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The Canada Farmer.

TORONTO, CANADA, APRIL 30, 1873.

Red Rust in Wheat.

Mr. Mechi, of Tiptree Hall, never loses an opportunity of pressing on the agricultural mind of England any useful fact or information for the benefit of the farming interest that comes to his knowledge. He seems ever on the alert to extract wisdom from passing occurrences, he is always eminently practical, and it would be difficult to estimate the benefit he has conferred on the farming world. Mr. Mechi, does not confine himself to home questions, but when occasion serves, is ready to throw out a practical suggestion, affecting the colonial farming interest. His last good service in this way, we find in a letter addressed by him to the editor of a London paper, on the subject of "red rust in colonial wheat," and it will be seen that it contains valuable information for Canadian farmers. Here it is:

"In the *Agricultural Gazette* for June 8, 1872, I wrote as follows:—

"The following fact may prove interesting as regards the red rust which is so extensively injurious to the wheat crops in Australia and Canada. A very choice sample of wheat was sent to me from Canada, so, judging from former experience how inferior colonial wheat results on my farm, I only dibbled it on a part of two lands or stretches in the middle of a field drilled with Golden Drop English wheat. All went on luxuriantly until recently, when the two lands of Canadian wheat showed signs of red rust, and are now a shining red among the green. But they are evidently infecting the adjoining wheat, especially that close to them, and the red tinge is gradually spreading, so that I fear an acre or more may be damaged, and that it may prevent my being able safely to sell the Golden Drop for seed, which I intended to do. The fact is interesting, for we may safely conclude that the disease is in or on the seed, and that it is not so much a question of climate. I should therefore like to know, in the interest of our Canadian or Australian friends, whether they soak or steep their wheat, as we do, in a solution of sulphate of copper or some other dressing. I should imagine that they do not. Fortunately for the cause of comparison and discovery, we did not steep the handful of Canadian wheat sent to us; it is more than probable that if we had done so it would have been free from rust like the rest of my wheat crops. Those interested in colonial agriculture will be quite welcome to inspect the crop between this and harvest time."

"Since writing the foregoing, the colonial wheat referred to wasted and became worthless at harvest. The Golden Drop wheat on each side of it was of good quality and unaffected, although the tips of some of the leaves immediately in contact with the colonial wheat had an orange tinge. I consider it to be of immense importance to our colonies that the farmers there should steep their wheat and thus avoid rust and smut, for rust especially entails immense losses. A comparative trial, with and without steeping, would remove any doubt.

"We use 1 lb. of bluestone (sulphate of copper), dissolved in 10 pints of water, to each sack (4 imperial bushels) of wheat. The wheat is either soaked in the solution for ten minutes, or the solution is poured over and intermixed with it until it is absorbed. I have almost invariably found that wheat sent to me from our colonies became rusted and worthless. For the future I shall steep a part, and have another part unsteeped. The samples sent to me were of very fine quality."

"I should be glad to learn if any of my brother agriculturists have had experience with colonial wheat, and whether it was sown steeped or unsteeped? I have heard complaints that it requires acclimatizing, perhaps that may have reference to the residue of the crop in the sown having been steeped."

"The following is a striking instance of the necessity for steeping wheat: We sowed a headland with unsteeped wheat, and the crop of that headland was full of smutty ears. The rest of the crop, from the same seed steeped, was perfectly free from smutty ears. The following is the letter above referred to, together with my answer. They may prove of interest to your readers."

West End, Victoria Plains, Western Australia,
December 13th, 1872.

"Sir, in reply to the honor of your acquaintance, I feel I am taking a liberty in writing to you, but trust the cause of my doing so may be a sufficient apology. We have been suffering from red rust for several seasons past, but this last season has been most fatal. The crops in some parts of the colony are entirely destroyed, and throughout more or less affected, which will, it is feared, completely purchase the exports of wheat, and others totally ruined. Believing your opinion on all farming matters to be the highest authority, and feeling that your advice at this crisis would be of eminent service to my brother agriculturists and well as my self, I am induced to write to you on the subject, in order, if possible, to discover some means of checking its ravages next season. I would also ask your opinion of the following:—Whether lime and salt spread on the land would be a healthy antidote to rust, and if so what proportion? When would it be used—as soon as the blade comes—just before it unfolds—or just before it comes out in ear? What is the most subject? Is it principally attributable to the weather in the way of east winds and blighty clouds? Are there any means of checking it when at first slightly making its appearance? I will not encroach upon your valuable time with further questions, but hoping you will under the circumstances kindly add us with your counsel. I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
J. J. Mechi, Esq. CHAS. CLINCH.

Tiptree Hall, Kelvedon, Essex, March 6, 1873.

Dear Sir,—I refer you to the foregoing as a reply to your letter. I have had no experience with lime and salt, although I have heard of it being used as a dressing for the seed. The sulphate of copper is, as far as my experience goes, a certain preventative. I believe the mischief is in or on the seed. In England, we suffer most with blight, or smutty ears where seed is unsteeped. The fine colonial wheat which I have sown always promise well, and look healthy until the development of the head, and then become destroyed by the rust. In future I shall try a part steeped and unsteeped of any colonial samples I may receive—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
J. J. Mechi.

