

Government of the Province of Saskatchewan

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Planning the Farmstead and Buildings

The erection of suitable farm buildings sooner or later occupies the attention of the western farmer. At the outset he uses temporary structures to shelter himself, his family perhaps, and such stock as he may possess. The adage that "a binder in the dry is worth two in the snow" doesn't worry him very much because he may not possess one. But we believe it is the better plan to put up temporary structures at the outset than it would be to erect a permanent building and not complete it, owing perhaps to financial limitations.

The Location.

The location of the building site is a matter of considerable importance to the farmer. The ordinary operations of the farm cannot be as economically conducted as they should be unless the farm buildings are placed to the best advantage in respect to their convenient situation to all portions of the land under cultivation. Several factors influence the final choice of a site. The water supply is perhaps most important of all. There is also the question of drainage, and whether we have a sufficient area of suitably lying land, and the convenience of the who e.

Water Supply.—In most cases the location of a good well will determine the situation of the farmstead. Everyone is familiar with instances where a settler has erected comparatively comfortable buildings before making sure of a permanent water supply, afterwards boring in vain for water, and finally having to abandon the original site and move his buildings at considerable expense to another part of the farm where water has been struck. A good water supply is *most* necessary.

Drainage.—By this is meant the general slope and lay of the land. As the water supply is of so much importance, it is most necessary to preserve it from contamination. If the supply is furnished by a well, the slope of the ground should be such that all drainage from barnyard or house will be carried in another direction. The ground also should lie in such a manner as to provide good surface drainage in order that water will not lie around the yard. Other things being equal, a south or

south-eastern slope is to be preferred and there must be a sufficient extent of suitably lying ground to accommodate all necessary buildings both present and future.

Convenience.—The farmstead must be conveniently placed in relation to the rest of the farm. A great saving of time in going to and from work can be effected by having the buildings properly located with this point in view. While convenience to town and school should be considered, it is not nearly so important as convenience for working the land. It is quite a common thing to find buildings placed in the corner of the farm nearest to town, and in some cases, fortunately isolated, we find the farm house built on the road allowance. As most roads will be used sooner or later, it is advisable to see there is no mistake in this respect.

Preparation of a Plan.

A good rule to bear in mind in farm planning is: "As the building site is to the farm so should the buildings be to each other." After a decision has been reached as to the exact location of the farm buildings, the next step should be the preparation of some definite plan showing the general layout of the farmstead and must include the following: (1) Site for residence; (2) site for stables and other buildings; (3) all necessary roads and walks or approaches to buildings; (4) the extent of barnyards; (5) vegetable and fruit garden; (6) lawns and ornamental grounds; (7) windbreaks and shelter belts.

Under ordinary conditions in the West, a farmer starting on a new place usually commences operations by putting up a rather small dwelling and perhaps a makeshift stable. He will leave what he considers ample room around the house and stables and then perhaps in the second year will surround the whole with several rows of trees. Probably this is satisfactory for four or five years, but when it is found necessary to erect more buildings, such as implement sheds, poultry houses, etc., he finds he has only a limited space at his disposal. Forethought is very necessary and a plan of the proposed farmstead of primary importance.

Having agreed, then, that a plan is necessary, and having also discussed in a general way the main features to be embodied, we may now give more consideration to details. It must be remembered that in planning the separate buildings themselves, their interior arrangements, especially of the dwelling and buildings for housing stock, have a direct connection with the laying out of the grounds and the course of roads and approaches. For instance, in the case of the dwelling, the best portions of the lawns and ornamental plantings should be so arranged as to give the most pleasing views from the living rooms. The dwelling house will naturally occupy the best available site with, if possible, a south or south-easterly exposure and should always be placed well back from the road for the sake both of appearance and convenience. Leave plenty of space between the barn and the dwelling and arrange the stables with yard room to the south, thus giving the warmest exposure to young animals when turned out in the winter.

Arrangement of Roads.

No roads can be intelligently laid out until the sites of the various buildings have been definitely located. From the main road two approaches should be arranged for, one to serve the stables and the barn yard and

the other the dwelling. Means of ingress and egress must also be provided on either side to give convenient access to the fields. In threshing time it must be remembered that a large traction engine pulling a separator, a caboose and probably a tank, cannot turn a sharp corner and negotiate a narrow gateway without considerable risk of running into a gatepost.

The Farm Garden.

Roughly speaking, from half to one acre might be reserved for this purpose. By all means have the garden easy of access to the kitchen. If it is close to the house, a lot of weeding will be done in odd moments, which would not be the case were it placed several hundred yards away. The farmer's wife can often find time to spend a few minutes gathering some vegetable while preparing a meal which she might not be able to do if more time was required in reaching the garden, and taking everything into consideration, it is just as necessary for things to be convenient where the lady of the house is concerned as it is for the farmer or his hired man—perhaps even more so.

Desirability of Tree Planting.

The actual cash value of a good, thrifty, well arranged belt of trees is incomparably greater than the actual cost of establishing it. No farm is complete unless some suitable shelter for the buildings is provided. A good point, too, which is often lost sight of, is that its value increases year by year. Of what other improvement can the same be said? Buildings deteriorate and are a continual source of expense in upkeep. A good belt of trees covering say an acre of ground can be established at a cost well under \$30, and it is impossible to estimate how much such a belt adds to the general value. Once established it is a source of no further expense, for on the contrary, apart from adding beauty to the surroundings, it affords protection to buildings, house and garden.

Outline of General Scheme.

Preferences vary as to what point of the compass the house and barn respectively should face, and probably this question, in the case of the house at least, is of less importance than the site itself. Other things being equal, however, we should face the house to the east and set the barn east and west.

We should face the house to the east because we should build a square or rectangular house with at least four rooms downstairs. Of these the parlour would be in the front of the house and in the south-east corner, the dining or living room behind it and in the south-west corner with windows in two walls; the kitchen would then occupy the north-west corner which is the coolest both summer and winter. (The kitchen needs the cool location in the summer and can best stand it in winter on account of having the range to heat it.) The fourth room, be it a bedroom, den, study, office, library, sewing room, nursery or what-not, would then occupy the north-east corner. The next best arrangement is to face the house to the south with the rooms in the same relation to each other.

Our reason for placing the barn with its ends east and west is solely in order that the interior may receive the maximum of sunlight in the winter. This can be secured if fanlights are placed above the doors east and west, with possibly a window flanking the doors on each side and the whole south side is studded with windows as numerous and large as structural conditions will admit of. These windows should be placed sufficiently high in the wall that they will not shed light directly into the eyes of horses facing them, and will enable the sun's rays to reach the centre passage and stalls on the north side of the building. To secure this result an extra high ceiling is needed or else the loft floor may be sloped up for eight feet or so along the south side of the building.

Farm Planning "Tabloids."

If you possess capital it is better at the outset to invest a little more in live stock or sound barns and a *little less* in the dwelling house.

Plan so that you obtain the maximum amount of service with the minimum amount of outlay.

Exercise forethought.

If you are a live stock man, some day you will require all the year round hired help and a married man may give you the most efficient service. This may necessitate building a small house *inside* the shelter belt.

Make sure of a water supply before building.

Make a study of convenience first, last and all the while.