

# The Centre Democrat.

BELLEVILLE, PA.

## AGRICULTURAL.

NEWS, FACTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

THE TEST OF THE NATIONAL WELFARE IS THE INTELLIGENCE AND 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.

OUR contemporary, the *Valley Spirit*, grows irreverent: It speaks of General Commissioner Le Due as the "head of the tea plant and potato bug department at Washington." We would tell what it calls Le Due—it's not pretty.

AN IOWA correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* encourages us in the East to continue a hotly waged war on the potato bugs, by the assurance that they will finally leave, as they have already done in the West. He states that this spring there are but few stragglers left there.

AN agricultural college for girls is to be established in Michigan.—*Exchange*. That's right! We have no doubt that when the girls are taught to hold the plow scientifically we shall have greatly increased crops at reduced expenditure.

AMONG the competitors for the prizes offered by D. K. Bliss & Sons for the largest yield of wheat from a single pound of seed, is A. J. Croggins, Tulare county, Cal., who is reported as having gained a crop of 791 pounds, or 13 1/5 bushels.—*Exchange*.

WE know nothing of the method of cultivation adopted by Mr. Croggins, but we venture to guess that the wheat was sown in rows wide enough apart to permit the use of the cultivator, and that the cultivator was freely used.

IMMENSE quantities of potatoes are already being shipped to the Northern markets from Virginia. Norfolk sent nineteen thousand barrels to New York alone on Saturday. This is a fair indication of what is to come. The high prices of last year stimulated the planting of this spring to a wonderful degree, and by the time the general crop is harvested prices will be as far below a fair and remunerative average as last year they were above.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Connecticut Farmer*, in denouncing the destruction of birds and their nests, says that he does "not object to the destruction of hawks or crows." We can say no good word for the hawks, but must protest against the killing of crows. The only mischief they can be justly charged with is the pulling of corn in the spring, and this may be easily and entirely prevented by sowing a peck or so of the refuse kernels from the ends of the ears used for seed, broadcast over the field. Mr. Crow will hunt hours for one of these before he will attempt to pull a stalk, and while he is hunting he will "gobble" cut worms, wire worms and other destructive pests, many times more than enough to compensate for the trouble you have taken.

Now that harvest is here, and we shall all be among the grain for a week or two to come, let us make careful observations as to the effect of harrowing or cultivating wheat and determine the worth of the practice to such an extent as to help us decide whether or not we will, when sowing the next crop, try sowing with only every other tube of the drill, and then thoroughly cultivating, both this fall and in the spring. For ourselves we have already enough faith in the practice to warrant us in trying an acre or two in this way.

A correspondent of the *Valley Spirit* tells of measuring square yards of two different lots in the same field, and which had been treated precisely alike, excepting that one had been drilled in as usual and not cultivated, while in the other, every alternate tube of the drill had been stopped up, making the rows of wheat double width, and this had been cultivated. Upon counting the heads in each measured yard the uncultivated lot numbered 350, while those in the cultivated piece numbered 458. The heads in the cultivated lot averaged seventeen-fortieths of an inch larger than those in the uncultivated lot,

and "the stalks of cultivated wheat are three inches taller, and the heads of more uniform size than the uncultivated." We hope a number of Centre county farmers will test this matter for themselves this fall. Capt. John A. Hunter, of Half Moon, is respectfully requested to give us the benefit of his experience in the matter.

DO NOT overwork. This may seem strange advice to give farmers, but observation and experience show it to be needed. Seed time and harvest are exacting, and their demands must be met promptly. To allow protest here is sure to tell in a fearful accumulation of costs in the final accounting. But there are better ways to prevent this than by that unceasing toil "which takes no account of hours except as night shuts off opportunity for work." It is true that the "eight-hour system" cannot be applied to farming, nor can any other which rigidly demands a cessation of work at a given moment, whether the task in hand is completed or not, but reason and common sense dictate that "there are always plain limits to safe endurance, and they must be observed, or disaster will come." The ambitious and economical farmer is strongly tempted, in these long summer days, with work pressing at all points, to do more work than he can afford to do. He not only fills the proper working hours full of the hardest and heaviest of labor, but robs the sleeping hours of their just dues, and inaugurates physical decay which must result in shortened life, and causes mental depression and lassitude which render him incapable of that mental activity demanded in the proper management of the complicated affairs of a farm. Take time for sleep, and time for rest—full, complete, satisfactory rest—and the work will be done better, more easily, and more promptly, than when body and mind are worn out and dragged down by excessive manual labor.

