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EDITORIAL

Our Friend the Oat

Followers of our market reports will have noticed that indications point to better prices for oats. In actual market operations, these indications are not so pronounced, but in the opinions behind the market which gives that condition known as "tone," are to be found pronounced indications of better prices. It is a fact in elevator circles that sufficient oats cannot be got at present prices, and in all other American markets a similar condition exists.

With the market for oats ruling strong, year after year, it is well worth considering whether or not the average farmer should not give oats more of a chance to do their best and raise more of them. No crop is so much imposed upon as the oat crop, and considering the handicaps that are put upon it, it is not to be wondered at that the average yield is so far below the possible output. Land that has raised two crops of wheat and has become dry, weedy, and "tired" is given over to oats. Seeding is left until the latest possible date and the seed, as a rule, is taken from the bin without much attempt to test its percentage germination or to blow out the light grains and weed seeds. Practice has evolved a system of seeding oats so that the stooling habit is induced, requiring the parent plant to produce extra stems when it might be pushing forward its own growth, so that when the dry days of July and August come, the oat crop has just completed its vegetable stage and is beginning its function of seed production. Weather conditions up to this time have been favorable for growth, but with dry weather setting in, fertility nearly exhausted, and weeds making headway, the oat crop has a hard struggle for existence.

As a possible money-making proposition, the oat crop deserves better at the hands of most men. It should not be the case that land becomes unfit for wheat. Oats respond in yields to justify earlier seeding. The difference between extra good and only average seed is enough to make it worth while always to get

the best. And there should be a concentrated attempt made to gradually adopt thicker seeding, so that there would be less stooling and more growth put into the heads of the grain.

The fact that oats for milling purposes are brought in car-lots into some of the best farming districts in the West, while wheat is shipped out, indicates that freight departments of railroads are benefiting more than farmers under certain systems of farm management.

A Broad Classification of Grasses

Anyone who reads these pages must have noticed the interest that is being taken in growing tame grasses. The settler's first problem is to destroy grass and almost his second is to get other grass to grow. Fortunately, we have grasses specially adapted to the somewhat limited variety of our soils, and knowing the characteristics of these grasses one can use them to good advantage.

Timothy, the old standby of the Canadian farmer is not naturally adapted to dry soils. It requires frequent rains and a subsoil that is continually giving up moisture. Nature endowed timothy with an abnormal thirst. It takes up a lot of moisture and exhales a lot, so that it stands little chance of success on the dry loams, especially where the subsoil is dry on upland prairies, but it does well in valley lands or rich, strong prairie soils.

The opposite of timothy, so to speak, is rye grass. Naturally, rye grass makes the most possible use of the moisture it takes up. It does not readily exhale vapor, but having a close covering keeps its moisture for its own use and uses it. It is essentially the upland prairie cultivated grass. Having a thirst somewhat intermediate between timothy and rye grass is brome grass. This grass will do with less moisture than timothy, but requires more than rye grass. It does well on lands that may be considered just a little dry for timothy, but plenty moist enough for rye grass. These are the peculiar characteristics of our three principal grasses with respect to their soil requirements. In their feeding value, there is also a difference generally rating timothy, brome grass and rye grass so that if one has soil that will grow timothy he is not so much concerned about brome unless he wishes to insure against a dry year, and if another can grow brome he leaves rye grass alone, except for the same reason.

The Man's Responsibility

As our agriculture develops, it becomes more and more evident that success depends upon the man. We have legislation for the purpose of arresting the spread of weeds, experimental farms to assist in determining the best crops to

grow, a seed control act to protect from ignorant or unscrupulous dealers, a grain act to help to equitably distribute the services of the railways, and numerous other institutions to inform, protect and bolster up, but all the artificial agencies, man-made laws and institutions will not make a success of a man if the elements of success are not born in him and developed throughout his life.

We are all familiar with the complaint that "there is no chance to make it go here, the cards are stacked against us" or "if we only had a law to compel" some one to do so and so we would be all right. And, nursing these supposed wrongs, many a man plods along without ever stopping to do a little self-analysis and to get acquainted with himself to see if it would not be better and easier to adjust himself to existing conditions than to make the world over again to comply with his standards.

To make a success of farming, a man should continually study his own particular problems. There are very few men who can give much time to public affairs without neglecting private business, and the guide as to which should receive first attention should be the financial ability to leave private business to attend to public affairs. In organized society, the first care is to produce useful, efficient and independent citizens, then an accumulation of such citizens may be safely trusted to manage the State.

The Purpose of Practical Education

This is the season when the greatest activity is manifested in our agricultural organizations, and it should be the aim of every farmer to derive from such all that he is capable of receiving, or they are capable of giving him. In the Prairie Provinces, agricultural meetings are being held, that so far as they go, are the best means of introducing new facts and new ideas and re-emphasizing some of the old ones which we may have forgotten, that is possible at the present state of development of our system of agricultural education. The means of imparting knowledge to the whole farming community, as is attempted by our institutes, fairs and other organizations may be incomplete in its present stage, and capable of being vastly improved upon, but it is as perfect as the development in the agricultural industry at the present time is capable of making it, the system costs money to maintain, those whom it seeks to aid pay as large a share in its maintenance as anybody else, and purely for business reasons should endeavor to get their money's worth from it.

The great object of agricultural education, as carried out through those institutions named, is to induce men to farm better, and the largest inducement that can be offered as an incentive to agricultural progress is the

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