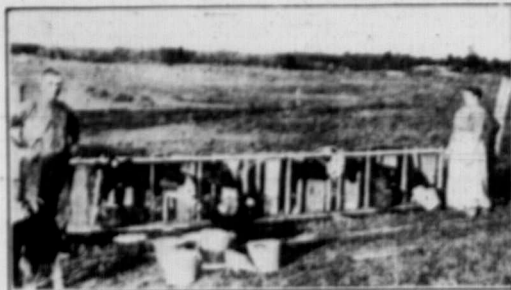


Farm Experiences



Home-made calf feeding device used by E. W. Roach, Douglaston, Sask.

CUTTING OUT FARM CHORES

Let me submit a few thoughts on present day farming, and how we circumvented the labor problem. This last year we had hogs, cows, young cattle and horses, milking cows, and sent the cream to the factory at Moose Jaw. Upon the cream question, I observe that when the cows are fresh, with plenty of green grass to feed upon, then butter fat falls to the minimum, about 20 to 22 cents per pound. As soon as the pastures dry and the cows fall off in milk supply, then the price gradually rises to about 30 cents. With the high price of labor, 20 cent butter fat does not pay, unless the farmer has and can induce his boys and girls to do the milking. Neither does it pay when it is 30 cents, for if you have any to send to market, you have to stable, feed hay worth \$14 per ton, besides grain to your cows, which eats up most of the profit. To get rid of so many chores and dispense with the hired man we disposed of our hogs, which we found were eating too much high priced oats and barley to leave us any margin of profit worth while, and that margin was all absorbed in such a year as 1914. Then we disposed of our cattle and substituted brood mares, figuring that we could afford to sell a colt at three years old for the price of a fat steer and be money ahead, for the colt, outside the service fee, practically costs nothing, as it lives and thrives both winter and summer on the feed that nature provides without our assistance, save that we fence him in during the summer, seeing to it that he has water and salt. Cattle must have feed provided for them, and when you are feeding hay worth from \$10 to \$20 per ton it is an expensive proposition. Present day prices warrant twice as much for a three-year-old colt as for a three-year-old steer, unfattened. Next we have rented our land, and hereafter will use the mares to prepare our summer fallows, do some fall and spring plowing, plant and cultivate a few acres of potatoes, draw off our share of the grain, put in our coal for winter, and do a kind of farming that will mean better yields for the acreage. We still adhere to mixed farming, but we do not mix as much as perhaps we would were we cut off from all outside grazing grounds, or had our land all broken up and were head over heels into grain farming. We are converts to the theory that pedigree seed and better preparation of soil will bring us more returns from half the acreage.

—J. R. L., Sask.

HUNTING COYOTES

The accompanying picture shows a method of hunting coyotes which has been very successfully followed by H. F. Shannon, Wilhelmina, Sask., and others. The dogs are kept inside the box on the sleigh until within a reasonable distance of the prairie wolf, and then they are let loose. The person driving can usually get very close to a coyote without exciting suspicion, and thus the excited dogs have a splendid chance to run this barnyard prowler down.

HOMESTEADING PERILS

Here is a vital question every farmer should ask himself: "Situated as I am in this particular district and on this particular farm, with its special advantages and disadvantages, will it pay me best to raise cattle for dairying or for beef, or shall I try sheep, or can I raise a grain crop profitably, and if so, what kind of grain, or am I in a position to take up intensive farming—poultry raising, truck farming, etc., or is there a still more profitable course for me to pursue?" Is it not time that for want of a serious consideration of this question there are hundreds of farmers sowing where they do not reap? Expending, say, fifteen dollars' worth of capital to raise a ten dollar hog, or raising

grain crops under conditions that bespeak a loss? Bookkeeping of an effective type is the real medium thru which an answer can be obtained, but it must be a real live system that preaches sermons to its owner constantly.

Here are some points that a homesteader must inevitably consider if he is to realize any returns for expended capital: How far is my farm from town? The farther it is the more expensive will be the shipment of produce and hence the necessity of raising whatever is most cheaply transportable. If, in addition to high mileage, the roads are all but impassable as is occasionally the case, that will constitute an incentive to the raising of livestock rather than grain, since these will ship themselves without heavy teaming expenses. Is the soil of my farm heavy or light? A study of agricultural bulletins will enable one to judge with fair exactitude just what crop will prosper best. It is usually considered unwise, for instance, to grow oats on a light gravelly soil, or winter grains on a soil that is subject to heaving, or rye on a strong clean soil that can be better utilized, or Timothy on a low or alkali soil. Is there a plentiful supply of water at hand? While it is at least practicable to draw the household supply long distances, the absence of a sufficient permanent supply is fatal to the prospects of extensive cattle raising. These and many similar questions will readily occur to a thinking farmer.

