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Edited by Dr. F. M. HEXAMER. This popular Magazine, heretofore published by Messrs. BLISS, SON & CO., will hereafter be published by the present proprietors, in an entirely new dress, and will appear in January, April, July and October of each year.

First number will be ready about April 20th.

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# 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, Penna.," that other farmers may have the benefit of it. Let communications be timely, and be sure that they are brief and well pointed.

MR. HENRY ROTHROCK, of Spring township, showed us a stalk of oats last week, which had been taken from his field, and which measured over five feet long. It was "superb." Mr. Rothrock says his field is full of just such oats as this, that it is all Hancock oats, and that his crop will be like Hancock's majority in Pennsylvania--big.

THE subject of "Ensilage," or, in other words, the preservation of green corn, or other green crops in a pit in the earth, for winter feeding, is now attracting much attention among farmers everywhere. Of course, the entire subject is new to many of our readers, and for their benefit we quote from the Chicago Live Stock Journal a reply to an Ohio farmer which gives the clearest explanation of the process that has yet come under our observation.

We have received, from Secretary McConkey, the premium list of the great sheep show which is to take place at Philadelphia in September, immediately after the close of the State Society's Exhibition, and under its auspices. The premiums offered are on a very liberal scale, and will doubtless have the effect of bringing out the finest display of sheep, wool and wool products ever gotten together. The "Grand Sweepstakes" prize, offered for the best pen of Merinos, is \$450, and sums between that and \$100, are freely sprinkled all through the list.

DURING a drive down the Bald Eagle Valley and up Nittany, a few days ago, our attention was directed to the greatly improved farming of the two valleys, and particularly that of the Bald Eagle. Crops in both are looking well, and giving evidence of good care, and intelligent and improved cultivation; but our friends in Nittany, among whom are some of the best farmers in the county, will have to "look a leedle out," or their Bald Eagle brethren will soon be fully abreast of them. "Bald Eagle farming" has long been a sort of by-word of reproach, but at the rate of improvement now manifest all along the valley, the old-time sneer will soon become a compliment. Fence rows have been cleaned out, lines straightened, stumps pulled and burned, swamps drained, brush patches cleared, old buildings repaired and new ones erected, and the spirit of improvement and evidences of thrift are seen on nearly every farm. The land seems to be better tilled than formerly; crops are more abundant and more diversified. Among the novelties we noticed "fodder corn," sown to help out the short hay crop; Hungarian grass or millet for the same purpose, and tobacco. This last mentioned crop seems to be commanding a good share of attention. At Mount Eagle Jacob R. Leathers is cultivating it to a considerable extent; at Howard, four acres of the Heverly farm have been devoted to it by Samuel Brickley, and J. A. Woodward has given up nearly eleven acres of his place to its culture. This is divided into lots, which are being cultivated by men from Clinton county whose names we did not learn. Both lots are fine, and we saw individual plants with fourteen leaves, and found numbers of leaves measuring from twelve to sixteen inches long. At Eagleville, Mr. Mansker, on the old Liggett farm, now owned by P. B. Cridler, has no less than seventeen acres devoted to the weed, all of which looks well. It is divided up into several small lots, under the care of as many individuals, most of whom live in the village. All this is decided improvement upon the old "Bald Eagle farming," and we congratulate our friends there upon the progress they have made.

# Book Notices.

A recent visit from an agent of the American Cyclopaedia has set us to thinking a good deal about the education of farmers' boys. The truth is that the average farmer finds very serious difficulties in the way of giving his sons even a good ordinary education. While, thanks to our common school system, the rudiments of an education are placed within reach of every boy in the land, the sparsely settled communities of the rural districts cannot afford the best schools or the most competent teachers, and the farmer who desires to give his children the advantages of even an ordinarily good English education, finds himself confronted by difficulties which the people of the towns do not have to contend with. Absence of proper schools and competent teachers near home, and inability to incur the heavy expense of sending to the towns where these advantages may be had, prevent many a farmer's family from attaining that degree of intelligence which should be the possession of every young man and woman in the land. Under these circumstances the farmer and his family should buy, read and study the best books to be had; and of these we know of none better, as an aid in the general education of the family, than the American Cyclopaedia. It is literally filled with the best obtainable information upon all subjects, and in such condensed form that even the farmer, busy as he is, may post-himself thoroughly upon any matter to which his attention may be called. We have neither time nor space to speak of the merits of this work in detail. It is enough to say that it is the latest, fullest, most reliable, and in all respects the best of all the Cyclopedias published, and as a medium of obtaining general information is worth more to the young man or young woman who has mastered the ordinary branches taught in the country schools, than all the schools in the State.

The Fruit Recorder has the following:

**GOLDEN LAWS OF THE STRAWBERRY.**  
I. Strawberries chosen--wouldst thou procure? Dig deep and mulch and strew manure.  
II. To make the fruitful vines endure, Dig deep and mulch and strew manure.  
III. To make assurance doubly sure, Dig deep and mulch and strew manure.  
Stem cypic, here is taught to scoff at. On these three laws hang all the profit.

