

The Centre Democrat.

BELLEFONTE, 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, Bellefonte, 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.

If you go to the fair to see and learn, that's one thing; if you go to see and be seen, that's another.

The dry weather of the fall, so far, is favorable to ditching. Much of the farm land of our county, particularly in the Bald Eagle Valley, would be benefited by underdraining, and it can be done now to much better advantage than when the ground has been soaked with late fall rains.

Some one, in writing of "Farm Divisions" in the *Farmer's Friend*, of the 6th instant, speaks of fences as "ornamental," and advocates the old Virginia worm fence for division between fields on the score of durability and convenience! And he seems to be serious, too!

In the *Democrat*, of August 28, we published an account of experiments made with several different fertilizers on the wheat crop by Hon. W. W. Reed, of Erie, in which he referred to continued experiments, the results of which would be known in the harvest of 1879. We wrote Mr. Reed asking for a statement of these results, and publish his reply in another column.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., is a favored city just now, and is enjoying a week full of agricultural good things. On Monday the National Agricultural Congress opened its annual session there, followed by the meeting of the American Pomological Society, which held its first session yesterday. In addition this is the week of the fair of the Western N. Y. Agricultural Society. Our friends Joseph Harris, James Vick and William C. Barry, and all the agricultural, floricultural and horticultural lights of lesser degree, who illuminate Rochester by their presence, will have a full week of it.

The short hay crop of this season makes the saving of the fodder of the corn crop a more important matter than usual. The stalks will be much more valuable if cut green than if left to be killed by frost. Besides this early cutting helps curing, and the husking may be done in good season, and the fodder be safely housed before it is injured by the rough weather of late fall and early winter. Care in shocking will tend to save fodder, and lighten the work of husking. It might prove profitable to pass through the corn-field before cutting, and cut off and burn all the bunches of smut, and smutty ears. Smut has wonderful re-producing qualities, and seems to be gaining in the corn crop. A little care now might prove to be the "stitch in time."

We note, with pleasure, the unusual care given to putting in the wheat crop this season. In all directions efforts seem to be made to have the ground in the best possible condition. During a little trip through the Bald Eagle Valley the other day, we noticed two or three cases in which farmers had returned to the old practice of *plowing in the seed*. In the cases which came under our observation the fields had been fallowed and harrowed with sufficient frequency to keep the weeds from getting too much start, and then covered with fine barnyard manure. The seed was sown upon this, and plowed in with a shallow furrow, making "lands" about twenty-four feet wide, and deepening the "dead furrows" between them, for the purpose of drawing off the surface water. It seemed strange, in these days of drills and cultivators, and disc harrows, and all the other "improved machinery" which inventive genius has given the farmer, to see this return to the primitive methods of our fathers, but we are not at all certain that the "good old way" will not, in some instances at least, prove the best way.

The current number of the *Rural New Yorker* is its special "wheat number," and it is crammed full of useful reading on this subject from end to end. The only criticism that we have to make is that it is too late. It should have appeared at least two weeks earlier, that the present season's seeding, which is now practically ended, might have been benefited by it.

A WESTFIELD, MASS., FARMER is trying an interesting experiment to see if high cultivation will successfully produce three crops in one season. He began cutting, last week, a fine crop of tobacco, "set" about the 20th of June, upon land from which he had just cut a crop of grass. July 25th turnip seed was sown between the rows of tobacco, and present appearances indicate a favorable termination of the experiment.

This would be much more interesting if we could know something about the rate at which manure has been applied to the ground for the tobacco and turnip crops, and how much more he expects to apply before sowing grain on it next year.

Stable Manure the Stand-by.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The constantly increasing use of commercial or chemical manure in this country is an indication of progress in agriculture; but it is well to do things with moderation, and to hold fast the old that is proved, while accepting and utilizing to our best advantage the good things that are new. Prominent among the old that should not be neglected, is stable manure, not only its use, but also its careful manufacture; we should not merely utilize what we cannot help making, but we should make as much of it as we can profitably. It will, of course, not pay to keep animals solely as machines for working hay, straw and roots into manure, and then to sell them at a loss; but whilst the vicissitudes of the local markets may occasionally reduce the price of stock to so low a point as to produce this result, we do not think that any fair-minded farmer will contend that as a general thing he can sell a well-fatted beef, or a good heifer, or a sturdy brace of steers that he has raised for more than their cost. If he has fed them poorly, and they are lean and scrawny, he may not find buyers; if he has fed them well, somebody will take them at a paying price; and the more liberally they are fed, the better their manure. And when the farmer has this manure he knows just what it is good for, and what he can do with it if he has had any ordinary amount of experience to guide him in his business; and it is of all manures the least likely to give him the go-by, with the plea that the season was unfavorable for its work.

