

FARM

Topics for Discussion

In recognition of the fact that valuable hints always are obtained from men engaged in actual farm work THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE has adopted the "Topics for Discussion" column in order that our readers may see an open channel through which they may inform their brother farmers as to practices that are worth adopting and warn them against methods that prove unprofitable. Not only do we wish our readers to discuss the topics announced for the various issues but also we desire that they suggest practical subjects on which it would be well to have discussion.

This notice appears under the "Farm" department, but the questions dealt with cover all branches of the farming industry. Letters should not exceed 600 words and should reach this office 10 days previous to the date of issue. They are read carefully and a first prize of \$3.00 and a second prize of \$2.00 awarded each week. Other letters used will be paid for at regular rates to contributors.

February 16.—*What method do you follow in selecting eggs for hatching to ensure getting eggs for this purpose from your best stock? Have you ever used a trap nest? If so, with what results? Do you know of any other method of selection that is just as good and simpler?*

February 23.—*What do you consider to be the most satisfactory crop rotation? Discuss briefly the nature of your soil and make special mention of means adopted to enrich your fields.*

March 2.—*What type of seed drill would you advise a farmer to buy? Under what conditions would the hoe drill, the shoe drill, or disc drill work most satisfactorily? What considerations would influence your choice of a drill? What are the "strong points" of a satisfactory seeder?*

March 9.—*At what time of year is it most advisable to apply barn-yard manure to the fields and what method of applying do you find most satisfactory? Give your opinion as to the value of barn-yard manure on prairie farms.*

Clearing Scrub Land

In the articles that follow some suggestions are offered in regard to clearing land of trees and scrub. It happens frequently that men run up against this problem in the course of homesteading or preparing their land for cultivation, and these articles, written by men who have had a good deal of practical experience in the clearing or their own farms, are intended to suggest ways that may be useful to somebody else in clearing theirs. In the competition the awards are given in the order which the articles appear.

Brush Scythe and Mower

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

We have cleared a half section of heavy scrub land, but would not like to pose as an authority on the subject. Still if our mistakes or successes are any benefit to those who have land to clear, we will cheerfully give them. Our soil is heavy black loam, and our experience in breaking is confined to it. We had to deal with most of the scrub and trees usually found in Manitoba. In clearing small stuff we have used the brush scythe a good deal, but do not consider it anything like as good or as cheap as the mower. We cut the mower bar in the center, as a five foot cut is too much for either the mower to stand, or a team of horses to handle. First cut the big stuff that is too heavy for the mower: or, better still, keep the axe and grub-hoe going with the mower. We would hardly like to give an opinion as to the relative merits of pulling willow or just cutting it and then breaking. Much would depend on the men and also on the team. If pulled they are done with and the land clear for the plow, but they are difficult to pile and burn if the weather is not favorable.

With regard to poplar there is only one right way to deal with it, and that is pull it with team of either two or four horses as may be necessary. Four horses will pull almost anything unless big trees and even these by cutting a few of the big roots on the surface. With oak, never under any circumstances cut it. If it is a tree of any size grub it out; if small scrub split it off the old root with axe or grub hook and you will very likely

kill it, but even if you do not you will not leave a lot of snags sticking up to break the binder sections.

The best and cheapest way to get rid of the old root is to take an axe and grub hoe just as the frost is going out of the ground in the spring and when the frost is out a few inches clear the earth away (you can always find the root by the break in the furrow) and split the root. A few blows will break the pieces on the whole root just where it is held solid in the frozen earth. Just the right time is all important in this.

In the breaking we believe in a four horse team driven abreast, but if one has a right outfit of horses and the weather is very hot, perhaps tandem is better.

We tried backsetting on two fields of 40 acres each, but met with dismal failure, the crop going down in both cases, and in one case we only got 17 bush per acre of very poor stuff.

It might not be out of place to add that while we do not altogether believe in burning stubble, we have on several occasions done so after first crop, with excellent results. Where the land is heavy, as ours is, it will produce a fine crop after burning by just discing and harrowing. Burning keeps the land clean, is very much cheaper and allows time for brush and roots turned under with the breaker to become thoroughly rotted. Then when plowed for a third crop and the old surface soil turned up you get almost as good a crop as off breaking.

As to the amount of land that can be cleared and broken in a given time, the differences are so great that figures are of little value. We have had light scrub cleared for \$1.50 per acre, and have had it cost \$4.00 or even \$5.00 per acre. Last summer we cleared and broke 25 acres of exceptionally heavy scrub land at a cost of slightly over \$2.00, or not over \$9.00 per acre. A four horse hitch should plow 1½ acres of almost any land and 2 acres if conditions are favorable. We owe much of our success to an exceptionally fine lot of men.

Man.

JOHN KERR.

Prefers Steam Outfit for Clearing Land

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

The easiest and most thorough method I know for breaking up scrub land is by means of the steam plow. The scrub I refer to is principally oak with a few poplars and willows. Of course if there were large trees on the land the plow could not work until they had been removed. The best way to remove trees is by means of a stump, and I have found the kind that work on the capstan principle and are anchored to a stump to be the best. If the roots are chopped off as they come out of the ground there will be no hole left. I have taken out very large trees and by this method there has only been a slight indentation in the ground to show where the stump came from.

I certainly think it pays to cut off everything as you go, and make a good job so that when the land has to be plowed it can be done with a gang. Some adopt the plan of putting four horses on a scrub plow and missing everything the plow will not cut. But taking into consideration the amount of work which has to be put on to get a satisfactory seed bed, and the job it is to plow it, I could never see how it paid.

