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EDITORIAL.

Some Advantages of Earth Roads.

It is a mistake to assume that gravel or crushed stone is essential to the building and maintenance of good roads. While, for heavily-travelled roads, a metal coating is of very great advantage—in fact, almost indispensable—and while a coating of gravel will be of undoubted benefit to almost any highway, yet, for the less-travelled back roads and concessions, it is by no means necessary. In fact, for such roads, the economy of gravelling, unless the material is very handy to apply, is open to serious question. By frequent and timely use of the split-log drag, combined with tiling, where necessary, earth roads subjected to ordinary use can be kept in very satisfactory condition at all seasons of the year, save at brief intervals in spring and during heavy rains; even then these roads need not be allowed to get into anything like the dire condition to which we have grown accustomed.

And there are several distinct and noteworthy advantages of such roads over metalled roads. First, their maintenance is simpler and cheaper, for the subsiding earth may be simply plastered back over the crown in spring, whereas the mud on a gravel road may not, without compunction, be thus treated, but should be scraped to one side, and then disposed of elsewhere, which is laborious and expensive. Secondly, the well-kept earth road is easier on horses' feet and legs, as well as on vehicle tires, springs and gearing. Many farm horses would not need to be shod from spring till fall were it not for travelling over hard, metal-surfaced roads. Thus, blacksmith's bills might be saved, and the horses' underpinning be the better for it.

In winter, during times of imperfect sleighing, a smooth, dragged earth road makes a better bottom than a gravel face. While these are, perhaps, minor points, they are worthy of due consideration, and point to the advantage of concentrating effort (on the less-travelled highways) upon tiling, ditching, and maintenance of the earth surface in prime condition by the split-log drag.

Be it remembered that expensive roads are not only expensive to build, but expensive to properly maintain. An earth road is easy to construct, and inexpensive to keep in serviceable shape. If some of the gravel scattered over the roads were used to fill trenches in which tile had been laid, the roads being left surfaced with the original loam, it would be much to the advantage of many a mile of road and many a rural passenger.

Co-operation in the Poultry Industry.

The wave of co-operation in farming practices has taken hold of poultry enthusiasts of Eastern Canada in such a way as to result in the formation of an association, the main purposes of which are to engender a co-operative spirit in the production of eggs and poultry, and in the placing of these on the market in such condition that consumers will be willing to pay higher prices. A uniformly high-class product, systematically marketed, is the aim. Without injury to the middleman, it is hoped that both producer and consumer will benefit.

This association should be of practical value to all concerned. Poultry organizations previously in existence in Canada strive chiefly to make their efforts count at exhibitions. This object, while laudable from the standpoint of disposing of fancy stock, and of maintaining a standard of excellence in type and characteristics among pure-bred, does not meet the requirements of the

farmer who keeps hens, or of the small poultryman. These latter want a ready market for eggs and whatever stock they may wish to sell, live or dressed. The Poultry-producers' Association of Eastern Canada promises to do this. It seems to have started along proper lines, and should prove of advantage to the Canadian poultry industry.

An Easy Start in Spraying.

"Does it pay to spray?" is a question still dubiously asked by hundreds and thousands of farmers, while hundreds of thousands of others do not even arrive at the interrogative state of mind, being content to leave the orchard to its fate in the struggle with scale, fungus and moth. And yet, if the truth were only known, there is scarcely any operation in the whole category of field and orchard practice which would pay better than spraying, intelligently, systematically and carefully performed. But the task seems formidable to those who have never seen it done, or become interested in it. Entomology and spraying are looked upon as a complicated science and art, which only the expert professor, armed with microscopes and knowledge gleaned from scientific text-books, can hope to unravel or understand.

All this is a great mistake. While there are fine points to observe in spraying practice, and plenty for the studious to learn, still, any farmer of ordinary intelligence can, by following directions given in the spray-calendar number and other issues of "The Farmer's Advocate," prepare and apply, with reasonable success, the three thorough sprayings with Bordeaux mixture and Paris green which A. McNeill, Chief of the Fruit Division, at Ottawa, declares will control seventy-five per cent. of the insect and fungous pests attacking the apple. The first of these should be put on when the leaf-buds are expanding; the second just after the blossoms fall, and the third a week or ten days later. Other sprayings are occasionally required, and usually beneficial, but make a start with these, and, as you study the question, the remaining applications will become apparent, and their necessity and occasion understood.