# Fine or Coarse Ground Feed.

"E. W. S." in Country Gentleman. L., page 200, inquires how fine feed should be ground for stock, stating that nearly half the farmers there think it should be ground fine. I fully agree with the first part of the answer, "that it has been proved that whole grain is inferior to ground meal," and also that when very fine it is more likely to become packed in a mass in the stomach than when it is coarser or granulated; but this does not prove that it is as well or better to grind it coarse, as L. perhaps might infer. Whole grain is inferior to ground because the fineness of division in the ground grain gives it much more surface for the digesting fluid to act upon, and thus digestion becomes much more complete.

The question must be, in what condition of fineness is meal most digestible when properly fed? If we grant that coarse cracked corn allows a freer circulation of the gastric juice than fine corn meal, still it does not prove that more of this coarse ground will be digested. In fact I have conclusively proved the contrary by a number of careful experiments in feeding very finely-ground meal for one week, and then coarsely-ground meal, and carefully examining the manure, found scarcely a trace of the fine, while about 10 per cent. of the coarsest passed without digestion. It would have been somewhat more satisfactory if the manure had been analyzed; yet inspection was quite sufficient as a general comparison. This experiment consisted in feeding alone three quarts of either quality per day. I also tried the same experiment by mixing first the fine meal with twice its bulk of cut hay, moistened, during ten days, and then the coarse mixed the same; and in this case not a trace of the fine meal could be found in the manure, but what was judged to be about 5 per cent. of the coarse was found in the manure. In feeding shelled corn alone, 20 per cent. appeared in the manure, but when the shelled corn was fed with cut hay, which rendered it difficult to separate the corn from the hay, both being eaten together, about half as much appeared in the manure.

I think the principle holds good that the benefit of grinding is in proportion to the fineness of division, and if this is the case, farmers should be advised to feed the meal with such coarse food as will separate the particles of meal, and thus secure complete digestion. Because careless farmers will feed meal without any admixture of cut hay, straw or chaff, their bad example should not lead us to modify the true principles applicable to grinding and proper feeding.

# How They Treat Stable Manure at the Kansas Agricultural College Farm.

By Prof. E. M. Shelton. Our barnyard is situated on a slight slope, and all drainage of the hill side is conveyed by ditches around the yard. We have found by experience that the rain-fall upon the barnyard, if it can be all retained, is, with the liquid voidings of the animals, about the quantity of moisture needed to keep the manure pile constantly moist. To retain the moisture properly the barnyard bottom is made slightly concave to prevent any overflow of its contents. Occasionally this does happen, but only during or after very heavy rains. Into this concavity, or "basin," as your correspondent has it, the drains from the different tiers of stalls in the barn empty. Each day the manure from horse and cattle stalls alike is dumped into this depression, where the hogs turn it over and extract whatever of pig feed it contains. But we aim to feed our pigs so that they have no temptation to carry investigations beyond the manure thrown out each day. I would, on no account, allow the pigs to constantly turn over the whole pile. The pig is an expensive laborer in more senses than one; and then the manure must be kept compact if we would have that slow fermentation, during which the ammonia is held in the pile, in the form of ammonia salts. Our manure pile we keep low and flat, and in such a position that the stock constantly pass over it, treading it solid from the first.

# Thistles and Hay.

Cor. of the Tribune. Thistles on rich meadow land in grass may be eradicated in two years with no direct cost or labor. Every farmer, whether troubled with thistles or not, should cut his best and heaviest grass in June, about the time it begins to head out (Timothy grass), and then, in due time, cut the second crop. This practice followed two years (on my land) will kill every thistle, no matter how thick they may be, in small patches, even to cover the ground. This is my experience on my farm; I cannot say how it might be on other farms and under other circumstances, only as I reason from analogy. I am inclined to think that all those farmers who practice cutting the first crop of grass in June are not troubled with thistles after the second year of mowing. Many farmers will consider this remedy worse than the disease, but with me it is not a remedy, for I thus practice, thistles or no thistles. I am aware that most farmers regard the cutting of two crops of grass upon the same ground in one season as very exhausting to the soil, but reason and experience teach me that one late crop exhausts the soil more than two crops, the first of which is cut in June. Repeated analyses of green grass indicate its quantity of nutrition to be 88 per cent., while that which is cut in bloom contains 62 per cent., and that cut when ripe has only 31 per cent. Then cut early and kill out your thistles, and thus cut off propagation by the ripening of the seed; and, still more, by this early cutting prevent any and all weeds from going to seed.

# Dominiques.

G. O. Brown in American Farmer. My experience has been, that the American Dominiques are the best winter layers--they are excellent mothers. Mr. J. Addison Smith, of Beulah Farm, Howard Co., Md., who recently spent some eighteen months traveling in Europe, visited the Paris and Belgium Gardens of Acclimation, and saw the choice poultry, writes me as follows: "I am convinced beyond all peradventure that the American Dominiques are the best chickens for farmers. They combine every good quality, are good layers, the best of mothers, hardy as hawks, and, like a good Berkshire hog, you can fatten them from the time they are hatched, and on less food than any other breed. The cocks are splendid breeders, take most admirable care of their flocks. They possibly may not lay quite as many eggs as the Leghorn tribe, or make quite as much meat as the Cochins. I have during the past few years tried nearly all new breeds and now I've settled down on a substantial basis, and propose to breed for profit--consequently shall confine myself to American Dominiques. I am glad to give an opinion that coincides with mine from such a good authority.