Cultivation of Beans. A correspondent of the *Practical Farmer* goes into this subject somewhat in detail. We have not room for his entire article, but give his best points in the following extracts: I like the wheat drill to sow with, as it puts them in regularly and rapidly, but I use every third drill so as to have them wide enough to cultivate. Cultivation should begin as soon as they are fairly up, and two workings will be sufficient usually, as the beans will soon cover ground so that the weeds cannot grow. I find the first week in June the best time to plant, although a little earlier or later will answer. I planted the 25th of June last year where I had cut wheat two days before, and it was the best crop I had. Where it is the intention to sow wheat after clover, a crop of clover may be cut for hay, and the stubble plowed and put in beans, which will ripen before it is time to sow wheat, and the land will be in better condition for the wheat crop than it would be if allowed to lie fallow. My neighbor and myself have sowed more or less wheat on bean land each year for four years, with gratifying success. \* \* \* We thresh altogether by tramping with horses; all that is necessary is to keep the barn floor well covered, so that the horses will not spit the beans, and when they are perfectly dry they can be threshed easily and rapidly.

The Best Drink for Laborers. When you have any heavy work to do, do not take either beer, cider or spirits. By far the best drink is thin oatmeal and water, with a little sugar. The proportions are a quarter of a pound of oatmeal to two quarts of water, according to the heat of the day and your work and thirst; it should be well boiled, and then one ounce and a half of brown sugar added. If you find it thicker than you like add three quarts of water. Before you drink it shake up the oatmeal well through the liquid. In summer drink this cold; in winter hot. You will find it not only quenches thirst, but will give you more strength and endurance than any other drink. If you cannot boil it you can take a little oatmeal mixed with cold water and sugar, but this is not so good. Always boil it if you can. If at any time you have to make a long day, as in harvest, and cannot stop for meals, increase the oatmeal to a half a pound, or even to three-quarters, and the water to three quarts if you are likely to be very thirsty. If you cannot get oatmeal, wheat flour will do, but not quite so well. For quenching thirst, few things are better than weak coffee and a little sugar. One ounce of coffee and half an ounce of sugar boiled in two quarts of water and cooled, is a very thirst-quenching drink. Cold tea has the same effect; but neither is so supporting as oatmeal. Thin cocoa is also very refreshing and supporting likewise, but is more expensive than oatmeal.

The Future of Orcharding. From the *Country Gentleman*. The future of orcharding, judging from the past, will be this: Most of them for lack of care and attention will bring their owners little or nothing, and these meagre returns will increase the neglect. A few wise and enterprising planters will pursue the opposite course, and as common fruit becomes cheap, they will give increased care—manure and cultivate their trees, destroy insects, thin and select, furnish only the finest specimens for market, and secure a reputation by years of perseverance. They will never suffer for want of a ready and good market. The few who thus secure the finest fruit, put up in the most perfect order, will always obtain purchasers, no matter how abundant common or poor fruit may be. This has actually been the case in many instances which might be cited.

The careless owner will let his orchard run to decay, and he will obtain only knotty, worm-eaten, and scabby apples, which will bring him but small returns in market, or not enough to pay for picking, packing and conveyance. Among the important means for obtaining fine, attractive and high priced specimens, is the practice of thinning the fruit while young. At this time, it is removed with rapidity and ease. The strength of the tree goes with the remainder, and in gathering the crop the labor of picking off all these supernumeraries is entirely obviated. This was all done when they were small. If left on the tree they not only exhaust its strength, but they must be all carefully hand-picked, with three fold the labor, and then all as completely assorted, to get rid of the many which are unsaleable.

Now is the time for this thinning. Weeds and Water in the Garden. *Vick's Illustrated Monthly*. "All weeds grow apace," is an adage as true as it is old. No one can afford to raise weeds. It is far cheaper to stir the ground frequently, with a hoe or cultivator, than to allow weeds to grow, even a little. Weed seeds are always ready to grow. They come in with the manure or are blown in by the winds, and, by a few days' neglect, will often get such a start as materially to injure a crop. Frequent stirring of the ground not only prevents the weeds from coming in, but promotes the growth of the crop, and thus every advantage is in favor of thorough cultivation.

Over all that broad stretch of our favored land where the rainfall is abundant, the lack of water for vegetation is only occasionally experienced, and consequently, like other blessings which we freely enjoy, its real value is not properly estimated. Almost every season, and in every part of the country, there are short times of drought when a good and convenient supply of water would be of great advantage, at least to some particular crop or crops in the garden. If it is possible to have the garden supplied with water, it should never be neglected. If no better source is available, a good well, with a pump and capacious tanks for tempering the water by the heat of the sun and air, will be found of great service. A well would usually be most convenient if situated near the center of the garden, but it may be necessary or even advantageous sometimes to locate it in some other part of the grounds. Wherever it is located there should be hose, or pipes, or some other means by which it can be delivered to any part of the ground.

