

FARM NOTES.

Lime seed meal, cottonseed meal, bran and other feeding stuffs serve admirably as fertilizers for crops, but it will pay better to feed such materials to stock and use the manure.

The plant food necessary to induce leaf growth is not the same as is required for fruit development. Plants having abundant leaves, such as cabbage, lettuce and kale, require more nitrogen than plants with less foliage. The stones of fruit, especially of the plum and peach, draw heavily upon the soil for plant food, preferring potash and phosphates. Overbearing by fruit trees exhausts the land and causes the production of imperfect fruit.

The real benefit derived from keeping stock may always be traced to the management. Good blood is essential, but no animal can thrive that is compelled to depend upon itself. Pure-bred stock demands the best care, but the same may also be said of common stock. The food is the imported factor in the production of meat or milk, but some animals can make better use of food than others. The farmer's attention, however, is necessary for all kinds of live stock, if the animals are to give a profit.

A cow requires from eight to ten gallons of water daily, if she is capable of giving an abundance of milk. Water is the largest proportion of milk, and the cow should have a sufficient amount to use in manufacturing milk and for supplying her bodily requirements. If the cow must seek water in some low, shallow place in the pasture she will be compelled to use that which is not pure. Every farm must have a plentiful supply of pure water for the cows, or they cannot yield their full quota of milk.

It is difficult to estimate the value of manure, as the quality of the manure depends upon the kind of food provided. Experiments made show that when cows are well fed and kept on water-tight floors they voided manure valued at ten cents per day. Horses kept in the same kind of stalls produced manure valued at four cents per day, two-fifths being voided in the fields. Sheep produced manure valued at a cent and a half per day a sheep, and swine produced manure valued at a half a cent a day each. This shows that the manure from all kinds of stock is a valuable portion of the receipts.

The farmer who begins the new year with the intention of reducing expenses will find many opportunities for so doing, and will also be surprised at the end of the year at the many avenues for allowing the loss. One cause of loss is the neglect of the farm wagons and implements. An account kept of the cost of repairs will show that quite a large sum goes in that direction, much of which could be saved. The use of more oil on tools, and keeping them sharp and in the best condition for use, will save labor, which is an item that must be paid for. Too many unprofitable animals, however, cause more loss than anything else, and the farmer should begin the new year with sufficient courage to thin out the flocks and herds so as to retain only the best and most profitable.

By actual experiment it has been demonstrated that the saving of food by means of good shelter is equal to the cost of the shelter in a short time. Pigs, when provided with good shelter and warm quarters, were fattened on much less food than was formerly required to simply keep the unprotected animals alive. The comparison is an important one. In the first place animals that were not properly provided with suitable accommodations, and not gaining in weight at all, really destroyed or wasted all that had been provided them, for the food was converted into heat, in order to give the animals protection that should have been furnished with boards and shingles. In the one case it might be asked whether feeding an animal on the products of the farm, which require labor in order to be produced, is cheaper than the shelter, which, when once erected, lasts for a number of years and does service for successive seasons. The use of the shelter is as important as the quality of the feed. A pig fed semi-occasionally on a mass of bulky provender, containing but little nutrition, certainly is not expected to do as well as one that receives a plentiful supply of all that is needed to promote growth, health and thrifty condition, and neither should it be expected that a shelter which allows the cold to enter, or the water to leak in, can properly protect the animal against the rigors of winter and the moistures of early spring.

In caring for the horses the question of proper feeding is all important. The care given the horse along other lines may be done exactly right, but the feeding may not be given proper judgment. Too many farmers do not feed their horses efficiently heavy, while on the other hand there are those who overdo the matter. The mistake in the light feeding of horses applies especially to the horses that are expected to do heavy farm work only, although many of these horses are obliged to do not only farm work, but road work besides. If we consult the statistics of some of the large cities in reference to this matter, we will find that horses there are much better fed as a rule than those on the farm. To illustrate this point the average road horse in the city, or the street car horses, that are drawing cabs and loads of about similar weight are fed from 4 to 15 pounds of oats and 10 to 12 pounds of hay daily, and where corn is a part of the ration the proportions are about 15 pounds of corn, 10 pounds of oats and 15 pounds of hay. In the feeding of the dray horse, whose work is more nearly like that of the farm horse, the ration is at least one-half more than what it is for horses doing lighter work. Let us stop and compare for a moment these rations with those fed by the average farmer. With the farmers, in too many cases, the ration for grain is corn and corn stover for roughage, and if corn stover is not used for roughage, a poor quality of hay is often employed. It is not to be wondered at, then, that many farm horses quickly wear out when spring work begins. The farmer should be prepared to feed oats as a part of the regular ration throughout the year, if at all possible, especially is this true when heavy work is being carried on. He should aim to feed for the work which the animals are expected to do, and bear in mind that when horses are employed to do farm work and go on the road, besides, great care should be exercised in feeding properly.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

