

A SYMPOSIUM ON WEEDS

PLENTY TO KEEP FARMERS THINKING. WEEDS MAY BE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE. WHEAT FARMING IS FAVORABLE TO WILD OATS.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The common weeds infesting the farms in this locality, I beg to say, are wild oats, French or stinkweed, common Canada thistles, hare's ear, and ball mustard. Weed inspectors are appointed by the municipal council for each township, who insists on the above not going to seed, by regular summer-fallowing and good cultivation.

Bridge Creek.

ALEXANDER MILLER.

GROWS BARLEY TO CHECK WILD OATS.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Wild oats are the worst round here. Some are growing barley and others are summer-fallowing. I find either is all right if done right. For barley plow land thin in the fall or early as you can in the spring and let the oats grow up. Then plow them down and put in your barley up close to your plows, as every day counts with the barley keeping ahead of the wild oats. Then cut the barley a little green as there will be some wild oats that will mature then and fall out in the stooks. After stacking it, plow as soon as you can and pack or roll it to get it to grow in fall if you can. If one year does not kill them this way, two years in succession will make the land quite clean. For fallow skim as for barley; then harrow as the weeds are just coming through the ground. This is where some farmers make the mistake: they wait till the fallow begins to look green; then start to harrow when the weeds have got too strong a hold of the land. Some try the cultivator, which won't work in loose soil where there is stubble; also the disc harrow, which covers more weeds than it cuts. Then after a wind the fallow will be green again. I find the plow is the best of all. Be sure and not plow deep, as wild oats won't start in the fallow if either too deep or too near the surface. I have plowed my field three times in the summer and never had the crop to lie down yet. The main thing is to have the fallow solid for the crop.

A READER.

APPRECIATES OUR INTEREST IN CLEAN FARMING.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Re noxious weeds the most common are Frenchweed and wild oats. The means employed to eradicate are surface cultivation by using the disc in fall and following summer, and harrowing each time after the disc, which causes all seeds on the surface to grow; then plowing in July and fallowing with wheat the next spring. Some prefer to sow to barley, disc in fall and plow after all other seeding is done, and seed from 5th to 10th of June. By this means no crop is missed and the return from the barley will be equal to that of wheat; that is in money. Six rowed barley is best as it will be ripe before the wild oats. One point I would strongly advocate is burning of stubble where there are noxious weeds, especially for wild oats, as the fire will burn the bristle and fur of the oats and makes it much easier to germinate and when the above weeds get in patches the farmer should thresh his straw which he intends to burn on such patches and in this way a great part of the fallen seed will be destroyed. We followed the above plan in Ontario and found great benefit from it. Thanking you again for the interest you take in clean farming.

W. J. HIGGINS.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Regarding the means being used in this district to rid the farms of noxious weeds. The most common weeds are mustard, French weed and wild oats and sow thistle.

Where the weeds have not got a very great hold of the land they are hand pulled and in places where there is a thick spot it is plowed several times during the summer. In the older cultivated fields where the weeds have got quite thick, the only successful plan adopted so far is to grow late crops of barley, or oats for green feed.

A number of farmers are still persisting in growing wheat on land that is not fit for it, simply because they don't want to be bothered with the stock that must be kept if this coarse grain and green feed is to be a profitable crop.

These noxious weeds may yet prove a blessing in disguise to the farmers as *the really great problem facing them in the older districts is the impoverished condition of the soil.*

JAMES ADAMSON.

NOT MUCH EFFORT BEING MADE TO EXTIRPATE THE WEEDS.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

The noxious weeds infesting the farms in this locality are wild oats, Canada thistle and stinkweed. No effort is being made by farmers that I can see to keep these weeds in check, except that the land is summer-fallowed occasionally.

WM. LAUGHLAND.

HAVE VARIETY ENOUGH IN WEEDS.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Our most common weeds and those which give us the most trouble are wild oats, purple cockle, cow cockle, and blue-weed, while pennycress or stinkweed, tumbling mustard, night-flowering catchfly, and Canada thistle are altogether too common. Ball mustard, wild mustard, shepherd's purse, and false flax are plentiful, but not giving much trouble.

The principle methods followed by the farmers so far are clean summer-fallowing, trap crops and sowing the cleanest seed available.

H. N. THOMPSON.

BARLEY LARGELY USED AS A CLEANING CROP.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Re most common weeds in this locality and means employed by farmers to control them; the most common weeds in this locality are perhaps the ball mustard, and false flax. These, however, are fairly easy to control and farmers are giving more attention to checking the spread of wild oats and stinkweeds, which are increasing of late years. Most farmers are using barley as a cleaning crop for these weeds, and for this reason barley seed was at a premium in this district this year. The land intended for barley or summer-fallow is disced in the fall previous to germinate the foul seed, and then plowed late in the spring. The barley land is plowed and harrowed the fall succeeding the crop.

C. L. STRACHAN.

EDITOR FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

We have hardly any stinkweed. For one farm here that has any there are a dozen without, so I won't say anything about that. The worst and most persistent noxious weed we have here is wild oats. They were not much trouble until three years ago, and since then have been getting worse, until now some fields are nearly useless on their account and I don't know of a farm in the country that has not some.

Summer-fallowing is the only means tried so far for their extermination. In some cases that has proven a check, but in lots of cases it has not acted very well in that capacity. As a rule the fallow is disced early in the spring, as soon as wheat is in; then left until June 15th or July 1st and plowed; then kept cultivated. Some people plow early and then plow deeper again in July. I cannot see much difference in the two methods so far as oat extermination is concerned, but the former method gives a better crop of wheat on account of land being firmer.

I have noticed that where a very heavy crop of wild oats would grow in fall (I mean patches through fallow), the next season in that same place there would be a big crop of oats again in the wheat. I always thought that frost killed them in the fall, but now I am in doubt about that. What do you think? I have been trying a different method here, but have not been at it long enough to know if it is going to be better than fallow or not. I had sixty acres very bad with wild oats last spring, 1906. I disced it early; then left until June 1st before beginning to plow. By that time there was a good crop growing all over the piece—result of discing. I plowed the whole piece in June and put it all in six rowed barley. It grew a good heavy crop of barley with thousands of wild oats all through it. Before any oats had a chance to drop I cut the piece, threshed 2,400 bushels of barley and wild oats, bought eighteen steers in the fall and fattened them on it; also fed all my other cattle and hogs and still have enough to do me all summer, besides selling a few hundred bushels. Last fall I disced the land again and harrowed it and very soon now will begin to plow again and will put the whole piece in barley again and expect to be rid of wild oats on that piece for some time, but will let you know results this fall. I saw in some paper that seeding down for a couple of years in grass would kill oats. Last year I had wheat in a piece of land that had been in grass for five years. I was particular with seed in that place and did not sow any wild oats on it, and yet there were some in the crop last August when we cut.

I don't think we shall ever be able to clean our farms or keep them clean, unless we adopt some other method of farming. We all grow nearly all wheat. It takes longer to ripen than any other grain and oats get a better chance to drop off and re-seed than with any other kind of grain. In the face of such prices as we get here for stall fed beef, it seems folly to advise farmers to grow barley and feed it, but I think that method is the best for keeping farms clean.

We had no Canadian thistles around here until 1905; at least I did not hear of any, but now nearly every man has a few patches. Some people dig them up; others pile manure on place not less than two feet deep and leave it there a year, when they are smothered. These methods are all right when spots of thistles are not very numerous or large. There is no other kind of noxious weeds in this locality.

R. K. SMITH.



SPRING WORK ON THE FARM OF J. L. BASTEDO, MOOSE JAW, SASK.