

Grasses and Forage Plants.

The New York Farmers' Club on Orchard Grass and Clover.

At a recent meeting of the N. Y. Farmers' Club, a discussion took place about Orchard Grass and Clover. The President, Mr. N. C. Ely, read a paper on the subject, in which he advocated sowing orchard grass from the 20th of August to the 11th of September in the climate of Western New York, which is very similar to that of most of Western Canada. He also gave an account of a successful experiment in the way of sowing red clover along with orchard grass in the early fall. Orchard grass grows in bunches or stools, and something is needed to grow with it which will fill up and cover all the ground. Red clover is early enough to cut about the same time as orchard grass, but Mr. Ely had never known of it being sown in the fall successfully. So last fall he tried it and the result was highly satisfactory. Both the orchard grass and clover made a good growth last fall, stood the winter well, and started early in the spring. Mr. Ely depends on orchard grass as the first growth for sowing. If convenience is usually driving the way, dry feed, sparingly at first and more freely as cattle become used to it. It is usually ready two weeks earlier than clover, but for a man feeding crop, they cut very well together. The *New York Farmer* gives the following synopsis of the discussion that followed the reading of the President's paper:—

Mr. Ely observed that a clover seed is sown in the latter part of August or about 1st of September, a good crop may be expected. It will fail if put down before. It may be sown at the end of August and get rich growth.

Mr. Williams inquired if the grass exhibited the growth of last fall.

The Secretary stated that it was full growth, and had stood through the winter all right.

Mr. S. D. C. said that the orchard grass was not identical with sputh grass. The peculiarities of the formation of his roots make it tenacious life, and gives it a large amount of vitality. The specimen exhibited was the product of the soil, and was put down this spring. The single seed would form in the course of three years a crop of the same size as a peck of manure in a circular row. It is a winter crop during the summer it would stand better than to grow until the snow falls. It is, he said, the best grass we can grow for hay.

Dr. Thomas of Ontario, said the many of farmers having a passion for sowing grass in orchards, but they should sow the clover in other parts of their farms. There was, he said, no use in sowing clover and orchard grass together.

Mr. Howell remarked he would never do to sow clover in the fall.

Mr. Williams said that clover was a tender plant, and frost would kill it. Orchard grass were covered with snow during the winter, so as to save it from frost, it might be sown in clover early in the winter, so that it has an opportunity of getting well into the ground, and he has been generally successful in his crops. It might be better to sow in the early autumn. In spring there is generally dry, and when the crop was sown late, it was apt to be a failure. With regard to orchard grass and others of a permanent character, they should be sown with clover.

Curing Fodder Corn.

Last year I heard something over an acre of Southern white, fodder corn, a heavy growth, in a way that was new to me and which proved quite satisfactory notwithstanding the very unfavorable weather. I had previously cured it by shocking it in the field, and intended to treat this in the same way; but a severe shower with wind laid it all flat just before it was fit to cut, and so twisted the stalks that it would not stand up. I was 'driven to the wall,' and went with reluctance. The corn when cut was laid in bunches large enough to make medium sized bundles, and without waiting for it to wilt, it was bound near the butts with straw and placed upon the wall single or two bundles deep as to size, and so that they might balance as nearly as might be. The butts were all placed to the north or west because more difficult to

cure than the leaf, and that they might be more exposed to the dry winds. And I thought the bundles would be less liable to be blown off, as the easterly winds are usually damp. Scarcely any of it did blow off.

The corn was planted at different times, and I began cutting during the last week in August. We had then 6 or 8 days of good dry weather, and finding that what I had put on the wall first had cured considerably, I piled the bundles 3 or 4 deep and afterwards filled the vacant spaces with later cuttings. Some of the corn was grown upon land from which a crop of hay was taken last year, and it was quite green when cut. This I did not pile so thick, but found that the rain water dried off so quick that the under sides of the bundles did not change their color and cured without being damaged. I was surprised that so little water penetrated the bunches, and noticed that in most cases where the water remained for any length of time, that it was where the bundles were laid partly crosswise of each other, which prevented the water from running off.

The fodder was put into the barn at different times between Oct. 25 and Nov. 8, having been on the wall from 6 to 10 weeks. Some of the corn we had last fall made the top side of the fodder look bad, and some persons who saw it on a distance thought it spoiled, but a slight examination satisfied them and showed that the injury was trifling.

The quality of the fodder was not of course what it would have been if it had not been hurt somewhat by laying on the ground before being cut, and had been better had it been more favorable afterwards. But my cattle ate it readily, and those who saw it—Harriman of New York among the number—stated that they would have been glad of any they ever saw.—*Canadian Farmer*.

To Improve the Quality of Hay.

It is a well known fact that the hay crop as generally raised is far behind what it should be in point of quality. If soil is so ill adapted to grass that a heavy yield cannot be obtained, there is no excuse for having an inferior grade. An exchange, and we ought to be unable to say what one, gives the following on the subject:

If his land is not naturally fitted for grass, there are two ways in either of which the farmer may succeed in obtaining good results. The first and easiest, as present results are concerned, the easiest way for him to obtain the seed of some of the varieties of grass which, while making first rate hay, are adapted to his land. For instance his land may be wet and cold, filled with bog or sedge grass of miserable quality.