"Good luck unto old Christmas, And long life let us sing, For he doth more good unto the poor Than many a crowned king."

Once more the snow and ice, the blazing fires, the holly and the mistletoe of Christmas! The very word fills us with thoughts of good cheer and overflowing hospitality. No trouble is too great to make our homes speak of the spirit of the day.

There is a fancy just now for the miniature little trees, oddly clipped, which may well be utilized for the Christmas dinner-table. After banging the dining-room with ground-pine and holly, arrange a mat of holly in the centre of the table, and stand on it a candelabrum set with red candles, with smaller mats here and there with individual candles. Then put some of these odd little trees about, and you will have a delightfully quaint effect. They come of triangular shape, or round, or in the tall, slender poplar shapes; beside these, there are lovely copper pots filled with artificial holly which may be used instead of the little trees, with a charming effect also. For a simple family dinner one may also use the holly and candles as before, but introduce the idea of Christmas bells. A large hoop wound with holly or vines may be suspended by wires from the ceiling, a large papier-mache bell hung from the centre with red ribbons and holly intertwined, with a dozen or more small bells hung with narrower ribbons from the hoop, each bell with a bit of holly fastened to it. With this the table may have place-cards of little cardboard bells, and the red cranberry jelly and perhaps the ices may carry out the same shape. Roast goose is the traditional dish for Christmas day, but as many families prefer to have turkey instead, the two menus are given with the different dishes as a main course:

- Grapefruit. Clear soup with croutons. Radishes, celery, salted nuts, olives. Oysters gratin, a la Crane. Chicken and ham timbale with cream sauce. Roast goose with prune and rice stuffing; giblet gravy; sweet potatoes; French string beans. Cranberry sherbet in Christmas cups. Breast of partridge with dressed lettuce. Plum-pudding jelly with whipped cream. Coffee, nuts, and raisins.

For the oysters, butter a baking-dish and put in a layer of soft fine bread crumbs. Put in a next layer of medium-sized oysters, bits of butter, salt, paprika, and a layer of soft crumbs; then moisten with sherry and a little strained oyster juice mixed; put on another layer of oysters and seasoning and crumbs, and so fill the dish, with crumbs on top. Cover with bits of butter and bake in a hot oven for twenty minutes and serve at once. This dish may be prepared in individual dishes and baked six minutes.

The timbale is an excellent and easily prepared entree. Take three-quarters of a cup of cold chicken breast, cut into fine bits, and half a cup of cold boiled ham, also cut up. Put these twice through the meat-chopper and pound fine. Mix two table-spoonfuls of butter with one of flour and a half cup of chicken stock or strained gravy and cook thoroughly; mix in the meat, stir well, and cool. When very cold fold in half a cup of cream, whipped, with the beaten whites of two eggs; butter small moulds, fill each one half full of the mixture, and bake in a pan of water. Turn out and put a spoonful of rich cream sauce by each. The dish is prettier if a little star of truffle be put into each mold before the mousses is poured in.

In selecting the goose try and get one that is large, but young and tender, and not too fat. If there is any doubt in the matter, parboil the bird for at least an hour the day before you need it. A very nice stuffing for goose is this: Soak a quarter of a pound of prunes over night, and cook till nearly tender. Put a cup of rice into a quart of cold water and slowly bring it to a boil, rinse, and drain in a sieve. Add the prune juice and more water if necessary to make a pint and a half altogether, and cook the rice with a little salt, till nearly done and all the water is absorbed. Cut the prunes into bits. Add twelve large chestnuts blanched and cut up, and the rice, half a cup of melted butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix lightly and stuff the goose.

