

Farm Crop Queries

Conducted by Professor Henry G. Bell.

The object of this department is to place at the service of our farm readers the advice of an acknowledged authority on all subjects pertaining to soils and crops.

Address all questions to Professor Henry G. Bell, in care of The Wilson Publishing Company, Limited, Toronto, and answers will appear in this column in the order in which they are received. As space is limited it is advisable where immediate reply is necessary that a stamped and addressed envelope be enclosed with the question, when the answer will be mailed direct.



Henry G. Bell.

Question—W. K.:—I have a meadow seeded down last spring, but, owing to the extreme wet, followed by a drought, there is only half a crop. The clover mostly lived but the timothy is nearly all dead. Should I plow them up in the Spring, or would it be advisable to go over the ground with a drag harrow and sow timothy by hand?

Answer:—If the clover has lived through the winter in sufficient quantities I would advise re-sowing timothy seed in the spring and at the same time top-dressing the seeding with well-rotted manure or about 200 pounds of fertilizer. The fertilizer should be high in ammonia. I think you would do well also to add three pounds of meadow fescue grass per acre. This is a rapid-growing grass and should make a valuable addition to your meadow. After this has been applied I believe it would be advisable to harrow the seeding lightly, making sure to harrow it with the grain drill rows instead of with a drag. If the spring is normal this should get you a good catch and make a satisfactory seeding.

Question—M. L. S.:—I purchased a farm on which only 6 acres were plowed and part of this was done two years ago and left to grow to weeds. A great deal of the field was planted to potatoes, but it also is very weedy.

The land has had very little manure in the last five years. Plowing for spring crops must be done this spring as we were unable to do any plowing last fall. We purpose sowing barley and oats, and would like to know whether it is advisable to seed this land with clover this spring or plow the stubble after the grain is harvested and seed to rye, and then sow the clover a year from this spring. We have no barn-yard manure to apply to the land.

Answer:—In my opinion it would be well to seed your barley and oats with clover this spring. The soil is evidently run down and you should, as soon as possible, establish a system of cropping where you could plow under a second crop of clover. This will add organic matter, or humus, to the soil and will also make some addition of nitrogen. In order to make sure of a satisfactory catch of clover and at the same time greatly assist your barley and oats seeding, it would be well to apply 200 to 300 pounds of fertilizer to the acre at the time of seeding the crop, since you have no barn-yard manure to apply to your land. This fertilizer should carry at least two to four per cent. ammonia and from six to eight per cent. available phosphoric acid. It will not only help the grain crop but will do a great deal to insure a satisfactory stand of clover.



Your Problems

Conducted by Mrs. Helen Law.

Mothers and daughters of all ages are cordially invited to write to this department. Initials only will be published with each question and its answer as a means of identification, but full name and address must be given in each letter. Write on one side of paper only. Answers will be mailed direct if stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Address all correspondence for this department to Mrs. Helen Law, 75 Castle Frank Road, Toronto.

E. F. A.:—1. Vegetables are more wholesome and better flavored when steamed than they are when boiled or fried. Besides, there is much less waste than in boiling, as much of the nutrition of the vegetables is thrown away with the water in which they are boiled. The water should be saved and used in soups. 2. If linen is moistened along the line the threads are easier. 3. A large pair of scissors is a convenient kitchen tool, especially in preparing lettuce and other vegetables. Of course, they must be thoroughly washed, as are other utensils, after every using. 4. When plaster cracks, add enough vinegar to plaster of paris to make a mixture like thick putty, fill the crack, and smooth off with a knife. If water is used the plaster hardens too quickly. 5. Before storing a stovepipe away for the summer, rub it well with coal oil, stuff the ends with newspaper to keep out any moisture, and there will be no rust in the autumn.

