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### Summer-fallowing.

The best method of treating a summer-fallow becomes an intensely important question after the experience of this past spring, when in so many cases the finely-worked surface soil of the fallows drifted to such a fearful extent. Thinking only of preventing drifting, doubtless many will give the land no work after plowing. Of course, if the only object is to have the land ready for next year's seeding, this might answer well enough, but if there are weed seeds in the soil, then something more than plowing is demanded.

Under the extreme drought conditions that exist at this writing, it seems like ridicule to talk about conserving soil moisture; but laugh if you will, it is an absolute fact that soil moisture is conserved by providing a firm subsoil and a finely-worked, mellow surface. It is a well-recognized fact that even after weeks of excessive dry, hot weather, crops on many fields have retained a wonderfully green, vigorous look, while adjoining fields that were not in as good tillth withered up at the beginning of the drought. The peculiarly favorable conditions of early spring greatly assisted in putting the soil into the best possible condition for resisting drought, and had rains come in any reasonable time, the crops would have withstood a deal of hardship and come on all right.

If there are weed seeds in the soil, something more than a plowing must be given, or they will simply be dormant, waiting a favorable opportunity to germinate. The necessity of getting grass roots and fiber back into the soil is clearly evident, for no matter what treatment is given (without root fiber to hold it together), the surface soil is almost sure to drift, under anything like the conditions that have prevailed this season. While determined to get our farms under grass rotation as soon as possible, we must, however, go on with the summer-fallows.

Conditions of soil and district must govern whether one good deep plowing in June or a shallow plowing or cultivating early, followed by a deeper plowing in early July, is best, but this being settled to the owner's satisfaction, the best treatment we can suggest would be to follow the plows closely with a subsoil packer, in order to close all air spaces and firm the subsoil. If a packer is not available, and the soil tends to be open and loose to the bottom of the furrow, try a disk harrow, run almost level and perhaps loaded down. Following the packer or disk, use a cultivator at frequent intervals right up to late fall.

There are a number of weeds, annuals, under ordinary conditions, that seem to acquire the power of adapting themselves to other conditions and become perennials for the occasion, such as stinkweed, shepherd's-purse, peppergrass, etc., which will germinate on summer-fallows in the late summer, and form a strong, low-lying plant, in which stage they live through the winter and make rapid progress the following season. Our present style of seed drills are no use to knock out weeds, and the farmer, thinking he had worked his fallow well and that any green thing left on it would be killed by the winter's frost, is surprised to find he has a dirty field after all his pains. Every point must be watched and every effort made to make next year's crop make up for this year's shortage.

One of the great advantages of having the study of plants taken up in our schools is forcibly set forth in the following account of a sad poisoning case at Cardston, Alta.: A girl of 11, named Maggie Oakley, was out with her two younger sisters and a little brother, and finding some wild parsnip roots, ate some herself and gave some to the children. All of them were almost at once seized with convulsions, and the eldest girl died before the arrival of medical assistance. The lives of the others were only saved through persistent efforts on the part of the doctor.

### Scarcity of Live Stock.

The acknowledged uncertainty of the wheat crop as a main dependence for Canadian farmers, and the low price so long prevailing for that cereal, a condition which even a war of considerable proportions, once a sure precursor of higher prices, now fails to appreciably affect, has properly led to a more general dependence upon live stock and its products for returns from the farm. The active demand for live stock and the improved market prices now ruling for all classes of meat and milk producing animals and for dairy products, as well as for good horses, has only one drawback, and that is the fact of the scarcity of stock in the country at the present time. A keen demand and good prices are welcome experiences and are doing much to relieve the conditions for farmers and stock-breeders, and the only element of regret in the situation is that they are not in a position to reap the benefit more largely without unduly depleting their reserve of breeding stock, and thus, it may be, seriously discounting the future. The increased demand and rapid rise in values in the last three years, following a period of depression, found farmers anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity to realize on everything in the way of stock they could reasonably spare, and as a consequence the feature which most forcibly strikes the observant traveller through the country is the undoubted shortness of the supply of stock on Canadian farms. The stereotyped complaint of the market reporters is the paucity of the supply of suitable animals for the export beef trade. Feeders complain that they cannot find the class of cattle likely to make paying returns for the feed required to prepare them for market, while for the inferior class available higher prices are asked than they feel justified in paying with any hope of a margin of profit. A letter recently received at this office from a dealer who in the last two years had succeeded fairly well in filling orders for several hundred stockers for the Western States shows that he is utterly unable to repeat the experience this year, as the cattle simply cannot be found, and one man, met upon his travels, who, by taking time by the forelock, had managed to get together a considerable number on pasture, was assured of 5½ cents per pound for them in the near future. In an extended trip through a considerable section of Western Ontario, fairly representative of the Province, in the last two weeks, visiting a number of breeders of Shorthorn cattle, the writer found the herds in every case noticeably short in numbers as a result of numerous sales, the owners in a majority of cases apologizing for the smallness of their herds and enquiring where they could buy to replenish their stocks. Not only were bulls fit for service found closely sold out, but the supply of females reduced to a very considerable extent, while buyers from the States were still scouring the country for more, a carload of pure-bred females leaving London for Iowa only last week, and three carloads from this district in the last three weeks for different destinations.

