

Alfalfa—What Grey Farmers Think of it

Geo. Marsh, Peterboro Co., Ont.

Alfalfa has been grown for years in my home county, Grey, (Ont.) but owing to lack of knowledge of its great value as a feed and also to the fact that the science of inoculation was only until recently very little known, many of our farmers were not successful at first with alfalfa and for this reason the increase in acreage has been slow until the last four or five years. Since our experiment stations have taken up the matter and information has been available on the proper methods of inoculation, and also the great value of alfalfa as a soil renovator, food for live stock, and also as a pasture plant, the increase in popularity of alfalfa in Grey county has been very rapid. Last week I took a trip up to my home farm. I shall this week give Farm and Dairy readers the benefit of the information I gathered in regard to alfalfa in that district.

GROWING ALFALFA FOR 30 YEARS

Mr. John Stark, has grown alfalfa for more than 30 years, and has a number of fields that have been sown for 25 or 30 years. He commenced sowing the crop on his stiff, red clay hills, which were hard to work and very uncertain in crop production in ordinary years. On such soils, which were almost worthless for cultivation, he has produced profitable crops of alfalfa.

Mr. Sam McKnight, a well-known stock breeder of Epping, pins his faith to alfalfa hay and corn ensilage. He grows about 30 acres of corn for his silos and also has about the same acreage in alfalfa. He purposes doubling his alfalfa acreage this spring.

At Thornbury, C. Parkinson, breeder of pure bred Shorthorn, attribute a large measure of his success to this wonderful forage plant. They commenced growing alfalfa in a small way some years ago and now have 25 acres, which acreage he will greatly increase this spring.

\$50 PER ACRE FROM SEED

John Geddes has grown alfalfa for years, both on poor lake shore gravel and also on hard clay hills, which were almost impossible to cultivate and has had good success on both types of soil. Last year he obtained \$300 for the seed from six acres of land after the field had produced a heavy first crop of hay.

A. Barkley, on an adjoining farm, obtained \$100 for his seed from a three-acre field, also after having had a heavy crop of hay. These two men, as well as the majority of farmers in this district, are sowing large acreages of alfalfa, as they realize the crop has passed the experimental stage and it can be sown with the same certainty of producing a crop as timothy and clover or other farm crops.

LARGE ACREAGES GROWN

Jos. Alexander sowed six acres of alfalfa last year and will sow another field this spring. Geo. Penrose put in eight acres, which is coming through the winter in good shape and will increase his acreage by 10 or 12 acres this spring. J. Perry also sowed seven acres and this spring will sow more. On my own farm I have seeded 50 acres; I am planning to sow as much more this spring. These men I have mentioned are all on adjoining farms, and as it is probable many other farmers over the entire county are sowing nearly as much, these figures will give an idea of the large proportion of the land in Grey county that is being put in to alfalfa.

Owing to the prevalence of sweet clover and also to the number of small plots of alfalfa, which have been scattered over the county for years, very little inoculation appears to be necessary, but the most careful farmers are either using the prepared culture from the Guelph College or are sowing soil from an old alfalfa field at the rate of 200 pounds per acre.

Very little difference appears to be seen in the crops with reference to the method of sowing. Success has been obtained with alfalfa when sown with all crops, at all times of the year, and also when sown alone. Probably the most popular method in my home district is to work the land thoroughly in the spring and sow it with a light crop of barley, or oats, although the majority of the farmers take the full crop of grain and find it just as easy to get a stand of alfalfa, as they would a stand of timothy and clover. As a rule 20 lbs. of seed per acre have given the best results.

A number of farmers have had good results by sowing alfalfa on fall wheat in the spring and harrowing it in with a light harrow. On my own farm I sowed 12 acres with wheat last fall. I believe that this is one of the most convenient and easiest methods of growing alfalfa. My wheat was sown early, about the second week in August. The alfalfa made a good growth and the fall wheat has seemed to protect it so that the alfalfa is coming through without leaving. Last week this alfalfa was very much greener than the old stands sown earlier in the season with barley or oats. This method of sowing is as yet but an experiment with me and I should not recommend Farm and Dairy readers as yet to practise this method of sowing except it be experimentally.

