

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN MANITOBA
AND N.-W. T.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY BY
THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED).

WESTERN OFFICE:
IMPERIAL BANK BLOCK, CORNER BARRISTERS AVE. AND MAIN ST.,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

EASTERN OFFICE:
CARLING STREET, LONDON, ONT.

LONDON (ENGLAND) OFFICE:
W. W. CHAPMAN, Agent, Mowbray House, Norfolk street,
London, W. C., England.

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Bright Crop Prospects.

Just in time, and after an ideal spring for completing seeding operations, the earth has got an invigorating supply of moisture, and the great wheat crop of the West never put its tentative spears forth to the sunlight under more favorable conditions. The seed-bed was in perfect condition, the plowing, owing to the favorable harvest and fall weather of last year, was generally in a forward state, and in consequence the wheat has practically all been sown in its proper season. The work was accomplished on all our soils and over all our territories with but little interruption from the weather, and no sooner was the work done and the seeders relegated to a period of inaction in the implement yard, than moisture, the want of which had been causing anxiety for a week or two, fell, and fell copiously and abundantly. Nor has it been local or limited in area, for all over the wheat lands of the West water has been uniformly distributed, and hope is high that our land is again to be blessed with a good crop. An idea amounting to a rooted belief is prevalent that more than two good crops cannot be expected in succession, and that Western Canada having had two such crops in the last two years, there is little chance of a third. Whether this belief is founded on observation, or on some such antique historical tale as the "Seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in Egypt," we do not know, but we take no part in such a belief, and our attitude is based upon the agricultural history of Western Canada as it has been observed and recorded during the past decade. It is admitted that our land, by the changed conditions caused by habitation, cultivation, drainage, and all the other influences accompanying the evolution from a vast howling waste to a country where millions, yearly increasing by tens of thousands, live on its produce and supply such produce for consumption abroad, has changed in climatic and other features, and, consequently, theories based upon observations of the past are not applicable to-day. We are more inclined to believe that the past good crops are but the beginning of a long series of prosperous years, and although it is too early to forecast the harvest of '03, present circumstances point forward with

ever-increasing hopefulness. Favorable reports on the crop prospects have reached us and are reaching us every day from all parts of the West, and a bright, hopeful tone permeates all of them, showing that prospects are bright and hopes high all over the country.

Calgary Show and Sale.

Visitors to Calgary during convention week could not fail to be impressed with the splendid prospects for pure-bred stock in the Northwest Territories, particularly in Alberta. The general good character of the animals shown, and the interest which was being taken by the large number in attendance was ample testimony of what the future holds in store. The horse show, as reported elsewhere in these columns, was truly inspiring, and was, to say the least, a revelation to those who did not come prepared to see a good show of high-class stock. Altogether the horse-breeders of our West have reason for congratulation upon the position which they now hold. The heavy drafts were a sight that the largest shows in America might not be ashamed of, and the lighter breeds displayed quality that was but little less praiseworthy. It is significant that from a ranch in this district should come two such famous Hackneys as Robin Adair II., a champion at Madison Square Gardens, New York, last year, and Saxon, the championship winner at Toronto Spring Show this year. This fact alone is sufficient guarantee to outsiders that upon the prairies of the West there is as good blood as anywhere on the continent.

From the cattle-breeders' standpoint, however, the show was scarcely up to the same high standard. This was, doubtless, owing to the regulation requiring all animals exhibited to be offered for sale. Although there were a few good ones, a great many also appeared in the show-ring that were not particularly typical specimens of the breed which they represented.

In summing up the result of the sale, the officials in charge were unanimous in pronouncing it satisfactory. In general, too, the contributors were of the same mind, but there were those who believed that their stock should have brought more money, and no doubt they had reason for such a contention. There was a good deal of stuff offered, however, that was dear at any price, and if the sale is to be carried on in future with the purpose of encouraging the breeding of the superior, as against the scrub sire, a system of culling will have to be resorted to. The general opinion that ranchmen are prepared to buy almost any kind of sire was not borne out by the bidding at this sale. Most of these men were looking for strong, not necessarily well-fitted bulls, worth about one hundred dollars each, and when animals of that character came in there was never a deadlock in the bidding, but when the narrow-breasted, shallow-bodied species made its appearance the auctioneer did not find his work so easy.

