

THE COST AND PROFIT OF A TURNIP CROP.

To the Editor of the ONTARIO FARMER:—

SIR,—In the *Canada Farmer* of the 1st Dec., ult., I find the following communication over the signature of "Dewdrop":—

"At this season of the year, one often hears the question asked 'whether root crops really do pay;' and as they are certainly becoming daily of more importance in Canadian agriculture, it is probable that many would give them a trial, were they not deterred from doing so, by the seemingly enormous cost attendant thereon. If, therefore, some of your readers who have been in the habit of cultivating this crop, would give their experience of the cost per acre, I think it would be conferring a benefit on the farming community.

"I append hereto my own estimated cost per acre of a crop of turnips:

Rent.....	\$ 4 00
Seed, 3 lbs., at 30 cents (say)	1 00
Ploughing twice.....	4 00
Cultivating, harrowing, &c.....	2 00
Hoeing twice.....	10 00
Pulling.....	2 50
Carting.....	2 50
Manure, 20 loads at 50 cents.....	10 00
Carting, spreading, &c.....	10 00
Total.....	\$46 00

"There is, besides, the expense of making the drills and putting in the seed. If I am correct in the above estimate, nothing short of an extra crop will balance the cost."

With regard to the question "whether it really does pay to raise root crops," the answer depends somewhat upon how root crops are managed. That a root crop properly managed does pay, is beyond a doubt, it being an ascertained fact, and consequently indisputable. If "Dewdrop" would just be at the trouble to take a drive through the several townships in the vicinity of Guelph, at the fall of the year, and have a chat with the farmers residing in those townships as to the profitableness of a root crop, I am thoroughly convinced that he would never again ask the above question, and would feel himself more than compensated for his time and trouble. Nor would his friends and neighbours, after the representation of the result of his visit, ever more be skeptical as to the paying of root culture!

Before I proceed to discuss the items in "Dewdrop's" letter, I must inform him that he has started altogether on a wrong principle. In the first place, he charges his turnip crop with ten dollars per acre for manure, and ten dol-

lars for carting and spreading the same. We will take it for granted that he is a farmer, and that the manure used is not purchased, but made upon the farm from his stock and previous crops. Why, then, should this manure be charged at all? But allowing that it should be, why is the whole cost of manure and carting it out to be laid upon the root crop? Do not the two or three succeeding crops share in the benefit of that manure, and in the good culture of the soil for the root crop? I well know that many growers of root crops fall into the same error, so that "Dewdrop" is not alone in that respect. But on reflection I think he will plainly see the mistake he has made. He has, moreover, put the item too high, in charging ten dollars for cartage and spreading of the manure, as an active man and lad will, with a span of horses and waggon, or with two carts and two horses, if the manure yard is but an ordinary distance from the field, manure and spread an acre a day. Therefore, ten dollars an acre is too high a charge for such work. The item set down for preparing the land is about right, provided the soil is in an ordinary good state of culture to begin with. If, however, very foul, it would require more working. This again should not all be charged to the root crop. The crops that follow will luxuriate therein, and will yield more abundantly for the previous labor the soil has had, consequently a portion of that labor should in reality be chargeable to those crops. Then ten dollars for hoeing the crop twice over is quite too much—half the amount would be ample, as three expert hands would readily hoe out all weeds and super-abundant plants of an acre in one day, and two hands would be sufficient the second time going over. The horse turnip hoe is not named. This, if used, as it certainly ought to be, would as a matter of course reduce the hand-hoeing very materially, and could be performed in a couple of hours. At the expiration of three or four weeks the crop ought again to have the aid of the horse hoe or cultivator.

Next comes the charge for pulling up the turnips. Growers of turnips generally, in this part of the province at least, have discarded that slow and expensive process. Our plan now, after having cut off the turnip tops with a sharp,