

FARM AND GARDEN

VALUE OF WHEAT STRAW.

A Splendid Article on Its Use for Food and Fertility.

The successful farmer is usually the one who allows little waste, utilizing the by-products of the farm, as well as those of fixed value. From quite extensive observation I find that on a large per cent. of our farms, straw is held to be of little value and treated accordingly. In some localities "straw board" factories are established, which consume thousands of tons of straw, for which they pay about \$1 a ton in the stack, and this brings the farmer something at least, but on thousands of farms the threshing is done in the field or wood lot, and the straw left without even making a decent stack of it, and farmers do not get a value of 50 cents a ton from it. Often these same farmers lack hay to winter their stock and buy at \$10 or more a ton, and many times their stock sleeps on barn floors, full of cracks or with auger holes bored in them to let the urine through. The quantity of straw per acre, and the proportion of straw to wheat, varies somewhat, but the average shows about two pounds of straw for one of grain, or a ton of straw for each 164 bushels of wheat. I think I am entirely within reasonable bounds when I say that the farmer ought to get a value of \$5 a ton out of this straw, and this if realized, will nearly or quite pay the expense of growing the crop, and enables us to realize some profit from wheat even at 50 cents a bushel.

I base this valuation of straw on its food value and also its fertilizing value, and this is shown by its chemical analysis and proven in actual use as food on the farm. Counting average hay as worth \$10 a ton, wheat straw is shown to be worth \$7.90 a ton for food. Its fertilizing value, as shown by chemical analysis, is \$2.44 a ton, allowing the same valuation for its nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash, as is allowed for these in commercial fertilizers. Whether the farmer realizes either of these values from straw, depends on his intelligence in handling it; but if he can save a ton of horse urine, which has a chemical valuation of over \$8, by bedding with a ton of straw, all of which urine would be lost without it, it will not pay to sell the straw for a dollar or two a ton, or to leave it in the field. And if he can save two tons of hay by feeding three tons of straw, without increasing the cost of his grain food or unfavorably affecting his animals, then he certainly can make money by utilizing his straw. To get the greatest fertilizing value from straw, it should be used liberally for bedding live stock on water-tight floors, so that no urine will be lost. The urine of the horse is very rich in nitrogen and potash, but contains no phosphoric acid; and as this manure heats very readily, and the nitrogen is volatile and escapes readily in gas, and the potash is soluble and leaches out easily, it can be seen that intelligent management of horse manure is required to get the greatest benefit from it. My plan is to clean the stalls daily, spread the manure and straw in an adjoining stable, and keep enough stock loose on it to tramp it solid and keep it moist; and when it has accumulated to the depth of two or three feet, we take it to the field and spread it on sod which is to be plowed the following spring. Managed in this way, we reduce the labor of handling to a minimum, and there will be no loss of valuable properties by evaporation, and anything that leaches goes into the ground just where it is needed.

I believe that it is best in feeding straw to make the grain ration a little heavier and let it consist of bran, oats and oil meal rather than corn, as these foods are more nitrogenous, and balance the ration better; and I think it is better to give no hay or corn fodder, for if they are expecting these, which are more palatable than straw, they will not eat it so well, but if they are supplied with good fresh straw and fed bran, they will soon eat it freely and thrive well on it. It would be best to feed the ground feed mixed with cut straw, and then let them have loose straw to pick besides, and twice a day clean out the mangers and put what is left under the stock for bedding.

I would not feed straw exclusively to cows giving milk, or to young growing animals, but horses when not at work and store cattle two years old and upwards, will do well on it. I know several farmers who feed their teams no other rough feed during the winter, and their horses are in fine condition when spring comes. One of the difficult things is to convince the farmer that bran is more valuable to feed with straw than corn, and most of them will feed corn when they could sell it and buy a much larger weight of bran. To-day I can buy bran at \$12 a ton, and corn is selling at 50 cents a bushel, and 40 bushels of it are required to make a ton of meal after it is tolled, and yet a majority of farmers will feed corn even when there is a greater difference than this in the price. Each year I feed more bran, and appreciate it more, and I now feed it as a part of the ration in fattening both hogs and cattle, and am convinced that it is true economy to do this, as there is less danger of indigestion than when the grain ration is corn exclusively, but especially when feeding straw, which has a very low albuminoid ratio, bran, which has a high albuminoid ratio, is valuable. On large farms, where the straw often amounts to a hundred tons or more, it can be stacked so as to furnish both shelter and food by making the stacks so that cattle can go under them, and thus, disperse the cattle so that they will bulk up in the warm straw sheds at night. The cattle will help themselves to the straw and a few

pounds of ground feed a day will keep them in good condition.

