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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

The Mail Bag

AN OPEN FORUM

This page is maintained to allow a free discussion of all questions vital to western farmers. Up to the limit of space letters will be published giving both sides of all such questions. It is not possible to publish all letters received, but an effort will be made to select those most fairly representing different views. Short letters will be given preference. All letters must be accompanied by name and address of writer, tho not necessarily for publication. Unused letters will be returned if accompanied by postage.

HOW TO GET BEST SEED

Editor, Guide:—In those parts of the West where the blight of heat or rust killed the grain before maturity there is a seed problem that is giving the farmer a good deal of study. Some insist that even their lowest grades, such as feed wheat or No. 6, will grow since they have noticed in their fields at mill settings or where scattering seed had been partially covered it grew apparently like good wheat, from which they reason that it will do to sow next spring.

Good seed means not merely good germinating power, but a good supply of nutriment in the kernel to carry it on after germination till it gets to the stage when it can draw on the soil for its support. After fertilization at the time of bloom the plant has its power of reproduction, and the subsequent time to the period of ripening it has been adding to its store of flour which gives sustenance to the plant after germination. I have had a good growth by sowing a few handfuls of ground grain run thru a chopper, not set too close to injure the germ.

In a warm favorable season of good growing conditions shrunken seed might give a good crop. Heat and moisture necessary to germination also starts up a fermentation in the reserve supply of plant food in the well developed kernel and which serves to carry the young

of their beaten track. Let us see if the situation can be met.

A. DRYDEN.

St. Agathe, Man., Dec. 11.

MUNICIPAL HAIL INSURANCE

Editor, Guide:—We are told we can only expect to receive 40 per cent. of the Municipal Hail Insurance. Of course we fully understand that it is stated on the form that in an exceptional year if the commission did not have the money they would not be bound to pay all claims. But do the government or the commission realize the distress this is going to cause amongst farmers in this year of fabulous prices for everything? I will quote my own case as an example. I was totally haled. I have to buy sheaves, oats and all my seed wheat, which means that I work the whole year for nothing and have to dig up \$600 from somewhere to carry on, whereas if I had the insurance in full I could pay everything and have \$150 for working. We do not ask for charity, we only ask for what should come to us by right and belongs to us. I do not think any of our more fortunate neighbors would object to a few cents more extra taxes to enable the Hail Insurance Commission to make good the claims, and I am sure we would not object if we had the insurance in full and it would help us, who

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE WORLD AT WAR



This map shows how over three-fifths of the human race and about three-fifths of the earth's surface are involved in the struggle against the Central Powers—rightly called the world war. Europe is entirely involved, save for Scandinavia and Denmark (to which Greenland and Iceland belong), Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and Greece. All Africa has been drawn into it, save the Spanish possessions in Morocco and on the west coast and the independent States of Abyssinia and Liberia. In Asia the Chinese Empire, Persia and Afghanistan are neutral. Though they have not been involved in the war's repercussions, Siam also stands out, as, of course, the Dutch East Indies and the American-owned Philippines. Australia is entirely at war, save for Dutch New Guinea. The New World is the only continental mass that has, as the whole escaped the war though here the large mass of Canada in North America, the West Indian possessions of France and Britain, British and French Guiana in South America, and the Antarctic islands are all independent territory. Yet, in the main, the New World offers a complete contrast with the Old, which is, with China as the only considerable exception, engaged in this great conflict.

plant on in spite of cold or other adverse conditions. The question then comes up, can the farmer afford to gamble on his chance of getting the weather that would suit his poor seed? Obviously not, and while a good many will sow what they have, it will be because of the difficulty of replacing it with good seed that would cut out this risk.

There are hundreds of cars going thru Winnipeg now to the water front that would make the best of seed if they could only be diverted to where they could be used as such. When a wheat train pulls in gangs of men immediately draw the samples and the train proceeds on its way and by the time the samples reach the broker the train is at the lake. To get a car for my own use I have about come to the conclusion that the only way I can do it is to go to some place in Alberta and ship it home direct, while if I had the power to divert one billed to the terminals I could, by accompanying the samples, select any number suitable for seed in short order and be glad to get it by paying the Fort William price. Railway managers in their adherence to routine throw obstacles in the way of any interference with their way of doing business and it is only when the case becomes urgent, or by a prod from the Grain Commission, will they move out

have worked equally as hard as our neighbors, to start afresh. This would be just a little example of what we call co-operation. This is an exceptional year and an exceptional measure should be decided on.

