

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

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Editorial.

The Advisory Board of the Agricultural College.

One of the encouraging signs of the times in Manitoba with regard to agricultural education, is the response made by the agricultural societies to the Minister of Agriculture's invitation to select four men to represent them on the Advisory Board of the College. The hearty response gives the lie effectually to the statement made by a contemporary a short time ago, to the effect that the Province was not ready for such a college, and the farmers and their children were not capable of receiving such instruction. Such a statement, prompted by jealousy, because the cause of agricultural education had been so consistently and steadily championed by this paper, was not altogether unexpected, because the said contemporary was not posted as to what an up-to-date agricultural college taught, and, therefore, could not be expected to write intelligently regarding a subject on which it was ignorant. The board is to consist of ten members, as has already been stated previously in our columns, and it is to be hoped that seven men will be selected by the farmers and the Lieut.-Governor in Council (the Government), who will be firm in the resolve that the college courses must and shall be thoroughly practical, and that they will steadily fight the University influence on the Board, which we have no hesitation in saying will be exerted to benefit the University at the expense of the Farmers' College. It was a mistake, we consider, to put two representatives on the Board from the University, one would have been ample; and there should be at least one man on the Board who is either a graduate or undergraduate of an Agricultural College. There are many such in the Province, whose advice would be worth considerable to the Government at this stage.

From a noted agricultural journal of the States we take the following:

"That the farmer is eager to learn is shown in the wonderful success attained by the Iowa College, where nearly one thousand men from the farm convened this winter at the College for two weeks' instruction in corn and stock judging. Of course old-line educators will again be sadly shocked, as they have already been disturbed on various occasions, by what is going on in the progressive colleges. Some of these well-meaning but mistaken men seem to believe that education is only for the select few, who out of their kind-heartedness will instruct and guide the great rabble of less fortunate ones. Despite the feelings of those thus afflicted with antiquated views of education, the work will continue to spread and intensify."

The Province cannot afford to experiment with the Agricultural College; neither will it help the cause of agricultural education if the University element is allowed to mould the course or dominate the Advisory Board.

We believe the Government is sincere in its wish to give the Province a thoroughly practical farmers' school, but we frankly confess that we fear the University influence, which can only be checked by the appointment by the Government of three farmers, such as served on the Agricultural College commission two years ago.

Enclosed find \$1.50 for my renewal. Your magazine is grand.
G. H. ROSS,
Leduc, Alberta.

The Cost of Burning Straw.

A trip through many districts in Manitoba finds many a farmer short of feed for his stock, even straw for feed and bedding being very scarce.

Several instances we have had brought to our notice where men burned the bulk of their straw last fall, for fear it would be in the way, or would not burn when the spring came, never expecting a winter such as we have just experienced, or dreaming that as much feed would be needed. The loss to the country through such unpreparedness cannot be estimated in figures, but must be immense, when the loss of flesh and loss of growth is considered, which would not have occurred had there been plenty of feed. In fact, the lack of nutritious food is bound to have some effect on the progeny of breeding animals, and will also be felt in the rush of seeding on the horses.

It is a remarkable fact that the bulk of the injury done horses and cattle in Western Canada is by starvation and exposure, with its sequence, stunting, while the losses with swine are in the main due to overfeeding and lack of exercise. The present system of stacking straw by means of the blower, renders it easy to put the straw in shape, by trimming the edges up to six feet high, thus keeping the snow from drifting over it, so that it can be got at easily. The shortage of straw for winter feeding is due, not to any lack of crop, but rather to lack of foresight in burning the quantities last fall that would have been so useful. There is an old saying, "It's no use crying over spilt milk," yet the lesson is plain for our future guidance, namely, save enough straw for spring, and grow plenty of rough feed for fodder.

The Poultry Classes at Winnipeg Fair.

A perusal of the prize-list for the last two Winnipeg shows, and the one to come, reveals the fact that there is not sufficient difference made in that prize-list between the utility breeds and those more particularly classed as "fancy."

