

The selection of seed is a very important point, and success depends as much upon the right selection of seed as upon any other one thing. The best and purest seed to be had should be chosen. The fewer weed seeds it contains, the better will be the stand of alfalfa, and the less trouble there will be in preventing weeds from smothering the young plant. The purest seed is the cheapest. Where seed of good quality can be had, which has been grown near where it is to be sown, it is to be preferred to seed grown at a distance, as it is more acclimatized.

The quantity to sow per acre to secure a good stand varies with the seed, the condition of the soil, the season, and the thickness of stand desired.

The amount that I sow is about twenty pounds per acre. The last field of twenty acres that I have sown, I mixed two bushels of orchard grass in with the alfalfa, as I thought that it would be beneficial in helping to cure it and protect it from the weather when it is put up in coils. There is not much danger of having too thick a stand, as there is in having it too thin. When thick and even, little or no trouble is had with weeds after the alfalfa has well started. If too thin, it is very difficult to thicken the stand without plowing it up and reseeded, and there will be much trouble with weeds. Strive to have a good even stand, without patches or bare spots.

I have been successful by seeding in the spring just as soon as the ground is warm and dry and growth good. It will germinate quite quickly in warm weather in May or even the latter part of April, according to the season. I would recommend sowing broadcast or by drill, but be sure to harrow after, so as to cover it about one to one and a half inches deep. If your ground is light, roll it, so as to keep the strong winds from blowing.

Two things should be considered in determining when alfalfa should be cut: the weather and the stage of bloom. Any time from when the alfalfa begins blooming to when it is about one-fourth in bloom, is a good time for cutting it, provided the weather is good. Some speakers in the Farmers' Institutes recommend to cut when the new shoots start above the ground, but I do not just quite agree with that, because I think it gets too woody, and stock will not relish it so well, as they will leave more stems in their mangers. Alfalfa does not cure as readily as other hay, as the stems or stalks are more solid, without much pith in them, and, therefore, it needs more sunshine to cure it properly.

So much depends on the weather that no definite rule can be given. We cut the alfalfa in the forenoon, after the dew is all dried off, and ted it after dinner, then ted the next day before noon, when dew is drying off, so as not to knock too many leaves off, then rake and coil it, leaving it for a day or so till it sweats, then haul it to the barn or stack. The leaves fall off badly when very dry, and as they are the richest portion of the plant, the raking and tedding should be done at a time when the leaves can be saved as much as possible. We think, when hauling to the barn, salt thrown on the hay, say a gallon to the ton, improves it. There is so much difference of opinion about putting up this hay that no two persons agree in all particulars. Experience and observation will direct the matter. As alfalfa sheds rain badly, it should not be stacked out of doors, unless covers are provided for stacks. Canvas covers dipped in linseed oil will pay their cost in two or three seasons.

Alfalfa hay should be fed much as any other hay is fed. Some feeders like it for work horses, others do not. There is nothing better for colts, brood mares, milch cows, steers, calves, sheep, hogs, and the leaves are good for hens to make them lay in winter, when eggs are high in price.

I might say here that hogs relish this in winter as in summer, but do not kill any of them when feeding heavy on this hay or grass, as I think it makes the pork taste ashy. Alfalfa should not be pastured the first year after sown. It will be better to wait till after the third year, so that it will be well rooted; that is, permanent pasturing. In pasturing it, cows and sheep should not be allowed too much at a time till they get accustomed to it, as it is worse than clover for bloating. Horses, colts and hogs thrive marvellously on it. It should not be pastured very closely, as close and continuous cropping will kill it. It is advisable, I think, to pasture it lightly the second year, instead of cutting it the third time, pasturing not later than 20th of September, allowing it plenty of time to grow again to protect the roots for winter.

Every farmer should have a field of alfalfa: it is the poor man's friend. I may just state that we have sown another five acres this spring. Finished tilling it April 3rd, 1911, and sowed about ten days later, at the rate of 18 or 20 pounds per acre. On June 2nd, part of the stand was five inches to a foot high, according to the thickness of the barley, which was sown about five pecks per acre.

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Happy on the Farm.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I have read with considerable interest the discussions in your paper about "The Boy and the Farm." Of course, some boys never did and never will like farm work. I had "railroad fever" myself, but less than a year cured me, and I know now what a pleasant time one can put in on a farm. I would rather take a team and do any kind of farm work than work in town.

Have read "An Observer's" remarks about the Clydesdale driver, and I think that the man he mentions would be money in pocket if he were to buy a good driver. It would save his work

Conserve the Soil Moisture.

Midsummer is at hand, and the problem that concerns the busy tiller of the soil is how he can best conserve the soil moisture. Very little can be done in this direction on the fields which are producing grain crops, but corn, root and fallow land may be so handled as to retain a large proportion of the moisture already in the ground, as well as any that may happen to be precipitated during the remainder of the season. Evaporation is excessive during the hot, clear summer days, and moisture which will be required by the plant is thus drawn off and lost. Corn and other hoed crops require much moisture for the highest

yield; therefore, it is important that some means be taken to control, as far as possible, this loss of moisture. The acreage of corn is increasing yearly, and it is now an important crop in all districts where it can be grown with a reasonable amount of success, and this year, when the hay crop is light, growers should make an effort to repair the shortage in hay by producing an exceptionally heavy yield of corn. The same applies to the growers of root crops.

People generally know that a layer of top soil kept finely pulverized is an effective means of checking evaporation, and is the best means of moisture conservation. Knowing this, the question often arises as to how deep the mulch should be, and how best to maintain it. It is now believed that a comparatively shallow layer of fine earth, kept loose by frequent stirring, is more effective than a mulch formed by deeper cultivation. When deep intertillage is practiced, too large an amount of soil is stirred and exposed to the air and sunlight, which causes the layer constituting the mulch to lose all its moisture. The mulch itself dries out quickly, so it is evident that the lighter the mulch, provided it constitutes enough to

make a thorough blanket, the better the results will be. Frequent cultivation is the only method of maintaining this mulch. The cultivator should be kept going at least once each week, and after each shower. It is surprising how quickly the moisture supplied by a light rainfall disappears from a solid, uncultivated surface. The rain destroys the mulch, and for this reason it is important that the mulch be reproduced as speedily as possible. Consequently, as soon as the land is in a fit condition to work after the rain has ceased, no time should be lost in getting the surface stirred again. The soil may contain all the necessary constituents which go to make up plant food, but if moisture is deficient, the plant



How He Enjoys It!

horses, and a driver of 1,100 or 1,200 pounds would soon pay for herself if never hitched for pleasure. There are many trips to town where a heavy horse could not do a mile in better than ten minutes, and a driver of the size mentioned could go in five or a little more, and do it easier. Besides, would not the boy be more contented? Before I got a farm of my own, I worked for my father for some time, and could always get a horse to go away for baseball or football games. Nothing was said about wages, either, but when I wanted a start, I got it, and no fuss over it. Might say that I know of a man who would not let his men work overtime, as he thought they could not do so and keep in condition. H. H.



Canadian Farmer: "Good preaching is all right, but preaching and practice together should make a powerful combination." [This is the cartoonist's idea of fighting weeds. The way we actually go at it was shown in the picture of the four-horse cultivator, issue June 15th.—Editor.]