

# The Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL

Some people watch the copper coins so narrowly that silver dollars roll past them unobserved.

No man has any business to hold opinions on matters concerning which science can throw the light of definite knowledge.

A cool-curing room will not always insure either a "lower" yield or a premium in price realized for the cheese, because its effect may be offset by other independent influences working in the opposite direction, but cool-curing tends towards both these desirable results.

"Never allow a colt to lose its colt flesh. Keep it going right along after weaning, especially up to the age of two years, and as long after as one possibly can, for there is no denying the fact that condition is more than half of the horse at any and all times." These words, by R. P. Stericker, the noted horse judge, should be laid well to heart by everyone who undertakes to raise a foal.

The agricultural community must view with misgivings the proposal to appoint a permanent tariff commission to investigate and advise concerning the levy of tariff imposts and their relation to the various industries affected. While an impartial commission of this kind might render useful service, would there not be danger of its becoming an ingenious instrument of higher protection, playing into the hands of aggressive self-seeking interests?

That means of killing the golden-egged goose which consists in going out of a line of stock husbandry because cost of feed is temporarily high, or prices for the product temporarily low, is not peculiar to the Canadian farmer. The Irish farmers of Ulster, it seems, discouraged by a dear potato crop (which is hog feed in Ireland) in 1907, and baited by extra high prices for pork in the late fall of that year, sold off their sows, still further diminishing their numbers in the spring of 1908. Thus, the Ulster hog-raisers reduced their sow stock by 9,504 head, and are now contributing a scant supply of pork when prices are temptingly high. Agriculture needs more men of faith—faith to persevere, when the courage of their neighbors plays out.

That the gentle, patient, seven-days-a-week dairy cow has done more to banish romance and sociability from country life than all other causes combined, is the sweeping indictment of an Oxford County correspondent. He puts it strong, but it must be admitted that where dairying is followed as an exclusive specialty, requiring regular nightly and morning attendance of the whole farm force, the chores do become too exacting for the interests of society, intellect, or even physical well-being. A reasonable number of cows are a pleasure to handle, but a farm where all the family and employees are tied constantly to the stable is not the kind to appeal to a well-balanced young man. Money making is not the noblest purpose in life, nor is bovine society a satisfactory substitute for that of fellow human beings. No Canadian farm should have so many cows that one or more members of the family may not conveniently remain away for a day, or several days. Otherwise the burden of duties becomes a depressing, deadening and narrowing routine.

### Corn-cutting and Silo-filling.

Several letters have appeared in "The Farmer's Advocate" from men of experience, giving in some detail their methods of cutting the corn crop and filling the silo. Great changes have taken place in ideals and methods in regard to this work from what prevailed when silos first began to be used. In no respect is this more noticeable than in the stage of ripeness of the corn crop preferred. Instead of the immature, green stuff formerly thought to be most suitable for silage purposes, our correspondents are agreed that the grain ought to be fairly well glazed; in fact, just very little short of being ripe enough to cut for husking, before cutting for the silo should begin. If frost threatens, some would cut a little earlier than this, but most would run chances of a frost rather than of ensiling immature stuff. The opinion seems to prevail that even if corn leaves are frozen white the value of the product is not seriously impaired, but that cutting should not be long delayed after a frost, as the leaves and stalks then dry out rapidly, and there is danger of mouldy silage as a result, besides some waste of leaves. One correspondent would add water to frozen corn in the silo, but the majority depend on more firmly tramping it to prevent mouldiness.

The corn binder has taken the place of hand cutting in the field with almost all, on account of being quicker, easier, and of the greater speed in handling bound bundles, but some would prefer hand labor if help were available. One objects to the corn binder on account of its breaking off ears and leaving long stubble, and he uses in preference short-handled, heavy hoes, which do the neatest possible work. Five or six acres is reckoned a fair day's work for a binder. If corn is in hills, four or five men with hoes or sickles will accomplish as much, but where binders are used sowing in drills is commonly practiced. Cutting is generally done a day ahead of filling, on account of leaving greater freedom for teams hauling, and also because slight drying is an advantage.

