

FARM OPERATIONS.

TOP-DRESSING GRASS LANDS.

Now is the time, says the New England Farmer, to commence the preparation of materials for this important work. Some persons doubt whether the application of manure to the surface of grass land is the best mode of using it. This depends upon two or three circumstances, viz.—1. Upon the nature of the soil. 2. Upon the time of application. 3. Upon the condition of the dressing.

Top dressing will continue to bring a crop longer on a moist soil than on a dry one, 1st, because such land is the best adapted to grass; and, 2dly, because the manure by being kept moist is brought into a state of decomposition, and becomes prepared as food for the plants instead of drying up. Top dressing, therefore, for high lands, should be applied in the spring, as early as April or the first part of May, so as to receive the early rains and get thoroughly leached, and the coarser particles washed down among the roots of the grass before the hot dry weather comes on. Or, it may be applied—and perhaps with better effect—late in November, when it will receive the later rains and be leached by them, or be covered with snow to be melted upon the dressing, and thus carry its fertilizing properties gradually to the grass roots during the winter and spring.

It is unpopular—we are fully aware—to recommend top dressing for high and dry grass lands; still we believe it to be a profitable way of fertilizing, when it is done judiciously. The error consists in cropping the land for many years, without manuring until not only the fertilizing agents are exhausted, but the roots of the grass themselves have either died for want of food, or have been driven out by plants more hardy and persistent than themselves. When a field is in this condition it is folly to top dress it. There is no basis upon which to act. The dressing was deferred too long—there is no recuperative power left. The remedy for such land is through the plow, manure, cultivation, and plenty of seed, or all of these, excepting the cultivation, which may be omitted by turning over the sod and laying down in August, or early in September.

In a wet season something may be done on high land by spreading fine compost manure liberally, scattering on grass seed

and harrowing. Clover, sown early in April in this way, will sometimes succeed well. If the farmer would be watchful, manure his fields in season, occasionally scattering a little seed over them, while producing liberal crops, he might save considerable expense in plowing and re-seeding. All this, however, should not prevent a judicious rotation of crops, and, in turn, bringing the grass fields into cultivated ones, which is undoubtedly the course that will secure the most certain profits.

The time when top dressing should be applied, is a question upon which our best farmers do not agree. What is needed, is a copious rain immediately after the dressing is spread, but as we cannot command this, we must exercise a sound judgment in the matter, and be content with the result. If the compost cart should follow that which carries away the hay, and a liberal shower follow, perhaps there would be no better time to apply the dressing; and in a moderately moist season, this course will succeed well. April and early in May are good seasons, but then the objection exists of cutting up the fields by the feet of the team, and the wheels. In the autumn there is little danger of this, unless the season be very wet: the more pressing work of the warm season is out of the way, and, upon the whole, perhaps this is the best time for this operation. The third point requiring care is the condition of the dressing when it is used. It should be rich, that is, made of good materials, and fermentation not carried so far as to set free its gaseous properties; and then it should be fine—if as fine as sand, so much the better. This will allow of its being spread evenly, and present such a surface to the rain and dews as to have every part quickly penetrated and its fertilizing properties carried to the roots below.

HOW TO CURE INDIAN CORN FOR FODDER.

Having received several letters making inquiries in regard to my method of curing corn, for fodder, I thought, as the inquiries came from the readers of your valuable paper, I would give you my method for publication.

In order to have the fodder good, the corn should be cut up while it is yet green—this is, before the leaves and stalks begin to dry up. Any time after the corn be-