

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

The great importance of the potato crop, and the near approach of the season for planting it, justify us in devoting our space this week largely to its consideration.

A Novel Potato Contest.

A novel contest in the culture of the potato has been going on the past summer among a few members of the Franklin, Mass., Farmers' Club, which may prove of interest to others outside the association. The contest was started by Monroe Morse, a successful cultivator of this crop, who challenged any of all the members of the Club to compete with him for the largest and best crop of potatoes grown upon a single square rod of ground, the competitor who should show the best yield being entitled to the product of all the other competing rods—size and smoothness both to be considered. Competitors were required to plant from the same lot of seed, a barrel of Early Rose purchased in Boston being provided by the challenger for that purpose. Rules for measuring the ground were adopted, and each planter was restricted from planting nearer to the outside lines than allowed by the rules, unless he chose to select a rod from a potato field, in which case the lines must extend only to the middle of the adjoining spaces between the rows. Ten members accepted the challenge, making the number of competitors eleven. The potatoes grown were placed on exhibition at the meeting of the club, at the residence of Wm. E. Nason, Oct. 4, and statements concerning the methods of culture placed on file with the secretary. The reports show as wide a difference in the methods adopted as in the quantity and quality of the crops presented. Below we give the names of the competitors, with the number of pounds grown by each, commencing with the smallest yield:

Table listing potato contest results: S. F. Sargent (381 lbs), A. C. Bullard (56 lbs), Wm. Mann (76 lbs), Wm. Adams (78 lbs), G. S. Hancock (91 lbs), Monroe Morse (93 lbs), James Hood (125 lbs), Alfred Clark (132 lbs), S. W. Squire (159 lbs), A. W. Cheever (183 lbs).

V. R. Warren was a competitor, but by mistake his rod was dug and the potatoes consumed without weighing. The small yields obtained by Messrs. Sargent, Bullard, Mann, Hancock and Morse were due solely to the failure of the seed in germinating—more than half of Mr. Sargent's failing to grow, and nearly half of those planted by Messrs. Bullard, Mann, Hancock and Morse. To promote smoothness, Mr. Sargent laid rye straw in the bottom of the drills, planting the sets upon the top and then covering with soil. For the same purpose Mr. Bullard used forest leaves in the bottom of his drills. As the season was dry at the time of planting, and for some time afterward, this proved a serious damage, although the quality of their product was unexcelled. Messrs. Hancock, Clark, Adams and Hood depended chiefly upon stable manure, while Messrs. Morse, Bullard, Sargent, Squire, Mann and Cheever used principally guano and other commercial fertilizers. Mr. Adams, we believe, applied considerable potash in the form of spent lye, and from this or other causes had a very inferior crop of scabby potatoes. Mr. Squire used Peruvian guano at the rate of 800 pounds per acre, and sulphate of potash 200 pounds per acre. Mr. Hancock applied a two-horse cart load of stable manure to the rod, plowed in, and nine pounds guano sprinkled in the hills. Mr. Cheever plowed in a light coat of manure, and applied guano and sulphate of potash, at the rate of 1,000 pounds of the former and 400 of the latter per acre. Mr. Morse used 800 pounds of guano and 200 pounds potash per acre. Mr. Clark applied stable manure freely and watered the ground occasionally after the potatoes were growing, with a solution of hog manure and poultry droppings. Mr. Hood used a spoonful of Bradley's superphosphate in the hill. Messrs. Hancock, Hood and Adams had each about fifty hills while Mr. Clark had 125 hills. Mr. Squire planted in five double rows or drills, the seed being just twelve inches apart each way, with room for horse cultivation between. Mr. Morse practiced horse cultivation exclusively, never using a hand hoe at all, either in covering or tending the crop, while Messrs. Clark, Hood and Cheever cultivated by hand exclusively. Mr. Squire cut his seed in halves, planting one piece in a place. Mr. Mann used pieces with two eyes, while most of the others were cut to single eyes. Mr. Hood cut his seed

two weeks before planting, and found it much dried, but only one hill failed. The lots were planted from May 6, to June 8, and were dug at three different periods, several competitors being in each case present and taking part in the measuring of the land, and weighing the crop.