R. S.:—1. There is a clear amber shade between yellow and brown that would be excellent for the walls of your living-room with the Northern exposure. Have the ceiling of a deep ivory tone, dropped down to meet the picture molding which should also be deep ivory. Plain oatmeal paper is best for walls which are to serve as a background for pictures. With plain walls one may have figured madras curtains, but hemstitched scrim in ecru or cream would make very suitable curtains for this room, and scrim wears and launders better than madras. Dip the ecru curtains in strong tea and dry in the shade. A suitable rug would have the amber shade of the walls mingled with blue and terra cotta. 2. Subdued colors are always most restful. I would not

advise papering any room in red as it is considered by physicians to be very trying on the nerves. 3. Yes, Nottingham curtains are satisfactory, especially if you possess curtain stretchers. They do not iron well. 4. The tendency is toward simplicity in house furnishings now; as few draperies, cushions and ornaments as possible, and all articles are intended for use and not merely for show. It certainly lessens the housewife's task of cleaning, and is conducive to the family health.

H. D.:—1. The trenches on the western front extend about 750 miles. 2. Probably "The New Housekeeping," by Mrs. C. Frederick, will supply the information you require in household matters. 3. The Provincial Board of Health of Ontario will furnish you gratis a booklet, by Dr. Helen MacMurdy, entitled "A Little Talk About the Baby," which you will find valuable.

W. W.:—1. The new collars are nearly all of the sailor variety and of very sheer materials such as linen, and georgette crepe. They are hemstitched or edged with lace or silk braid, and some have tucks or insertion set in. 2. Handbags are seldom of leather, but are elaborate affairs of silk, or beads, or are knitted or crocheted in bright hues of crocheted silk. You might make a round bag of a strip of silk like your dress with a circle of cardboard covered with silk or form the bottom, and then crochet on a top of a contrasting color about an inch wide, through which to run a silk cord.

D. V. C.:—When your time is limited, it is best to plant flowering shrubs rather than annuals. Once carefully planted in good soil, the shrubs require little attention and are beautiful

and permanent additions to the home grounds. Some of the best shrubs are: Spirea van Houttei, Flowering Almond, Japan Quince, Tartarian Honeysuckle, Syringa, Lilac, Snowball, Hydrangea, Rose of Sharon. These will give you a succession of bloom from May to October. Flowering vines, such as Clematis, Wistaria, Dutchman's Pipe, Trumpet Flower, and Climbing Roses, are easily cared for. It is best to buy large three-year-old plants.

Horse Sense

Chronic swellings, puffs, etc., which are usually a sequel to some acute disease or injury, have their beginning in enlargement, either hard or soft, without pain or heat.

The remedy is either repeated blistering or the use of absorbents, as the daily application with smart friction of a little of a liniment made of 4 drams each of iodine and iodide of potassium and 4 oz. each of alcohol and glycerine.

Begin fitting the work horses for the heavy spring tasks before the work begins.

After a winter of comparative idleness it is unwise and unprofitable to put a team in heavy work without preparation.

Now that heavy plowing is about to start, remember that prevention is the best cure for sore shoulders in horses. If it doesn't do the horse any good to have you say a kind word to him as you pass, it does you good.

Plenty of sunlight and abundance of fresh air are two prime requisites in any stabling proposition.

The horse's feet should be washed occasionally with soap and water. Bone spavin can often be traced to working the colt at too tender an age, or fast driving over roads that are slippery, or too suddenly stopping or jerking the colt.

For growing colts there is no better grain ration than equal parts of corn and oats ground together. This feed supplies the elements required for the production of fat, bone and muscle.

Hogs

Bowels in good working order lead to a good time at farrowing. Pigs have short legs and not much strength. They can't wallow around in long straw. Run the straw through the cutting box and then scatter it about the pen, good and deep.

A sow that has just brought her pigs to town doesn't need much, if anything, to eat for a while. When she acts as if she was getting hungry, make her a nice soup of wheat middlings, bran and oats. But we need to be careful not to give too much at once; better to feed often.