Bulls which have been reared on small farms and stabled during most of their life are not general favorites with the ranchmen, as they have not in the past given the best satisfaction. Of this class a few very well fitted animals appeared for sale, and as they were scarcely qualified to become pure-bred herd headers, and not being popular with the ranchmen, the prices realized were not what their contributors had expected.

Worms as Soil Renovators.

Earthworms are not soil formers, for they are seldom met with in soils that are destitute of organic matter. They are simply renovators. Every time a worm is driven by dry weather, or any other cause, to descend deep, it brings to the surface, when it empties the contents of its body, a few particles of fresh earth. At the same time it fertilizes the subsoil by opening up passages, which encourage the roots of plants to penetrate deeper, these passages being lined with excreted matter, which provides a store of nourishment for the roots. On meadow land Darwin found these worm casts amount annually to eighteen tons an acre, and on good arable land to about ten tons.—[American Fertilizer.

Siftings.

Now is the time to get the breaker into shape. See that all the fittings are without crack or flaw, and all the parts firmly bolted together.

* * *

We presume that the harness has been oiled and neatly mended in early spring. Another careful look over now may save the hired man unhitching to hunt repair materials. Save time by systematic work.

* * *

"Badness" is not the only contagious element in man's nature. One individual of a happy-tempered mind can create a sunny atmosphere for many lives. Goodness is contagious; then use your influence in spreading it.

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Look at the padding of the horse collar and pads. See that there are no holes or lumps forming. In nine cases out of ten these start sore backs and shoulders, and once started they are hard to cure.

* * *

It is a grievous wrong to torture a horse with a headstall and bit that do not fit him. The draft animal, being naturally of a cool temper, has little to worry him in the performance of his daily work, provided his head and shoulders are reasonably comfortable and his driver human. See that the collar and bridle fit.

* * *

Calves and sour milk are not a paying combination. Your farming methods may justly approve of you extracting the butter from the calves' natural food, but under no consideration can even your pocket approve of pouring into the stomach of a calf sour milk. Make your butter in some way that will permit of the skim milk being fed to calves before it becomes sour.

* * *

If you have heavy scrub in this year's breaking, fit on a leather strap to the beam to hold a well-sharpened axe, also carry a heavy file, and use it when the share and coulter become dull. The difference as a power-saver, both in man and horses, will soon appeal to you where there are roots to contend with.

* * *

Think of the myriads of flies which pester your sweaty horses as they eat their noon-day meal. It is only the digested portion of a horse's food that can supply power. A tormented animal cannot digest his food equal to one in comfort, therefore, screen and darken the stable doors and windows and give the poor animals a chance to enjoy their rest and meals in peace.

* * *

We all know the yelling horseman. He is often a good man, and as a rule he is a hustler. His methods, however, if he observes any, are usually of an erratic nature. His horses are worked in rushes and spurts, and when he is not yelling "Get up!" he is screaming out "Whoa, steady!" His horses are always in an excitable state, hard to manage, and innocent of the first rudiments of training.

* * *

If you have fences on your farm and they have not been fixed up this year, look to them now. Haying time will come on quickly, and so will the growth of the grain, when cattle will go through anything but a tightly fixed fence. When cattle learn the habit of going through fences every farmer knows how hard it is to break them of the habit. Pokes and drags make partial cures, but they are unsightly in a herd, besides being uncomfortable and detrimental to the progress of the animal.

* * *

Weeds in the summer-fallow should never be allowed to become large before being turned under. Weed seeds of many varieties mature more than most people believe after they are plowed, so that the wise plan is never to allow them to reach the flowering stage. The amount of moisture which a crop of weeds draws from the soil is simply enormous, and the root portion is strengthened, and in biennials and perennials new plants propagated in proportion to the amount of leaf surface. Always remember that leaves are to plants what lungs are to animals.