

FARM AND DAIRY



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& RURAL HOME

The Recognized Organ of "Dairying in Canada."



Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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At Home with Henry Glendinning

His Experience with Alfalfa and the Lessons he Has Learned

F. E. ELLIS, B.S.A., EDITOR, FARM AND DAIRY

WE had just arrived from the station and were seated in the comfortable library-office of the Glendinning home. After the usual "small talk" about the weather, the health of our respective families, etc., I asked: "Well, how many acres of alfalfa will you cut this season?" That seemed to come naturally as the first question pertaining to the operations of Rosebank Farm.

"We will just cut 50 acres for crop, and we will need it all," responded mine host. "Last spring we seeded 23 acres to alfalfa and about 50 acres to alsike and red clover. All of that 50 acres, except eight, has been plowed up. We have had three dry years here, but 1914 was the driest of them all, and the dry weather almost completely killed the stand of the red and alsike clovers. All of the 23 acres of the red and alsike clovers, however, came through in fine shape; just as good as one could desire. From now on we will discontinue red clover altogether and give alfalfa the right of way."

"How do you explain the superior catch from the alfalfa? Perhaps you seeded it without a nurse crop and gave it a better chance," I inquired.

"The difference must be due solely to the superior merit of alfalfa in resisting drought," affirmed Mr. Glendinning in defence of his favorite crop. "We have never used the no-nurse system of growing alfalfa because we have no trouble in getting a good catch seeding along with the grain crop. In fact, last season the alfalfa had a poorer chance than the red and alsike clovers. The latter were seeded with barley as a nurse crop, and the alfalfa with oats, which is supposed to be the poorest of all nurse crops for alfalfa. The land on which we were seeding the alfalfa, however, was perfectly clean, and as we wanted the O.A.C. No. 79 oats for seed, we sowed oats on the alfalfa land."

A Twenty Years' Experience

Later in the afternoon, after an inspection of the well kept stables with their fine herd of Jersey cattle, we got back to alfalfa talk again, and Mr. Glendinning told me of his experiences with the crop of which he is now the best known advocate.

"I grew my first alfalfa about 20 years ago," said Mr. Glendinning reminiscingly. "I had been reading about the crop, but had never even seen it grow. I decided to give it a trial. I bought some seed in Toronto. I am now satisfied that that seed was five or six years old at least. I sowed it at the rate of 95 pounds to the acre, and did not get as good a catch as I did last season from a seeding of 12 pounds to the acre. And last season, mind you, was a much more unfavorable one than when I made my first seeding

20 years ago. Of course, the longer you grow alfalfa on your land the smaller the seeding required to secure a stand.

"I sowed that first time with a nurse crop of spring wheat. When I looked at those puny little plants of alfalfa with their small stems, small



Two Friends of the Farmer.

They are easily located. The motor cycle seems to bring the town nearer the farm; particularly when repairs are suddenly needed in the rush of spring work. The silo stores the ideal complement to alfalfa hay in the regions of the dairy cow. Most of our folks have the latter; the popularity of the former is on the increase.

leaves, many of them inclined to be yellow, it did not look like much of a crop, but I decided that such growth must be the nature of the plant. The stock was kept off after the grain was harvested and the crop made a fair growth that fall. The next year we cut a very fair crop of alfalfa. The land was rich and in splendid condition. I remember that that year we cut two crops. Then we made our first big mistake.

Not a Pasture Crop

"After we had taken the second crop and growth was again well started, we turned the stock on. We had been told that alfalfa was the greatest pasture plant the world has ever known, and we took the experts at their word. A number of hogs ran on it and on the adjoining field. The following spring there was hardly a plant

left of our original seeding. Such was our first experience with pasturing alfalfa, and our experiences with alfalfa as a pasture plant since have served only to strengthen our belief that if one wishes to get rid of a stand of alfalfa, the best way to do is to pasture it.

"I just stated that hogs ran on both our alfalfa field and the field adjoining. The second spring we seeded alfalfa on that adjoining field, this time with barley as a nurse crop. What was our surprise when instead of small puny plants, the alfalfa stand was strong and vigorous. By the time the barley was ready to cut, the alfalfa was almost as tall as its nurse crop, and some of it was out in blossom. I wasn't able to explain the difference then, but I think I can now. My belief is that there were a few bacteria clinging to the seeds of that first seeding on my farm, that these developed throughout the season, and that the hogs in the dirt that they carried on their feet from one field to the other, inoculated the second field with alfalfa nitrifying bacteria.

"We sowed only the common varieties of alfalfa then, and for a number of years we would get a good catch one season and have a failure the next. We were slow, too, in giving up our belief in the experts who had told us that alfalfa was a good pasture plant, and we lost several stands through pasturing late in the fall. When we gave up late cutting and late pasturing, our experiences with alfalfa took a turn for the better.

An Experiment With Nitro-Culture

"I then knew nothing about bacteria or nitro-culture. One day when riding on the train with Prof. C. A. Zavitz, of Guelph, he asked me if I had tried nitro-culture. I told him that I had been getting good catches, and asked if he thought I could do any better by inoculating the seed.

"Shortly after that, I received a bottle of nitro-culture from the Ontario Agricultural College. Just about that time I had bought the farm across the road. On it alfalfa had never grown. Here were ideal conditions to experiment with my sample of nitro-culture. Part of the field was seeded with untreated seed and part with treated. When we came to harvest the crop of barley, the bundles that we got from the treated part of the field were more than half alfalfa. From the untreated portion of the field we harvested only clean barley. We could walk out to the field and see clearly the straight line of demarcation between the two portions, so strong and vigorous was the growth of the inoculated portion, while on the uninoculated portion we had a catch that resembled very much the first field of alfalfa I had ever seeded. I found a great number of weak, puny plants as I had at first. In the course of a few days the treated stubble was a green mass, and on the other portion, stubble only was visible. The treated portion people used to mistake for fall wheat, so green did it look from the road, and not a few asked me why I didn't plow up the rest of the field and put it into wheat