

### Treatment of Young Clover

J. Hugh McKenney, Elgin County, Ont.

The young clover is now entering upon what perhaps is the most critical period of its existence. With the removal of the grain crop it is left practically unprotected from the scorching rays of the sun. The average farmer apparently believes that the final outcome, whether it be good or bad, is largely a matter of chance. Considering the value of clover both as a fertilizer, and as a fodder crop, it is a most important factor in the ordinary farm rotation. Neglect of clover is bound to effect a farmer's undoing in a greater or less degree. True, weather conditions have considerable to do in the matter, but given a fairly good soil, and a reasonable effort to assist nature so far as is practicable, a good stand of clover may usually be secured, even under unfavorable conditions.

While riding the binder and when drawing in the grain I always keep an eye on the young clover. In some places it will be strong and rank; in others, where the nurse crop is badly lodged, it may be thin and weak or be completely smothered out; in other places where the grain is thin and poor the clover will also present a feeble appearance. In the first instance there is no cause for worry, it only needs letting alone and is sure to come on splendidly. So, too, will the spots that have been shaded and smothered by the heavy grain lodging. Where the nurse crop goes down early there will be places completely smothered out, but even then it will seldom pay to reseed them. Such land is so rich that a few seeds that did not grow at first will stool out wonderfully, soon covering the bare spots. It is, therefore, only on such areas where both grain and clover are thin, that I give much attention.

#### ASSISTING NATURE

The cause of the trouble is that the soil in these poor places is generally lacking in available nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash, especially the last named, of which the clover plant requires large quantities to make a successful growth. If left alone, there will be very little if any of it left in the spring; so here is at least one way where the farmer can assist nature. A moderate coating of either farm yard manure or some good commercial fertilizer containing a large percentage of potash will work wonders in such cases. If farmyard manure is used it should be spread evenly and not too thickly over the surface, taking care not to leave any lumps or clods of straw manure, which might smother the delicate young plants. A manure spreader, is the best for this purpose, as it is possible to do the spreading much more evenly and economically than by hand. This top dressing gives the clover a good start before winter. The fall rains carry the valuable parts of the manure down to the roots, while the straw refuse mulches the ground between the young plants and shades the surface.

#### SHOULD NOT BE PASTURED

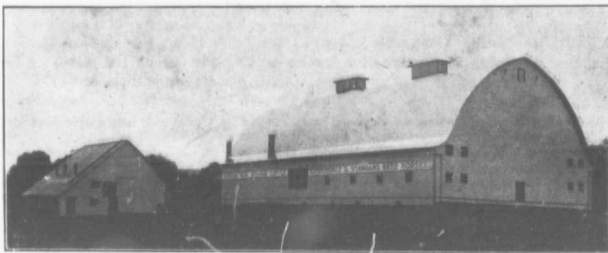
Another point, where many make a great mistake, is in pasturing their young clover in the fall. If there is any danger of it becoming far enough advanced to form heads, which is very probable when the fore-going method of top-dressing is practiced, it would be much wiser to run a mowing machine over the field, setting the knife to run as high as possible. The dividing board should be removed so as not to leave the cut clover in bunches but spread evenly all over the field. This clipping thickens the top and root growth, adds to the mulch and fertility and tends to produce a uniform stand. There is no danger of injury from tramping by stock or of the plants being cut off below the crown as would happen very frequently if animals were allowed on. Then, too, the ground is cleaned of weeds and these also serve as a protection. The clipping should not be done later than the middle of

September in order to give the clover sufficient time to make proper growth before cold weather begins. By following these few precautions, other things being equal, I have never failed to secure a good stand of clover.

### How Weeds are Spread

An American citizen from New York State, who had a farm there, but who used to farm in Michigan, was sitting in the train just behind the writer on our way up the Midland Division of the G. T. R., from Toronto. He

The threshing machine is one of the worst sinners in distributing weed seeds from farm to farm, and more precaution should be taken by farmers to see that the seeds are well shaken and swept out of the machine before it enters their premises. Then, when threshing is begun, the first half bushel of grain should be kept and ground for feed. This would be one of the greatest safeguards against the spread of wild oats, wild mustard and like seeds. Stock carry seeds on their hoofs in a muddy time, but more frequently in their hair does distribution take place.



