

The Centre Democrat.

BELLEVILLE, PA.

AGRICULTURAL.

NEWS, FACTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

THE TEST OF THE NATIONAL WELFARE IS THE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PROSPERITY OF THE FARMER.

Every farmer in his annual experience discovers something of value. Write it and send it to the "Agricultural Editor of the Democrat, Belleville, Penn'a," that other farmers may have the benefit of it. Let communications be timely, and be sure that they are brief and well pointed.

"GILT-EDGED" butter makers demand the best cows, and the best feed, of course, but with these given they may fail to come up to the standard unless many things usually considered of minor importance are carefully looked after. Every detail must be watched with the utmost care. Extreme cleanliness must prevail at every stage of the process. The "working" must not only be done in the right way, but must be stopped at the right moment. Those who use borax and sugar, must be careful to use proper quantities. Where the color is defective, as it always is in winter, it must be regulated by the use of some artificial color, and of these none are better than the Perfected Butter Color, of which we spoke some time since. And last, but by no means least, comes the salt, which must not only be carefully regulated as to quantity, but carefully looked after in quality. This has come to be a matter of so much importance that in England a patent has been granted to Messrs. Higgin & Co., for a process of manufacture, which results in a superior quality of salt for dairy purposes. It is manufactured from the brine of a natural spring, by a course of evaporation, filtration and grinding, and is never handled during the process, but falls from the machine into the sacks in which it is delivered to consumers. This not only makes it chemically pure, but produces it in an eminently clean state—an item of great importance to butter makers. This salt is now being imported to this country in immense quantities by Thurber & Co., of New York, and is rapidly taking precedence of all other brands in the principal dairy States. The patentees and manufacturers regard the trade of this country as so important that they are having made by Messrs. Tiffany & Co., the great gold and silver manufacturers and dealers of New York, a series of gold, silver and bronze medals, twenty-four of each, to be offered as first, second and third prizes, for butter and cheese, made with this salt, in the principal dairy States. These are to be competed for at the State Fairs, but we have not, as yet, learned the details of the competition, nor do we know whether or not Pennsylvania is to compete for a set. If it should be so, cannot at least one of them be brought to Centre county? We believe we have just as good butter makers here as can be found in the State, and can see no reason why some one of them should not have one of these prizes.

Cultivated Wheat.

We find the following reports on cultivated wheat in the *Valley Spirit*, published at Chambersburg. We should be glad to have reports on the subject from some of our Centre county farmers who have made experiments in the same direction:

Major Ives and several other gentlemen have been examining some wheat fields in this vicinity and we are indebted to the Major for some interesting facts disclosed by the examination. J. S. Nixon has a small field of wheat near the railroad station, which has been cultivated between the rows while growing. It was seeded in rows 4 inches wide and 11 inches apart. The seeding was done quite late—Oct. 26—and no fertilizer was used. A square yard of this field was measured and on counting the heads of wheat within that space they were found to number 366.

Jerre Rhoadarmer has a field of wheat in the same square of town as Nixon's. It was drilled in the ordinary way and at the usual time, with fertilizer, and not cultivated while growing. In it a square yard was measured and the heads counted and found to number 190, a decline of nearly one-half compared with Nixon's.

Henry Greenawalt, a mile west of town, has two fields of wheat, divided from one another by the turnpike. One of them was seeded in the usual way with a drill, putting in 1 1/2 bushels per acre, and has not been cultivated. In seeding the other each alternate row of wheat stand 16 inches apart, 1 bushel of seed per acre being sown,

This field has been cultivated. The first mentioned field was seeded Sept. 19—the last, Sept. 26. Both were phosphated—the uncultivated with 200 lbs. per acre, and the cultivated with 300 lbs. On a square yard of the uncultivated 317 heads were counted—on a square yard of the cultivated 399. Ten heads of the uncultivated average 2.7-10 inches in length—ten of the cultivated averaged 3 inches.