Used properly, as every good farmer knows how to use it, it can never do any harm, notwithstanding some of the foolishness that is occasionally seen in the papers about the matter. In an article which lately came under our notice we are treated to several assertions as to the bad effect of stable manure on the quality of certain crops, for which we believe there is very slight foundation, if any at all; and when there are not assertions as to harm that has been done, there are suggestions supplied by the writer's fertile imagination, of greater harm that may be done. It is asserted that vegetables are more watery and otherwise of a poorer quality, when manured than when chemical manures are used—that pig's dung imparts a flavor of its own to roots and to tobacco; and it is suggested that the decaying animal matter of this manure may cause disease in animals that feed of grass produced with its aid.* Farmers should learn by practice how to make profitable use of chemical fertilizers; but they should not be led by any such statements and hints as these to give up stable manure; it is after all, the staple feeder of the crops in any long settled country, and in the present condition of things the human population of the world cannot be fed and clothed without its assistance.

*It is perhaps unnecessary for us to suggest that such nonsense as is here referred to is probably written by some "chemical fertilizer" agent.—ED. DEMOCRAT.

Letter from Hon. W. W. Reed.

ERIE, September 4, 1879.

EDITORS DEMOCRAT—Dear Sirs: Your letter came duly to hand, and in reply I am sorry to say that my wheat last fall was badly injured by the "fry" and winter killed in the winter and early spring, and from these causes there were so many "bare spots" in the sections that I intended to cut and thrash separately, that it was not possible to tell anything about the results of the fertilizers. What wheat there was very plump and full, but I don't expect to get over eight or ten bushels to the acre.

I shall continue my experiments, and hope for better luck next time.

Truly yours, &c., WM. W. REED.

Now is the time to perfect your plans for that new poultry house which you have been thinking about so long, and which you need so badly. Don't let your hens go through another winter without a comfortable shelter.

Experiments with Wheat.

From the Practical Farmer.

As appropriate to the season, we wish to suggest some experiments with the wheat crop. First, as to the amount of seed per acre. A large majority of farmers sow from five to six pecks, probably because their fathers did. Experiment on our soil has demonstrated that one bushel or less will produce all the land is capable of, and in fact, more than a larger quantity. We have grown a heavy crop from half a bushel of seed, and the result of our experiment in this direction has been to reduce, one-third or more, the amount of seed sown, and we have increased the yield by so doing. Another experiment we would suggest is in the way of fining and compacting the soil. It is the practice of many farmers to sow their wheat after a single harrowing. We are convinced from our own practice that on some soils several bushels to the acre may be added, or the crop even doubled in some instances, by a dollar's worth of work expended to the acre in pulverizing the soil. Experiments with fertilizers are of great importance. Try on a plot specially selected for the purpose, some special fertilizers. Try pure bone on one plot, bone and ashes on another, wheat bran composted with leaf mold for a few weeks on a third, and salt on a fourth. Then on a small plot, at least, try the effect of cultivation. There are statements going the round of the agricultural papers that cultivation will double the yield of wheat. If these statements are true, we want to know it, and if they are published in the interest of those having machinery for sale, we also want to know it. It may be that on some soils it will be largely beneficial and not on the others, and each farmer should know for himself. A few square rods, thoroughly cultivated and compared with an adjoining plot uncultivated, will help to settle the question, and if a hundred or more will try the same experiment, and report through *The Farmer*, it will throw still more light on the question.

Errors in Poultry Keeping.

Fanny Field in Practical Farmer.

An eminent poultry breeder once said "hens were only machines for laying eggs," and a great many inexperienced poultry raisers accept his statement literally, and do not feed their "egg-machines" any more than they would a sewing machine; if they must look upon hens as machines, let them also consider that most machines need oiling occasionally.

Another error is in over feeding, especially the heavy Cochins and Brahmas; these rapid flesh-producing breeds are given fattening food until they are so loaded down with fat that they are worthless as layers forever after, and the Asiatics get the name of being enormous eaters, and poor egg-producers, when the fault lays with the owner's manner of feeding, and not with the "ravenous appetites" of the large breeds.

Another bad practice is that of irregular feeding; the fowls are fed whenever the farmer or his wife or some of the children happen to think of it. Sometimes they are fed early in the morning; then again they get their morning meal about the middle of the forenoon, and sometimes they don't get it at all; it is starvation one day and over-feeding the next.

Another great drawback to success in poultry keeping is the overstocking small yards. Give your fowls room enough to turn around without treading on their neighbors' toes.

Another error is the custom of keeping a rooster for every half dozen hens. Where fowls are kept on the farm and have free range, one good, vigorous, healthy young rooster to every fifteen or twenty hens is sufficient.

Another mistake that farmers often make is that of compelling fowls to roost on the wood-pile, on the fence, in the trees, in an open shed, or anywhere else they can find a place, during the entire winter. Under such circumstances it takes every crumb of food that the hens can get to keep up animal heat enough to keep from freezing, and as a natural consequence eggs are nowhere.

Women as Poultry Raisers.

From the Poultry World.