Next make a sherbet by adding the juice of half a lemon to a quart of strained cranberry sauce, sweetening it well, and freeze to a mush. Serve it in pretty little white crepe-white paper cups which come on purpose for the day. One is a miniature bag tied up with holly and red ribbon, with the words "Plum Pudding" in gilt letters on the front. Another is a sparkling snowball with a little gilded snow-shovel fastened to the top.

The game course following may be slices of breast of partridge or any game to be found in the generous markets of the season, served with French-dressed lettuce. After this may come the usual plum-pudding or, for those who find this too rich and heavy a dish, yet wish to keep to the traditions for the day, there is this new and delicious plum-pudding jelly to be substituted: Put half a box of gelatine into a cup of cold water and soak half an hour; heat a pint of milk in the double boiler, and when hot dissolve a cup of sugar in it and an ounce and a half of melted chocolate. Put a heaping cup of stoned raisins, a cup of washed currants, half a cup of sliced citron, and a teaspoonful of cinnamon and one of cloves into a very little warm water on the stove, to soften and mellow. When the milk and chocolate are well mixed, pour them over the gelatine and strain into a bowl. As soon as it begins to grow firm stir in the fruit and put into a mould. Turn out on a platter, surround with whipped cream, and edge with holly. This will look and taste like a veritable plum pudding.

This second menu is quite different from the first, but has the same flavor of Christmas day:

- Oysters on the half-shell; celery and horse-radish. Clear soup. Radishes, olives, salted nuts. Dressed scallops in little dishes. Chicken pie. Roast turkey; cranberry jelly; browned potatoes; French peas. Dressed lettuce with tomato crescents. Christmas plum pudding. Ice-cream with small cakes. Coffee, cheese, and wafers.

The scallops are to be scalded and the juice saved; when cold chop them fine and add half the quantity of soft bread crumbs, salt and cayenne, a sprinkling of chopped parsley, a piece of softened butter as large as a walnut, and then enough of the juice to make a stiff batter. Put into little ramekins, or in large scallop-shells, cover with crumbs and butter, and brown in the oven. This is a new sort of chicken pie, sometimes called a chicken pudding, and will be found nice for a change; Cut up two chickens and remove all the large bones; fry in a very

hot pan for five minutes only with two or three slices of onion and a dozen bites of salt pork; put the chicken into a deep saucepan with just enough hot water to cover, and simmer till tender. Take it from the pan, drain, and arrange it in a baking dish. Beat the yolks of three eggs, add a cup of milk, a tablespoonful of butter, salt and pepper, and enough flour to make a stiff batter. Fold in the beaten whites of the eggs, pour over the chicken, and bake till it is brown. Thicken slightly the stock left in the saucepan and pass in the gravy boat. Cut-up mushrooms or a pint of small oysters are a most delicious addition to this excellent dish.

As there is no game course after the roast it is unnecessary to have a sherbet; a plain lettuce salad may follow with these pretty precedents: Cook for twenty minutes half a can of tomatoes with a tablespoonful of sugar, a slice of onion, three cloves, salt and pepper, and strain. Return to the fire and thicken with two tablespoonfuls of corn-starch cooked smooth with four of water, and add a beaten egg and remove at once. Pour into a shallow pan till the tomato is less than an inch thick, and when perfectly cold cut into crescents with a round biscuit-cutter. Dip into fine crumbs, beaten eggs, and crumbs again, and fry in deep fat in a wire basket. Drain on paper and serve cold or hot.

Another plan is to dispense with the plum pudding and have Christmas cake. This is a famous rule: One pound of butter, one of flour, one of sugar, four of currants, five of seeded raisins, one of sliced citron; one cup of brandy, one of sherry, one of molasses; twelve eggs, beaten separately; two oranges chopped fine; two teaspoonfuls each of mace and clove, three each of cinnamon and nutmeg, one of soda mixed in the molasses. A little candied orange peel and some rose-water may be added if one choose. Bake four and a half hours in a moderate oven.

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