

Soils and Crops

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

Danger in Stalk Fields.

Some stockmen are puzzled to know how to use the fodder remaining in the corn fields after husking time. Some years they turn stock into the fields and have no ill luck; other years the so-called "corn-stalk disease" has killed many of their best cattle and horses. Just why the stalks prove harmless some years, and deadly now and then, has never been rightly explained, but it seems likely that climate or atmospheric conditions have much to do with it.

Many cases of alleged corn-stalk disease now are known to be really cases of deadly hemorrhagic septicaemia. In these cases the animals have a discharge of frothy, bloody fluid from the nostrils or mouth, or bloody flux (dysentery) may precede death. After death, blood spots are found studding the mucous membrane lining the intestines and serous membranes of closed cavities. Red blotches also are found under the skin. In other cases impaction of the paunch (rumen) occurs and ends in death, the affected animal showing crazy symptoms similar to those seen in ordinary corn-stalk disease, some cases of hemorrhagic septicaemia and in lead-poisoning.

There are other possible causes of loss in corn-stalk fields. We have known of at least one serious loss of cattle turned into a stalk field in which wild mustard had grown ripe and withered. The paunches of the dead cattle reeked with the fumes of mustard when opened. Other losses have been attributed to formation of salt-peter (nitrate of potassium) in the joints of corn killed by drought, wet weather or root-worms, while potassium acid has been blamed in instances where cattle have died from eating withered or second growth sorghum.

Whenever possible, cut, shock, and husk corn. Little if any loss ever has been attributed to corn fodder or corn stalks. Use a large part of the corn crop on every stalk farm in the form of well made and carefully stored silage. Silage is safe feed if free from mold and judiciously fed.

Keep all pregnant animals out of cornstalk fields. Let no horse pasture cornstalks. Such feed is far more dangerous for horses than cattle. Muzzle all horses used on wagons when standing corn is being husked. Have all cattle and sheep that are to be pastured on cornstalk fields vaccinated against hemorrhagic septicaemia before turning them into such fields. So far as valuable pure-bred or high-grade cattle are concerned test stalk fields by turning in a scrub or two before the other animals are allowed to pasture. Provide all animals pastured in cornstalk fields free access to pure drinking water at all times. Supply salt liberally. At first feed hay before turning cattle into stalk fields and gradually accustom them to the stalks. Fence off any portion of the corn field that has been killed by drought, wet weather or root-worms, or that has grown up to noxious weeds, such as mustard, jimson, etc.

In conclusion, shocked corn should be hauled from the field promptly when dry—not left there to waste and mold—and that when cornstalk disease is prevalent cattle should be yard fed on sound feed.

How to Make Tractors Pay on Small Farms.

There are hundreds of farms running in size from sixty to 100 acres. It is interesting to know what some of the owners think about tractors. One thing seems certain—the greater the acreage owned the more favorable the tractor appears to the owner.

Most owners of farms of sixty acres or more think that a tractor would be of much service to them, but they realize that it would not entirely supplant their horses. Therefore, they say that if they purchased a tractor they would be increasing capital invested—which they think is already very great—without materially increasing their revenue. It would be, in most cases, simply a means of en-

abbing them to do their work more easily and quickly.

If you should suggest to them that they could increase their earnings by working more land, most of them would tell you either that they can not get any land near their farms or else that they do not care to increase their acreage. Yet because of the advantages which a tractor offers—of doing work quickly and easily—some would like to have the services of a tractor.

One solution of this problem is that four or five farmers owning medium-sized adjoining farms club together and purchase one tractor to be used jointly by all, the horses furnishing the auxiliary power. By doing this the cost would be greatly reduced, because each used would pay according to the number of acres farmed. For instance, if one man farmed sixty acres, another one forty acres, a third eighty acres and a fourth 100 acres—a total of 240 acres—then the first would pay three-sevenths of the price of the tractor, the second two-sevenths, the third farmer four-sevenths and the fourth farmer eight-sevenths. Only the actual number of acres worked should be counted in making this basis of cost.

An objection raised is that all might want to use the tractor at the same time. It is certain that a tractor can work only at one place at a time, but it works rapidly enough that the work to be done on any one medium-sized farm can be done in a very short time, and then the tractor is ready to go to work on the next farm. Also, because of the small acreage of the farms, no great inconvenience because of delay in waiting for the tractor is likely to occur on account of conflict in the time of using. Furthermore, the idea is to use the tractor only for the heavier work.

Another advantage of this plan is this: In any group of men there is usually one who seems to have a natural ability along mechanical lines. If arrangements are made for such a man to handle the tractor on all the farms, greater service can be had from it; at the same time it will be better cared for and better maintained.

