

Where Rye Beats Wheat

By William C. Smith

After a long experience in growing rye upon all classes of soil found in the humid region of the Central United States, I have found that rye will grow, thrive and mature a paying crop upon relatively poor and "run-down" soils. I have never experienced a failure in growing rye, nor have I seen one, nor have I found, upon inquiry, a farmer who has failed in rye growing when the seed was properly sown and covered. This cannot be said of any other crop grown on the farm.

The initial expense in growing rye is small, as it can be drilled or broadcast in corn at the rate of one and one-half bushels to the acre. Some of the best rye I ever grew was broadcast in corn and nothing was done toward covering the grain. But I advise giving the grain a covering if possible to do so.

Often corn is so blown down that a covering cannot be given the seed, yet it is seldom, if ever, that you will make a failure by sowing the rye broadcast without covering the seed. It could only fail to grow a crop if it should be dry after seed time and on up to winter, but seldom does dry weather continue so late, and rye can be sown as late as the last of October and yet make a crop.

When rye is sown in the open the soil need not be deeply plowed, which means a saving, as it takes much horse or tractor power to plow deeply. Yet I plow deeply for the rye crop if possible, as it pays to do so.

Little fertilizer is needed for the rye crop, but of course rye responds and pours out its wealth of grain when sown in good fertile soil, the same as any other crop will do.

Rye is a profitable pasture crop, and it is remarkable how extensively it can be pastured and yet produce a paying crop of grain. From my window I can look across the highway upon a field of sandy, worn soil that has had no fertilizer or organic matter for twenty years. This field was sown to rye in the fall of 1916, and the late fall of that year and all the spring of 1917 was pastured by horses and cattle, until I thought it was impossible for it to produce a crop of grain worth harvesting; yet when the rye grown upon this field was threshed it produced twenty bushels to the acre and sold for \$1.60 per bushel, and gave a large by-product of straw, of great value for feeding purposes. And, mind you, this was done on soil that for years has not produced a twenty-bushel-to-the-acre corn crop, and, in fact, for many of the years this field has been planted to corn the crop would be considered a failure.

In the fall of 1916 a neighbor's tenant at a considerable expense for plowing and preparing the seed bed, and for fertilizer and seed, sowed twenty acres of wheat. After the wheat was sown he went into a twenty-acre field of growing corn and broadcast it to rye, doing nothing toward covering the seed.

The two crops were recently harvested and sold, and each was an average crop for this year. A list of the actual expense for sowing and harvesting each crop had been kept, and upon comparison it was found that the rye crop returned the greater profit, although the wheat crop sold for the most money. The small expense incurred in growing the rye crop made it the best money-making crop.

Soils that will grow an average corn crop to the acre will produce a rye crop of twenty-five to thirty bushels to the acre, which at present prices makes the rye crop a profitable one to grow.

When rye was selling at sixty cents a bushel, and wheat at less than one dollar a bushel, and hogs were selling for nine cents a pound, I fed ground rye to hogs and realized one dollar a bushel for my rye, and the hogs were fitted for the market upon a feed of rye alone. With hogs now selling above eighteen cents a pound, I can feed them ground rye and realize more than two dollars a bushel for the rye.

There is no better pasture crop for cattle and hogs than rye. Sown in August it has given me four months' pasture in the fall before the snow covered it, and then from early spring until

nearly the first of June I pastured it and yet it produced a twenty-five-bushel-to-the-acre grain crop. Rye affords pasture when other pasture crops are not available.

If rye is sown very early it must be closely pastured to prevent jointing, or the cold of winter will kill it. Rye will never winterkill if it goes into the winter unjointed. I have sown rye late in October after the digging of late potatoes, and while it afforded no fall pasture it made a splendid late spring pasture, and a paying crop of grain.

I know of soils that have been planted to rye for three successive years, and the rye crop grown upon them the third year was the best one of the three. I have given this fact in rye growing much study, and have reached the conclusion that the reason why rye does not exhaust soil fertility is because of

its extensive root system. Growers of rye have noticed that rye plows up in the spring like heavy blue-grass sod. Its small roots are a matted mass of vegetable fiber, penetrating the soil to a depth of six or seven inches. These roots when growing evidently disintegrate particles of the soil and release valuable soil elements, making them available for building up the soils' fertility. And these roots, decaying, afford a fine feeding ground for soil bacteria, giving them the opportunity and material to contribute toward soil building.