Now if the owner will turn over the turf and let it rot (meanwhile obtaining a crop of corn, oats, or some other grain), and then seed down with Alsik clover, red top or even fowl meadow grass, he will not only greatly improve the quality of his hay but also increase the quantity. Even timothy can be sown on wet land and for a few years produce good crops. The tendency is, of course, for the old weed grass to supplant the improved kinds, although the clover, being natural for wet lands, is said to hold its own a great while even in cold and poor land. If this course is pursued it is probable that the process will have to be repeated every four or five years in order to maintain a first rate quality of hay.

This system, as we said above, is the easiest and, as far as present results are concerned, without an regard to future comfort or profit, the most profitable method to be pursued. But if the farmer looks to the future, as all men ought, and endeavors to provide not only for the present but also to prepare for the future, he naturally desires some method of improvement which shall be successful in its present results, and also be of permanent value to himself and to his farm. This method is found in a system of thorough drainage and high manuring. It is objected that these things are too expensive? Remember that everything of value is expensive. It costs to improve it, but the improvement is a perpetual benefit. Every year it pays something toward the expense. Suppose a case:

A farmer has a meadow containing ten acres of good land with the exception of being cold and wet. Because it is wet it is cold, and because it is wet and cold both, it will produce only a very inferior quality of hay. It is not suitable for other crops. All that he does with the land is to mow it once a year. He obtains about a ton of hay per acre, and when well cured it is worth about ten dollars. The land he calls worth about fifty dollars per acre. Now let him dig large ditches to take off the surplus water, let him expend in this way two hundred dollars on the lot.

The dirt thrown out of the ditches will be worth at least fifty dollars—probably more—to put into the barnyard for compost. This will leave one hundred and fifty dollars as the net result of the improvement of the ten acres. The land will now be in condition to bear grass or any hued crop, and will be worth one hundred dollars per acre. It will produce from one to two tons of hay per acre, and the labor of raising the crop will be much less than it was before the land was drained. Now apply manure, and large and valuable crops will be obtained. The increased value of the crop will in two or three years pay for all the work, while the land will be worth double the price it would sell for before it was improved.—*Ohio Farmer*.

Improving Meadows.

Just after haying is finished every farmer knows exactly where he cut the heaviest grass, and just where the unproductive acres are, and then is the proper time to improve them. It is too generally believed that when a meadow has become sod bound and unproductive, a course of ploughing and cropping by rotation and seeding down is necessary, in order to obtain a heavy growth of grass.

This method is good, providing two difficulties are overcome: first, when only a portion of a field requires renewing, it is difficult to remove a crop of corn (which is almost invariably raised first) from the ground in time to secure the fall seed on the balance of the field before the frost has injured it, as the meadow becomes too wet and soft to allow cattle and horses to tramp upon it.

Second, when soil is once turned, farmers are apt to keep it under the plough too long; hence so many acres of poor land upon the farms of Ohio husbandmen. Land should always be stocked down before the old soil has entirely rotted away. The two above named difficulties have kept hundreds of acres of meadow land lying in almost useless condition for years.

Experience has taught many, however, that to renovate meadow land ploughing is not required, the partly barren places should be worked out, and in the month of September receive a good top dressing of manure and be thoroughly harrowed up, dragged and the old sod is entirely broken up and torn in pieces, then stocked with one peck of pure timothy seed per acre, and drag lightly.

The trouble is, the grass roots becoming so compacted and interwoven that they cannot ramify, and foreign matter works in. A coat of manure, thorough harrowing and seeding will cause sufficient increase of grass the first year to more than pay for labor bestowed. If in the fall it is discovered that by reason of drouth or any other cause the seed has not grown, it should be restocked without dragging in the latter part of March. We have had the best luck when stocking in spring by sowing upon a light snow.

There is another thing that too many farmers neglect and that is the putting of meadows in proper shape for the mowing machine. The time spent mowing around stumps, hillocks, logs and trees, with hand scythe, amounts to more in a season or two than would be required to remove them all, and make the meadow forever afterwards clear and smooth.

We have noticed that farmers who apply all of their barn manure to their meadows in the fall produce the heaviest crops of all kinds upon their farms. The reason is this: manure lying in the pile until all becomes decomposed and more valuable, and if being all applied to meadows, there is none for ploughed ground. So but two or three crops will be taken off, then sown to clover and the second crop ploughed under, then stocked down, and a new piece ploughed. It makes easy tillage and large profits.—*Ohio Farmer*.

Top-Dressing Grass Land.

If any one has any manure to spare at this season of the year, he need not fear to apply it just now, and that, too, pretty liberally. Many indeed think that now, just as the grass is rapidly growing, is the very best time of all the year. It does not remain long exposed if applied now. The grass grows up around it and gives it shade and keeps it moist in fact forms a complete protection against loss by evaporation that may be caused by the sun and the wind. As a general rule we prefer to top dress in the fall, as it gives a good winter protection and prepares the ground admirably for work in the spring, but if there is any lot that needs a dressing, the next best time is just as the grass is starting into active growth.—*Massachusetts Ploughman*.