Bad results sometimes come when pigs are due, because of disturbances in the vicinity of the sow's quarters. So far as possible give her a chance to be quiet.

Hogs fill a very important place in the economic world, and, will doubtless long continue to do so, the more especially when we succeed in reducing the death rate in the hog kingdom to a reasonable figure.

Poultry

The hen that gets cold feet through exposure these raw days is apt to give her master cold feet when it comes to marketing her eggs. Keep the hens in till the ground is warmer.

When you turn chickens out for a run during mild days, throw some meat scraps, which are too large for them to swallow, within their reach. The ones that are lucky (?) enough to secure a morsel will be chased by the others, thus affording abundant exercise for all.

The egg-laying season among geese practically begins in March, although frequently eggs will be dropped in January and February—much depending upon the age of the geese and the condition of the weather.

An abdominal pouch of great size indicates great age, a pointer well worth remembering in purchasing breeding birds.

If you want to know what hen manure will do for fruit, plant some plum trees in the yard where hens run. Trees that bore very few pums, and none that were sound, have been made to bear bushels of fruit, just by letting hens run around them as will.



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ASHES AS AN ASSET.

Mineral Constituents of Tobacco Valuable to the Soil.

It appears that smokers are throwing away annually about 8,000 tons of valuable material, the same being the ashes of the tobacco that they consume.

The ash left on burning tobacco is considerable and, as a matter of fact, the mineral matter of the tobacco leaf frequently amounts to as much as a fifth part of its weight. Thus a ton of tobacco leaf would yield four hundredweights of ash, which represent valuable mineral constituents withdrawn from the soil which have to be replaced by abundant manuring.

It has been calculated that a ton of tobacco withdraws more than a hundredweight of mineral constituents per acre of land. This would appear to be an astounding waste of material, which must be of enormous value to the soil, considering that 75 per cent. consists of calcium and potassium salts and 15 per cent. of magnesium and sodium salts, including nearly 5 per cent. of the essential constituent to all plants—phosphoric acid.

On the face of it there would seem to be a fortune in store for that individual who could devise a successful means for the collection of tobacco ash.—Washington Star.

Sheep Notes

If a ewe loses her lamb, keep her milking as a foster-mother.

If she objects to mother a strange lamb, put her in a narrow stall, specially prepared, until she becomes reconciled. With gentleness, a ewe will soon take kindly to the situation.

One night out in a cold March storm may cost you several lambs and perhaps take the vigor out of a nice ewe. Are the droppings hard and like bullets? A little more laxative food and not quite so much timothy hay will correct this. The best physic for sheep is wheat bran, with frequent rationings of vegetables.

The humble sheep is getting a great deal of attention just now. Scarcity of wool means higher-priced clothing.

Famous Triplets.

Wine, women and song.
Battle, murder and sudden death.
Bell, book and candle.
Reading, 'ritin' and 'rithmetick.
He, she and it.
Bailey, Banks, and Biddle.
Faith, hope and charity.
Wynken, Blynken and Nod.
Hop, skip and jump.
Time, place and the girl.
Bread and cheese and kisses.

The Dairy

A pound of meal before the cow freshens is worth as much as three pounds after she freshens.

Water basins, with a supply of water always before the cows, means less labor in milking and a greater quantity of milk in the pail.

Cows fed a ration composed largely of silage produced 17 per cent. more milk and 28 per cent. more butter fat than those given a ration consisting mainly of grain.

Let your cows know you and study their wants. A finely bred dairy cow is a sensitive and high-strung animal and quick to respond to kind and considerate treatment.

So far as possible turn the water out of your barn-yard, so that the cows may not slip and bring on trouble.

A wire barn-yard fence is pretty cold comfort for a cow on a raw March day. Cold and comfort are not on speaking terms in the dairy. The sire which has brought you good calves is worthy of the best care you can give him.

Inadequate ventilation and inattention to the accumulation of gas-forming rubbish was responsible for a large percentage of the destruction of farm properties by fire.