Comparing Nixon's with Rhoadarmer's, the cultivated would appear to have a very great advantage over the uncultivated. But there is a wide difference in the stand of wheat in different fields supposed to have soil of the same quality, in this valley, this season, and it would not do to take the difference between Nixon's and Rhoadarmer's fields as a settler of the question about cultivating growing wheat.

The difference between Greenawalt's two fields is no more conclusive of the question. The cultivated has more and larger heads to the square yard than the uncultivated, but it received 100 lbs. more phosphate per acre, which might make all the difference.

These comparisons look favorable to the new method, but other and more extensive tests will have to be made before its superiority can be taken as established. In the measurement and count made, Rhoadarmer's uncultivated falls almost as badly below Greenawalt's uncultivated as below Nixon's cultivated.

We hope the matter will be taken up and experimented upon by our farmers, year after year, till it shall be fully settled one way or the other.

Crop Reports.

The *Rural New Yorker*, of Saturday last, devotes no less than seven of its large pages to a condensed report of the condition of the growing crops, gathered from all quarters of the Union. We quote a synopsis of this excellent report from its editorial columns:

From these and various other sources of information, including the report of the Department of Agriculture, received this morning from Washington, it appears that the average condition of winter wheat is 90, against 98 last year. The yield on the Pacific coast, from which our special reports have not yet reached us, is considerably above the average, Oregon rising to 104. The States north of the Ohio river average 95, Indiana reaching 103. The crop in the Middle States averages 86; that of New England 94; and of the South Atlantic States 96, South Carolina reporting 108 and Georgia 112—a fine showing for the Empire State of the South. The Southern inland States average 88, the Gulf States 83, and the trans-Mississippi States only 79, as compared with 98 last year. All over the country a late spring and severe drought have been more or less injurious to the crop. Complaints of winter-killing have come from some parts of the South, and of slight ravages by the Hessian fly from the North and West; while grasshoppers have made their appearance, but have not yet done much damage, beyond the Mississippi. The acreage under spring wheat is about four per cent. greater than last year. The heaviest increase is in California, which reports ten per cent. more; while in the New England and the States west of the Mississippi there is an increase of five per cent., and one of nine per cent. in Minnesota; while the Middle States fall off one per cent. The condition of spring wheat is about the same on the whole, as that of winter wheat all the States being a trifle below the average, the crop having been subjected to the same injurious influences. There is considerable increase in the acreage under wheat, but the amount of this it is at present impossible to ascertain. In many of the old States the increase is, in the aggregate, not inconsiderable, while in some of the border States, and especially in the Territories, it is of great extent. For instance, in one county in Dakota, which last year sowed only fifty acres, upwards of four thousand acres have been grown this year. It is more than probable, therefore, that this great increase of area under wheat will at least fully counterbalance the slight diminution in the yield per acre of the crop.

Corn is nearly everywhere backward, but the late rains all over the country have already pushed it ahead wonderfully, and unless the weather is very unfavorable a fair crop is among the probabilities. Curiously enough, while our Kansas reports indicate a very poor wheat crop, they all promise a splendid crop of corn. Poor seeds and planting too early appear to be the causes of the present unsatisfactory condition of the crop in the Middle and most of the Western States, and it is to be hoped that the lessons taught by the hard experience of the present season will not be profitless in the future.

D. D. T. MOORE, the veteran agricultural editor, whose name is familiar to many as the originator of *Moore's Rural New Yorker*, has started a new "illustrated journal for suburban, village and country towns." The new candidate for public favor is a monthly, and is published in New York, and the name of Mr. Moore carries with it a prestige which must make it a success. It is large, ably edited, neatly printed and finely illustrated.

GRASSHOPPERS have appeared in unusual numbers in several parts of the county, and are said to be doing much damage to grass and grain. We have not seen any of them as yet, but those who have say that they are the regular "Kansas hopper." We trust their visit will be a brief one.