PAY HIGH PRICES FOR ALFALFA HAY

In Grey county the value of alfalfa as a feed is thoroughly understood; the townspeople even



A Labor Saving, Satisfactory Way of Getting Through with Farming

Many of our farmers have found out that this can do a maximum day's work and do it with a minimum expenditure for manual labor. How much more "fit" this man will be after a day's work than if he had walked all day.—Photo on John Sokel's farm, Huron County, Ont.

are enquiring for it for feeding both their horses and cows and are satisfied to pay from \$2 to \$4 a ton more for it than for good timothy and red clover. But even at these enhanced prices there is very little alfalfa hay being sold as the farmers know its value and as yet have no surplus for sale.

Although in this section here under review, of late years success has been attained in growing alfalfa without inoculation, it was not so at first; many farmers at first lost their seed and in other cases patchy fields were the result of lack of inoculation. With the present high price of seed it is certainly a misquid policy to risk the value of the seed and the use of the land for the want of a few bags of inoculated soil, or a few cents spent in buying the culture from Guelph. I strongly advise everyone, purposing the sowing of alfalfa seed, to inoculate his soil thoroughly, as we have yet to find the man who sowed 20 lbs. of good alfalfa seed on soil rich and dry enough to grow good red clover, or ordinary farm crops and who has sowed it together with 200 lbs. of inoculated soil from an old alfalfa field, who has had a failure with alfalfa.

It is thought by some orchardists that Bordeaux mixture will cure plant diseases. It does not cure. It prevents. For insects, we spray with; for fungous diseases, we spray to prevent.

Preventive Treatment for Navel Disease

Death commonly results amongst new-born foals on account of navel-ill, a disease caused by filth germs entering the fresh navel. The disease, while it is incurable, is preventable, and every precaution should be observed to prevent it.

The preventative treatment consists in thorough disinfection of the stall before and after foaling, and the application of a disinfectant to the navel. A five per cent. solution of carbolic acid is perhaps as good as any disinfectant for this purpose, and it is one usually on hand at any farmhouse.

If the navel cord breaks naturally it will be as well; but if it must be cut, tie it above with a string dipped in disinfectant. Make the cut fairly close to the belly in order that the string may be left no longer than is necessary to prevent bleeding.

Apply the carbolic disinfectant at once, and repeat the disinfection twice daily until the cord dries and falls away, leaving a well healed, normal navel. Another good disinfectant for this purpose is a solution of two drams of powdered corrosive sublimate and two drams of solution or tincture of chloride of iron. This is a poisonous solution and should be plainly labelled and kept out of reach of children.

No one need get discouraged on account of loss from navel-ill. The disease can easily be avoided by careful attention to these precautionary measures, which should invariably be

taken. The disease is more likely to occur in early foals than in those dropped at pasture, because there is more filth and more germs about the stable. As insurance against trouble every foal's navel should be treated.

Water For Heavy Producing Cows

An important consideration in record making in winter time, or any time for that matter, is to heat the water for the cows until the chill is taken off it. On the ordinary farm this may effectively be done by placing one or two pails of boiling water into the trough, sufficient to warm the water therein so as to be most palatable. Cows will drink water treated in this way as they never will cold water.

It means work to thus heat water, but it pays. It is cheaper than buying feed and the extra milk pays for it. Many of our American breeders, we are told, recognize the importance of this latter point and have tank heaters by means of which they warm the water in their tanks before it is placed before the cattle.

It is difficult enough to build up a good dairy herd when correct principles of breeding are followed such as keeping records and using pure bred sires. If we do not follow such principles we will never get a good herd.—J. F. Singleton, Kingston, Ont.