

Farm Crop



Conducted by

The object of the service of our farm edged authority on crops.

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Henry G. Bell.

Question—W. E. A.:—Have a piece of land I do not wish to work this season except to summer fallow. Can I plow it about June to kill weeds, and sow it to oats or anything else good for pasture? By not pasturing it too close and turning it under in the fall, will land be in good shape for next year?

Answer:—If you intend to summer fallow the land, I would advise you to plow it sooner than June, probably early in May, and keep it harrowed and disked about once in two or three weeks, so as to root up the young sprouting weeds and to preserve a dust mulch which will prevent the escape of the water from the soil. If you wish to establish a temporary pasture I cannot advise you better than to try the mixture advised by Prof. Zavitz of Ontario Agricultural College. He advises sowing 88 lbs. per acre of a mixture composed of 51 lbs. of oats, 30 lbs. of Early Amber sugar cane and 7 lbs. of common red clover. Professor Zavitz says to sow this early in May. The oats and the Early Amber sugar cane can be drilled in through the regular grain drill and the clover seed through the grass and clover seeder attachment of the grain drill. At Guelph this mixture has been found to be ready to carry cattle late in June. This pasture has carried more than one steer to the acre and in 1911 was successfully used to maintain milk cows. If this material is not pastured down too close it will form a valuable addition of humus to the soil if turned down late in the fall. Land under such management as outlined should be in good shape for next spring, if plowed fairly deeply in the fall.

Question—M. C.:—Kindly tell me how I can get rid of thistles and quack grass.

Answer:—The killing of thistles and quack grass requires heroic methods. Plenty of muscle, horse flesh or gasoline used through a tractor will kill them. The top of the plant serves much the same purpose as the lungs of animals, so that if the plant is deprived of that vital part it must soon die. If this principle is kept in mind both thistles and quack grass can be killed.

No one method will work in all soils, and in all locations. If the thistles are cut down and not a single spear allowed to come above the surface, they must soon die from lack of power to breathe in air and ability to digest food. Usually some form of clean cultivation is the best method either with a crop or by bare fallowing. The thing to do is to outline a systematic plan of attack and to keep in mind at all times the fact that you must keep every leaf cut off.

The same persistent methods apply to the killing of quack grass. However, if the quack grass is in sod it is best to plow the ground shallow during the summer, say about three inches deep. For this it is advisable to use a special type of plow with a Scotch bottom having a real long gradually sloping mold board. This permits the easy turning of the sod. The next thing to do is, with a week or ten days, go on the land with a disc and thoroughly cut up the land. You should disc this every ten days or two weeks until fall when the quack grass will be completely killed out. Don't count the number of times you go over the land. Keep on going, going, going until every spear of the grass is killed out.

Question—J. G.:—What is the comparative food value of oats cut while green and cured and fed in the winter as hay, especially as a milk producer?

Answer:—The following is the analysis of oats cut in the milk stage: Oats cut in milk stage and fed as hay in winter.

	Water	Ash	Crude Protein	Carbon Hydrates	Free extract	Fat.
Oats in Milk	14.6	5.7	8.9	27.4	41.2	2.8
Oats in Grain	10.4	3.2	11.4	49.8	59.4	4.8

It is seen from the above analysis that oats cut in the green stage make a very good feed for all classes of livestock. They should not be fed alone to milk cows but supplemented with alfalfa hay and concentrates in the form of bran, cottonseed or oil meal. The chances are that better results will be secured and perhaps a larger quantity of food can be harvested if the oats instead of being sown alone are seeded with Canada field peas.

Question—A. S. L.:—I am thinking of planting a few acres in strawberries for the market. What is the best soil, fertilizer, and variety of plant and the best time to begin? A detailed answer will oblige.

Answer:—Strawberries are not overly particular as regards the soil in which they grow; however, they will usually do best on soil that is suitable for potatoes. They should be grown in a rich, friable seedbed.

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