

FARM

Topics for Discussion

In recognition of the fact that valuable hints always are obtained from men engaged in actual farm work THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE has adopted the "Topics for Discussion" column in order that our readers may see an open channel through which they may inform their brother farmers as to practices that are worth adopting and warn them against methods that prove unprofitable. Not only do we wish our readers to discuss the topics announced for the various issues, but also we desire that they suggest practical subjects on which it would be well to have discussion.

This notice appears under the "Farm" department, but the questions dealt with cover all branches of the farming industry. Letters should not exceed 600 words and should reach this office 10 days previous to the date of issue. They are read carefully and a first prize of \$3.00 and a second prize of \$2.00 awarded each week. Other letters used will be paid for at regular rates to contributors.

August 24.—Discuss the practice of stacking grain in the Canadian West. What are the chief advantages and disadvantages, and what are some of the important features of good stacking?

August 31.—What do you consider the average farmer should have as a library to which to refer from time to time? Give your opinion of agricultural books, bulletins, reports, etc., and other available reading matter.

September 7.—Give suggestions on exhibiting field roots and garden vegetables at local fairs. Many exhibitors pay little or no attention to making their display attractive. What have you to suggest on collection of specimens and their preparation for the show table?

September 14.—Give suggestions on preparing poultry for market. Discuss specifically the fitting and marketing of old birds and this year's stock.

Fencing Pointers

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

For level land a ready woven fence made of really good quality galvanized steel wire, of the so-called coiled spring type is probably as good as any. It must, however, be thoroughly galvanized so as to prevent rusting, especially where the wires are joined to one another. The vertical wires should have sufficient strength to offer considerable solidity, and the horizontal (coiled spring) wires should have ample strength, say No. 9 gauge. Such a fence well-stapled to cedar fence posts, at least 8 x 8 inches, set 2½ to 3 feet in the ground, well below frost level and 20 feet apart, should give good satisfaction. End posts and all anchor posts should be from 4 to 5 feet in the ground, and should have "dead men" (crossbars of cedar or big stones) set to help to carry the strain. Substantial poles to act as struts should stretch from near the top of the anchor post to the next post, against which it should butt just above ground level, and in addition to this a No. 9 soft (not steel) galvanized wire should be doubled around the anchor post at ground level, and carried, double, to the top of the nearest post, and drawn taut by a "Spanish windlass," i.e., a stick placed between the wires at right angles to them and turned round, end over end, so as to twist up the stay wires and so tighten them. In hollows the posts should be set as deep as the anchor posts, and "dead men" securely spiked to them, to prevent the upward pull of the fence drawing them out.

In very uneven ground a fence built on the spot is the best. In this case the posts are set as already described, and the wires are run one at

a time, commencing with the top wire (coiled spring wire, of course). To do this, the wire coil is placed on a horizontal free-running reel, when a horse hitched to the wire will soon draw it out. It is then stapled and the next wire run.

The staples must never be driven quite home with these fences, as a certain amount of freedom of movement of the wires must be allowed.

After the wires of this "built on the ground" fence are run, the vertical stays must be put in place. I do not like wire stays twisted round the horizontal wires, as the bending of galvanized wires cracks the zinc coating and admits rain, causing rapid rusting. If wire stays are employed I prefer them clipped or clamped on, whereby all bending is obviated.

The best of these built fences I have seen has wood pickets clipped on, one every four feet or so, by wire clips. These buttons should be painted. In fact, if the whole fence were painted its life would be greater, as all risk of rusting would be removed.

B. C.

W. J. L. HAMILTON.

Advice to Flax Growers

This is one of the driest years that North Dakota farmers have ever experienced. Flax on old flax lands has not only had to compete with wilt, but it has suffered under drouth conditions more severely than the crop can usually withstand. Many farmers who have sown flax on old flax lands find that the wilt in connection with the intense drouth has been very severe.

I am writing this to say that no farmer should allow the fact that there is only a small amount

This mulch serves as a blanket on top to hold in moisture and hasten the decomposition of the underturned sod.

It is not possible to give definite advice without knowing all particulars. The nature and amount of work done in preparing for crop will depend on how easy it is to retain the moisture and prepare a good seed bed.

Questions Answered at Lacombe

The following extracts were copied from a farmer's note book, being questions of importance that he had heard answered by the men who directed the excursionists about the experimental farm on the day of the farmers' excursion to Lacombe. Many of the questions and answers embody valuable information, especially to husbandmen of Alberta.

