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The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine

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EDITORIAL.

If twice over is not enough cultivate again.

It's not often that "The Farmer's Advocate" is published on April 1.

The spring "drive" is about due on the farms as well as at the front.

Good roads mean greater efficiency and a larger earning power for the farm.

Do not push the horses the first day on the land. They will do more later if not overdone at first.

We read the other day in a Toronto paper that 8,000 horses are still needed from Eastern Canada for our army.

Feed the stock well from now until the grass is abundant. This is the season when the good feeder proves his worth.

Crops depend on seed, soil, cultivation and climatic conditions. Over two of these the grower has complete control.

It has been proven that there are many men in the cities desirous of obtaining farm work, and men with previous farm experience.

If we are to have production "More Than Usual" we must have cultivation "More Than Usual." Are the best preparations made to do it?

We read that this war is to be the end of militarism for all time. If so much is really accomplished the incalculable sacrifice will not be in vain.

Anyone can raise good crops on a fertile farm in favorable seasons, but it takes a real farmer to get satisfactory returns from a run-down farm in bad seasons.

Three good questions for the farmer to ask himself regarding each of his many farm operations are: What does it cost me? What does it net me? Is it profitable? These questions answered ensure efficiency and profit.

Twice through the mill may not be enough for the seed. We recently examined some seed oats which had been fanned and screened twice, and yet contained too many small grains to be good seed. Run them through again.

With the appalling slaughter of men in Europe a great deal of the work and business of the future in the decimated regions will inevitably be done by women. Would the world suffer if more of its administrative affairs were under their control and direction?

Wheat speculators in America might just as well be cheerful and believe that there is no wheat at Black Sea ports ready to be rushed to Western Europe as soon as the Dardanelles are open; yet Western Europe believes that millions of bushels of Russian wheat are awaiting an exit. Time will tell, and the reckless speculator may get a rude jolt.

Seeding.

Of all the seasons, Spring is the most welcome on the farm. A long Winter of doing chores and cutting wood drags slowly by when the end of March or first of April is reached, and still the winds are raw and frosts frequent and hard. The stable has been crowded with many mouths to fill, and feed unusually dear grows scarcer and scarcer. Each day brings forth the remark, "Surely this backward weather cannot last much longer," and the days drag on until one morning the song sparrow is heard on every side, the head of the meadowlark bobs up here and there in the meadow, the poplars are swarming with noisy bronze grackles, a bob-o-link whistles shrilly from the post across the lane, and the balmy breeze out of the south or southwest wafts up waves of warm air which carry that lazy spring feeling to us all, and make us feel like stretching out for an hour's snooze on the sunny side of the cutting on the old straw stack. The fields are drying rapidly, the last speck of snow quickly vanishes from the fence corners and the knolls show white and ready for the seed. The white spots grow in number and size; the darker land becomes solid, and after taking a walk across the driest field on the farm and kicking here and there at the soil to test its friability, the farmer announces that spring is here in earnest and the land is ready for the rapid, yet thorough, preparation for the seed.

What joy fills the breast of the boy as he literally throws the harness on the old team and hastily hitches to the gang plow or disk harrow to fill the dead furrows ready for further cultivation! There is in most neighborhoods a feeling that it is an honor to be the first, and a disgrace to be last in seeding operations. It is always best to be first provided the land is ready to work and a thorough cultivation is given, but it is poor policy to be first at the expense of the crop, handicapped by being sown on a soggy, cold, wet soil. Never "mud it in." As soon as the furrows are filled four horses are hitched to the big spring-tooth cultivator, and back and forth they go, resting for a short time occasionally to get their shoulders rubbed down and cooled off to prevent scalding and resultant troublesome sores. Once over, twice over; then the harrow or roller, and then the big drill. There is always a rush to get the first field finished. The careful farmer has his seed all ready, two bushels measured into each bag, and he carefully tests his drill to see how it is sowing. By placing a known amount in the seed box at first and "stepping off" the land sown by it he knows exactly how the drill is sowing. If it is putting on too little seed he knows it, and if too much is being sown he has a check on it. This is the only safe plan. It is not wise to depend on even the best of drills with the most up-to-date feeds. They are all satisfactory, but must be regulated for the seed being sown. For instance, barley not well bearded will require the drill set at much more than the amount the owner wishes to sow, as will also light and long-tailed oats, but then these should not be sown.

After the drill comes the drag harrow—the boy's job—the worst of all the seeding work, but a boy's legs never tire while he thinks he is doing a man's work. When we look back through the years and remember the times when about five o'clock in the afternoon our fourteen-year-old legs used to tire out, and with a laugh from the man driving the team on the drill we were

"grabbed" by the nigh leg and hoisted on to the back of the old gray mare adding to her burden for the hour up to six o'clock, we do not blame anyone for using wide harrows, putting four horses on them, and arranging a cart so as to ride behind. The man on the disk, the cultivator, the drill and even the plow rides, and why should not the boy driving the harrows? After harrowing some roll, but it is now believed that it would be better to roll before sowing, or if it is done after, the land should be gone over with a light harrow to leave a fine mulch. This rolling is a very "sleepy" job, especially if the driver has been "out" the night before. It is about the hardest place in the world to stay awake on a warm, spring afternoon. In days gone by the boy was expected to pick the rolling stones off the field while rolling; this kept him from dozing, for he would get so angry at having to get up and down from the seat so often that his temper kept him very much awake, although an occasional stone was rolled down instead of being picked up. For this and other reasons we believe stones are now generally picked up on the stone-boat before seeding or on the wagon after, making stone-picking a separate job and not spoiling all the fun of rolling.

Cultivating the soil is the best appetizer in the world. He is a sick man who cannot eat almost everything in sight when engaged in spring's work. There is something about the smell of newly-stirred soil which makes good meat and potatoes, fruit, pies and cakes taste better than at any other season of the year. A dyspeptic could eat big meals and digest them if he would spend a few days plowing and cultivating the soil in spring.

The bane of it all is the chores. Before breakfast, at noon hour, and after supper chores! It means long days on most farms because the seeding must be "rushed" in, and all hands are needed to work teams, and the teams must do a day's work. When this is so the man does about fifteen hours. Where possible this should be avoided, but it is not always possible. On a fifty-acre farm one man often does all the work outside haying and harvesting operations. He must work long days. On many 100 acre and 150-acre farms two men do the work, and it is necessary to keep two teams going, so the chores fall to the lot of the weary teamsters during seeding as at other times. Some are overcoming this by using four-horse teams and implements exclusively. One man does all the seeding, the other all the chores, and under some conditions it is an excellent practice. On larger farms, of course, more system is possible, and the teamsters should not be required to chore, a stable man looking after this work.

With all its rush of leg-wearying work, and its long hours of field and chores, seeding is the great time of excitement, of health and vigor, of big meals relished and digested—the real beginning of things. Let us have the best seeding on record right now.

Great Britain now has a serious farm-labor problem. The single men are at the front, and many of the married farm laborers have gone also, leaving their families in the farmers' cottages, which cannot be occupied by other married men. The situation is more or less acute, but is being met with characteristic grim determination.