Some Live Farm Topics

Harvesting and Cleaning the Bean Crop

A few beans are still pulled by hand, some cut off with a knife, which is attached to a plow, but the greater part of the beans are cut off with two-horse cutters. The bean cutter is attached to a common two-horse cultivator. It has two knives which pass about one inch below the ground, cutting the roots off and throwing two rows into one. They are then forced into small bunches, being careful to shake all the dirt off the roots, and afterwards turned into wind rows. When sufficiently dry they are taken into the barn. Great care must be taken to have them dry before putting in the barn, so if there are frequent showers during harvest the beans must be turned often in order to let them dry properly.

The beans are threshed with a bean separator, which has a capacity of from six hundred to one thousand bushels per day. The threshing machine also crumbles up any lumps of earth, that may be among the beans. Some of the latest machines clean the beans in such a manner that they are fit for market without any further cleaning. The yield per acre of beans varies from fifteen to thirty-five bushels; they usually overrun the standard weight, which is sixty pounds to the bushel.

For marketing, the beans that have not been cleaned by the threshing machines are run through the fanning mill, then put into bags, and taken to a bean factory where they are further cleaned, graded and hand-picked before being shipped. The largest warehouse in the Dominion for handling, grading, and storing beans, is situated at Blenheim, Ontario. It is a building some fifty feet square, strongly built and four stories high, with a cellar under the whole building. The storage capacity is fully fifty thousand bushels, and the weekly shipment is from two to four thousand bushels of hand-picked beans.

In the cellar is situated the boiler and engine, and also bins for receiving the beans before they are elevated to the upper stories.

The first floor is used for receiving the beans from the farmers' wagons. When the beans are taken from the wagons they are first weighed and then dumped into a hole in the floor, and elevated from below into the bins on the upper floors. This floor is also used for bagging and barrelling the beans which have been hand-picked and are ready to ship.

On the eastern half of the second floor is a large, light, airy room, which is occupied by the pickers. There are over fifty machines, and each machine is controlled by a female operator, who, with quick fingers, and sharp eyes, picks out any remaining discolored or split beans, as they slowly, but steadily pass before her on a canvas screen.

The western portion of this flat and also the next flat is occupied by large storage bins.

In the upper story is the grader and cleaner. The beans are elevated up to this story and run through the grader and cleaner at the rate of one hundred and fifty bushels per hour. After having passed through this machine, but little dirt and very few small or split beans remain. The beans from the grader run into the large storage bins, and from these bins the pickers are supplied. After having gone through the pickers' hands, they are barrelled or bagged, and marked hand-picked.

The building described above, although one of the largest factories, is but one of a number of similar establishments in Blenheim, Chatham, and other surrounding towns.

The price of beans has varied greatly, as high as two dollars and a half per bushel has been received, while on the other hand they have been as low as fifty cents a bushel. The average price for the last thirty years would perhaps be about one dollar and a quarter per bushel.

The United States may be said to be the chief consumers of Canadian beans, at least one-third of the total crop is shipped to Boston, New York, St. Louis, and other large cities of United States. The remainder of the crop goes to France, South Africa, West Indies, the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia.

J. O. LAIRD,
Kent Co., Ont.

Why Alfalfa Will Pay

It, being a legume, is a nitrogen fixer, and leaves the soil in a better condition than it found it.

Rooting very deeply, it gathers potash and phosphoric acid from sources not available to other plants, and leaves the soil in a more porous, and therefore, better physical condition than it found it.

A ton of good alfalfa hay contains one-tenth more protein than a ton of wheat bran.

When once established on inoculated soil, it produces, perennially; its period of productivity being practically unlimited.

It produces three or four crops per year and from three to six tons per acre.

When plowed under, the roots and stubble leave a large amount of valuable humus in the soil.

Alfalfa has been grown successfully on hardpan land 180 feet above water.

In view of these facts, will it not pay to make an effort to grow alfalfa?

