

THE FARMERS AND THE BACON TRADE.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The shortage of the supply of suitable hogs, of which the packers are at present complaining, is but the logical consequence of the advantage taken by those people last year when the supply was plentiful. The greed for fat dividends has resulted, in this case, as it often does, in losses to themselves in other directions. The packers were warned that farmers, finding it unprofitable—indeed, a losing game—to raise hogs at the prices being paid, would drop the business, and the sequel shows that they meant it, and have lowered the supply much faster than the buyers thought probable in so short a time. That there is no money in feeding hogs with the price where it was held, and with grain and millfeed at the high figures prevailing, should have been patent to anyone with a modicum of knowledge of the circumstances. And the part of wisdom for the packers would appear to have been to meet the conditions as far as possible by dividing their profits with the producers to such an extent as would have enabled them to continue the supply of suitable stock. The consequence of their cupidity, on the other hand, tends to cripple themselves, while discouraging an enterprise on the part of the farmers of this country that was distinctly commendable, and a transformation in the quality of product such as has seldom been equalled in any country in so short a period. The consequence of the course pursued by the packers was an inferior class of product—old sows and half-finished hogs—lowering the quality and the character of our product on the market, and at the same time forcing them to pay higher prices for an inferior class of stock. And to add to the misery of it, now that higher prices are being paid, the farmers have few hogs to sell, and will not receive nearly as much advantage from the advance as they would have received had prices been maintained at fair figures last year, as well as this. Farmers, however, should not be discouraged; present prices are fairly satisfactory; feed will be more plentiful, and probably somewhat lower in price this year. There is always a considerable amount of skim milk, whey, or swill from the kitchen and dairy which would be wasted if not fed to hogs, and, with this and a pasture plot, together with a little grain, they can be grown at moderate expense until the finishing period; and, if kept in limited numbers, of the proper type, will make satisfactory returns for what they get.

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THE FARM.

COAL ASHES AS FERTILIZER.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

A great deal has been said and written relative to the use of hard-coal ashes as a fertilizer, and I have always been under the impression that they are of no value, until this spring, when I have proven to the contrary. My experience is as follows: At the rear of my residence, and adjoining my vegetable garden, last year I had plowed and raised potatoes on about one-eighth of an acre. The potatoes were a poor crop. Soil, a clay loam, not too heavy. Last winter I burned about twelve tons of hard coal, and the ashes were all dumped on this land at the house end, and in the spring spread over about three-quarters of the

land. I then gave the whole piece barnyard manure, at the rate of twelve loads to the acre, with a manure spreader, and the result is that I have as good oats as I ever saw on the portion where the coal ashes were applied, and can see very rank growth where the piles were; and where there were no ashes the crop is light. What are the properties?
J. H. M. PARKER.
Que.

HARVESTING AND STORING CORN.

Unlike last year, this season promises to be one in which the corn crop will ripen early and thoroughly. In sections where silos are common harvesting operations, if somewhat laborious and exhausting, are simple. The corn-binder lays the crop low, and at the silo the steam or gasoline engine driven cutter, with blower attachment, makes swift work of the bound bundles fed into it. The go-betweens—the men who pitch the sheaves on to the low truck wagons, and those who do the unloading and feeding—have heavy, straining work, but as there is generally a good-sized gang together, thus relieving the monotony of working alone or in pairs, and as there is a certain stimulus in the whizz and roar of the cutter, the work goes merrily on. The thought that once the job is done it is all done—no husking or chopping shocks out of the frozen ground to follow—is a great satisfaction, and has a great deal to do with the popularity of the silo.

In regard to the stage of ripeness at which corn should be cut for silage, the tendency has been more and more for corn thoroughly ripe; that is, corn in which the husks are dry or partly dry, though the leaves and stalks are still juicy and green. The experience of Mr. A. L. Currah, Oxford Co., Ontario, as given in his letter published in our issue of January 23rd, 1908, is very significant. On November 23rd he filled a silo with corn which had been stooked about two months. It made, he says, almost first-class ensilage, not being sour or acid, as green corn would make if put in silo at once, and cattle could eat a large quantity without any scouring or bad results whatever.

Cutting with the corn-binder, both for the silo and for dry curing, has become very popular of late, as it saves much hard work, and extra men for corn cutting have been almost impossible to secure. But it has disadvantages. The stubs are left rather long, and many ears are broken off and have to be gathered up afterwards. In some sections, indeed, after a trial of corn harvesters there has been a return to cutting by hand. The old-fashioned sickle or a specially-made corn knife are commonly used, but some, more particular, cut with short-handled heavy hoes, made on purpose. These last make the neatest work of any, the stubs left being only about one inch high. The improved appearance of the field is worth something, and the saving of corn fodder is considerable.