The plan of having a community tractor is well worth trying. Here is a chance to put into effect that magic word—co-operation. Why not talk it over with your neighbors, decide upon the number of farms one tractor can serve and purchase one?

Force Asparagus For Winter.

Crisp, fresh asparagus tips can be obtained in a continuous supply this winter by forcing.

Lifting the crowns from the field and placing them in cellars is the common method of forcing. Plow up the crowns late in the fall when the soil is moist, so as to have as much soil as possible adhere to them. Leave them exposed in the field until frozen, then cover with litter or remove to a shed in order to prevent alternate freezing and thawing, which is harmful. Store the crowns in a cool cellar or pit and bed as needed to supply a succession of shoots.

When ready for forcing, bring the crowns to the cellar and bed on two or three inches of loose soil on the floor. Place the clumps close together, fill the spaces between clumps with loose soil, and cover the crowns to the depth of about an inch. Moisten the soil thoroughly and keep it moist all the time, but never allow it to become drenched. For white shoots the light should be excluded.

For the first ten days after the crowns are placed, the temperature should be kept rather low, 45 to 50 deg. F. After this period a temperature of 55 to 60 deg. F. is satisfactory, although a higher temperature will not be injurious.

In about six weeks after bedding, the cutting can begin and will continue until the crowns are exhausted. As soon as the crowns become exhausted they should be removed and a new supply put in.

Increase Hog Production.

H. S. Arkell, Live Stock Commissioner, who has recently returned from a trip to Europe where he has reviewed the live stock market situation, has expressed his views, regarding Canada's position, in the October number of The Agricultural Gazette. He states that the London agents of our Canadian packers reviewed in disappointment the orders for Canadian goods—bacon, eggs, etc.—for which they could obtain but a tenth of the product they required. The unwarranted high price of hogs in Canada during the past month is but a reflection on the reputation of Canadian bacon, as compared with American, and demonstrates the effort of our packers to maintain their connection with old established clients in the face of short supplies. Since Denmark, within a year, will again be a factor on the bacon market, our only security for the future is full production and such a substantial export supply as must command recognition by its volume and quality. Short hog production is unquestionably the most dangerous policy Canada can adopt. This is true of eggs as well as bacon.

Buy Thrift Stamps.

Poultry

When building a poultry house money is saved by simple construction. First, select a well-drained site, if possible where there is protection from a windbreak or other farm buildings. Then build a house that is about twenty feet deep so that the wind will not strike the birds on the roosts, even when the front of the house is open during storms. Have plenty of windows for fresh air and sunshine as that is an important factor in keeping the farm flock in health.

Keep producers of hen keep flocks of five hundred Leghorns in one poultry house, but we seldom see more than one hundred birds of the heavier breeds to a flock. Of course, the Leghorns are active and seem to thrive better than heavier birds when large numbers are together. However, it seems as if some large farms have a capacity of more of the heavier birds than they are carrying and some flocks of Plymouth Rocks and Wyandottes might be managed in large numbers if the birds were given a large range and the best sanitary measures were used in the house. It is largely a matter of skill in management and the less a farmer is interested in poultry the smaller the flock he can manage with safety. It takes much work to handle large flocks of farm poultry in a large range, and few general farmers have the time to do it exactly right.

Nut Candies for Hollow'en.

Since no Hollow'en party is complete without candy and no Hollow'en candy without nuts, the following recipes will serve a good purpose at this time of the year. They are not too expensive even for these days, but, especially if the nuts, raisins, and perhaps some of the other ingredients can be obtained at first hand.

Butternut Caramels.—Boil together one cupful of brown sugar, two cupfuls of light-colored molasses, one cupful of sour cream or of sweet milk, and one-quarter pound of chocolate until the mixture turns hard in cold water. When it has reached the brittle state, stir in one large cupful of butternut meats—or hickorynut meats, if they are preferred—and pour the candy into buttered tins. The quantity should make about a hundred caramels.

Seed Grain Distribution.

The annual free distribution of samples of seed grain is being conducted at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, by the Dominion Cerealists.

The following kinds of seed grain will be sent out this season:

Spring Wheat (in about 5-lb. samples), White Oats (about 4 lbs.), barley (about 5 lbs.), field peas (green garden peas) (about 5 lbs.), field beans (early ripening, only about 2 lbs.), flax for seed (about 2 lbs.), and flax for fibre (about 2 lbs.).

Only one sample can be sent to each applicant.

Application must be on printed forms, which may be obtained from the Dominion Cerealists at any time after Sept. 1st.

