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THE FARM. MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURISTS.

The Crop Prospects—Essays on Apple Pruning and Hay Cutting—White-Marked Tobacco.

A stated meeting of the Lancaster agricultural and horticultural society was held in their room in city hall yesterday afternoon.

The following named members and visitors were present: Messrs. H. M. Engle, Marietta; John C. Linville, Gap; Casper Miller, Conestoga; James Wood, Kirk's Mills; Simon P. Eby, city; C. L. Hunsicker, Manheim twp.; P. S. Reist, Litzitz; John H. Landis, Manor; Wm. H. Brosius, Drumore; Wm. H. Brosius, city; J. M. Johnston, city; Levi S. Reist, Manheim; Peter Hiller, Conestoga; Frank Griest, city; Eph. Hoover, Manheim.

The president and secretary being absent, Vice President Henry M. Engle took the chair, and John C. Linville was appointed secretary pro tem.

New Members Elected. John H. Landis, of Manor, proposed for membership Washington B. Paxson and Francis N. Scott, of Colerain township, and both were elected.

Crop Reports. Casper Miller, of Conestoga, reported the cherry crop almost a failure, the pear crop not much better, the apples very thin set, the peaches more promising, grass rather thickly set but healthy looking, giving promise of a good crop of hay.

Peter S. Reist reported the wheat in Warwick and Manheim as very promising, possibly a little too rank in growth, grass in general looks well; new clover not so well; oats very promising; peaches plentiful; cherries, except in low-lying places, good; currants greatly damaged by worms, both on the leaf and at the root; other fruits promise a fair average.

John H. Landis said that in Manor township the wheat never looked better than it did a week or ten days ago, but now it is growing too rank and beginning to lodge, and the straw, near the ground, is getting very heavy, especially in the low-lying places, and the fruit on the trees are peaches and cherries are nearly all killed by unfavorable weather; potatoes plenty and so are the potatoes, especially in the low-lying places, and the fruit on the trees are peaches and cherries are nearly all killed by unfavorable weather; potatoes plenty and so are the potatoes, especially in the low-lying places, and the fruit on the trees are peaches and cherries are nearly all killed by unfavorable weather.

John C. Linville, of Salisbury, reported wheat as growing very rank, with straw full of sap, and therefore liable to rust if the weather should become hot; oats looks better than he has seen it for twelve years past; the grass is good as far as it goes, but is short and in some places thin; peaches and cherries are nearly all killed by unfavorable weather; potatoes plenty and so are the potatoes, especially in the low-lying places, and the fruit on the trees are peaches and cherries are nearly all killed by unfavorable weather.

Wm. H. Brosius, of Drumore, said that Mr. Wood's report will answer for Drumore—wheat fine; grass fair, but fruit unpromising.

H. M. Engle, of Marietta, said the wheat looked remarkably well but some of it is beginning to lodge. Its outcome will depend on the condition of the weather for the next four weeks; if it should remain cool all will be well; but if it should become hot and dry the crop will be ruined. The grass is thin in many places; the corn well set, owing largely to the superiority of the seed; the heavy rains, however, have retarded its growth. Potatoes look well, but there are many blights. In the case of the cotyledons had some months ago as to whether excessively cold weather would destroy the eggs and larvae of insects, Dr. Rathvon had taken the position that it would not affect them. Mr. Engle was inclined to think that it would destroy some species, but not the iron clad potato bug. He noticed that the cabbage worm and cecidaria are very scarce this year and he attributes their scarcity to the cold and wet weather. Peaches and apples are fairly promising, but many of them are dropping from the trees, and there will not be a full crop; cherries are very poor, there not being one-tenth of a crop; all kinds of small fruits look exceedingly well. The rainfall for the month of May was nearly five inches.

Pruning Apple Trees. John C. Linville read the following essay: Now is the right time to prune the apple trees if we want the wounds to heal over quickly. If the wounds are large it is well to cover with grafting wax or varnish, to exclude the sun and drying winds, for the sun is necessary to remove larva limbs if the trees have been properly cared for at the start. I think there is more harm done by too much than by too little pruning.

Vigorous growing trees are very impatient at having part of their branches cut away. Dormant buds along the upper side of the limbs push out into "suckers." These have to be removed again and again, until finally the bark along the top of the limbs dies and the tree is ruined. I have always met with this trouble in attempting to thin out dense headed trees. Dormant buds should be taken in summer pruning not to jar the bark loose.

In old orchards there will every year be found some dead limbs that must be cut away. This had better be done in winter, but may be done now. In many orchards may be seen a number of limbs left from six inches to a foot in length. I have never heard any reason given for this mode of pruning. It is pitiful to see nature making desperate efforts to cover over these deformities, the "sap wood" creeping year after year further and further out on the useless member, until finally the dead stump decays away and leaves a hole in the trunk of the tree. This makes a capital place in which the flickers may build their nests, but it is death to the apple tree. Dead limbs should be sawed off at the shoulder, and they will heal over even if four or five inches in diameter.

In order to cut off large limbs neatly the saw should be put in good order. After the saw should be laid on the work-bench and a flat file run from heel to point along each side of the teeth. This prevents the points of the teeth from scratching the wound and leaves it smooth.