Fine Buildings on a Quebec Farm.

A south-east view of the barn and pigery on Senator W. W. Owen's farm at Monte-Bello, Que. The Senator farms 500 acres of excellent clay land fronting on the Ottawa River. See *Gossip*, "Ayrshire at Monte-Bello," page 19 of this issue.

remarked, as we were both looking out of the car window, "Why this is the cleanest country I ever struck. Our country is full of all kinds of rubbish. I have a garden I thought that I was keeping quite clean, but there are more weeds in it, I believe, than in all the farms I have seen from Scarborough Junction up to Unionville." It certainly is a very clean part of the province, and is well farmed. I told him I could take him to very few such sections as he was looking at, I was sorry to say, in the province, but there were a few other parts that would compare favorably. However, this being the latter part of August, and the comparatively level fields having been well harvested, one could not see, at this time of the year, some of the weeds which doubtless did show up even in that highly favored locality. It is not altogether free from wild oats, mustard or the perennial sow thistle, and spots of quack grass. None of these weeds were showing much.

#### THE AGENCIES OF DISTRIBUTION

There are some weeds it is hard to get entirely free from, owing to their easy distribution by their seeds. Already the commerce in seeds has been noted as a most fertile source of weed distribution. Other agencies are the wind, water birds, vehicles and machinery—especially, the threshing machine—stock, and stable manure. The wind carries these seeds, to which a pappus is attached, like a parachute, of which most of the thistles, dandelions, blue lettuce, etc., are examples. Wind also distributes weed seeds sometimes in winter over a crust on the snow. Such seeds as ragweed, chicory, curled dock, etc., may be more or less distributed in this way. Water will carry weed seeds along river and creek banks, and deposit them there. During heavy rains or spring freshets, seeds are carried from high lands down on flats to the ditches and creeks. Birds are carriers of seeds, sometimes dropping them out of their beaks and, perhaps, oftener they drop them in their manure undigested. Vehicles passing along the roads, or across fields, may pick up seeds or portions of underground root stalks during wet weather, and carry them to other parts. The farm implements trail root stalks from field to field, if great care is not taken to prevent it.

Such weeds as the burrs or those having rough surfaces and forks like vetch, stick to the hair, and are carried around in this way.

Then last, but not least, stable manure, especially that hauled from town or village to the farm, is usually loaded. Great care should be taken as to the application of stable manure containing weed seeds to prevent their distribution. It has been frequently argued, and often practised, to rot the manure through the heating process to destroy the vitality of weed seeds. This system is open to serious objections, such as the loss of the nitrogen element, which is the most valuable fertilizing ingredient in stable manure, and the reduction in bulk, thus lessening the amount of humus to be added to the soil.

It would appear a far better way to apply manure to sod lands intended to be plowed either in spring or autumn for hoe crops, or on hoe crop ground, and simply worked in the surface soil, where the weed seeds would be sprouted, and the tender plants killed. Much of this distribution would be saved by preventing as far as possible all weeds from going to seed in all places. Would it not pay? "Weed Fighter."

### Preparing Bees for Winter

E. C. Haged, Victoria Co., Ont.

Anyone contemplating keeping bees, whether on a small or on a large scale, should, before embarking in the business, secure a good, up-to-date book on the subject of bee-keeping. A winter should be spent in studying it, so that the theory of the business, as well as the nature and habits of the bees, may be well fixed in one's mind before attempting to handle them. One of the numerous periodicals devoted to the keeping of bees, is indispensable to the beginner. When spring comes, the would-be bee-keeper should, if possible, spend a day in the yard of some experienced bee-keeper, if such a one can be found in the neighborhood.

If one already has the bees, and has been letting them run themselves all summer, he should make haste now to see that they are put in proper shape for the approaching winter. The beginning of the month of September is plenty late enough to complete the work of winter preparation in the apiary. It is not the purpose of