By mutual agreement the competitors were required to act also as judges, and, after inspecting the several yields, they unanimously decided that the 183-pound lot, though not quite equal in quality to two or three of the smaller lots, was, nevertheless, on account of both quantity and quality, entitled to the first place on the list. The 1,013 pounds, or 16 53-60 bushels of potatoes, grown on ten square rods by ten competitors, was, therefore, awarded to A. W. Cheever, who in response to the announcement stated that although at the earnest solicitation of his friend, Mr. Morse, the challenger, he had joined in the competition, and had done his best to give some one a handsome yield of potatoes, yet with his well-known views concerning the injurious tendency of all forms of games of chance in which one man's luck is another man's loss, he could accept only those grown upon his own plot; and as parties had expressed a desire to secure seed for planting from these trial lots, he would direct that they be sold at auction, the proceeds to be placed in the treasury of the club, to be used towards paying for a lecture during the coming winter. The other competitors agreeing to the same arrangement, the whole lot was sold, netting to the club the sum of \$11.47, thus closing a competitive trial in which valuable experience had been gained by all and without loss to any. The following is the

STATEMENT OF A. W. CHEEVER:

The land on which I grew the trial rod of potatoes has been under cultivation several years, producing chiefly forage crops. Last year it produced a crop of rye fodder and a crop of oat fodder, and these were followed by a crop of barley, each crop being manured either with stable manure or commercial fertilizers. The soil is a heavy loam exposed to the East, quite moist early in the season, so that an early plowing caused it to form somewhat into lumps which remained unpulverized during the season. It was plowed but once this year, a light coat of stable manure being turned in about seven inches deep. This was somewhat mixed with the soil by deep cultivation after plowing. The rows were marked out with a large cultivator tooth about eighteen inches apart, run quite shallow, so that the potato sets, when planted, were scarcely below the surface of the ground.

Before planting, about 800 pounds of guano, and 400 pounds of sulphate potash, per acre, were spread broadcast over the furrows. The seed was prepared by exposure several days to a strong light, to start the sprouts into a short, healthy growth. When ready to plant, single eyes were cut from the seed, selecting only those which were well started and of good, strong appearance. Most of the eyes were cut from the stem end or middle of the potato, where considerable potato could be taken out with each eye. As they were cut, they were laid in a basket, with plaster dusted over them in sufficient quantity to cover the cut surface, and to partially protect the sprouts from bruising while being handled. The pieces were dropped singly, and about fourteen inches apart, the whole amount of ground planted in this way being from two to three rods.

The sets were covered by hand not over an inch deep. Just as the shoots were breaking ground, the plot was dusted over with guano, at the rate of 200 pounds per acre, and then raked into the soil with a garden rake, killing, at the same time, all the small weeds which had started. As the potatoes were so near the surface, and so thickly planted, it was found impracticable to hill them in the ordinary way, so the ground was mulched with chopped straw for a protection, not only against weeds, but to keep the new potatoes from being sunburnt as they showed themselves above the surface. The mulch also, in a measure, secured a cool, moist soil, during the hot, dry weather of midsummer. The straw was put on some three inches deep, but soon settled to one inch, and was then covered with a second coat of mulch which remained undisturbed till digging time.

To keep the bugs in check, a sprinkling of dry plaster was used three or four times, with just enough Paris green to shade the plaster, giving it a slight greenish tinge. A very few weeds were pulled by hand during the season of growth, but it was the aim to travel over the patch just as little as possible, as the plants covered nearly the whole surface. The rod of land was measured off from near the centre of the patch, at digging time, by Horace Morse and S. W. Squire, and the potatoes weighed by Mr. Morse, who certifies that there were 183 pounds—a yield per acre equal to 488 bushels. The most important lesson I have learned by the experiment is that potatoes must have room to grow under ground, or the yield will be diminished and the quality impaired. I would never plant so near the surface again, and

with an equally favorable season should expect to do better another year.

Manuring Potatoes.

It is a mistaken idea, that some are affected with, to suppose that potatoes can be grown upon a poor soil or with a small quantity of manure or fertilizer. The potato is by no means an exception to the general rule that all farm crops require fertility to their perfect and successful development.

In order to produce 100 bushels of potatoes, with the average quantity of top, requires of the chief elements of plant growth—nitrogen or ammonia, phosphoric acid, and potash—the following quantities: Ammonia 22.50 lbs., phosphoric acid 51 lbs., and potash 179 lbs., being one third more phosphoric acid and two and one-half times as much potash as is required to produce 58 bushels of Indian corn. From this fact it is evident that potatoes may well follow Indian corn and vice versa. In raising potatoes the deficiency in necessary fertilizing material is likely to occur in phosphoric acid and potash, which is one cause of the constitutional deterioration of this plant on many farms. It makes little difference how these elements are supplied; ashes are excellent for supplying the potash, but no matter how large the quantity of this ingredient, if the phosphoric acid is wanting the crop will correspondingly fail. And the only advantage of an over-application of any ingredient is that it is thereby stored in the soil and held in reserve for future crops. It is frequently advantageous to plant potatoes upon green sward, but our practice has been rather to follow a corn crop, in which case the soil is mellow and better adapted to the use of horse labor in the planting than green sward; and again, if the soil has been properly manured, it is partially prepared for a crop of potatoes. Our practice has been to follow corn that has been well manured, and only manure the potatoes in the hill, getting good crops. When we think the soil is somewhat deficient in manure a quantity is spread and plowed in, although the other course is to be preferred.