As the stock of seed is limited, farmers are advised to apply early to avoid disappointment. No application forms will be furnished after Feb. 1st, 1920. C. E. Sanders, Dominion Cerealists.

Keeping Seed Corn From Mice.

Here is a good way to fight away the mice from the seed corn, we have found. After seed corn has dried out thoroughly it can be placed in microproof boxes having heavy wire screens sides, if such boxes are staked in single file with adequate distance between the stacks. Enough distance must be between them to allow a good and free circulation of air. These boxes should be made of uniform size so that each will act as a cover for the under one, thus requiring an extra cover for the top one of a stack only.

Corn should be dry enough by the first of the year to store in this way. Some seasons some artificial heat might be needed, however, to make storing safe. Boxes should be of convenient size for handling. Three feet long and wide enough to admit the longest ears make a nice size, and will admit of easy handling. Solid board bottoms and ends are used. If made strong such boxes will last a lifetime, and will come in handy every year.

To Keep Faith in Your Banker.

Chances are you have never borrowed a dollar from your local banker, and you have been going to him all these years to have your various cheques cashed. All these years he has been hoping that you would come along some day and borrow some of his capital as working resource in your farm operations. Better not do it, though, if you are not going to have gumption to pay it back when due, and keep your word good always with him.

We have borrowed hundreds of dollars from our bankers to carry on operations. When you want to build, or buy a bunch of pigs, a cow, some sheep, a flock of hens, some good seed grain, just notice how gladly your banker will advance you the money to get it, providing you do not have the ready cash. You must come across with good paper, though, and it is easy to do this if once you establish a good credit with your bank, and then keep it good.

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Health Talks

By John B. Huber, AM, MD

Address communications to 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

Catarra in Children.

At the onset of catarra in a child, a hot bath may be given, with a hot lemonade, containing some such sweating medicine as sweet spirits of nitre (10 drops to a child of one year), or acetate of ammonium (20 drops). The child is put to bed, or confined, at any rate, in one room. The treatment is begun with a teaspoonful of castor oil. If the child is old enough, the throat may be sprayed three or four times daily with a solution of histriene (one teaspoonful to the ounce—8 teaspoonful). Or it may, if it can, gargle a normal salt solution (one-half teaspoonful of common salt to a tumblerful of water as hot as can be borne).

After the dry stage of the cold has passed, quinine may be given in one to two grain doses. (They may be had of the druggist as quinine chocolates, one grain to the chocolate). Or, if this causes headache and the throat is still sore, two grains of salicylate of sodium may be given every two or three hours.

We must remember that oftentimes acute nasal catarra may be associated with gastric or intestinal disturbances. A laxative is then helpful (a teaspoonful of syrup of figs at bedtime, also three times a day two grains of soda bicarbonate. It is well known, indeed, that a great many children have runny noses because they are given too much sweets and starchy food; this fact should be taken into account in the treatment.

The child should be kept indoors a few days, especially when there is any liability to bronchitis; otherwise he may begin to go about if the weather is fine.

A child must not be over-dressed, lest it become susceptible to catarra. Always keep the child's feet warm and dry, and when taking it outdoors adapt its clothing to the surrounding atmosphere. As for indoors, there is so more reason for dressing a child

than that it should be dressed thus in summer.

Questions and Answers.
We are two sisters—the older, 19 years, is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, weight 112 lbs.; the other, 17 years old, 5 ft. 2 in., weight 107 1/2 lbs. Will you kindly give us our correct weight in regard to healthful standing. A younger sister is 9 years old, 45 1/2 in. high, weight 46 lbs. This child has been sickly, but of late is feeling well and eats plenty and regular.

Answer—The 19-year-old should tip the scales at 125, the 17-year-old at 112. For the 9-year-old I cannot give weight, but she appears to be considerably underweight. You seem to be a slim set of girls, and information for filing you out is being mailed.

I am troubled with bronchitis and have been ever since I was a child. I am thirty-five years of age but until the spring of last year I have not had to lose any time from work on account of it. For the last three years I have been exposed to the fumes of acids used in the making of T. N. T. and at present I am exposed to acetylene, aldehyde and acetic fumes. I had better tell you that I smoke cigarettes. I am more or less subject to changes in the weather, particularly as the winter draws to a close. All the time for the past two years I have become so exhausted as to be unable to work for two weeks or so. I only breathe through one nostril on account of a deformed nose, and if I go to sleep at night with my mouth closed I awaken with the pain that is caused behind my nose.

Answer—Many cases of bronchitis are due to the inhalation of fumes such as you describe. You must absolutely give up such work. And you have to quit smoking until you are fully restored to health. A good physician should give your nose local treatment. Further information is being mailed you.