The Plymouth Rock Fowls are becoming quite popular, and they combine many of the qualities of the Dominiques. Although they are a made breed, produced by crossing the Dominique on the Black Java, are now, after years of trial, breeding quite true. They are larger than the Dominique. In plumage the same. As yet their eggs vary in color. They are hardy. Thus it will be seen all the good traits, or perfection, can not be found in any one breed of fowls. It is said that there is no better way to destroy sorrel than to plow the land in early summer, and in July sow buckwheat. Sorrel is a potash plant, and has sometimes been used as a fertilizer for potatoes.

# Ensilage.

From the Live Stock Journal. An Ohio farmer wants us to advise him as to whether it would be safe for him to try the preservation of green corn or other fodder in a silo in the earth as he supposes Germans did years ago. We certainly do not think this the best way to keep green food for making milk. Fermentation should be avoided as far as possible; and it is much more difficult to prevent fermentation of green corn or clover in a trench in the earth than in a silo with air-tight walls, as is now used by M. Goffart, of France. He formerly used the trench in the earth, and found that much better than drying the fodder, but he was not able to prevent the air entering through cracks in the covering of earth when it settled. He succeeded in preserving green fodder in this way for some six or eight years, and regarded it as a great improvement for winter feeding, as its succulence was largely preserved, although fermentation had proceeded further than was desirable.

The trench ensilage was put up as follows: On a dry piece of ground the earth was excavated in a trench 7 feet wide at the top and 5 feet wide at the bottom, and as long as desired. The green corn was cut and laid in lengthways of the ditch and trodden down solid. It was filled to the top of the earth, and then carried up both ways like the roof of a house some 3 or 4 feet above the ground. Then some straw was laid over this and the earth thrown out of the ditch used to cover it some two feet deep. When the green fodder settled and caused the earth covering to crack, more earth was thrown upon these cracks and rammed down to keep the air from entering. This was done several times; and when the fodder was taken out in winter, it was eaten by cattle with a better relish than dry fodder. This is called sour fodder.

But now M. Goffart has adopted a silo built with a tight wall of masonry, 16 feet high, upon each side, and 12 to 16 feet apart, with roof over it. The roof is placed some 3 feet above the top of the wall, so as to give head room for filling.

The best way to build, in most places in this country, is with a water-lime concrete wall, 20 inches at the bottom and 14 inches at the top, the slant being on the outside of the wall, since the inside must be perpendicular and smooth, for the planks, placed on the top of the ensilage, to settle as the green fodder settles or becomes compressed. It is more convenient to have the silo walls 12 to 14 feet apart, rather than wider, as the planks are more easily handled that length.

A silo 12 feet wide, 16 feet high, and 40 feet long, will hold about 190 tons of green fodder. When more room than this is needed, then build two silos, side by side, and let the middle wall be 20 inches thick, carried up perpendicular on both sides, and the two outside walls built as above described.

The door of the silo is in the end, and the planks are placed cross-wise on top after the silo is filled. One plank is taken off at a time and this space cut down for feeding. Instead of laying in the corn lengthways without cutting, as was formerly the way, it is now run through a large cutter, and cut into half-inch lengths, and by a carrier attached to the machine, is delivered over the wall into the silo. Here it is spread evenly and trodden down solid. It will pack much more solid after being cut short in this way, and thus keep the air from entering. When the silo is full and solid, loose planks are fitted in across on top from wall to wall, and a weight pressure is placed on these with stone--about 500 pounds to the square yard of surface. As the green fodder settles these planks go down with it, and keep up a constant pressure on the upper surface, and thus prevent the entrance of air. M. Goffart thinks the small cracks between the planks facilitate the escape of air contained in the ensilage, allowing it to pack so solid that further air cannot enter. It is found to be packed so hard when the end is cut down for feeding, that the air does not effect it during the long time of feeding it out. When the air is properly excluded, as by this method, all kinds of green fodder may be preserved, and thus stock can be given, not merely green corn, but clover, timothy, millet, oats and peas, oats, Hungarian grass, rye, or any other green food. Beet pulp, sugar meal (refuse of corn in grape sugar making), brewers' grains or other like damp refuse, may be preserved in this way by excluding the air.

I HAVE been engaged in the fruit business for a long time, and for the last four or five years neither spade nor plow has been allowed in my graperies, or among my other small fruits, and the result is an abundance of fine berries, when my neighbors' fail. When I gave thorough cultivation I had for labor, wood. When I changed to thorough mulching I was rewarded with an abundance of fine fruit, and wood enough for all purposes. I mulch freely in late fall or early spring, with almost anything that will keep the weeds down. I think the best thing I ever tried was corn stalk litter; especially so of a dry season like the summer just past.