

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

\* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE. \*

PERSEVERE AND SUCCEED  
FOUNDED 1880

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

Vol. XXXVI.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, JUNE 5, 1901.

No. 527

## The Summer-fallow.

The summer-fallow occupies an important place in our system of cultivation, and under existing conditions, where large areas are worked with a minimum of manual labor, there is probably no other system that can as readily be utilized on a large scale for ridding the land of foul weeds and conserving soil moisture. There are many, however, who annually summer-fallow a portion of their land, but who do so in such a way that only a small proportion of the possible advantages are obtained. In fact, one frequently sees what was intended for a fallow producing more weeds and in worse condition generally than if it had been under crop.

No set rules regarding summer-fallowing are applicable to all soils and districts, except that there should never be more undertaken than can be thoroughly worked. On heavy soils where the land is level there is the danger of rains coming just when the weeds are ready for the harrow, and it then frequently happens that before the land is dry enough to work, the weeds have made such headway that nothing but the plow will have any effect upon them, and on light soils there is the opposite danger that continued dry weather, with heavy winds, may cause serious drifting if the land is cultivated after plowing. In undertaking a summer-fallow, one should have more in mind than merely increasing the crop area. The two most important objects will be the conservation of soil moisture and the eradication of weeds. These go together, and treatment for the one assists in the other. Weed seeds will not germinate without moisture, and in cultivating for the conservation of moisture, germination is encouraged, and then the weeds are killed when they are most easily destroyed. These objects can be obtained by using certain crops, as well as by the bare fallow, but, of course, more labor is necessary, and in order to utilize the crops, stock of some kind must be kept.

In some districts, where the rainfall is fairly liberal and the soil strong, much better results are obtained from growing barley as a cleaning crop than from bare fallow. Barley can be sown late, thus allowing for the destruction of several crops of weeds before seeding, and as it matures quickly or can be cut for green feed, it can be harvested before most weeds can ripen seed. Seeding the fallow in July, with a half bushel of oats or wheat per acre, serves to furnish a good succulent bite for stock during the fall months when prairie pastures are dried up, and the stock in pasturing off the crop firm it down and leave the land in fine shape for wheat. Some objection may be taken to oats for above purpose, for there is danger of some not germinating till the following spring, when they become mixed with the wheat. None of the above crops, however, quite serve the purpose of the fallow, and would not suit every kind of land. Another plan adopted by some with satisfaction is to sow rape or corn along in July, sowing two pounds of the former and half bushel of the latter per acre, in rows about thirty inches apart, with the shoe drill. This land can be cultivated frequently with the weeder until the rape or corn is a foot or so high, and thus weeds are eradicated and moisture conserved, and such crops make excellent succulent fall pasture. The rape would probably be least spoiled by frost and would contain more nutriment. Rape may be cut and piled and left frozen, to be hauled in and thawed out immediately before feeding.

The summer-fallow should be plowed as soon as seeding is finished or before weeds have advanced far enough to mature seed. One deep, thorough plowing is preferable to two plowings, as the second is apt to leave the ground loose and to bring seeds to the surface too late in the season to get them all germinated and killed. If a hard pan has formed by repeated plowings at the same depth, or if it is desirable to bring up a little subsoil, the summer-

fallow plowing is the time to do it. On light, porous soils, a subsoil packer used immediately after the plow serves to firm the lower portion of the furrow and assist in conserving moisture. If the packer is not required, or the cost of one not warranted, then the harrow should follow the plow without any loss of time, to retain soil moisture. Surface cultivation with harrow, weeder or cultivator should be followed up at frequent intervals as late in the season as necessary to insure that no weeds mature seeds and that biennials and perennials are properly kept in check. Where thistles or deep-rooted perennials are numerous, harrows—even disk harrows—are seldom much good, and the duck-foot cultivator or even the gang plow must be used. Such plants are, through their leaves, enabled to store up food in their roots to produce plants and seeds the following year, and only by keeping leaves from forming are the roots starved and killed.

On light soils, and even on some rich loams, frequent surface cultivation is prohibited on account of liability to drift. The fact that a soil drifts is evidence that it is lacking in root-fiber or humus, to supply which seeding down to grass is the readiest way. Humus (or decaying vegetable matter) may be compared to a sponge, ready to take up moisture and to retain it. Land without humus is in bad mechanical condition and should be treated to a grass rotation or a dressing of manure.

## Farm Siftings.

Too many of the agricultural societies who hold summer fairs have endeavored to keep up with the pace set by the larger fairs in the matter of attractions! Owing to lack of money, the small fry can never hope to go in for the spectacular, but may do just as useful work in a small way as their more opulent brethren. The buttermaking and live-stock judging competitions of Winnipeg and Brandon are worthy of emulation, and should be patronized largely by the young people. The feeling that one has no scope or cannot obtain fame has doubtless had something to do with the exodus from the farm. These competitions are your opportunities, young people of the farm, so don't let them elude your grasp!