We commend to the best attention of our experienced farmers, these suggestions of Mr. Mechi. They arrive at a timely moment, when spring wheat is being sown, and a fair test of the effects of steeping the seed in Mr. Mechi's solution, ought by all means to be made.

The Advantages of "Forehandedness."

Some farmers complain that they are always behind with their work on account of not being forehanded enough to carry on their premises independently; that they have to help their neighbors in seed time and harvest before attending to their own farm interests, in order to procure funds to help to do their work. Now, the man who gets into this rut is destined to remain there just so long as he has not resolution enough to extricate himself by a change of practice. Rather than live in such a condition of servitude and self-robbery, he had better pay four times the real value of seed, tools and help, and mortgage to do it, and then keep fully up to time.

Here and there, all over the country, let the season be what it may, will be found every summer inferior fields of grain, the result of bad seed or late sowing, and spindling corn from late planting. In winter will be found upon these farms poor stock, because fed upon hay which was not cut until it had lost nearly all of its nutritious elements. The loss attending such management as this one year, should be a lesson to the one who suffers by it, but it is not, for as before stated, he thinks that his circumstances will not allow of a different course. The husbandman who is always behind time in his farm operations is, in addition to the inconveniences alluded to, subject to the tricks of sharpers in the commercial world. As soon as any article of produce is marketable it must, through the overpressing demand for money, be sold, let prices range as they may, and this subjugation of a class has an effect more detrimental upon the produce market than any other influence brought to bear upon it. So a whole community is afflicted by the inadvertency of a class.—*Cor. N. F. Times*.

Mangolds v. Swedes.

The late Lord Spencer conducted some experiments with the view of testing the respective feeding value of Mangolds and turnips, and as far as they go, furnish reliable information in favor of Mangolds.

His lordship says: "At Christmas I put two Durhams steers to feeding, the one upon Swedish turnips, the other upon Mangolds. I ascertained the weight of the steers by measurement:

1st Month, No. 1. Fed on Swedes, gained 34 lbs., consuming 1,624 lbs.

No. 2.—Fed on Mangolds, gained 52 lbs., consuming 1,848 lbs.

2nd Month, No. 2.—Fed on Swedes, gained 14 lbs., consuming 1,889 lbs.

No. 1.—Fed on Mangolds, gained 32 lbs., consuming 1,884 lbs.

3rd Month, No. 1. Fed on Mangolds, gained 50 lbs., consuming 1,792 lbs.

No. 2.—Fed on Mangolds, gained 31 lbs., consuming 1,792 lbs."

The comparison between the increase of the two animals during the first two months should not only be observed, but the fact that when No. 2 was changed from Mangolds to Swedes in the second month, his growth was nearly stopped, but as soon as he was put on Mangolds again in the third month, he began at once to increase.

The more recent experiments on fattening cattle, by Colonel McDonall, of Logan, show that 75 lbs. of Mangolds produced equal results with 107 lbs. of Swedes, while that of Mr. McCulloch (Auchness), quoted by Dr. Anderson, analytical chemist to the Highland Society of Scotland, have led him to the conclusion that 30 lbs. of Mangolds are equal in feeding value to 40 lbs. of turnips. Morton, in his *Cyclopedia of agriculture*, however, states that he scarcely thinks the majority of farmers will agree with the alleged superiority of Mangolds over Swedes for feeding purposes.

Weather and Crops in Britain.

The past has been another week of fine spring weather, and a great amount of field work has been satisfactorily accomplished. Seeding is now in a comparatively advanced state in England, the soil being in capital condition for sowing. The weather in Scotland has been favorable to spring work, which is progressing rapidly. Regarding the state of affairs in West Lothian the *Scotsman* remarks:—

"The weather during March has been on the whole favorable for spring work; the second week was very cold, with snow blasts, but the two last weeks have been good. There has not been much sunshine, and vegetation is backward; but with good weather now, the spring will be early enough. The arrows of ploughing have been got well forward; the beans were sown with a favorable tide; a beginning has been made with the seeding of land under white crop; and land which was ploughed before February is harrowing fine. The winter-sown wheat is looking very unequal on heavy soils; it is very thin, and some fields will have to be ploughed up. On free soils there are more plants, but they are weakly; altogether the appearance of the crop is not promising. Pasture grass has not made a start, and the fields look brown for the season. All kinds of stock are dear, lean cattle particularly so, being out of proportion to the even high price of fat. Grain markets have not moved much, though the demand for seed has raised prices for good samples of oats and barley."—*London Farmer*, 7th April.

Facts for Farmers.

A series of experiments instituted to test the average loss in weight by drying, show that corn loses one-fifth and wheat one-fourteenth by the process. From this, statement it is made that farmers will make more by selling unshelled corn in the fall at 75 cents than the following summer at \$1 per bushel, and that wheat at \$1.32 in December is equal to \$1.30 for the same wheat in June following. This estimate is made on the basis of interest at seven per cent., and takes no account of loss from vermin. These facts are worthy of consideration.—*Exchange*.

—The profits of farming should consist, in a large measure, in the improvement of the farm itself and its belongings, and there can be no better investment than this. That is very poor farming, if worthy to be called farming, which, though it may nominally show a cash balance, leaves the homestead in a worse instead of a better condition than it found it.