Upon an examination of tables containing the valuable constituents of manure, it is found that horse manure is more valuable in its combination of these constituents, adapted to the production of the potato, than any other farm manure. Horse manure, in its natural undried state, contains 12.2 lbs. of phosphoric acid, 28 lbs. of potash and 5.4 lbs. of nitrogen or 6.5 lbs. of ammonia in every 1,000 lbs. From this it is clear to be seen that by an application of three and one-half tons of this manure, 100 bushels of potatoes should be produced. This accords exactly with our experience; we have had better results from the use of horse manure with potatoes than with any other kind, in careful tests.

This should be the study of the farmer—if there is any special adaptability of manures to particular crops, whereby far better general results can be obtained, they should be so employed. There should always be a proportionate supply of all necessary constituents or else there is a loss in the use of those portions that can not be appropriated by the crop. In growing crops, if a manure is applied that furnishes a large surplus of one constituent, that lies unappropriated until some rotation that requires its use. This is very well where one application of manure is left to satisfy a rotation; then the care must be exercised in the selection of the rotating crops, but in annual fertilizing the fertilizing material should be made as nearly as can be in accordance with the demands of the crop.

W. H. YEOMANS.

Mulching Potatoes.

From the Country Gentleman. It pays to mulch potatoes. Straw pretty well rotted makes about as good a general covering as anything. If the ground needs fertility, coarse manure is preferable. Any coarse material—weeds, swamp grass, unrotted straw—has its good effect. Apply as soon as the cultivator is withdrawn. The benefit is more than is usually supposed. It keeps the ground moist and cool, two conditions essential to the best success of this plant. Weeds also are kept down; the ground retains its mellowness, the mulch preventing the rain from packing it, and the sun from baking it, and when worked for the crop, will be found in a decidedly improved condition, the mulch by that time being decayed and mixing with the soil. The soil will be cleaner, richer and mellow.

I HAVE been very successful in raising potatoes under straw in the following manner: Put the land in good order by plowing, rolling, harrowing, &c.; lay off rows two feet apart, and put one piece in a place, one foot apart; cut small—not more than two eyes. Cover in the usual manner with plow or hoe, and when the potatoes first begin to come up, cover them ten inches deep with straw or prairie hay. In the fall, when you go to dig, rake off the straw from a few rows at a time with a horse-rake. After the digging is done, plow the straw for manure.

Burbank Seedling Potato.

This sort stands to-day at the head of all the new potatoes. It has the vigor of the Peerless and Peachblow, giving remunerative crops on poor and grand returns on rich soil. The beautiful color of the tops and their freedom from blight of the leaves, is in pleasing contrast to all the other varieties in cultivation. The stalks are many and long, covering and shading the whole ground, preventing the growth of weeds and grass, in fields of lazy cultivators. The potatoes are long, roundish and white, of uniform size, and great beauty. In healthfulness they are unsurpassed. In yield they equal the Peerless, under the same culture. In quality they are all one can desire.

Potato Culture.

For the past twenty years my practice has been to plant the largest of the small ones, cutting two eyes on a piece and putting three pieces in a hill, and, as every eye will not come, I intend to have three or four stalks to a hill. If you get twelve or fourteen stalks to a hill you will surely have small potatoes, for there is just as much impropriety in overseeding potatoes as corn. When seeded light the vines grow strong and erect, admit the sun and air to the ground, thus tending to prevent disease and blight. When overseeded the vines grow slender, are liable to break down, retain the moisture of the ground, mildew and prematurely decay. I believe the only advantage derived from planting large potatoes is the extra amount of starch secreted, and that, on the other hand, is more than made up by the gain in seed and the slight cost of the small ones.

A SUBSCRIBER in Goshen writes with reference to the potato disease: "Many fields have not rotted at all, and I am satisfied that it is worst where green manure is applied. My way has been to plant corn on turf with plenty of manure, then the next year potatoes, manuring in the hill, with some concentrated fertilizer. The Beauty of Hebron has not rotted as bad as the Early Rose with same treatment."

In raising potatoes, wood ashes are one of the best fertilizers that can be found for that purpose. Good soil and a clover sod will raise potatoes, if they have good cultivation. Our new varieties will stand more manure than the older kinds, as they were originated and raised by high cultivation.

