets bigger crops. Now and again the farmer on non-irrigated land gets a bumper crop. What causes a bumper crop in Western Canada? Simply this, the right amount of moisture at the right time. Given these conditions a bumper crop on the fertile land of Western Canada is assured. But the most perfect climate is subject to variations; these conditions do not come every year. To the irrigation farmer they do come every year. His personal experience, the advice which the company's experts stand ready to give him, and the experiments of the Dominion Government are at his command to show just when he should use moisture, and how much. He may make mistakes at first, just as the man with a new furnace will not get the best results until he learns how to use it. But the man with the new furnace does not sit and freeze because he does not understand it at first; he studies his plant and soon masters it. So the irrigation farmer, studies his soil, his crops, the climatic conditions of his district, and learns to treat his land in such a way that when he plants a crop he knows he is going to reap a harvest. So while the farmer on non-irrigated land gets a bumper crop now and again, the irrigation farmer gets one every season.

3. The irrigation farmer can grow a greater variety of crops. Not only does he grow more to the acre, but he grows more kinds, thus permitting him to employ more scientific crop rotation, and supply more of his needs. In the Central Pacific Railway Company's Irrigation Districts, for instance, he can grow alfalfa, "the king of feeders," with great success. Alfalfa on irrigated land is the foundation of the live stock and dairy industry. He can grow vegetables with greater success, by applying just the right amount of water at the right time; the same is true of small fruits, and, as the country develops, will doubtless prove true of larger fruits, which are already grown in the older irrigated districts of Alberta.

4. The irrigation farmer has a better climate. As there is less wet weather, he has more bright sunshine than in districts which depend on rainfall for moisture. His plans are not so often interrupted by unfavorable weather. If there is anything more exasperating to a dry farmer than drought in the growing season, it is rain in harvest. The irrigation farmer never suffers from the first and rarely from the second. He does not lose the loss of time of himself, his men, and his equipment on account of rain. His live stock thrive better. He has better roads, and in Alberta he has the finest climate of any agricultural section of the American continent.

5. The irrigation farmer has greater community advantages. The very nature of irrigation tends to close settlement. The farms are comparatively small, because they produce more to the acre, and fewer acres are necessary to support the farmer. The settlement is confined to certain definite areas. Instead of scattered over a whole country. Consequently there are neighbors close at hand; schools, churches, telephones, mail deliveries, and all community organizations flourish as it is not possible under other conditions.

6. The irrigation farmer does not need to summer-fallow his land. In districts where dry farming is practised, half the land is summer-fallowed each year to conserve the moisture for the following year's crop. In districts where there is no necessary, much summer-fallowing must still be done to keep the land free from weeds. But in irrigation districts it is not necessary to leave land fallow in order to conserve moisture. As to weeds—every farmer knows it is in dry seasons the weeds make their greatest inroads. Water overcomes them largely, and whatever water fails to do is accomplished by rotation of crops and good cultivation. It is true the irrigation farmer puts more work on an acre than does the dry farmer (except in growing alfalfa) but he makes every acre bear crop every year, instead of leaving half his farm fallow.

7. The irrigation farmer's land never wears out. As soon as it shows any disposition to lose its fertility, he plants it to alfalfa, which restores the nitrogen to the soil, and makes it richer than it was in the days before it ever knew a plow. The alfalfa he feeds to his live stock, and the manure, in turn, goes back to the soil, thus replenishing it doubly. After a number of alfalfa crops the land is planted with some such crop as sugar beets; then two or three crops of grain are taken; then back to alfalfa. A farm may be cultivated in this way forever without losing its virgin fertility.

8. The irrigation farmer makes a home. His system of agriculture, rotating crops over a period of years, means that he is going to give his life to his profession. He is not in the business to mine his soil for a few years, get two or three snap bumper crops, and move on, leaving his land in a condition that would exhaust it. On the contrary, every year his land becomes more valuable, not for speculation, but for actual production. Consequently there is no purpose in leaving it. If, when he buys a farm, he plants on it some of the trees which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company furnishes free for the purpose, he will in a few years have fine groves and shelter belts, which relieve the bareness of the prairie and give his farm a home-like appearance. The shelter belts allow him to grow small fruits in a production that would not otherwise be possible. With his dairy cows, his hogs, sheep, and poultry, his vegetables and fruit, he becomes as nearly independent as it is possible for anyone to be under the conditions of modern civilization. Whether other business or industry offers a future so desirable?

