

# The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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Vol. XLVII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MAY 23, 1912.

No. 1026

## EDITORIAL.

Good seeding weather, a fine tilth and ample moisture in the soil, are the preliminary harbingers of a big crop.

While it is generally considered that roots are an expensive crop to grow, with labor so scarce, it is also conceded that they are one of the best system regulators for the stock, especially the younger animals during the winter months. Even where silage is abundant, roots are a valuable adjunct to the ration. A few mangels or turnips can be profitably grown on most stock farms. Anything which tends to advance the growth and general health of young stock cannot profitably be done without. The extra labor in caring for the roots will be more than repaid in stock returns.

How thick to plant corn for ensilage, is an important question which usually confronts the silo-user. That many acres are planted too thick to make the best quality of feed is undeniable. At the same time, we incline to the opinion that, considering both yield and quality, a somewhat thicker seeding is advisable than when the corn is grown for early husking. For the latter purpose, three or four stocks in hills 42 x 44 inches apart are enough. For ensilage, we intend this year to plant an average of about five kernels of ear-tested corn per hill, in hills check-rowed 42 inches each way.

Merging of banks is now the order of the day. First thing we know we shall have a tightly-organized money trust, serving the interests of Big Business first, while smaller customers kneel before the banking magnates, hats in hand, beseeching the favor of occasional banking accommodation, which will be granted, or not, according to the exigencies of the Big Business aforesaid. Developments of this kind will soon make us wonder whether our much-lauded system of branch banks is, after all, the best thing for the country, notwithstanding its admitted advantages. At all events, there is great and growing need for a system of Government inspection of all our banks, and a well-informed public will insist upon it with a voice so strong and so insistent that Parliament will have to sit up and take heed.

Eliminating fruit and vegetable crops, the greatest opportunity open to Canadian farmers to-day is the chance of reducing feed bills by growing alfalfa. Sow it this year on your summer-fallow, instead of wheat. A good catch of alfalfa on land suitable to it is worth half a dozen crops of wheat. Seeding alfalfa in July on well-drained and thoroughly-cultivated fallow is likely to prove a success over large areas of Southern Ontario, however it may prove in other latitudes. We do not say that summer seeding is preferable to spring seeding on clean land, but we strongly recommend it for land which requires cleaning. While alfalfa is usually supposed to be a more exacting crop than red clover in regard to the conditions necessary for successful seeding down, there are instances where the opposite proves true, as in the case of a correspondent who reports success with alfalfa last year, but failure in getting a catch of red clover. For one thing, the alfalfa appears to stand drouth better, as many farmers noticed during the exceptional season of 1911.

## Average and Possible Production.

Every business man, if he has any interest in his vocation, desires to have it known as the greatest business of its kind in the country. Manufacturing plants are rated according to the size of their output, and their managers are never content until this has reached its fullest capacity. Likewise, no agriculturist should be satisfied until every available foot of soil on his farm is doing its utmost toward increasing the production of that farm. Keeping down production may raise prices, but the man who has the lowest production suffers most, because there are always those who put forth every endeavor to get large yields, and, anyway, a large production is better for all concerned. Where does your farm stand in point of production? Is it below average, average, or at the highest possible point at which increase can be profitably made?

In looking over the statement of the average yield of the various crops in Canada during 1910 (not last year, which was unfavorable), one is struck with the low returns. While these compare very favorably with those of our neighbor to the South, and are generally believed satisfactory on the whole, when one considers just what might be, the results leave a doubt in the mind as to the value of the methods followed on many farms in the country. The average yield of wheat was only 16.14 bushels per acre; oats, 32.79; barley, 24.62; rye, 18.35; peas, 16.93; buckwheat, 26.77; mixed grains, 33.76; flax, 7.97; beans, 22.21; corn for husking, 57.00; potatoes, 147.14; turnips, 402.36; hay, 1.82 tons; fodder corn, 9.38 tons.