While silo filling is but of yesterday, and cutting and shocking corn for dry feed is from time immemorial, we yet believe that there is more carelessness to be seen and more errors made in the latter method than in the former. How often is corn cutting delayed until the leaves as well as the husks are paper dry, under the delusion that the grain is filling fuller, or else because of mismanagement or simple indolence? What careless shocking is done, to judge by the number of shocks leaned over or lying flat and rotting with the fall rains. The habits of the crows have changed in part because so many leave their corn shocks with good ears on out in the fields all winter. When we first remember, scarcely a crow stayed for the winter, now thousands and tens of thousands of

them do so. How they must laugh at the farmer's folly while feasting on his corn. All these forms of waste are needless, and should be prevented. Corn can be cut at the proper time, when the husks are just beginning to turn dry, and while the stalks and leaves properly cured make a palatable food for stock. Shocks can be set up so that they will not fall. We are told to "behold the fowls of the air," not to imitate them. "They sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns," but we ought to. Corn, especially if eared, should be taken under cover when dry, or stacked neatly in small stacks where it can be got at conveniently.

Corn for husking should, we think, be cut by hand. It is no advantage in husking, but rather the reverse, to have it bound. Some, for convenience in shocking, use a wooden horse, but a better method, and one that ensures the shock standing, is to tie four hills together and set the loose corn in equal quantities into the four corners of the X thus made. If done as it ought to be, and the top well tied, such a shock may twist a little, but will never fall. Some system in the placing of the shock and the cutting and handling of the corn will save much time. We have found a space of six hills, square, thirty-six hills in all, to make a convenient sized shock. Tie the four center hills together, then cut four hills and carry at once and set up in one of the corners. Do the same from hills handy for each of the four corners; then repeat the process and the shock is finished. The shock stands better when the corners are each half filled first and then finished at the next turn than if the full amount were put in each corner at once. Tie the top firmly with straw, twine, or one of the cornstalks. We prefer a cornstalk, as being the quickest, cheapest and best.

In two weeks or a little more husking can be begun. This work is often deferred until winter, or is kept for a bad-weather job in the barn, but where time will permit it is most economically done in the field. Before beginning at a shock, first cut the four hills which have held it up, and then pull over flat. Tie the stalks in bundles as they are husked, and in the evening set up again in larger shocks. The ears can be thrown into little heaps, to be gathered up afterwards, but labor is saved if a team is kept alongside and the baskets emptied at once into the wagon to be shovelled into the corn crib before unhitching. After being husked the stalks dry quickly, and should be housed or stacked before snow or late rains injure them.

We are of those who believe that where the corn crop is all to be fed to cattle the labor and expense of husking and grinding the grain is thrown away. Corn just as it grows—stalks with the ears on—is first-class cattle fodder, and if fed judiciously there is practically no waste. Experiments in cattle fattening in Kansas demonstrated to the experimenter's surprise that it was a more profitable method of handling and feeding corn than either having it ground or fed in the ear. If to be fed in this way, whether it is cut by machine or by hand, it is tied in bundles, each of the size needed for one feed, and these are shocked in the field until dry enough to be hauled in.

A word now as to the shocking of bound bundles. It is much better for one man to do his own shocking than for two to work together. One man can see to it better than two can, that the shock is evenly balanced and slanted on all sides. Corn bundles should be set up in pairs, or if they are too heavy for this to be done, then when one bundle is set up on one side another of equal size should be set up on the opposite side. Another important point to be observed is that each bundle as it is set up in the shock shall be first shocked forcibly down in an upright position before the top is leaned over toward its mate. Attention to little things like these we have suggested makes a very great difference in the standing quality of corn shocks. Another little detail worth attention is to have shocks set up in straight rows. If they are every way—higgledy-piggledy—they are an eyesore, while if in straight rows, evenly distanced, they are like soldiers in rank, a sight to see.

CREOSOTE AS A FENCE-POST PRESERVATIVE.

Experiments have for some years been conducted at United States stations to determine the best method of wood preservation. The growing scarcity of timber gives this question an interest for all of us. If the life of a fence post could be doubled, what a saving would be effected? Many substances have been tried, but the preservative now recommended is creosote. This is a by-product of coal tar, which is produced at most plants for the manufacture of illuminating gas. This tar is distilled, and during the process the condensed vapors are run into three separate vessels and thus separated into the light oil of tar or naphtha, the dead oil of coal tar or creosote, and pitch. Wood tar, when distilled in a similar manner, gives "wood creosote," which also possesses strong antiseptic properties. The treatment recommended for fence posts is to have an iron tank capable of holding fifty posts, filled, when the posts are in, to a depth of three and a half feet with creosote and kept hot. The posts are kept in this bath for from one to five hours, depending on the character of the wood, and are then transferred to a cold bath of the same material for an hour.

It is claimed that by this process low-grade woods, such as willow, cottonwood and elm, can be made as lasting as cedar or oak untreated.



Nonpareil Marquis.

Shorthorn bull, two years old. First at Calgary and Winnipeg, 1908. Senior champion at Calgary and grand champion at Winnipeg. Owned by Sir William Van Horne.