When we were younger and studied history, the curfew was brought before us as a sort of despotism. The modern application of the curfew, namely, the getting of the children off the streets of the towns and cities at night, is a good one and might well be more generally adopted. Children who run the streets at night rarely make leading citizens; they are on the street when they should be in bed. Youth is the period of brain development, the time to lay the foundation of character, something impossible to do with the young nightly-frequenter of the boulevard. The young chit of sixteen becomes the lazy, loudly-dressed and immodest woman, while the boy becomes the cigarette fiend, the liar, gambler or worse, from the freedom of the street. We often here the expression "The man in the street," never "The child in the street." The place for the young people in the evening is in the home, so ring the curfew bell and send the children home.

The term, thoroughbred, is often used by stockmen in connection with cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, and dogs. Such use of the term is incorrect. A Thoroughbred is a running horse. Pure-bred is the term to apply to pedigreed stock, whether horses, cattle, sheep, swine, or poultry.

The year-old colt resembles his sire and promises to make a good horse when he matures. Do not save him from the surgeon's castrating knife unless he is both pedigreed and a good one. Careful selection and relentless culling will aid in keeping the stock up to the high-water mark. The same will apply to the ram lamb, the bull calf or the boar pig. Never allow any male animal to procreate his kind unless he is well bred and a good individual. Neglect of these precautions means certain loss.

The season of raspberries and cream, and other small fruits, will soon be here. The investment in a couple of dozen bushes will be a good one. If you have none, plant this summer!

Lay out your garden so that you can cultivate with a horse. *The man with the hoe* is hard to find in the Manitoba farm garden.

Why not name your farm? Surely there is something about your place of abode which makes it different from that of your neighbor. Name the homestead and live up to the name. In the stock-breeding world we hear of Oak Lodge, Belvoir, Maple Hill, and other appropriate and distinctive names. Among the more esthetic agriculturists we hear of The Elms, The Maples, Brookside, and others. Try and stand out from your worldly surroundings. It pays to advertise!

In spite of the rush for the mighty dollar or the bushel of wheat, there are people who believe in making life pleasant by the improvement of one's surroundings. The Reeve of Blanchard is a public-spirited man, and in order to develop a taste for beauty, neatness and cleanliness, has donated money for competition among the schools of his municipality. Carnegie's mammoth donations for free libraries are no more worthy of mention than the above is. The schools of this district will no doubt plant trees, keep their yards clean, and thus render the schoolhouse and its grounds a place of delight to the pupils. The healthy rivalry engendered will spread, and the little homes of learning will be as oases in the desert.

A similar competition for the best-managed farm, taking into consideration the house, buildings, garden, groves, etc., might well be set on foot by one or two of our largest agricultural fairs. The expense need not be very large; the competitors could furnish photos of the homestead, which, together with the report of the inspector, would aid the judging committee in arriving at safe and satisfactory conclusions.

INTER PRIMOS.

## The Farm Cellar.

The farmhouse cellar is an important factor in the management of the farm. A poor cellar hastens the deterioration of the farm produce that may be stored in it for preservation during the winter. If any improvements are to be made in it, now is the time when they must be considered, as they should certainly be made during summer time and when the soil water is below the bottom of the cellar. If a cellar is to be valuable, dampness must be eliminated. There is no doubt that a cement floor is a desideratum in most cellars. The exceptions are the cellars where the natural texture and lay of the land are such that the bottom of the cellar is perfectly dry. Such cases are not, however, numerous in the prairie states where the ground is level. Generally the moisture in the ground works sideways enough to get under the cellar and then works upward.

Two results come from this: The cellar gets wet in spots, and in rainy weather even pools form in the low places; the walls have their support softened and settle enough to cause cracks to appear in the ceilings and around the chimneys. The moisture once present, is with difficulty removed, no matter how much the windows and doors are opened. This condition of affairs in the fall causes considerable loss. The fruit and vegetables are put into the cellar, and should be kept cool. To do this the doors and windows should be opened during a part of the night, to let in the cool air, and should be closed during the day, to prevent the cool air being displaced by the warm air. But in the numerous damp or wet cellars this is not possible. The doors and windows must be kept open during the day to assist in drying out the water that has soaked in during the time of the fall rains. This, of course, renders the cellar of very little value during the whole autumnal season. Just when the farm products should be kept cool they are repeatedly exposed to conditions of heat and moisture that start the life principles into activity. Not only so, but in the fruits and vegetables the molds and germs that make rot multiply and begin their destructive work.

It is therefore manifestly to the interest of the farmer to have a dry cellar and one that can be kept cool in the manner indicated. The first principle is to have a cellar that will not have to be kept open to insure freedom from moisture. A small sum of money spent in improving the cellar is sure to be a paying investment, to say nothing of the improvement in the sanitary conditions of the farm home. *Farmers' Review.*