THE area of Pennsylvania is about 43,000 square miles.

The Green Currant Worm.

From *Vick's Illustrated Monthly*.

Will you please inform me how to use white hellebore for the purpose of killing the green currant worm? Should it be mixed with some other substance, and if so, what? In what quantity and in what manner is it applied? We have three thousand currant bushes and they were visited by this pest last year, and I suppose it will be here again in force this spring.—Mrs. M. S., Hamilton, Ohio.

To the same purport we read in the proceedings of the Montgomery Co. Horticultural Society, of Dayton, Ohio. By the way, we must congratulate this Society upon its flourishing condition, and wish it a prosperous future. Its monthly "Proceedings" indicate a lively interest, and even enthusiasm, among its members. In the March meeting of this Society,

"Mr. Silver asked for a remedy for the currant worm.

Mr. Ohmer said it appeared here last summer for the first time, but could not state what would destroy it.

Dr. Warder said it also made its first appearance last summer in Hamilton county.

Mr. Longstreth said a neighbor of his successfully fought them last summer with strong soaps; took them in time and persevere, and success will crown your efforts."

The currant worm, the larva of a saw-fly, (*Abraxia ribesaria*), has long been a naturalized resident of this section. We are afraid that soapsuds will be a poor weapon to fight this enemy with. The only thing that has proved effective is what is called White Hellebore in the shops—it is really *Veratrum Album*. This comes in the shape of a fine powder, and is applied with a small dredging box, in quantities sufficient to give the worms a good peppering. It is best to scatter it on when the leaves are damp, either by dew or after having sprinkled them with water. The plants must be watched and the powder applied whenever the worms appear, which will be several times during the season. The powder does not injure the fruit, and we never heard of any ill effects from its use; of course, in applying it one should guard himself from it by standing to the windward of it. It is sometimes mixed with water, and applied with a sprinkling pot or syringe, but common sentiment favors the application of it in a dry state. When once this insect has settled in a locality, there is little hope that it will ever be entirely rid of it.

Do Not Mow too Close.

From the *World*.

There was true economy in the advice of the farmer who recommended that the lower joints of grass be left in the field for the old brindle cow rather than cut and cured for her. He was one of the numerous army of mowers who had learned there is nothing gained by cutting too close.

The testimony with respect to the height from the ground at which it is best to cut grass is conflicting and tends to confuse and oftentimes misleads a novice in the hay-field. Cultivators vary in practice from one-half inch, or as close as possible, to four inches. The general tendency is, however, to cut close, and many fine meadows have been seriously injured therefrom.

Close observation has taught that timothy cannot be cut low, in dry weather especially, without inflicting injury. All attempts at close shaving the sward should be avoided. Many of our most successful farmers cut timothy nearly or quite four inches from the ground. Others in gauging mowing-machines for this grass take care to run them so high that it will not be cut below the second joint above the tuber.

Close mowing of upland meadows ought also to be avoided, as the action of the hot sun and dry weather following the harvest affects the roots of the grass unfavorably when left without some protection. On the other hand low, wet mowing grounds will bear cutting close as possible; these are benefited by the influences which would dry and burn up an upland meadow. Again, where the practice is followed of top-dressing the meadow immediately after taking off the grass, the mowing may be done low and a smooth surface left to cut over the next time.

Generally speaking, grasses cut two inches high will start much quicker and thrive better than when shaved close to the ground; the finer grasses, as a rule, when the season is not a very dry one, can be cut lower with safety than coarser sorts.

Potting Strawberry Plants for Early Production.

As the time is near at hand when the preliminary steps of the method now adopted to insure an early return from strawberry patches must be taken, a short explanation of the plan pursued by the largest truckers and nurserymen may be of benefit to those who desire to avail themselves of it. When, through bearing the crop of the season, the strawberry plant throws out runners which reach six or eight inches from the parent stem before rooting, and it is this feature which is taken advantage of in securing a new plant, a small pot filled with rich earth should be sunk in the ground just under the joint of the runner; when the roots are firmly established in the potted earth, the connection between the parent and offspring is

severed, the potted strawberry plant increasing in vigor until the time of planting out in the open ground in August or September, a good crop the following spring resulting, instead of waiting for two years for a full yield, as has been the custom when the old method was pursued.