LIST OF JURORS.—The following list of Grand and Traverse jurors have already been drawn for the regular April term of Court, commencing Monday, April 26, 1880:

- GRAND JURORS: James Hamilton, Benner, William Groves, Benner, John H. Odenkirk, Potter, Charles Shiller, Potter, George Kline, Colgate, H. B. Tetterton, Walker, Morris Furey, Spring, J. J. Meyer, Potter, Philip church, Pastor, Rev. J. Bonshar, residence, 739 1/2 N. E. Street, S. W. Potter, R. C. CHESTERMAN, Belleville. TRAVESER JURORS—FIRST WEEK: J. E. Way, Union, Shuman Lyon, Spring, Jacob Condit, Harris, James Morrison, Worth, E. J. Kelley, Worth, Lewis Smith, Harris, Geo. W. Spangler, Potter, Edw. Graham, Belleville, Frank Gowland, Philadelphia, John Leach, Harris, Daniel Runkle, Gregg, Albert Owens, Philadelphia, Geo. H. Zeigler, Philadelphia, Edward Smith, Harris, Chester Munson, Philadelphia, David Mattern, Half Moon, Alfred Hesterman, Bush, John B. McCord, Bush, Roland C. Irvin, Boggs, Curtin Meyer, Bush, William Wagner, Boggs, Nelson Askey, Howard tp., Leonard Metzger, Liberty, Joseph Runnberger, Patton, Joseph L. Hall, Howard tp., William Groves, Benner, Henry G. Royer, Miles, Thomas Morryman, Taylor, James Adams, Philadelphia, William A. Kelly, Patton, John Q. Miles, Huston, William Eckley, Belleville, Isaac Stover, Spring, Jacob Garberick, Walker, Charles S. Beck, Walker, W. W. Beck, Marion, John C. South, Miles, J. A. O'Grady, Ferguson, Henry Flahburn, Benner, John Gilliland, Snow Shoe, George E. Book, Burnside, S. D. Eric, Ferguson, Wilson Russell, Haines, Thos. Wilson, Half Moon, James C. Boal, Potter, Ans. Atherton, Philadelphia, Samuel Glenn, Colgate, James C. Boal, Potter, William Eckley, Belleville, Isaac Stover, Spring, Jacob Garberick, Walker, Charles S. Beck, Walker, W. W. Beck, Marion, John C. South, Miles, J. A. O'Grady, Ferguson, Henry Flahburn, Benner, John Gilliland, Snow Shoe, George E. Book, Burnside, S. D. Eric, Ferguson.

Business Cards.

- HARNESS MANUFACTORY: In Garman's New Block, BELLEVILLE, PA. 1-17. F. P. BLAIR, JEWELRY, WATCHES, CLOCKS, WARE, &c. All work neatly executed. On Allegheny street, under Brooker's House. 4-47. DEALERS IN PURE DRUGS ONLY. J. ZELLER & SON, DRUGGISTS, No. 8, Brookerhoff Row. All the Standard Patent Medicines Prescriptions and Family Recipes accurately prepared. Trusses, Shoulder Braces, &c., &c. 4-47. LOUIS DOLL, FASHIONABLE BOOT & SHOEMAKER, Brookerhoff Row, Allegheny street, Belleville, Pa. 1-17. R. C. HEWES, Pres't. J. F. BARRE, Cash'r. FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF BELLEVILLE, Allegheny Street, Belleville, Pa. 4-47. CENTRE COUNTY BANKING COMPANY. Receive Deposits, And Allow Interest, Discount Notes, Buy and Sell Gov. Securities, Gold and Coupons. JAMES A. BRAVER, President. J. D. SUGGER, Cashier. 4-47.

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OFFICIAL DIRECTORY. REGULAR TERMS OF COURT—Fourth Mondays of January, April, August and November. President Judge—HON. CRAS A. MATYR, LOCK HAVEN. Additional Judge—HON. JOHN H. OYK, BELLEVILLE. Associate Judges—HON. DANIEL RHODES, JOHN DIVES, PHOENIXIA. County Commissioners—ANDREW GREGG, GEO. SWAB, JAMES DUNKLE. Clerk to County Commissioners—HENRY RECK. Attorney to County Commissioners—C. M. BOWER. Janitor of the Court House—BARTER GALBRAITH. Recorder of Deeds, &c.—WILLIAM A. TORRES. District Attorney—DAVID A. FORTNEY. Sheriff—JOHN SPANGLER. Treasurer—HENRY LEAGUE. County Surveyor—JONATHAN DAVLING. Coroners—DR. JOSEPH ADAMS. County Commissioners—ANDREW GREGG, GEO. SWAB, JAMES DUNKLE. Clerk to County Commissioners—HENRY RECK. Attorney to County Commissioners—C. M. BOWER. Janitor of the Court House—BARTER GALBRAITH. Recorder of Deeds, &c.—WILLIAM A. TORRES. District Attorney—DAVID A. FORTNEY. Sheriff—JOHN SPANGLER. Treasurer—HENRY LEAGUE. County Surveyor—JONATHAN DAVLING. Coroners—DR. 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