The custom practiced in France of allowing the wife so many francs a month or year as "pin-money" to use as she pleases, is one that should be generally adopted, especially in the United States. On the farm the care and profits of some if not all the poultry, could be very properly transferred to the women of the household. The care of poultry is a business naturally adapted to women, as it requires patience and attention, and at the same time, kindness and gentleness, traits too often lacking in the sterner sex. There is no event in connection with poultry raising, during the whole year, which has not its interest for those who care for the innocent creatures of the barn-yard, whether it be feeding the grateful bipeds, gathering the eggs, hatching the chickens, or reducing the flocks in the fall to suit winter quarters, all have their charm, and excite the interest and sympathy of their attendants. There is much complaint

among physiologists that American ladies lose health and beauty earlier than they ought for want of sufficient out-of-door exercise; and this occupation has among its other benefits, that of sending them daily abroad into the pure outer air, and inciting a love for rural, natural beauty not found among those whom no such duty tempts from the fireside.

How Farmers Lose Money.

By not taking one or more good papers.

By keeping no account of farm operations, paying no attention to the maxim that a "stitch in time saves nine," in regard to sowing grain and planting seed at the proper time.

Leaving reapers, plows, cultivators, etc., unsheltered from the rain and the heat of the sun. More money is lost in this way, annually, than most persons would be willing to believe.

Permitting broken implements to be scattered over the farm until they are irreparable. By repairing broken implements at the proper time, many dollars may be saved—a proof of the assertion that time is money.

Attending auction sales and purchasing all kinds of trumpery, because, in the words of the vender, the articles are very cheap.

Allowing fences to remain unrepaired until strange cattle are found grazing in the meadow, grain fields, or browsing on the fruit trees.

Disbelieving the principle of rotation of crops, before making a single experiment.

Planting fruit trees without giving the trees half the attention required to make them profitable.

Tomatoes on Trellises.

Correspondence of Rural New Yorker.

As an experiment I trained one tomato vine this year on a trellis and do not think I shall ever plant another vine, without some kind of a trellis, unless it is to experiment. The fruits on trellised vines attain a large size, are juicy and do not taste of the ground. While the fruit of the vines that were left to run on the ground, were rotting, those trained to a trellis were sound and growing rapidly. The trellis I use is the same as the one described and engraved in the *Rural*, last spring. It takes but little work to make one. Any farmer can make all he wants in the barn some day when it rains. The fruit will ripen more evenly and ten days earlier—which is quite an advantage. Moreover the arrangement gives the garden a more tasty appearance and it is much easier to keep the trellised ground free from weeds.

Gardeners' Talk.

Ask a gardener what kind of soil you should use for such and such plants, and he will reply, a "loose, mellow, rich and well-drained one." It matters little what plant, bush or tree you speak of, that's the condition the soil must be in. Take any soil on your place, sandy, clayey, loamy, gravelly, or even stony; make it as above, and the plant must do well. Here is the whole secret of successful and profitable growth. If you are building a house for yourself, plow, subsoil, drain, manure, plow again, narrow the garden fine, and drain with tiles if necessary, but let it, before planting, possess the four cardinal virtues, and there can be no such word as fail. The best farms are but facsimiles of this.

Birds vs. Insects.

From the Aukley (Iowa) Enterprise.

A farmer in this State will not allow partridges to be killed on his place. He states that recent investigations by him prove conclusively that they are the best protectors the wheat crop could have. In the craw of one he found over a hundred bugs of the most destructive kind to the wheat crop. His crop is excellent, while that of his neighbor is ruined by bugs.

Kerosene and Burdocks.

From Vick's Monthly.

We have used kerosene with complete success in destroying burdocks and other weeds. The plants should be cut off close to the ground and a few drops of the coal-oil poured on to the crowns; they immediately commence to decay and are utterly destroyed. Troublesome weeds on the lawn can thus be surely and speedily disposed of.

Harvesting Beans.

From the American Agriculturist.

Harvest beans carefully to preserve the color. Rain or mildew will reduce the value fully 50 per cent. Stack in tall, narrow heaps around single stakes set in the ground, end cap the stacks with straw to shed rain. Thrash as soon as dry, and store in barrels in a dry place.

Manure as a Mulch.

Manure proper is the grand mulch; it is a mulch for our meadows; it is a mulch for the grain fields, applied at the time of sowing; and for our fruit trees. But it must be applied evenly and finely; then the ground gets all its strength. This has been demonstrated. It has been carried out by science and experience.

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Leaves Snow Shoe 7:30 A. M., arrives in Bellefonte 9:20 A. M.

Leaves Bellefonte 10:20 A. M., arrives at Snow Shoe 11:57 A. M.

Leaves Snow Shoe 2:42 P. M., arrives in Bellefonte 4:12 P. M.

Leaves Bellefonte 4:55 P. M., arrives at Snow Shoe 6:27 P. M.

DANIEL HARRIS, General Superintendent.

BALD EAGLE VALLEY RAILROAD.

ROAD.—Time-Table, December 31, 1877.

Exp. Mail. WESTWARD. EASTWARD. Exp. Mail.

A. M. P. M. P. M. A. M. P. M. A. M.

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