Care of the Land. From *Harper's Weekly*. The care of our land has become one of the chiefest questions of the time. If we are to pour out upon Europe nearly two hundred bushels of wheat annually, besides a host of rare inventions—locks, guns, manufactures, provisions, cotton—the preservation of the powers of the soil must be the foundation of our success. But here our inventive genius has apparently abandoned us. We have forgotten to apply our intelligence to agriculture. The waste of land in all sections of the country has been without a parallel. The Eastern States are abandoned by their young men for the tempting fertility of the West; yet it is possible that industry and economy might make the lands of Massachusetts and Connecticut as profitable at least as the sands of Belgium and the heaths of Sussex. They have the advantage of a great manufacturing market, and the protection of an easy access. Virginia and Georgia may yet be reclaimed. Wealth must return to the Genesee valley, and the decay of nature must be checked in its westward stride.

"But you know, pa," said the farmer's daughter, when he spoke to her about the addresses of his neighbor's son, "you know, pa, that ma wants me to marry a man of culture." "So do I, my dear, so do I; and there's no better culture in the country than agriculture."

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## Preparing Land for Wheat.

Illinois Correspondent of *Country Gentleman*. The successes which have attended the culture of winter wheat in the black soil counties of Illinois since 1875, and my frequent notices of it in these columns, admonish me that I should call the attention of farmers to the necessity of a summer fallow of greater or less length, and that in a long, dry and hot summer, the best, if not the only insurance for next year's crop, is a deeper summer fallow. For this latitude, and northward, June is the best month in which to plow for wheat, and if not the best month south of 35° or 37°, it is because conditions exist there which northern wheat-growers know nothing about. Land is plowed in June to bury the heavy vegetable growth and to give it time to rot, to allow of the soil to settle together, and above all, to give an opportunity for the buried vegetable matter, after decomposition, to work up to the surface, there to combine with the surface mineral constituents of the soil and the atmosphere, and in that way prepare food for the starting wheat plant. This plowing should be deep, governed by the character of the soil, but the plowing just before seeding should be not more than two or three inches. Indeed, the main reason for summer fallow, and the explanation of its success, is that the wheat plant feeds near the surface, and in order to get that food there in the right state, the soil must be plowed long enough before seeding to allow the plant food to reach the surface and combine with the atmospheric elements. Strangers are surprised at the magnificent fields of wheat now to be seen in the black soil counties, a state of the crop which has advanced the value, if not the price of these lands, \$4 or \$5 an acre, and it is for their pecuniary interest for farmers to so prepare for future crops that there shall be no interruption to the generous wheat yield for the next 20 years. Perhaps the most unexpected fact developed of late years is that the lower the land is the better for a successful wheat crop, provided only that the soil is well drained, or that there is no standing water.

Hay Tedders. From the *World*. In the Northern States where the weather at haying time is liable to be uncertain the tedder has come to be very generally used for the purpose of shaking up and respraying the hay. Should a rain overtake the hay before it is put into cocks it is a useful and convenient means by which to lift the hay from the ground and lay it down again lightly thus allowing free circulation of air under it. If the rain follows immediately after cutting no great harm results, as the water cannot be absorbed by the grass, which is full of juice. In this condition it can lie on the spread and be safe. Had it been dried or partly dried when the rain fell upon it the case would have been different. With fair weather and the tedder, a few hours will suffice to draw off the outside water and relieve the hay of much of its inside moisture.

How to Care for Cows. The cows must be treated with kindness. They must not be driven far nor fast to or from pasture. When stabled they ought to be clean, comfortable and fed with good, sound and rich food. The cow is a quiet easy-going, luxurious living animal, manufacturing her best products under the most favorable circumstances, and only from the best materials. The milking must be regularly performed, and absolute cleanliness is as necessary with the cow as her food and her care. With these properly attended to the milk and butter will be pure and sweet.

CUCUMBER BUGS.—A writer in the *Rural New Yorker* says that he has successfully repelled the insect commonly known as the striped bug by applying ashes soaked in kerosene. A handful is applied at the centre of each hill. Its strong odor compels them to beat a retreat.

Gleanings. The question of agriculture is the world's question. If not already done, destroy the nests of the Canker worm in your apple orchard now. Don't delay the job.

Does it pay? is an important question, both commercially and agriculturally, and if not, abandon what don't pay. Pinch off blackberry and raspberry shoots, the laterals when two feet long, the leaders when three or four feet high.

Butter is very cheap, and milk of course not very valuable, but it is cheaper to bring a calf up by hand than to let him take the milk direct from the cow.

Professor Cook, of the Michigan Agricultural College, from examinations of the crops of birds, extending through a long time and with many species, gives it as his opinion that nearly all our birds, not excepting robin, jay and grackle, are the farmer's efficient aids and worthy his fostering care.

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