## What Manitoba is Doing for Its Boys and Girls

THE largest agricultural organization in Manitoba is the Boys' and Girls' Clubs. The organization is a big one, because the members have, through their industry and enthusiasm, gained the respect and admiration of all the grown-up people who have had an opportunity of observing what has been done. This has resulted in help and encouragement being given whenever needed. The first clubs were organized in Manitoba in 1913, when eight districts with 49 members undertook to raise chickens, potatoes and corn. From the very first the idea appealed to parents, teachers and pupils. By the end of the year there were 28 clubs, with 1,846 members. In 1915 there were 58 clubs, with 5,500 members; 1916 saw 110 clubs and 12,250 members; and last year there were 150 clubs, with 18,000 members. It is confidently expected that this year there will be 200 clubs and 30,000 members.

These clubs are conducted under the administration of the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture. Their objects and aims may be summarized as follows:

### Objects and Aims of Club Work.

1. "To bring home and school close together in understanding, sympathy, and cooperative efforts.
2. "To make the school the centre for the acquisition and dissemination of information of direct practical value to the community and to make the home and the home farm, with its implements, the live stock, its fells and farm buildings, the laboratory where all this knowledge will be applied under actual farming conditions.
3. "To arouse a spirit of loyalty to the school, the community, and the tools. These are placed in the hands of the members who are able to render each other.
4. "To develop a better knowledge of the advantages and possibilities of rural life in Manitoba.

- (a) by providing an opportunity of finding out how much real pleasure there is in systematically carrying out the activities of the club along agricultural and home-making lines.
- (b) by providing healthful and interesting employment as a part of the sports and activities of the club.
- (c) by providing a means of earning extra money.
5. "To encourage a right attitude towards work and to show that what is pursued in the right spirit is not recreation, for recreation has been defined as 'doing what one likes to do.'
6. "To foster in young people a sense of responsibility.
7. "To stimulate thought, initiative, and leadership.
8. "To assist in providing food and clothing for the needy.

How Contests Are Conducted. All boys or girls living in Manitoba who will be over 10 and under 19 years old when the club fair is held are eligible to become members, whether they are attending school or not. So far as possible the members of the club are volunteers on these people, although the contest leaders must be selected from the adults of the community. Thus the leading gardener in the district might be leader of the best raising contest and the most practical swine breeder would be able to render splendid assistance in the pig-raising contest. Some of the supplies necessary to the contests are provided for by the Government. Other supplies, as, for instance, eggs for hatching, are made available at cost. The culmination of the year's work is the club fair, where the boys and girls exhibit the products of their industry. The prizes given in these fairs range all the way from \$2 for a first prize to ten or 25¢ for a tenth place. Special

prizes are given by For instance, last year Company paid the expenses of a trip to a week of instruction and at the Agricultural Manitoba Swine Breeders' Association, a girl who raised the best pig in each inspectorial district there are not less than in the division.

The pig-raising contest is a popular one. The boys' contest purchase one which they feed for months is kept of the amount consumed, and in the work is scored on the basis of gain in weight, and the record card, if the boy must own the pig of the banks in Manitoba to lend money to brighten who are recommended teacher on the understanding money be paid back when sold.

A calf-raising contest on similar lines, and it scored in the same way as the pig-raising contest. The calf and the calf club fair in Manitoba, feeding ability of the province. The contests are of greater number because capital involved. The spring is either made eggs or baby chicks, and the work of the young people on the basis of the appearance of the chicks, and the record number raised in comparison hatched, cost of feed, etc.

### Grain Growing Club

The one and five-acre require greater ability of the contestants than do the other contests. These are places for bright active boys who successful in minor contests years, and are not tackle a much larger unit is open to boys between 10 years of age, and they may one acre or five acres of land are offered for the best shortly before cutting and sheaf grain exhibition seed grain fair and at the seed grain fair.

Other contests in which children compete are the home garden, bread making, canning, the selection and sowing, churning, pig and essay writing. Encouraged, however, to enter more than three or four once.

This is a very brief sketch of what is being conducted by the boys and girls of rural Manitoba. The contests amount to 20,000 of the province are being and greater interest in the every day life of the province must be enormous. The of Education is right in this junior club work one of important activities, as it with the development of future citizens.

Sugar maple trees are a valuable asset to a farm. Regular commercial sugar maple trees are not only sap and high. There is honey, and beyond the work, though all profit. You don't plough or harrow, or feed ground for the manure, but you don't have to do any spring and you don't have to wait from spring to fall. The season comes at a time when farm work is slack. They require no spraying, pruning or watering. They stay in on untillable or rocky soil. In the pioneer days, it was the pioneer who was in the war scarcity of

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