I know of no plant so suitable to prevent soil washing, and the use of rye for green manuring is not appreciated by the American farmer.

Summing up the points to be considered in favor of growing rye for a grain crop, we find that: 1—It costs less to seed rye than wheat; 2—Rye will

grow a paying crop on the poorest of soils where wheat will not grow a crop that will repay cost of seeding and harvesting; 3—It never fails to produce some grain or marketable straw.

There is always a market for rye, for it can be fed at a greater profit to stock upon the farm. Its by-product, straw, is more valuable for feeding than wheat straw.

In comparison with wheat growing—considering the facts of the heavy cost of seeding wheat, that rye will grow a paying crop on soil that will not produce a wheat crop, and that rye does not exhaust soil fertility like wheat—we must reach the conclusion that rye is the more profitable crop.

Where the keeping of livestock is an important feature of the farm, the value of the rye crop for pasture and grain feeding must not be overlooked.

INTELLIGENT FARMING IS A PATRIOTIC DUTY

MANITOBA FARMERS
DO YOU KNOW?

That in Europe to-day there are 28 Millions of Cattle fewer than before the war began?

That this decrease is about four and one-half times as many cattle as we have in Canada and over 40 times as many as Manitoba possesses?

That European sheep flocks have decreased by 54 million head?

That this decrease is 27 times as many sheep as Canada owns, and 367 times as many as there are in Manitoba?

That the European swine population has decreased by 32 million head, or 13 times as many pigs as Canada owns, and about 100 times as many as exist in Manitoba to-day?

That previous to the war the greatest suppliers of cattle, sheep and swine, and their products to Great Britain were Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, New Zealand, Australia and Russia?

That for the duration of the war Canada and the United States must, because of their geographical position, supply a very much larger part of the food needed by the Allies?

That the Allies to-day will buy, at very high prices, all the beef, mutton, bacon, hides, wool, cheese, eggs, wheat, oats and barley we can raise?

That the prices for farm products will likely be even higher during 1918 than during 1917?

That even if peace were declared next week it would take years for the world to make up its deficit in some lines of production?

Therefore the Call to the Manitoba Farmer is--

To sow only clean seed.

To learn all there is to know about weed fighting—Attend the Weed Conferences.

To raise every calf to at least two years of age.

To save every ewe lamb for breeding purposes.

To increase the swine production greatly.

To keep as many live stock as will utilize all the surplus of pasturage, hay and straw in the neighborhood.

To breed up herds and flocks by using only high-class males.

To feed and care for sheep in such a way as to keep the wool free of chaff and dirt.

To increase dairy and egg production.

To feed all screenings on the farm after destroying the germinating power of all weed seeds.

To use as many vegetables and perishable foods as possible in the diet, and so permit of exporting the maximum amount of beef, bacon and flour.

To waste nothing.

To avoid, so far as possible, the erection, during the war, of expensive buildings that are not positively needed.

To leave till the summer no work that can be accomplished during the winter.

To study the latest government agricultural bulletins, Federal and Provincial. (For List of Manitoba bulletins, write the Publications Branch, Manitoba Department of Agriculture, Winnipeg)

To encourage the boys and girls to study farming through the Boys' and Girls' Club movement.

To attend the Farmers' Week Conferences if possible, and to send the boys who are at home to the Agricultural Short Course Schools or the Agricultural College.

To take the keenest interest possible in the work of the Agricultural Society, Grain Growers' Association, Home Economics Society or any other organization which stands for a progressive type of agricultural life.

To feel free at all times to write to the Manitoba Agricultural College, the Extension Service and Manitoba Department of Agriculture for agricultural information of any sort.

To exercise the greatest freedom in suggesting to this Department any constructive way in which the Manitoba Government can further assist Manitoba farming.

Manitoba Department of Agriculture
WINNIPEG