WALTER FURNEAUX.

Swanell P.O., Sask.

UNFAIR TO FOREIGNERS

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of October 18 there is a letter by Geo. Thomson. He has not expressed what I think is fair to this country as a whole when he says the Austrians and Germans shall be not allowed homestead rights. Tell us, Thomson, hasn't this government induced those immigrants to come here? They are innocent of this war. We should be kind to them. They make in most instances first class farmers. They are equal to any farmers of other nationalities. I should think we should try to get this great Western country settled. I think the Lord created this country for the benefit of all foreign emigrants and not for one country alone. Haven't the farmers got burden enough paying to privileged interests and high wages? Let those donate to the Patriotic Funds that can afford to, but don't include all the poor farmers who have heavy debts before. The whole country should not

Farmers' Business Number

In 1917 we expect to publish two special farmers' business numbers, one on January 24, the other on April 11. We want from every co-operative association in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, an account of the work carried on during the past year. There is nothing that will do more to encourage new organizations than an account of those that have been successful, and nothing that will be more useful than a knowledge of the mistakes or failures of unsuccessful ones. We want to make this issue

A Record of Co-operative Growth in 1916

To do so we need a report of the business conducted by every local group, association or union of farmers in the three provinces. We would like to have the secretary or some other member of the association write us a short, interesting article telling us just what business the organization has been doing, what is being purchased and what saving has been effected by this co-operation or collective buying. Here are some other questions, answers to which ought to be included in your article:—(1) Is your association incorporated, and if so, under what Act? (2) Are you conducting a wholesale warehouse business, a retail store, or are supplies ordered in carlots and distributed among the farmers from the car immediately on arrival? (3) How many farmers are there in your organization? (4) What has been the effect of carrying on this collective business? (5) How do you distribute profits? (6) Are non-farmers allowed to purchase thru the association and if so do they participate in profits? (7) Do you co-operate with other associations for special purposes? (8) Have you established a permanent office, a "Grain Growers" or a community hall in which to hold your meetings? (9) How is your secretary paid? (10) What is your method, and have you any difficulty in arranging financial assistance from your bank? (11) Have you any method of making your work more widely known, and of keeping an active interest without, as well as within your organization, in other words of advertising? (12) What have been your greatest difficulties? (13) Have you had a satisfactory bookkeeping system? Outline it. To the end of each letter or on a separate sheet we would like to have a list of the companies from whom purchases have been made.

We want all the facts, figures, statistics, you can give us on your work. Associations that have already had their organization history, etc., published in The Guide should confine their letters more closely to immediate essentials. We would like to have fairly complete accounts of all the work of new associations. These need not be too extended. Letters should run anywhere from 800 to 1,600 or even 2,000 words.

Send All Photographs You Can

We would also like to have all the new photographs you can possibly send us illustrating phases of co-operative work. For all we can use we will pay from 50 cents to one dollar. All the helpful suggestions that can be incorporated in your articles should be included. We would also like to have any questions asked that you think the experience of other associations could enlighten you on. What influence has the increased prosperity of the last two years had on co-operative work?

The letter may be written by any member of your organization, but it MUST REACH US BY JANUARY 15, 1917. We want a report from every association carrying on a co-operative business, no matter how small. For the best letters

We Will Pay Cash Prizes of \$8, \$6, \$4 and \$2

for the four best and for the others at regular rates

The prizes will not necessarily go to the one doing the greatest volume of business, but will be given for facts, for completeness of detailed description, for the conduct of the association and the benefit to the community as well as for the best written letter. Write on one side of the paper, use ink if convenient, and leave a good margin. Be sure to have your letter in our office before January 10, as we cannot use it for our January 24th number if received later. Address all communications to The Editor—

Grain Growers' Guide
WINNIPEG, MAN.