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HOW TO SECURE BIGGER YIELDS FROM ONE OF OUR MOST COMMON CROPS

E. F. Eaton, Colchester Co., N. S.

The Average Yield of Oats is 30 to 40 Bushels an Acre—Yields of 75 to 100 Bushels are Easily Possible—How to Secure a Maximum Yield—Suggestions from a Successful Grain Grower

OATS are grown almost universally on Canadian farms and their value is appreciated.

We are convinced, however, that the average yield might be well high doubled and that the quality of the oats produced by many of our farmers might also be greatly improved. On some of our best farms, I have frequently seen oat crops yield over 100 bushels to the acre. The average yield is somewhere between 30 and 40 bushels. This is altogether too great a discrepancy between the average and good yields. We will endeavor to explain how we and several other farmers that we are acquainted with have been able to secure average yields of 75 to 90 bushels to the acre.

We believe that the selection of seed has almost as much to do with a favorable yield as has the preparation of the soil. It is foolishness to expect good results from some varieties of oats that we have seen tried. We have seen two varieties of oats in the same field, each getting exactly the same treatment, show a difference in yield of 30 to 40 bushels. After trying several varieties we ourselves have come down to the Banner which we find to be a good yielder and a good quality oat. Some of our neighbors are using the Siberian variety and consider it even superior to the Banner. For grain mixtures with barley, which we sometimes grow, we prefer the Daubeny oat, not because it is a heavy yielder but because it ripens about the same time as the Mandscheuri barley.

NOT AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS

It may be well also to mention the experience that we have had with the Tartar King. This variety makes a great showing in the field but we have found it to have too thick a hull to make good horse feed and the yield was nothing like what one would expect from its appearance before harvesting.

We practice fanning mill selection and nothing but the largest and plumpest of seed is sown. Sowing directly from the bin, which is the most generally practiced method here in Eastern Canada, is always bad practice. In the best crop of oats there is certain to be a percentage of small shrunken grains that germinate poorly and produce a poor plant. In a fairly good year we plan to select one bushel of seed from the two to four bushels put through the mill.

INSURANCE AGAINST SMUT

We treat all our seed grain for smut, although we have not seen that disease on our farms for years. We consider it cheap insurance to buy one pint of formalin, mix it with 40 gallons of water and with that amount treat all of the seed oats that we use in one year. The method of application that we follow is to sweep the barn floor clean, so clean that there will be no seed around, and then spread the seed grain out to a

depth of three to four inches. This we moisten with the formalin solution by means of an ordinary watering can. We turn the grain over with a scoop shovel and water again. We then push the grain into a corner in a heap, cover the heap with horse rugs or grain sacks to retain the fumes of the formalin, and in 24 or 36 hours we will guarantee that grain absolutely free from smut spores

EARLY SEEDING IMPORTANT

We prefer to seed our oats following some hood crop; in our case mangels, turnips and potatoes. It is of vital importance that oats be seeded as early in the season as possible. We believe that a week's difference in seeding may make a difference of 10 bushels an acre in the yield. For that reason we prefer to plow the land shallow in the

Forceful Articles

I am very glad to receive Farm and Dairy and wish to compliment you on the steady improvement which is noticeable through the paper.

I have taken a good deal of interest in reading the special articles that have been a feature on page four, and have been wondering who has had the time to work out such comprehensive and forceful articles.—J. A. McLean, Professor of Animal Husbandry, Mass., Agricultural College, Amherst, Mass.

fall, apply the manure in the winter and then all that there is to do in the spring is to thoroughly disc the soil, going over it twice, first longitudinal, and then crosswise, lapping the disc each trip. This disc will work the manure in the ground and spring plowing is not necessary. We follow the disc with the drag, and then comes the seeder.

FOR A BETTER LOOKING FIELD

A small point in seeding, but one that has much to do with making an even looking field, is to open the feed, when at the head lands, about two feet from where you wish to start seeding as one will go that distance before the grain reached the bottom of the spout. Where our oat crop follows so, we prefer to plow, disc and work the land as much as possible before winter to facilitate getting the crop in early in the spring.

We believe it a mistake to use the roller as a last operation. This leaves the land in just the right shape to lose moisture at a tremendous rate and this loss of moisture will have an even more detrimental effect on the small clover plants that it will on the crop of oats. We roll after seeding to compact the soil around the seed and give it plenty of moisture for germination but after the roller we follow with what we call the Breed

weeder. This is a very light harrow that pulverizes the soil and leaves a mulch about an inch deep on the surface. Again, after the field is showing quite green, we run over it with a light harrow to reform the surface mulch.

We have noticed in recent issues of Farm and Dairy considerable discussion regarding the advisability of using commercial fertilizer on every day farm crops. In our own section of Nova Scotia, fertilizers are almost universally used, and are generally believed to be profitable. On the land on which potatoes have been previously grown, no fertilizers would be applied to oats as the heavy application to the potato crop has beneficial after effects. Following other crops, however, we would make liberal applications of potash and phosphate fertilizers. Bone meal was once a favorite fertilizer but we are now come to prefer muriate of potash and Thomas phosphate. For nitrogen, of course, we depend on barn yard manure and leguminous crops. The amount and proportion of the fertilizers used depends altogether on the quality of the soil. We seldom use over 400 pounds mixed fertilizers to the acre.

Be Prepared for Spring Work

E. C. Colback, Cumberland County, N. S.

It almost makes me mad to see the way in which some farmers take their horses out of the stables in the spring when they have stood almost idle for months and start them right in to the hardest kind of spring work. This looks to me like a case for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty.

There is another side of the question too, besides the humane one. We cannot afford to do it. The efficiency of the horse for work is lowered immensely by lack of preparation and just at the season when we need good work most—in the spring. And I do not believe that the horse jumped from the stable to the plow in spring can be as efficient a worker through the whole succeeding summer as the horse that is prepared wisely and judiciously for the strenuous weeks of the spring.

At least a couple of months before spring work starts we commence to get our horses into shape, but even yet much can be done to harden the horses. If we have no work for them we should make work. They should get increasing amounts of exercise every day. Likewise the grain ration should be gradually increased, but in this particular care should be taken or we will have the horses down with founder, indigestion or even azotures, all of which diseases result from bad feeding, or too heavy feeding. Increasing the exercise, however, is the main point in preparing the horses for spring work.

Cow testing is a simple, reliable and very inexpensive method of determining what each cow gives in weight of milk and in weight of butter fat. It is a method of determining what each cow gives, not what the herd averages.—C. F. Whitley, Ottawa, Ont.