The prizes now offered may be none too big for any of the breeds, if not for the fancy breeds and others not as well suited to Western conditions, such, for instance, as the Dominiques, Anconas, several of the Games, the Houdans, La Fleche, Javas, Polish, Redcaps, Spanish Black, the Bantams, and possibly others; then the utility bird prizes for Plymouth Rocks, Brahmas, Cochins, Wyandottes, Leghorns, Minorcas, Orpingtons and Indian Games are not big enough.

The various live-stock associations have kept the classes in the prize-list held down pretty well to the breeds they consider best suited to the country, and have rather discouraged breeds they thought were not desirable. We cite, for example, the cutting down of the prize money to Cleveland Bays and Yorkshire Coach horses; the total elimination of one breed (Duroc-Jerseys) of pigs from the list, and the putting of the Chester Whites and Poland-Chinas into one class.

The precedent, therefore, has been established that because individuals have seen fit to import specimens of different breeds, it does not always follow that such breeds should be encouraged, unless their utility and suitability to conditions here is demonstrated.

We therefore submit that either less money be awarded to the fancy breeds of poultry, or else that more be offered for competition amongst the utility breeds. These sentiments may not accord with the views of all the poultry breeders, but we

believe such are sound and calculated to help the development of the dressed poultry and egg trade. Fancy points, unless backed up by usefulness, count for little.

The Root Crop in the Northwest.

Gradually but surely soil conditions are leading the farmers of the Western States to see that in diversified (mixed) farming lies the great hope of permanent prosperity. The keeping of live stock is an essential feature of diversified farming, and in order to make any branch of live stock profitable, it is necessary to grow crops for the special purpose of maintaining them and inducing them to yield the highest profits.

The growing of roots in the Northwest and Manitoba has passed the experimental stage, and the records show that it is one of our most reliable and prolific crops. Their value for keeping stock in a healthy, sappy condition, and inducing a large yield of milk, has long been recognized. In Great Britain, where the breeding of live stock has reached its highest perfection, roots form one of their constant and staple foods.

A dread of the labor involved has prejudiced the majority of farmers against this crop. That it takes a great deal of labor, all are quite willing to admit, but the crop requires most attention after seeding, a period of the season when the Western farmer is not so rushed with work. If we spend much time on a small piece of ground, we have the satisfaction of a correspondingly heavy crop for our labor.

A corn field where such a crop is grown, would make an ideal soil for roots, but they will grow on any field which yields a good grain crop. It should be plowed deeply, as early in the fall as possible. In the spring, after the surface of the ground is dry, harrow it over, and repeat in about a week, in order to get a fine seed-bed. It is good practice to harrow the day previous to sowing, so that the plants will have at least an equal chance with weeds.

The time for sowing varies with the spring. Generally, it is best to finish by the 20th of May, unless for carrots, which should be sowed earlier. The seed can be sown with an ordinary grain-drill, by leaving an open spout every 36 inches. We have found it best to have level drills that distance apart. It pays to give the plants plenty of room. In sowing, set the drill so that it drops a seed every four inches.

As soon as the plants can be traced in the drill, it is better to start the one-horse cultivator going, and continue cultivating as long as necessary to keep the weeds in thorough check. When about two inches high thin out, leaving the plants from twelve to fifteen inches apart.

The old-fashioned root cellar, banked with earth, is probably the cheapest and best for the man who grows only a small quantity. A bin in the stable, round which the warm air from the stock can circulate, makes a safe and convenient storing place.

It is better for a man to start on a small scale, and grow into the work gradually.

Min.

J. R. OASTLER.

Incoming Settlers.

During the month of April the number of free customs entries made at the port of Gretna by incoming settlers from the United States amounted to two hundred. These settlers had with them large quantities of valuable live stock and general effects. They are all well-to-do, practical farmers, and will make desirable acquisitions to the farming community of the country.