Marketing Requires Thought

Again, on the marketing question there should be more general forethought. Careless marketing is the cause of very heavy losses. This year, more perhaps than any, has revealed the absurdity of the annual avalanche of marketed grain in the threshing season. A careful study of the markets recorded on the last leaf but one of every issue of The Guide will put more dollars into a farmer's pocket than many days of ex-



HUNTING COYOTES. H. F. SHANNON, WILHELMINA, SASK.

hausting labor in the field. This is not speculation in the usual sense of the word. A scrutiny of several years issues of The Guide will reveal the fact that the market fluctuations are largely controlled by regularly recurring features and a study of these is extremely profitable to the farmer. A vital problem in good management is the method employed in the direct handling of finances. Payments made in cash are, with few exceptions, more profitable to farmers than credit lines. In trading concerns credit often plays a conspicuous part, but the conditions therein are different. Heavy liabilities are so often carelessly assumed by farmers as a class, and adverse legislation makes the financial condition of the entire farming profession so insecure that any kind of a loan to farmers is invariably accompanied by exorbitant rates of interest. Another danger for the farmer in handling credit is that, unlike most other professions, he relies upon nature's uncertain ways for the meeting of his liabilities. Thus a farmer who contracts a mortgage repayable in a lump sum on a certain date, often relies upon anticipated crop results for its repayment, without having secured his position by creating a reserve fund during the course of the loan. Comes a bad harvest at the critical time and the farmer is at the mercy of the loan company who may compel renewal with crushing expenses.

Another aspect of the financial question is as to when capital should be expended in permanent improvements, or in transient investments. Many a young homesteader takes up land, with a fair supply of capital to commence on, only to make the often fatal error of sinking his capital into expensive static improvements such as large buildings, superfluous horses, fences, implements that are too often destined to deteriorate at a much more rapid rate than the returns of the farm will justify. The result is steadily increasing poverty, sometimes forcing the homesteader after years of bitter struggling to renew his stock of capital by quitting the farm and hiring out again. These are some points the writer had to contend with when he homesteaded eight years ago, and the lessons

he has since learnt would have stood him in good stead had he learned them earlier.

H. F. T., Sask.

DIGGING A WELL IN QUICKSAND

I have noticed several inquiries as to how to sink a well in quicksand, and I have never yet seen a practical idea. Perhaps the plan I adopted with complete success might benefit others. With this plan a square crib works best, so start and dig your hole about 4 feet 6 inches. Keep your walls as perpendicular as possible and at the same time square. Dig nine feet deep and then crib. To crib proceed thus: Take a 9 foot board and mark off 4 feet 6 inches, and arrange so as to have a half lap of one inch on each opposite end. By cutting thru from each edge you save a cut. A sharp jerk and the board will split quite easily. Cut two boards this way and then place together, then you will find each lap will fit the lap on the other board and the whole will tend to bind together. Now place the four boards at the bottom of your hole and see that they fit good and tight against the walls, then place another round of boards, and each time see that they fit flush and square with the boards below and tight against the wall. It is best to dig your hole a little smaller, especially to make the boards fit tight, because it is better to take off a little of the wall than to try and fill in. With filling in the bracing effect is lost and the cribbing has a tendency to fall. After you get your hole cribbed to the top, take four pieces of 10 foot 2 by 4 inch scantling and place in each corner and spike with 4 inch spikes. This will nail your whole crib together. The foot of scantling above ground will serve as a platform to raise the pump, so as to get a good fall and also to make good drainage from the well. When you get the four corners spiked take 2 by 4 and brace between the scantling every three feet on the four sides. A greater convenience is to notch the scantling before putting in the well, then it makes nailing easier. Then on one side nail a board four inches wide, so as to form a ladder. You will find it handy if you have to go down the well any time. If you take your time you will find you have got a crib that will never cave in.

Now, when the top section is done, proceed with another section in the same manner, only if the walls are liable to cave in only dig five feet and crib and brace as before. At each joint splice with 2 by 4 and brace well. Proceed until you strike the sand, then when it starts to slide place each round of boards up under the other and nail temporarily to the board above. This will help to keep the sand back while you dig. The way I dig is this: I start in one corner and dig a hole as deep as possible; this acts as a reservoir to catch the drainage. Then I work back from this, and as it fills I keep it baled out below the level of the floor. When you strike water, mark the level. Now continue to dig and crib until you get depth enough to place a barrel—which must be sand tight—in the centre. The idea is that when the water rises it flows into the barrel, because you always have twelve or eighteen inches of water on top of the sand. Now place your pump inside the barrel, and you will always get water free from sand. If at any time you pump the barrel dry the sand cannot enter the barrel, and as the water rises again it flows into the barrel again and in this way the sand is not disturbed. If the season gets dry and the level goes down, your crib is already in place for you to go deeper. Just one thing more: When you

Continued on Page 28



A Pleasant Farm Experience