I would advise some of our farmers who have never fed straw to try it for their teams this winter. Weigh them at the beginning of the experiment and once a month afterwards, and regulate the grain ration so that they will gain in weight if in thin flesh, or at least hold their own if they are in good condition at the start. Lay in your bran in the summer, when the stock has accumulated in the mills and the price is low. I have done this for many years, and have never saved less than \$3 a ton by it, and sometimes \$8 or \$10. There is no risk in storing large quantities of bran, as it keeps perfectly. My store-room for bran is on the third floor of my barn, and a spout seven inches square inside brings it down to a bin holding a half ton in the stable in the basement. I think high up in the barn in the best place to locate the bran bin, as there is no dampness there, and the bran comes down easily by its own gravity.—Waldo F. Brown, in Country Gentleman.

Push the Pigs.

The intelligent farmer has been doing this all summer, in fact ever since they were born, but some pigs do not get a great deal of pushing at any time. If they have been neglected so far, begin now to get them in shape to fatten. This does not mean that they shall be fed much corn; in fact none is necessary. But they should have plenty of bran and middlings wet up with milk or water, and grass to eat as they like. Plenty of fresh water is also necessary. Don't think because you give them wet feed they do not need drink. If it is offered them they will show that they do.

Give them clean quarters. Don't say they are only hogs and prefer filth. I believe hogs are much maligned in this respect. A hog may lie in filth, but that is no reason to show that he would not prefer a bed of clean straw. I firmly believe, and observation bears me out, that a pig kept clean by washing will grow faster than one whose skin is plastered with mud and filth. Where there are many pigs it might be convenient to keep them clean, but with only a few a weekly scrubbing will certainly be beneficial.

Come to think of it, why should not a hog thrive better with a clean skin as well as a horse or a cow? It certainly would be conducive to the health of the animal as furnishing a more desirable article of food when his pigskin comes to be killed. Charcoal, ashes and salt, mixed, make an excellent preventive of disease for hogs. They will not eat too much if allowed to run to it at will.

Of course, in pushing the pigs it is intended to market them at six or eight months old. The day has gone by to keep them a year or more before selling. They may be made to give greater growth the first six months in proportion to the expense of feeding than ever afterward.

Pens are excellent for pigs. They furnish everything needed to make quick, healthy growth. Corn for the last few weeks, all they will eat, will put them in excellent shape for market.—Ohio Farmer.

Separating Cream.

Butter made from cream in submerged cans has not that delicacy of flavor of butter from cream raised in open cans, and is readily detected by a critical observer. A method is fast coming into use which is simple, inexpensive, a saving of ice and labor, preserves the quality of the open can and saves time almost as well as the mechanical separator, without the expense.

The milk, warm from the cow, is strained into a can till it is half full; then fill the can with cold water, which aerates milk, and immediately reduces its temperature to about 70° F., even in the warmest of weather. All the cream will rise to the surface in less than three hours.

The combined milk and water is drawn by a faucet from the bottom of the can till the cream appears, which is then drawn into a separate vessel. As the cream is separated in less than three hours, the can or cans used for the morning's milk are ready to be used for the night's milk; all that need go into the house is the sweet cream, thus lightening the labor there. The diluted skim-milk is fed to the pigs, the costly butter fat extracted from it being replaced by the cheaper fat of corn meal, in such proportions as are needed to feed to growing or fattening stock.

No time is lost, no labor required, nor expensive machinery to keep in repair when using the dilution process. As soon as the milk is mixed with water the separation goes on naturally, while the farmer is attending to other duties.—Ohio Farmer.

Small Fruit and Poultry.

It is useless to expect to raise small fruits and poultry on the same piece of ground, because the two are incompatible and the amateur may as well know it first as last. From the time plants are set out until the fruit is ripe they will constantly work injury to it. Chickens weighing less than a pound may be permitted to run at large among raspberries, blackberries and grapes after the fruit is gathered up to blossoming time again, and they will be of considerable benefit by destroying insects injurious to these fruits, but from the time the fruit begins to form until they are gathered they must be kept out if a crop is desired. And there is no season or time when chickens of any age or size will do a strawberry plantation any good whatever.

Taxes to Pay Cheerfully.

There are two taxes that every farmer should pay cheerfully. The first is the school tax, and the second is the road tax. Good roads make good citizens—good roads help to depopulate Hades, and, well they save our horses, our wagons and our temper.

Keep the Boys on the Farm.

Give your own sons as good a chance at least as you give the hired man.

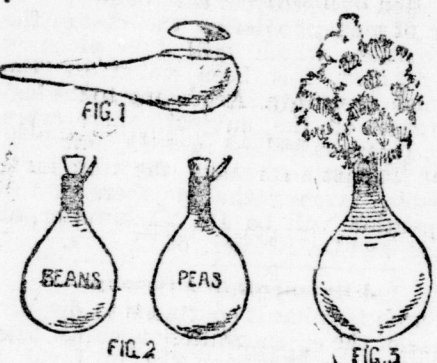
THE DIPPER GOURDS.