The temptation to sell when good prices are offered, and the natural aversion to seeing a buyer with good money go past, is more than the average breeder can successfully withstand, and, as a result, many have sold animals which they have felt in their better judgment ought to be retained in the herd to breed from and to build it up to better proportions. Justification for this course may be found in the determination entertained by some, at least, to fill up the blanks by importations, or the purchase of high-class imported animals, and by this means infusing fresh blood into their herds, and it is gratifying to find enterprising men of means so ready to take the risks of importing so largely as they are of the best that can be bought, and disposing of them at a reasonable margin of profit. The smaller breeders who have not advertised their

stock are finding customers among the more prominent breeders who have made extensive disposals and are looking for replenishing stock, but these in turn are offering only for the best, and generally that is the kind that is changing hands. As a consequence, it is largely of the best of our stock that is leaving the country, for, in the main, it is from the United States that the demand for our breeding stock comes. And the shortness of breeding cattle in that country is so very great that it must of necessity take years to recruit sufficiently to supply the requirements.

The obvious lesson for Canadian farmers, in view of these facts, would seem to be to increase their stock of cattle by raising more calves, improving the breed and quality by the use of pure-bred males of the best type, and feeding the young animals generously so as to bring them to early maturity and fit them for the highest prices in the market. Good sires are far too scarce in almost every section of the country, and there is little excuse for this fact, as pure-bred bulls of the beef breeds can even now be bought at a price which they will almost certainly bring in the market for beef at the end of a two or three years term of service, to say nothing of the increased value of their offspring as compared with common stock. In many sections where the services of superior sires may be had for a reasonable fee it is regrettable that so few farmers avail themselves of their use, as by this neglect they prejudice their own interests and the reputation and prosperity of the country.

These remarks apply equally to all classes of stock in the country at the present time, as the great demand for horses, sheep and hogs, as well as for cattle, and the well-known scarcity in all these lines, abundantly show. The present condition of the live-stock industry calls for serious consideration and a pronounced forward movement for increase and improvement, as it is undoubtedly the sheet anchor of successful farming in Canada and the most important of all our industries.

### Breeders Should Lead, Not be Led.

A great reform is needed in hog-raising in the West, says the editor of *The Wallace Farmer*. The breeders can help it along if they will. They will delay it if they keep on selling hogs that have no other recommendation except their good looks and prizewinning capacity. It is quite true that the farmer will buy fat rather than merit. Breeders are supposed to be able to educate the farmers, to lead them instead of being led by them, and if they will start out this year and raise pigs for the fall sales with plenty of growth, muscle, activity, energy, vigor, and show by their feeding that the farmer is at fault, they can do much to put a solid stone foundation under the edifice which the breeders are rearing.

The great trouble with breeders of all kinds of live stock is that they are always looking at the present market. They ought to breed what the farmers want. Unless the farmers want the right thing, the whole breeding business is on a sandy foundation. Refuse to sell farmers fat pigs. Send to your feeding pens all the pigs that are deficient in bone, length, depth, breadth, in get up and get there. Do not figure so much on prizewinning, and take the scale of points only for substance of doctrine. You breeders buy show pigs on the scale of points; you know mighty well you don't buy your own breeding stuff on that scale. Either change your scale of points, or keep it for show purposes exclusively. If the breeders don't do this, the farmers will buy red, white, gray, brown, black, grizzled, spotted, or any other color of hogs that are prolific, rangy, and have strong vitality. They will go down to the forests of the South if they can not do any better. It has been our firm conviction for fifteen years that the faults of the Poland-China hogs were not in the hogs at all, but in the breeders. If they wish to retain the confidence of the farmers they must breed not what the poorer farmers or less intelligent farmers think they want, but what all farmers really do want and which the breeder knows they want, whether they think so or not.