

Freeman's Potato Contest.

Farmer's Advocate, Dec. 1892.

It is seldom that a more interesting task falls to the lot of the members of the staff of an agricultural journal than that which was intrusted to the editor of the *Farmer's Advocate* in deciding between the contestants for the handsome prizes offered by the Freeman Fertilizer Works, Hamilton, Ont. As published in our advertising columns, the sum of \$50 and \$25, respectively, were offered for the best and second best yield from one acre of potatoes, the growth of 1892, obtained by the use of the special potato manure manufactured at their works.

One of the rules of the contest was that stable manure or any other fertilizing material was not allowed to be used, which appeared to have been overlooked by some of the parties who had entered for the trial.

The potato crop is one of the most profitable that can be grown on the farm, and when a suitable soil is found a good deal more money can be made than in growing any of the grain crops. The principal difficulties that present themselves are the labor required at digging time, and the manure that must be supplied from some source. The latter is always a perplexing problem when the crop is intended to be sold from the farm, for when barn-yard manure is systematically applied and the crop produced from it sold, there can be no more certain way of impoverishing the farm, unless some means of supplying the loss thus sustained is provided for.

Although the potato crop is not generally considered very exhaustive to the soil, still it requires a liberal application of manure in some form to obtain a good yield, and few farmers produce sufficient barn-yard manure for their general crops, without applying it where no portion is intended to be returned to the farm.

If we can judge from the reports in this contest it will pay, and pay most liberally, to use largely of a special fertilizer to the potato crop, and, what is still better, the land will be left in a richer condition after the removal and sale of the potato crop than it was before the application of the fertilizer. If we take the greatest yield given in this contest, according to the computation of the most skillful analysts there is \$14.26 in value taken from this acre of soil in producing this crop of 315 bushels of potatoes; and again, calculating at the lowest estimate given by the government analyst of the value of elements left of the 1,200 pounds of Freeman's potato manure after producing this crop, we find there is still several dollars' value in these essentials remaining after producing this crop of potatoes than it contained before the application of the fertilizer. It must also be remembered that after producing this crop the land is in far better mechanical condition than before, and should be quite equal in this respect to the most approved summer-fallowing.

Many of our best farmers are of the opinion that cattle feeding is the only practical plan of supplying the necessary fertilizing elements to the soil, but in order to add to the store of fertility the feed must be purchased,

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