HOW THEY CAN BE MADE TO SERVE A NUMBER OF PURPOSES.

Walter H. Garrison Tells How to Make the Best Artistic and Useful Articles Out of These Fence Corner Growths—Three Varieties of Manufactures Illustrated.

The common dipper gourds, whose seeds spring up perennially in the yards and fence corners of hundreds of farms over the country, may be made to serve many useful purposes. The gourd vines which are trained to run up fences and trees or other upright objects usually yield gourds with straight stems; while those which grow window-vine fashion, on the ground, have curved or crooked stems. Either kind may be used to make the useful and serviceable dipper, without which no old-fashioned housekeeper considers her kitchen complete. The best way to make a dipper is to use a tolerably sharp saw and saw off carefully a third of the ball of the gourd, as shown by Fig. 1. The seeds are to be cleaned out and the gourd boiled in water for an hour or more. A little borax or alum should be added.

No better receptacle in which to put garden and other seeds away for next year's use need be desired than good dried gourds, with the stems cut off, and a stopper of soft wood or cork fitted in like the stopper of a bottle. When the end of the stem is neatly sawed or cut off, the seeds or pit should be removed with a wire or sharp stick, and the gourd boiled to toughen it. Before fitting the stopper a cord may be wound around the neck which will prevent any liability to crack when the stopper is put in tight. The neck is dipped in melted wax to keep the



MADE-UP DIPPER GOURDS.

cord in place. A loop of cord serves to hang up each gourd on a nail, or they may be placed on upper shelves, as the seeds are put in them, after being well dried. The labels from seed packets may be pasted on the gourds to represent the kind of seeds contained in them, or the names may be printed with pen and ink.

Gourds made into seed receptacles are shown in Fig. 2. For saving seeds the small gourds are the best. Larger gourds, with the stems cut off and the seeds removed, make a neat mantle or table ornament, in which small bouquets of flowers or wild grasses may be handsomely arranged. Ornament the gourd with brush and paint, or pen and ink, after your own ideas, and half fill with sand to give weight and put in any pretty flowers or grasses you have and see if the effect is not tasty as well as inexpensive. Gourd bouquet holders are shown in Fig. 3. If desired these holders may be stained any color with the common dyes.—Walter H. Garrison, in Farm and Home.

Seeding for Hay and Pasture.

Many varieties of grass seeds are recommended for seeding for the above purposes. On the open market timothy hay brings the highest price, popular prejudice placing it at the head of all hay. There is, however, says the Orange Judd Farmer, a demand springing up for a good quality of hay made from mixed grasses.

The principal benefit to be derived from the sowing of a mixture composed of such varieties as meadow fescue, fescue, orchard grass, etc., is their permanency. Where fertility of the soil is kept up by top-dressing they will retain their heavy cropping and excellent pasturing qualities for a number of years. The grasses being early, the hay crop can be cut nearly two weeks ahead of timothy and being fibrous rooted all start quickly so that a heavy second crop or abundant fall pasture is afforded. These grasses can also be pastured without injury, as they do not form a bulb at the base of the stem in the fall as is the case with timothy. Another advantage of these mixed grasses is that by varying the mixture they can be adapted to a variety of soil, from heavy clay, through the various grades of loam to light, sandy soils.

The seeds of these grasses are much lighter than timothy and greater care is necessary in the sowing and not as thin as three bushel per acre should be sown. To those who have been accustomed to sow timothy this will seem an unusually heavy seeding, but there are more seeds in a half bushel of timothy than in three bushel of such a mixture.

The subject of more hay and better pastures is becoming an extremely important one to the farmers of the eastern states who are unable to compete in grain and corn growing with the vast areas of the western states. With the present low cost of these products caused by overproduction, it is in many cases cheaper to buy than to grow.

Plums in the Chicken Yard.

A writer in the Indiana Farmer last fall said: Theories vanish by the side of facts in every vocation. I have, at the present writing, three plum trees loaded with ripening fruit, and two others with not a plum left. The five trees were set on the same kind of ground seven years ago and have had the same culture. The same results have been derived for the past three years: the three trees bearing a full crop of sound fruit, and the two a crop of wormy fruit worthless. The three fruiting trees are in the chicken yard; the others outside. The ground in said yard is not plowed, but early in the spring is swept and kept hard and smooth. Under these trees I scatter bran and screenings, and "biddy" does the work of eating the pestiferous insects. While looking for the little seeds and specks of bran she garnishes her food with the spicy curculio. I know this to be true for I have the evidence.



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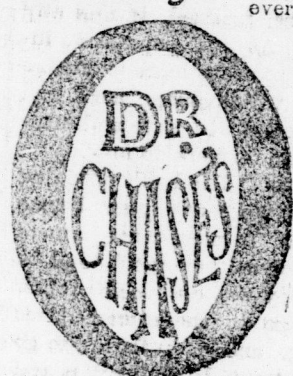
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