Under the best treatment, wheat yields anywhere from thirty to fifty bushels to the acre, and forty bushels is a common turn-out on good soil with the best growers. What does this mean? At an average of 16.14 bushels, a large percentage of growers must be producing far less than the average, for we know that many are producing far more. Wherein does the profit lie for these? And what is to hinder them from economically increasing returns by following approved methods? Wheat after wheat, year after year, without fertilizer of any kind, cannot but deplete the soil and cause light crops, which bring down the average. The grower of the heavy crop benefits at the expense of the producer of these poor crops; then, why not grow on each acre sown the heaviest crop that the soil will possibly produce? Canada's wheat in 1910 was worth \$112,973,000, at 16.14 bushels per acre. At 40 bushels, and the same rate per bushel, it would have brought \$279,858,736, or a difference of \$166,885,736 annually in this crop alone. If the price had been slightly less, the bulk of the growers would still have benefited.

Oats, perhaps the most widely-grown crop in Canada, shows equally striking results. The average yield in 1910 of 32.79 bushels per acre, is not in comparison with the possibilities of our soil. Sixty bushels is quite a common yield, and often 75 and 100 bushels per acre are harvested.

Barley, with a yield of 24.62 bushels per acre, is, like the two former, not giving the highest possible returns. Forty bushels of this crop is a very common yield, and 60 is often obtained. What must be the yield of the poorest crops, which when reckoned with these high yields bring the average down to a little over 24 bushels per acre?

Other grain crops show like results. Even the

fodder and root crops are in the same rut. Turnips, 402.36 bushels per acre, when 800 to 1,000 bushels are grown on many farms. Fodder corn, 9.38 tons per acre, when 15 tons grow on many acres.

These figures should stimulate to greater efforts. Either large areas are devoted to crops entirely unsuited to the soil and climate, or the methods used in cultivating them are wrong. Which is the case? Thousands of farms are producing crops far above the average, and thousands must be far below the average. The managers of these latter have reason to apply a little thought to this matter. If the land does not produce good crops of what is being grown, surely it is more suitable to other crops. Grow the crops adapted to the soil and climate, and grow them under conditions of fertility, tilth and cultivation which tend more towards maximum production than towards average or minimum output.

## Tile Drainage Cost and Benefits.

There are two outstanding facts about tile drainage: The cost and the benefits are both larger than popularly supposed. The cash outlay for tile is a small proportion of the cost. One and a third to one and a half cents a foot will generally buy the tile, except where long mains are required, but there is, in addition, the labor of hauling the tile, laying out the system, digging the trenches, and laying and covering the tile. This, when time is counted at full wages and board is allowed for, may and usually will run the labor cost up to fifty cents a rod, or more, equal to about three cents a foot, depending a great deal upon the nature of the subsoil, the skill of the ditchers, and the rate of wages in vogue; also, the time of year when the work is done.

Perhaps a few figures from our own experience may be of interest. Upon taking possession of what is now called "Weldwood," we decided to summer-fallow and tile about three acres on each side of a fall-plowed field, to be seeded to alfalfa in the fall. Notwithstanding that the land was kept well cultivated, the excessively hot, drouthy weather which set in by the time the O. A. C. staff had surveyed the field and turned in the map we were waiting for, dried the soil out considerably, and made the digging hard. We found, moreover, that the farm had a rock-ribbed foundation, the subsoil under the ridges being exceedingly hard and stony. We also found that ditchers were about as plentiful as hen's teeth, and these inexperienced ones then available would only work by the day. What with hard digging and poor diggers, the total labor cost of excavating and laying the first hundred rods was nearly a dollar a rod. This was prohibitive, and the men were discharged. Afterwards, we got hold of some skilled ditchers, who finished the job at thirty-five cents a rod for digging the ditch, laying and blinding the tile, the men boarding themselves. Even at this, we had to regard their interests by departing somewhat from the specifications on the map, running mains around through the hollows, instead of in bee-lines, as the contour of the land would have permitted. Averaging the whole cost of the drainage work, some of which was, for reasons explained, much higher than it should have been, but counting in every item, even to the foreman's time in laying out the system, stretching grade lines, etc., and figuring time of men and teams hauling tile and plowing in dirt, not forgetting, either, the half-days' and half-hours' jobs