I have been clearing up scrub land for eighteen years and the most effective way I have found outside of the steam plow, is as follows: First burn off the piece you intend to break, either in the fall or spring. This is important, for it will save a man keeping the coulter from filling up. Then stump all the plow will not cut through. It is wonderful how large a root the plow will cut, especially in clay soil, as it is around here. Hitch your horses on your plow, tandem, and use a heavy logging chain that runs through a pulley on the plow. This equalizes the teams and thus gives more power, besides if you strike a root that stops the outfit, there is a certain amount of "give" that saves many a break. I plow six inches deep, but in lighter soils it would be better to go deeper. Two men can handle this outfit and turn over a good area in a day.

Man.

C. S. MARGETSON.

* * *

"I enjoy THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE very much indeed. I have taken a great interest in the writings of Richard Keane. If I were near him I would give his hand a good shake."—Joseph Pritchard, Saskatchewan.

To Grow a Record Wheat Crop

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

I have a plot of new breaking on which I want to grow a record crop of wheat. I wish you would give me the assistance of your advice. Alta.

H. E.

For the best results you should have good, clean seed of strong germination, free from smut or any injury whatever. Have your land thoroughly pulverized by plows, harrows, etc., so that the young wheat plant may have every opportunity of procuring both moisture and plant food, and be sure to sow the wheat as early as it is possible to get upon the land. I prefer one and a half bushels of seed per acre put in with the disc drill, deep enough to reach the moist soil.

If the land is in any way rough I would advise harrowing after seeding. Many partial failures occur from insufficient harrowing of new land. If convenient to procure a sub-surface packer or a corrugated roller I would advise you to use one of them either before or after sowing; they should not be used when the soil is wet or it will cake. As to varieties both Preston and Red Fife have given large yields at Brandon and Indian Head. The first named is a bearded variety and is a few days earlier than Red Fife.

M. A. C.

S. A. BEDFORD.

A Grower's Estimate of Two-Rowed Barley

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE :

I have grown two-rowed for one season, but I mean to continue raising it, as I think it will pay better than wheat if enough farmers can be induced to grow it. Of course the average farmer thinks there is money in nothing but wheat and nothing will change his mind—not even being frozen out a couple of years in succession.

I will give you my experience growing two rowed barley. Last spring I purchased 12 bushels of the best seed I could get, which I sowed on 5½ acres. It came up very thick, so thick that it lodged badly before it was right headed out, which made it very difficult harvest. Consequently I lost a good deal of the grain. The crop was cut 89 days after it was sown, which was six days more than my six-rowed barley required to mature. It averaged 42 bushels per acre, which was twelve bushels better than my six-rowed. I was disappointed in the yield, according to the amount of straw, but we had no rain for five weeks before it was cut.

The grain was of fair quality, far better than any six-rowed barley I have ever grown. I have no hesitation in saying that the yield was greater than six-rowed and that the quality was very much better, but for the price it will command on the market I cannot speak definitely as I had not enough to ship a car. I am asking a dollar a bushel for what I have had to sell. I intend sowing fifty acres this spring, so I hope to be able to have a car load to dispose of next fall. You ask how is it that more of the two-rowed type is not grown. Well, around here—and I guess it will be the same all over—it is the wild oat pest that is keeping the acreage down. Last year I sowed one thousand bushels of six-rowed seed barley, and every farmer had the same story to tell: He wanted to clean out his wild oats; so once the wild oat is exterminated the two-rowed type will have a show.

Regarding an export trade I think the same could be established. I do not see how the farmers cannot grow just as plump grain in this country as in England. And if they took a little more pains securing the crop they should get as good a color, too. I think it would pay far better than wheat, as an average crop would return from \$20.00 to \$25.00 per acre, and then there is not the same risk of having the crop frozen, as it will ripen ten days earlier than wheat. Even if no export demand existed I would advise the more general growing to the two-rowed type, as I think it would be far better for feeding purposes, according to the qualities of the crop. For feeding I would say four bushels of the two-rowed are worth five of the six-rowed.

HUGH GILMOUR.

(Mr. Gilmour encloses with this letter samples of two-rowed and six-rowed barley grown on his farm during the past season. The two-rowed is a markedly superior sample, the kernel being more uniform in size, plumper, of brighter color and the grain better in every way, from the standpoint of the feeder as well as the maltster.—EDITOR.)

Founded 1886

153,487 in 1908.
79,444, against
or trade at the
this have shown
agate above the
imports were
e of over £10.
d for £47,624.
e previous year.
d imports were
y one month.
has grown from
00,000 in 1909,
ings in some
ous competitor

of Canada is
"The Statist"
bscribed in the
foreign invest-
Canada reached
eater portion of
on. This total
nt required for

ly £23,000,000,
h £22,000,000,
bout one-third,
for the year's
vested abroad
000,000.

N. DEWHIRST.

roducers

ocate and Home
lum, a promi-

is the beef ani-
lay, and a com-
maintain this
ontinuanee is a
the Canadian
going to attain
tility. "But,"
rifice beef typ-
ce, we must all
s, prizewinners,
e also splendia
re the kind we
say that a cow
active by hav-
and fine, capa-
xtreme of beef
records of over
n Britain, and
ed dairy strain,
of the poorer
licated here.
n print is that
ilking period."
that the breed-
stress upon the
long milking
e can be done.
horn, a matter
sibility of secur-
and the keep-

keep individual
e total receipts
reed, and four
two of the
lk:
.....\$179.30
..... 137.27
..... 21.00

.....\$337.57
or cow for the
e two purebred

DATE is a very
ts some useful
Saskatchewan.

ARMER'S Adv-
g every week."

sider it of great
in the topics it
Alberta.