Soot as a Manure.

By James Vick.

There is probably no crop upon which soot cannot be used to advantage. In the liquid form it can be used in the proportion of a peck to a hoghead of water, and for Strawberries just as they are swelling they can be used as the best method of applying it. On turnips as a field crop, for protection from the fly, it can be used at the rate of twenty bushels to the acre. As a top-dressing to grass lands, or to be dug into the garden, it can be applied at the rate of forty or fifty bushels to the acre, more or less, according to convenience. One hundred bushels to the acre will do no harm.

An analysis in France of a sample of soot taken from a chimney where wood had been the fuel used showed, among other constituents, twelve and a half per cent. of water, over twenty per cent. of nitrogenous matter, twenty-seven per cent. of soluble compounds of lime and potash, and thirty per cent. of humic acid. With such an exhibit we should expect splendid results from its use, as there always is. Soot from coal is usually thought to be better than that from wood, and it is best when made in a chimney of low heat. Soot is valuable, not only as a manure, but to drive away insects that attack young Cabbage, Turnip, Radish, and other plants; like any gritty substance, it repels them, and the bitter principle it contains, when dissolved by the rains or dew and spread on the leaves, is disagreeable to them. It is one of the most valuable substances the gardener can employ.

The Question of Weeds.

From the *Germanian Telegraph*.

Every good farmer knows that to insure satisfactory crops his land must be cultivated in the best manner, and if it is so cultivated few weeds will be found upon it. Sometimes, even upon well-managed farms, a field here and there, owing to adverse weather, a shortness of hands, or a rush of work generally, may be neglected for a few days and the weeds may get a start; but this happens rarely, and an observing man can always judge of the character of the farmer by glancing his eye over his premises. If the weeds are not to be regularly and systematically destroyed, the idea of conducting agricultural operations profitably may as well be abandoned, for the one is incompatible with the other.

And even this is more pointedly so with the garden. Weeds and a garden crop are antagonistic as life and death. They cannot stand upon the same platform. One must be master, and it is for the owner to say which. If a garden is systematically worked—and without system no garden is worth having—the labor of keeping down the weeds is reduced one-half. But let them once get ahead, and they may be fought all summer and prove victorious in the end.

Again, let no weeds go to seed; and do not throw into the public highway such as do, to be washed down upon the land of your neighbors.

Care of Colts.

From the *Tribune*.

A colt can be weaned, and better be, if the mare is going to work hard, when three months old, four and five being the usual time. A colt will do well away from the mare when three months old, or a little before, if it has been taught while running with the mare to eat oats. This can easily be done by feeding the mare oats in a box long enough for both to eat out of; the colt will learn to eat with its mother, and when she is taken away it should be left in same stable until it is thoroughly weaned. It will be more contented in this stable and have a better appetite. It should be fed grass three times a day with the oats, which should be regulated according to the size and age of the colt, from a half pint to a quart three times a day. It should also be watered regularly. A colt thus carefully cared for will do well and grow faster than when following the mare, fighting flies, and sucking milk more or less feverish because of the discomfort of the mare.

An honest farmer of Iowa, is reported by *The Hawkeye* man as somewhat discouraged this backward Spring in consequence of the following episodes of a single afternoon: In the first place he was "bounced" for using a three-horse clevis he made himself, and for which a perambulating individual claimed a patent; then the imp of the drivewell wrong him dry; then the lightning-rod peddler, screened by the snow storm, fastened \$65 worth of "protectors" on his \$10 smoke-house, and before he could get his gun half loaded the bailiff came in to say that he had been drawn on the jury.

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