Dig up canna roots as soon as the plants are killed. Cut the tops away and store the clumps whole; do not break them up until ready to set out again next spring. Leave plenty of soil on the clumps. Store in a moderately cool place where the roots will not freeze. The house cellar is generally suitable. There is little danger of heat injuring them unless they are too moist.

House all orchard machinery before cold weather—sprayers, cultivators, and the like.

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THREE NONSENSE GAMES

Although mystery and secrecy are supposed to be the keynote of a Halloween entertainment, there is nothing like a brisk nonsense game to wind up the evening successfully and send everyone away laughing. Here are three that will furnish plenty of fun, especially if a competent, quick-witted leader is chosen to conduct them. They may be simplified for use at children's parties.

"History Tangles.—The players are divided into two equal companies, which are drawn up opposite each other. The leader, who may be numbered with either side, suddenly tosses a bean bag or some other article to the player on the opposite side who appears to be least expecting it, and at the same time makes a glib misstatement of some important historical fact, such as, "Christopher Columbus won the battle of Queenston Heights." The recipient of the bag must instantly throw it back to another player with a sentence that in one breath corrects the previous misstatement and makes another equally inaccurate; for example, "Sir Isaac Brock won electricity from the air." If the third player thinks quickly enough of Benjamin Franklin he asserts that he was cast on a desert island, and throws the bag to an opponent. When a player is unable to take his cue promptly, he forfeits his throw, and the other side scores a point. The side wins that first makes a required number of points or that runs up the highest score in a given time.

"Find Your Neighbor.—This is a good game to play early in the evening, as it will quickly break the ice and promote sociability. After the players are seated in a circle, the leader advances from the centre and bows to one of the company with the greeting, "Your neighbor wishes to change seats with you." "How shall I know him?" the player asks, whereupon the leader briefly describes the neighbor and then begins to count twenty. If he says, "By his blue tie and gold scarf-pin," the player must make haste to exchange seats, before the counting stops, with a person whom the description fits. It will make no difference if the person whom he selects is not the one that the leader had in mind; a blue tie and a gold scarf-pin will justify his choice. It is important that the wearer of the tie and the pin shall keep quiet and not aid the searcher. If the player fails, he must pay a forfeit and take his neighbor's place. After ten or more forfeits have been paid they must be redeemed with amusing "stunts" in the usual way.

"Jolly Travelers.—The players are drawn up in two equal companies on opposite sides of the room. The leader, advancing and bowing to a player on the opposite side, announces, "I am a jolly traveler and have travelled far." He then makes a fantastic statement in regard to his adventures, as, for example, "While in Japan I had a cup of tea with the Mikado," and accompanies the statement with a pantomime of the tea-drinking. The second player now takes his turn, which is more difficult, for, after bowing to a third player, he must reproduce exactly the words and gestures of the first before he goes through his own performance. After enacting the tea-drinking scene, he may add, with illustrations, "And once I shooed an ostrich across the Sahara sands." The third player will of course have two absurd performances to go through besides his own. The longer the game lasts, the more ludicrous and difficult it grows. Some of the imaginary experiences may include kissing the Blarney stone in Ireland, fighting with a cinnamon bear in North America and fleeing from a Hottentot in Africa. If a player is unable to tell a travel tale or to repeat anecdotes of trips, he must join the ranks of the enemy. The game ends when one side or the other has taken all the players.

Leaves Are Valuable Fertilizer.
Because of their value as a fertilizer, leaves should be placed on garden and truck soil rather than allowed to be washed away or to be burned. Based on recent prices for fertilizer, 100 pounds of leaves contain fertilizing elements which would cost fifty-six cents if purchased in chemical fertilizer.

While leaf ash is also valuable as a fertilizer, the nitrogen in the leaves is lost when they are burned; more than one-half of their fertilizing value is represented by this element, which in the form of nitrate of soda sells for thirty-five cents a pound. Practically all the fertilizing compounds are quickly leached into the soil when the leaves are spread over the garden, thus reducing the chance for plant food loss as compared with burning and spreading the ash over the ground.

Plan on using the poultry manure to the best advantage by mixing it with hardwood ash and working it into the garden soil in the fall. Some crops are injured by spreading poultry manure near them in the spring, but if it is added to the soil in the fall, much of the caustic properties will be gone when the plants start to grow next spring. It pays to store the poultry manure gathered from the houses in dry barrels until enough has accumulated to make spreading profitable. At the present value of all fertilizers the manure from the poultry houses is well worth careful attention.

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