Spraying sometimes shows little result, because it may happen to be tried in a year when there is comparatively little trouble from insect and fungous pests. Often it fails to produce full benefits, because not thoroughly performed, or, mayhap, not done at the right time, or not often enough. But, taken one year with another, if properly done, according to directions, spraying will pay, and pay well—so well, indeed, that an orchardist should no more think of neglecting it than he would think of neglecting to pick the crop. The work, while not the pleasantest in the world, is not so bad, if one has a good, up-to-date pump, and prepares himself, horse and harness for the job. The pump will afterwards come in very handy for spraying potatoes, as well as mustard in the grain fields, and for whitewashing the interior of the dairy barn. Buy a spray pump, use it, and be up-to-date—but never lend it to a neighbor. A spray pump is something that should not be loaned.

"Old Subscriber," "Reader" and other correspondents still write, asking us questions, but forgetting to sign their names. These letters are immediately deposited in the waste-paper basket. We do not demand names for publication, but the name and address of every inquirer must accompany the questions to insure attention.

Experiments with Dual-purpose Grades.

Prof. Arkell, of Macdonald College Animal Husbandry Department, reports that none of the cows in their imported dairy Shorthorn herd has failed to pay its way, while some have given handsome returns over cost of production, their calves, also, proving growthy and satisfactory. The intention now is to add some more grade Shorthorns to the herd, breeding these to a dairy Shorthorn bull, raising the heifer calves for milkers, and the male calves for beefing purposes. In this way, valuable data should be obtained concerning the feasibility and economy, under certain conditions, of producing beef and milk in the same herd, and from the same strain of stock. Prof. Arkell's experiment will be watched with great interest. Mr. Grisdale, at Ottawa, has been doing some work to this purpose, with decidedly promising results, but the importance of the subject is such as to warrant duplication at every public experiment station and agricultural college in Canada. It is in no way challenging the field of the special dairy breeds to assert that many thousand farms in the Dominion of Canada would be most profitably stocked with a class of genuine double-decker cattle, such as the Shorthorn ought to be.

O. A. C. Annual Report.

An exceptionally instructive document is the 1908 annual report of the Ontario Agricultural College, just to hand from the Provincial Department of Agriculture, at Toronto. With a minimum of routinary review is combined a large amount of information in almost every department of the College work, gleaned from research, experiment and observation. Incidentally, we note that the President records a larger attendance in 1908 than ever before, there being, from January 1st, 1908, to December 31st, 1,225 students, who received instruction in one or more departments of College work. The regular agricultural courses were well filled, every bed in the recently enlarged boys' dormitory being taken, and seventy-two students, in addition, obliged to board outside. Macdonald Hall has been also filled to its utmost capacity with young ladies. To review the report by departments would be impossible within the limits of one article, and we shall not attempt it. Reference will be made elsewhere, and in future issues, to the results of investigations reported upon. Meanwhile, we advise every intelligent Ontario farmer who is not already on the Department's mailing list to send for a copy. It will repay careful reading.

Mistake of Mixing Breeds.

The idea is apt to prevail in the minds of farmers who have had little experience with pure-bred stock, or have given little study to the principles of breeding, that, by crossing two breeds, the best characteristics of both may be combined in the progeny. While, in the case of two breeds of a similar class—say, of the beef breeds of cattle—which have been long bred for compactness of form, thickness of flesh, and early maturity, the result of the first cross of pure-breds has often been a very satisfactory beef animal, in some instances quite equal to the best specimens of either of the breeds used in the experiment, yet experience has not proven that even in the first cross the prizes have been as numerous as the blanks, while the second and subsequent crosses in either direction have been less successful or satisfactory. And the same statement holds good, as a rule, in the mixing of