

The Canadian Dairyman AND Farming World

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THE CANADIAN DAIRYMAN AND FARMING WORLD
PETERBORO, ONT.

TORONTO OFFICE:
Room 306 Manning Chambers, 72 Queen St. West, Toronto.

GOOD ROADS

The subject of good roads is one of perennial interest. It is of special interest at this season to all those who reside in the rural districts. The time will soon be here when the farmer will be warned out to put in his time at road work where the statute labor system exists. Even now where the statute labor has been commuted are to be seen the grading machines busily engaged in moving earth and sods from the ditches to the centre of the road, there to be worked up into a blanket of dust in time of drought, and in seasons of rain, to pits of mud.

Happily, this is not true of all Townships. Many of our more enlightened Township Councils have come to recognize the fact that the average farmer, good as he may be in his own particular sphere, is not an adept at road-making. Such townships make use of an experienced commissioner, whose duty it is to direct and oversee all the work of road-making throughout the town-

ship. But, even here the best results are not always forthcoming, if we can judge from the reports received at our office from the different Reeves of townships.

If we are to have good roads it is necessary that our councils have some definite policy in regard to road-making. They must install and make use of modern road-making machinery, and employ competent men to operate the same. They must have a policy of construction, not one of destruction, as is too frequently the case. They should aim to avoid spending money in patchwork, but rather concentrate their energies upon works of a permanent nature, aiming each year to build a piece of road in accordance with modern approved methods that will be a credit to the township for time to come.

We can never have a proper system of roads, nor anything that approaches it, so long as we leave our roads to the tender care of our pathmasters. When we have commuted our statute labor, when we have appointed competent commissioners, skilled in the methods of modern road-making, to plan and direct all work that is done, and when our councils adopt a policy of permanent road improvement then and then only can we look for, or even hope for, any material bettering of our road systems in rural districts.

YOUR PASTURE FIELDS

Owing to the general scarcity of feed, and the high prices of all feeding stuffs at present, we will be sorely tempted this spring, to turn our stock to pasture at the earliest possible date. No greater mistake could be made. The early grass, though relished by the stock, contains a large percentage of moisture, and its feeding value is comparatively small. In addition to this it has a laxative effect upon the animals, which frequently terminates in scouring, and untoward results. In fact, in some parts of our country, more especially upon the prairies of the West, so drastic is this untoward action of the early grass upon the stock, that they lose in weight, failing to such an extent that the better class of stockmen have found it necessary to furnish hay or other fodder to carry their stock over this trying period when the new grass starts. But this is not the only effect of early pasturing. The ground once born of its natural covering, is exposed to the full force of the sun, and winds. Evaporation becomes much greater and, as a consequence, we have a smaller yield than we otherwise would have had.

Let the pasture get a right good start before you turn the stock on it this spring. It will pay you well to do so, even if your supply of feed is running dangerously low, and you will be put to the expense of buying a little to eke it out. Better to undergo a little expense now, than to suffer the inevitable loss of poor pastures later on.

To yield the best returns, a pas-

ture must be allowed to attain a good length of grass early in the season. Even then, it should never be pastured too closely. Some of us are of the opinion that to get the most possible from a pasture it must be nibbled closely; that where a long stand is allowed to grow up there surely will be waste. This idea has been exploded, and is now believed to be erroneous. Where we have the long stand, protection is afforded to the soil. Less soil water is evaporated, more is available to the plant, and hence we get a greater growth of grass. Even when the longer grass becomes somewhat dry, fresh, green growth is always to be found at the bottom. Thus the stock is always assured of plenty of pasture. While grazing upon the fresh green undergrowth, much of the drier part will also be consumed. In this way, ere the season has ended, most of the grass will have been eaten up, and what appeared in the earlier part of the season as sheer waste, has proven to be the truest of economy.

In view of the bright outlook for dairy products this coming summer, all dairymen should make abundant provision for their cows. In no way can they further this end better than by allowing the pastures to get the best start possible. If it be necessary to turn out earlier than one ought, make use of the pasture upon the public highway, upon some slashing or broken ground, but by all means keep your stock from your best pastures, till well on in the season. Any inconvenience or expense you may be put to, in holding off the pastures while they are attaining the desired length, will be returned in the increased and sustained milk-flow which will follow later on.

PLANT MORE TREES

Farmers as a class have been slow to recognize the advantage of planting trees upon their farms. Too often we have been content to look upon our farms merely from the standpoint of what could be made from them, giving but little thought to the aesthetic or the beautiful. Our homes frequently are merely places in which to exist, no attention whatever having been paid to surrounding them with trees and other beauties of nature that do so much towards making the home a more attractive place in which to live. The value of our farms would be greatly enhanced did this subject of tree planting receive more attention at the hands of our farmers. It costs but little to plant a few trees. Where this practice is made an annual event, before one is aware of it, the farm is well supplied with trees, with but little cost and with little effort on the part of the owner of the land.

Objection is frequently raised that fence row or roadside tree planting is not in the best interests of the farmer. It has been said that the trees as they grow larger, shade the crops as well as take nourishment from the soil, thus depleting the land

in proximity to the trees of the fertilizing ingredients which the crops sown there should make use of. This is a narrow view to take of this matter. True, the crops do not grow so luxuriantly nor produce so abundantly within a few feet of the trees. However, the advantages of these trees greatly overcomes this minor objection. The trees not only beautify the landscape, but when properly planted, are very useful as fence posts. They also act as shelter belts and provide shade that will yield returns during the hot summer months through shading our stock, particularly our dairy cows.

Suitable trees for planting can be obtained from the woodlot which exists upon most farms. Should such trees not be available, they can be obtained from nurserymen at a comparatively small cost. In fact, even where the trees from the woodlot are utilized, it is frequently advisable to obtain from the nurserymen, a variety of rapid-growing trees, such as the cotton-woods, that can be planted between the spaces reserved for the more hardy and slower-growing trees of the common woodlot. These rapidly-growing varieties will be large enough to support a fence many years before the other kinds have reached a sufficient degree of maturity. Thus we will have posts much quicker than where one kind only is planted. As the harder varieties become mature, the fence can be attached to them, the others being cut down and disposed of.

Besides this fence row work, it is frequently advisable to plant some shelter belts. The space most suitable for such work is at the intersection of cross fences between two or more fields. Such places cannot be cultivated into very closely and can just as well be made use of for growing a few trees. Elms and other such varieties are the most suitable for this purpose. As soon as they have obtained sufficient size and height, they not only will afford shade for the stock, but will furnish an acceptable place in which they can rest and scrub themselves. Besides this advantage, these waste places are being made use of, the landscape is beautified and at the same time, we are growing a little wood which will some day come in very useful.

Now that the time for tree planting is at hand, and as upon most farms there is a little time which can be devoted to the promotion of such work, let each and every one of us plan to carry out some tree planting this coming season. It will not require much time and the expense is insignificant compared with the advantages that are to be derived from such work and the ultimate and increasing satisfaction which will be ours in years to come as we watch these trees grow from tender saplings to large, useful, beautiful trees, at the same time realizing that it has been brought about by the work of our own hands.