The number of men and teams employed in hauling and filling depends on the distance that hauling has to be done, and also on the size and power of the cutting outfit. From three to five teams and drivers are usually engaged in hauling, about four men in the field to help load, one man to help unload, one at cutting-box, two distributing and tramping in silo, and the engineer. On the average the silo-filling gang consists of about 12 men, from 9 to 14 being given by the different correspondents as the number needed. Mr. Fixter, foreman Maedonald College Farm, uses a long, low platform, hung below axles of ordinary wagon as a corn rack, but a low-truck wagon with long, flat rack laid on bolsters is the more common style. To ensure ease in unloading, it is well to pile on the corn first at each end of rack and leave a space in the center unfilled.

Some report the whole cutting outfit, including corn binder, owned and operated by a company of farmers; a greater number, probably, engage one of the threshers of the neighborhood, to bring engine and cutting-box and fill the silo at a charge of about one dollar per hour. Corn binders are usually owned by one or more farmers, though in some instances they also are hired, a dollar per acre being the usual charge, the farmer supplying team and twine. One six-horse-power gasoline engine owned by a company of farmers is reported, but those almost universally used are ordinary thresher engines of from fourteen to twenty horse-power; size of cutting-box, with blower attachment, being in proportion to power of engine. From four and a half to eight acres per day, stored in silo, is given as the capacity

of cutting and blowing outfit, varying according to power used and weight of the crop.

The importance of thorough mixing and tramping of the cut corn as it drops into the silo is appreciated by all who have written. Two men, or in some instances three, are kept busy at this part of the work.

Most of the help needed for the strenuous work of silo filling is secured by changing work with neighbors, who also have silos to fill, though, if necessary, an extra man or two may be hired by the day.

The estimates of cost of putting good corn into the silo vary; farmers who do not place any value on team labor giving it as low as five and six dollars per acre, while Mr. Fixter, who counts in wages of team and possibly handles heavier crops, reckons the cost to be ten dollars. It will depend so much on distance to haul, weight of crop, excellence of machinery, etc., that close average estimates need not be expected. On one point there is complete agreement among the silo men; that is, they contrast the system they use as being not only cheaper than the old style of shocking and husking, but superior in every way.

### Bridges and Culverts.

The article by W. A. McLean, Engineer of Highways for Ontario, on "Bridges," is worthy of careful reading, as it is written by one who not only holds official position, but who is also, thoroughly practical and well acquainted with all details of the work.

Of late concrete and steel have come into use in place of wood for bridge and culvert material, even in remote country districts. The rise in price of timber is mainly responsible. As the new materials are lasting and will show for years to come the ideas of the present day, the point is made that looks should be considered. An ugly structure will always be an eyesore, will cost as much as and be no stronger than one of pleasing design. This applies to the smallest culvert, and on through all the different sizes up to the massive span bridge.

Emphasis is also properly laid on having good materials, and on having these properly mixed. Clean sand and clean gravel, to be afterwards mixed, are much preferable to gravel in which there is an undetermined amount of fine sand. "The theory of concrete is that there should be enough of cement to fill the voids in the sand; and enough of the resulting mortar to fill the voids in the gravel or broken stone."

No discussion of the bridge question will enable inexperienced men, or even those with some experience, such as councillors, to draw up plans and specifications for bridges of steel and concrete. That is a matter for a competent engineer, and the services of one should always be secured before tenders are called for, and also afterwards during construction, to see that work is properly done.

The tendency has been, and is, to have culverts large enough for ordinary freshets, but scarcely capacious enough for the extraordinary ones which seem to be becoming more frequent. This is a great mistake. It is poor economy to have water rushing across the roadway and cutting gutters there, which a little more culvert room would have avoided. Another mistake of a similar kind is to have bridges merely strong enough for the traffic of to-day without taking into account that the increasing weight, resulting from the probable adoption of motor traffic, is likely to call for stronger structures in the near future. Where modern bridges are being erected, such as will