The Seed Bed for Wheat

George Ray, Oxford Co., Ont.

I HAVE found that a minimum amount of work on the seed bed for wheat will result in a minimum crop, unless the season be particularly favorable. If there is any crop grown on the farm that requires a well worked seed bed, it is winter wheat. Moisture is seldom too plentiful at the season of the year when we are preparing the seed bed and sowing the wheat. There is little moisture coming from the skies. The most that the crop gets must come from the sub-soil. Hence the necessity of a well-firmed seed bed, which will make active capillary action possible.

I first realized the importance of a firm seed bed some 10 years ago. I had plowed the ends of the wheat field first. The constant tramping of the horses in turning at the end of the furrows firmed this portion of the field. Those end rows grew the best wheat of any part of the field, and outside of the packing they received they had no special advantage. Ever since then I have made it a point to start work on the wheat field early in order that by frequent harrowing I might be able to work the seed bed until firmed enough to ensure good capillary attraction of water. I believe the soil packer, a comparatively unknown instrument in Eastern Canada, could be used to good purpose.

I have a neighbor who believes that ground that plows up lumpy is the very best for wheat. I believe, however, that the reason he secures the best crops from that lumpy ground is that he goes to more trouble to work it down than if it plowed up mellow. Hence he gets the necessary firm seed bed.

COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER FOR WHEAT

Of late years I have become a strong advocate of commercial fertilizer for fall wheat. Particularly is it necessary where we sow wheat on the corn land. The corn crop, which grows most rapidly during the latter part of the season, will have used up practically all of the available soil fertility and unless commercial fertilizer is applied, the wheat will make a very poor start. Oats too are rather hard on the soil and leave little available food for the wheat. I advocate an application of 200 to 400 lbs. of good mixed fertilizer per acre; 2-6-8 goods will give fine returns. In case this term cannot be understood I will explain that a fertilizer containing two per cent. of nitrogen, six per cent. of phosphoric acid and eight per cent. of potash, is known as 2-6-8 goods.

I have been told that wheat is not a profitable crop in Ontario. I cannot agree with this view. Where wheat is grown on rich soil and a good crop harvested it brings in a nice little lump of money just at a time of year when money is scarce. I find too that I can get better catches of clover with wheat than with ordinary spring grains. Whether the better catch is due to earlier seeding of the clover or to the small stooling of the wheat I don't know. Straw, too, is at a premium nowadays, and this wheat supplies in abundance.

Farm Furrows

The more plowing that is done this fall, the less rush will there be next spring.

One way to avoid introducing noxious weeds in the meadows is to grow your own clover seed. Keep the weeds out of the seed patch.

General farm crops in Northumberland Co., Ont., are short this year. Apples, however, promise well and farmers with orchards will have a fair income; further testimony to the value of diversified farming.

The more wheat we market to our cattle, hogs and hens, the less will there be to market through the grain dealer and the higher will be the price for that which we do market.

Alfalfa Growing in Algoma

By W. P. Macdonald, Algoma District, Ont.

THAT alfalfa can be grown successfully in Algoma is clearly demonstrated by the appearance of a six-acre field on the farm of Henry Knight, Jr., in Korah township, near Sault Ste. Marie. Mr. Knight is wearing a pleasant smile these days. At the time of my visit, Mr. Knight was mowing some alfalfa to feed his dairy cows. His jolly salute was "Ha! Ha! I don't have to turn my cows out to pasture to be tormented by the big flies; no, not while I can grow alfalfa in Algoma. I can keep up my milk flow when most everyone is complaining." Indeed, his cows were in the stable, all lying down, looking satisfied and contentedly chewing their cuds.

The alfalfa presented a beautiful sight, growing on the side of a hill facing south, three feet

Alfalfa in the North

In the Algoma District of Ontario, Henry Knight, Jr., has succeeded in growing splendid alfalfa; the illustration bears testimony to that. His experiences with this crop are told in the adjoining article by Mr. McDonald.

and over in length, and as thick a stand as any farmer could desire. The soil is a red clay loam. The seed used was common Ontario-grown seed.

EFFECT ON INOCULATION.

The field is divided into three plots or seedings. One plot is three years old, one two years old, and one a year old. The first and last plots had the seed treated with nitro-culture, which Mr. Knight procured from the Bacteriological Department of the Ontario Agricultural College. The second plot, after its first winter, did not present an encouraging appearance. It was of a rather thin stand and of a yellowish color. No nodules could be found upon the roots. During the summer Mr. Knight noticed the plants beginning to take on a healthy green color, which gradually spread all oper the plot. Then he says, "I began to find nodules on the roots."

The one-year-old crop is the soil's first crop. In the spring of 1913 the brush was chopped, the stumps and snags pulled, the field given a good harrowing—never was plowed—the seed was sown and another harrowing was given to cover it.

Mr. Knight is enthusiastic over his success with alfalfa. He believes that alfalfa can be grown in Algoma if the land is underdrained. He believes his success not due to a favorable location, but to natural drainage. He is going to have the district representative do some surveying for him, and underdrain a field near his barn, where he can have alfalfa, the dairyman's friend, close at hand.

Pasture for Work Horses

James Armstrong, Wellington Co., Ont.

I BELIEVE in pasture for the farm work horse. It does a horse good to get a run in the fresh air and a bite or two of green grass. Few practices, however, are more abused than the pasturing of horses on the farm.

We should remember that a horse on pasture and getting most of its food from pasture is soft and cannot stand hard work. When I am working the horses every day I find that they can do more work and do it easier if they are kept away from the pasture altogether, and fed entirely on dry feed. During the summer season, however, while there may be strenuous work at times, the horses generally are worked only moderately and those horses should get a run on pasture. A too common practice is to expect the horse doing moderate work to get all of its nourishment from pasture. This is wrong. The practice that I have found best is to feed the horse after a day's work and then turn out to pasture, bringing it in in time in the morning to give another good feed before the day's work commences. Night pasture should be valued for its effect on the health of the horse and not as a source of nutrition.

Here is another precaution: When there is no work for the team for a couple of days, don't turn them to pasture to get a living and fight the flies. When a couple of days of idleness are sandwiched in with periods of hard work I keep the horses stabled during the day, feeding them somewhat less than their regular rations, and turn them to pasture at night. If Sunday is the only day of the week when horses are freed from hard work, I would advise that they be turned out to pasture only during a part of the day. If out all day they will get too much green stuff.

Eating and Working

THERE are two ways to get more work done. One is to employ more help; the other to make better use of the help you already have. In discussing the latter method in a recent issue, the Western Farmer lays stress on such points as system, equipment, and so forth. Finally the importance of proper eating is considered. There is so much common sense in the conclusions of our contemporary that we reproduce them herewith:

"Another point—working efficiency is impaired by improper food or its mastication. Nearly all the ills of life can be traced to the latter. Farmers are prone to hurry while eating every meal. Rushing to hard labor right after eating a hearty meal impairs digestion, tends to early fatigue through improper nourishment. Improper nourishment opens the way to many diseases. Sickness causes delay in farm work. One may not be sick yet not be in good physical condition. Lack of "tone" leads to errors as well as slow gait while at work. Too much protein in the diet causes impairment of working efficiency by the formation of poisons in the colon that dull the mind and enfeeble the muscles. Too much meat in the diet is injurious to the workingman. It has been found that those who take time to chew their food properly do not crave meats or proteins in excess.

"Take time to live—you will be a long time dead and it won't matter then whether you have plowed so many acres more than the limit of endurance would indicate as a day's work. Take time to live by living right every day, then you will enjoy the fruits of your toil. You will actually accomplish more if you try to do less."