Q. What grass makes the best pasture?

A. A mixture of blue grass, timothy and alsike.

Q. What is the proper time to use a packer on the land?

A. Always after sowing, and before sowing if possible.

Q. What time should barley be sown to give the best results?

A. Early seeding of barley gives the best results. Our first seeding was made on May 31st.

Q. Do you advise inoculation for peas?

A. Yes, they are nitrogen restorers. They should be sown about April 15th.

Q. What variety of oats do you advocate as the best kind to grow?

A. The Banner yields well and is generally popular. The Pioneer does well, but is a black oat and consequently is not as popular. Banner oats should be sown about April 11th.

Q. Did you ever try sowing oats in the fall?

A. Yes. But the returns were not satisfactory.

Q. What is the best variety of fodder corn?

A. We are led to believe that "Longfellow" gives best results.

Q. What quantity of timothy seed should be sown to the acre?

A. Five pounds.

Q. What is your method of sowing grass seed?

A. Broadcast always.

Q. How many cuttings of alfalfa do you get each year from the one piece of ground?

A. Two cuttings.

Q. What variety of alfalfa is the best to grow?

A. We advocate the "Turkestan." It is the most satisfactory variety with us, though we have a Siberian variety under test which does well and is very hardy, as it will stand very severe weather—weather that will freeze mercury in a thermometer.

Q. In your opinion which are the best varieties of strawberries?

A. We advocate three varieties and in this order: Senator Dunlop, Haverland and Bederwood.

Q. What varieties of spring wheat have you for distribution?

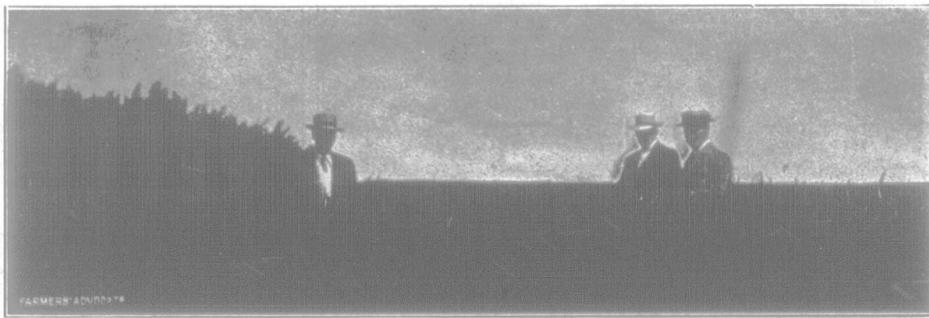
A. Chelsea, Red Fife, Preston and Huron.

Q. What varieties of potatoes do you consider the best?

A. There are several good varieties. Among the best are the Table Top, Ash Leaf Kidney and Rochester Rose.

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The profits of farming must rest, ultimately, on the complete organization of the farm as a business unit. At the present time, with land advancing in market price, the average farmer is satisfied to play even, and take his ultimate profits in the increasing sale value of his farm. It should be clear, however, that sooner or later land prices will cease to advance, and for his profits the farmer of to-morrow must look to the marginal gain on the year's work.



WHEAT STOOD BREAST HIGH IN THE INDIAN HEAD DISTRICT THE LAST WEEK IN JULY. The photograph was taken on the farm of George Harvey. To the left appears one corner of the windbreak that protects buildings and gardens. The gentlemen are John Millar to the left and Hon. Mr. Motherwell and Mr. Harvey to the right.

of flax seed produced in the crop per acre to prevent him from saving the seed which does grow, for the flax plants which are able to withstand both drouth and wilt will produce seed which is of the highest value. Even flax which is quite thoroughly resistant during ordinary years is unable to withstand the wilt and canker under the excessive drouth conditions that have prevailed in parts of the state.

Those who have any flax which has survived under these very discouraging conditions should save every bit of the seed for sowing purposes, as it will be of much value to them in future years. Remember that it is the old story of the survival of the fittest, which is in action under such hard growth conditions.

Breaking and Backsetting

In breaking sod for backsetting, do you advise working on top before backsetting, or would it be as well to leave surface cultivation until after backsetting?—D. R. B., Sask.

Ans.—When prairie is broken in preparation for cropping, the object should be to put an end to all growth and to put the land in such shape that as much moisture as possible will go down and be held there for the following season. The methods followed differ according to conditions. In many parts breaking is done rather deeply and then no backsetting is required. Where breaking and backsetting is the practice the aim is to break shallow as early as possible in the spring. Some roll immediately to make the furrow slices lie close so that the sod will rot. Then the disk harrow is used, setting it so that it will form a loose mulch on top but not tear the sods to pieces.