Value of Clover Sod

In a press bulletin recently issued from the Ontario Agricultural College, Prof. C. A. Zavitz bears most striking testimony to the influence of clover on the soil, increasing the yield of grain crops fully 50 per cent. more than if grown on a grass or timothy sod. He says:

"We have conducted a series of experiments at the Agricultural College, Guelph, on three different occasions, in order to ascertain the comparative value of clover and grass sod for crop production. We first grew clovers and grasses upon separate plots and removed the crops, after which the land was plowed and other crops were sown. The results, therefore, show the influence of the roots remaining in the soil upon the productiveness of crops following the clovers and the grasses. In 1902, barley was sown after each of four varieties of clovers and three varieties of grasses in four different places in our experimental grounds. The average results of the four tests in pounds of barley per acre were as follows: Red clover, 1,516; lucerne, 1,450; alsike clover, 1,427; mammoth red clover, 1,408; meadow fescue grass, 1,068; orchard grass, 1,015; and timothy, 946. It will therefore be seen that the red clover sod gave an increase over the timothy sod of 570 pounds, or nearly 12 bushels per acre.

"In another experiment which was completed in 1900, in which winter wheat was sown on both clover and grass sods, it was found that an average of 3,194 pounds of wheat per acre was obtained from the clover sod, and only 2,300 pounds from the grass sod.

"In 1899, a mixture of oats and barley was sown on clover sod and also on grass sod. The results were very marked, as an average of 2,256 pounds of mixed grains per acre were obtained from the clover sod, and only 1,078 pounds of mixed grains per acre from the grass sod.

"By averaging the results of these three grains, we find that the crop grown on the clover sod gave an increase over the crop grown on the grass sod by fully 56 per cent.

"The results of these experiments help us to appreciate the beneficial influence on the soil from growing clover. It also indicates the suitability of a properly cultivated clover sod as a preparation for winter wheat or for spring grains."

Orchard Cultivation

There is a danger that on account of the wet weather, orchards will not receive their usual cultivation, which is urgently needed to destroy weeds, aerate the soil, and conserve soil moisture for future use. If the ground is not stirred it bakes, cracks open and evaporation goes on rapidly. By stirring the soil through frequent cultivation, thus keeping a loose mulch on the surface, capillarity is broken up and moisture retained. As soon as it is possible, therefore, to get on the ground after a rain, the cultivator should be started in the orchard and kept going on as steadily as time and weather will permit.

To Keep Off Worms

Mr. T. R. Patillo, of Bridgewater, N.S., sends the Fruit Division, Ottawa, a novel preventive for the currant and gooseberry worm. He takes the twigs of the White Pine, inserts them in and out through the bushes when in bloom, and asserts that after several years' trial he has perfect confidence in this preventive. He is also of the opinion that it works equally well in keeping off the cucumber and squash bug.

A. MCNEILL.

New Strawberry Varieties

The Ohio Experiment Station has been investigating the varieties of strawberries and recommend the following new kinds as giving satisfactory results:

EARLY VARIETIES—August Luther, Cameron's Early, Excelsior, Johnson's Early, Thompson's Early.

MIDSEASON VARIETIES—Kittie Rice, Marie, Miller, Parson's Beauty, Sample, Senator Dunlap, Haverland, Warfield, Pokomoke, Greenville.

LATE VARIETIES—Yant, Brandywine, Gandy, Lester Lovett, Robbie, Nettie.

For the home garden the following are named because of excellent flavor: August Luther, Marshall, Brunette, Kittie Rice, Nettie, Robbie, Corsican, Granville, Yant.

The following prolific varieties are especially suited to near market: August Luther, Kittie Rice, Marie, Parson's Beauty, Sample, Haverland.

For long shipment and for canning the following are suitable: Warfield, Senator Dunlap, Granville, Gandy, Cardinal, Excelsior, Lyon, Marie, Parson's Beauty.

Deacon (severely)—Do you know where bad boys go who go fishing on Sunday?

Tommy (eagerly) — Yessir. Up Jones's creek.—Princeton Tiger.