Health

Clean Clothes and Health.

A spoonful of dust contains as many as 1½ million germs of one sort and another, and a recent examination of clothes sent to a certain number of dry cleaners in a city which had been through a serious epidemic in the schools disclosed that from fifteen suits a quart and a half of dirt was taken in which there were sufficient disease germs to wipe out a small town.

Statistics show that sickness and deaths in the Public schools of America is three times as prevalent during the second term of the school year as the first, and allowing for other causes like the bad weather usually common during January and February a great factor in this high percentage is conceded to be that whereas most children begin the year with new clothes, by the middle of the winter they have become thoroughly impregnated with dust, and germs are spread from child to child.

A little economy practised in other parts of the house, the denial of some accustomed luxury would provide for the dry cleaning of the older children's suits at least once during the winter. Little boys and girls of under 9 years should always wear clothes which may be washed at home with soap and water and so far as possible these are best made of cotton. But serge of a good quality made into kilts for girls and sailor suits for boys is an economical and all round satisfactory school clothes material. Three suits apiece, two for every day and one for best, are liberal winter provision.

One mother who has to plan skillfully in order to make her time fit her many duties reckons to wash one suit a week. In this way her children, two boys and one girl, wear their clothes three weeks, but when the weather is particularly dusty, she finds that every other week is about the right space. These little suits are trimmed with white cotton braid and this serves as a pretty fair indicator of the condition. When the braid is grimy it's high time for a visit to the wash-tub.

Careful home washing with fine white soap, a little ammonia and warm water does not damage serge in any way, and now after six months of steady wear this little trio of school folk look as trim as they did in October when their outfits were new. It may be mentioned too, that only one had cold stands against this family, a single case of pinkeye, which was not transmitted to the other children, and ten days absent from school since it began in September.

FISH FROM AFAR.

Army Supplies of Fish Now Obtained From Canadian Sources.

Tommy's ration of fish now comes from the Land of the Maple Leaf, and it is estimated that the Canadian fish markets benefit each week by the colossal sum of \$100,000, says London Answers.

The large stores of frozen fish, arrive daily at our docks, and Atlantic cod and haddock, Pacific halibut, and fresh-water fish pass under the vigilant eye of our military authorities before being pronounced as sound and fit for consumption by Britain's defenders.

The Canadians themselves contend that these supplies reach us as sound and as fresh as our own North Sea produce. The Great Lakes, too, yield their share to the market. Here, when the pike and white fish are caught, they are placed upon the ice which, during the cold season, covers the surface of the lakes, and are thus frozen quickly to a temperature from 20 to 30 degrees below zero—that is, from 32 to 82 degrees of frost! They are packed and shipped at once to England.

This experiment has been in working order since the beginning of last December, and has proved a very great success. Our rather scanty fish supply at home—thanks to the wily Hun and treacherous mine—is insufficient for our Army's needs. Then, too, Canada is helping to feed another sister colony, the New Zealand contingent receiving its supplies from the same source.

Sunday and War.

It is certainly remarkable how many important military events have taken place on a Sunday. It will be remembered that it was on a Sunday that the Germans made their hottest attack on our positions on the Aisne. Montenegro, Italy, and Rumania all declared war on a Sunday. The majority of the Zeppelin raids on England have been carried out on a Sunday morning. The forts of Tsingtau fell to the Japanese on a Sunday. It was also on a Sunday that the German cruiser Blücher was sunk in the North Sea by a British squadron. If we look back we find numerous instances of important military feats having been performed on a Sunday. To recall but a few: The battles of Salamanca, Vimiera, Fuentes d'Onora, Orthez, Toulouse, and Vittoria, were all fought on a Sunday.

Seeing The Instructor.

Musketry Instructor (to recruit who insists on gazing at him)—Why don't you look at the sights?
Recruit—Please, sergeant, which are the others?

The Doings of the Duffs.