Casper Hiller said there can be no particular rule laid down for pruning; one kind of tree will require one method and another kind another. In pruning apple trees his plan is to commence when they are young and cut off the tops so as to keep the tree low. Ordinarily the large limbs if cut off at all, should be cut off close to the shoulder and painted to prevent the escape of sap; but if the tree is old the limbs may be cut off a few inches from the shoulder, the stump will then decay gradually for several years and not affect the tree until it has become too old to be useful. He thought an orchard ought not to be allowed to stand more than thirty years, and that a young orchard might be safely planted on the same ground by placing the young trees in rows between the old ones, removing the latter when the former comes into bearing.

John H. Landis took exception to Mr. Linville's statement that too much pruning was worse than too little, especially as applied to peaches. If the trees are allowed to go unpruned the fruit is sure to be small and scrubby.

The question was further discussed by P. S. Reist, Peter S. Reist, Levi S. Reist, Henry M. Engle, and John C. Linville.

When to Cut. In answer to a question referred to him at last meeting Casper Miller answered as follows: I am not prepared to answer the question: "At what period of growth should grass be cut to make the best hay?" from actual test of the feeding quality of hay made at different periods of cutting. If my opinion would be of any value, I would say that the proper time to cut is when the plant is in the early stage of growth, the time when the seed is half formed. When grass and clover are cut too young they are too watery, make no weight, and are difficult to cure. If left until the seed is ripe the plant becomes woody and will lose its best feeding quality. I believe it has been satisfactorily shown that sorghum contains the most saccharine matter if cut when nearly ripe, and I think the same principle holds good with the grasses.

Henry M. Engle said that owing to a misapprehension he thought the above question had been referred to him for an answer, and had accordingly prepared a paper on the subject, which if there was no objection he would read.

He read it as follows: In order to answer this question satisfactorily I present it in an essay rather than in a verbal remark. According to statistics (which we have no reason to question) the value of the grass crop of this country exceeds that of any other crop. It requires but a small amount of either loss or gain to each farmer in utilizing it to his advantage or otherwise to swell the aggregate to millions. The period to cut grass for hay in order to realize the greatest value therefrom is the subject of a wide difference of opinions, much wider indeed than should exist in the use of so important an article, especially in thousands of years. It is, however, interesting to know that for some years past practical tests have been made in Europe and also in this country by chemical analysis as well as feeding tests, which seem to agree that grass cut in bloom will make the most valuable hay; that in proportion beyond that period until ripe it approaches woody fibre and consequently loss of important nutritive qualities. My own experience would dictate to err (if error it be) by cutting a little earlier than later, i. e. before full bloom, especially in the case of the numerous forms of timothy.

The difficulty of curing is claimed as a strong objection to cutting early, and is perhaps the leading cause of error on the other side; the result is, a very large proportion of hay not much better than straw. As proper curing is as important as the proper time of cutting, it is claimed that possibly one half of the hay made (in this section at least) loses much of its value by being gathered too dry. The old adage "make hay while the sun shines" I believe to be applied to excess. Were it always practicable, hay cut in the shade and seeds would be better if dried in the shade and housed or stacked as damp as will allow, only so as not to mould or grow, in fact a little of the latter is preferable to housing it in a very dry and brittle condition.

Although grass is more difficult to cure when cut young than when more nearly ripe, in the former condition it will be much more rain without injuring it, than when cut nearer ripe. The difference in weight is in favor of late cut grass, but the difference in weight is trifling, besides stock will relish the early cut much better than late cut, and fed to milk cows the latter will have a richer color from early than from late cut grass. Another important consideration applies to grasses which make second growth is that early cutting does not stunt the plant so much, consequently the second growth will be of so much more value as to outweigh any amount of weight gained by delay in cutting the first crop. My experience and observation of the grass has confirmed me so strongly in favor of early cutting of grass that I do not hesitate to recommend a trial to all who have any doubts of its advantages, and would suggest that as many members of this society as are so goodly, they may fairly by cutting some early and other a week or ten days later, and the coming winter feed to milk cows each kind alternate two or three weeks at a time and report results to this society, after which we may talk more intelligently on this important subject.

White-Marked Tobacco. Prof. Rathvon sent to the meeting several leaves of tobacco upon which there were very pretty and curiously wrought lace-like tracings. [The leaves were presented by Wm. Koeting, of Elizabethtown, and Morris Gershel, of this city, and a description of them followed.] The subject of a paper by Dr. Rathvon which has already appeared in the INTELLIGENCER—REPORTER.

Yellow Lucas. A printed circular from Alfred M. Kennedy, of the state Agricultural society, in which he recommends farmers to try the experiment of substituting yellow lucas for red clover, was read; but as the season is too far advanced to make the experiment, no action was taken.

Double Peaches. Casper Hiller brought to the meeting several twigs pulled from peach trees, on which there were a remarkable number of double peaches. Other members present stated that they had not noticed the same phenomena in their several neighborhoods. This abnormal growth was attributed to the exceptionally dry and hot weather of last autumn.

Books for the Library. Books for the Lancaster Agricultural reports; annual report of the Michigan Pomological society and the sixth annual report of the Agricultural society of Kansas. Adjourned.

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