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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, 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.

Less Pig-pen and More Pig-pasture.

SLAB-SIDES PREFERABLE TO PUG-NOSES AND FAT CHEEKS.

Colonel F. D. Curtis in Tribune.

Mere blubber is not desirable food in our climate. As pigs are now bred and fattened they are little more than animate lard. Everybody has been trying for years to see how fat they could make their pigs, and how much they could make them weigh in the shortest possible time. This universal system of stuffing has resulted in breeding out muscle (lean meat), and thickening up the fatty portions, which are merely the deposits of the oil contained in the food. To facilitate this fattening (oil depositing) process, absolute rest is required. Therefore to subserve their purpose pigs are confined in close quarters, with no exercise except stomach exercise. This organ is brought by the nature of the case into a morbid condition, when it is expected to consume and digest without limit. Pigs are stuffed to the very verge of breaking down of their digestive functions, and often beyond it. In the latter case they are speedily slaughtered before they run down. Usually pigs are confined in foul pens, where they are obliged to lie in their filth, and breath air poisonous with the fumes of decay. The whole system is wrong, resulting in distasteful, if not unwholesome food. The effect of this system of care and breeding pigs with the feeding of rich and concentrated food to promote rapid growth, has been to change the nature, or rather the physical construction of the animal from a muscular to a blubberous condition.

Exercise and slow growth conduce to muscular development, as muscles are formed where and when required. This is a universal law in the animal kingdom, illustrated by the blacksmith's arm, the race horse, and it could be shown in perfect demonstration by confining one pig in the way pigs are usually fed, and taking another of the same litter and training it to extended exercise, or by simply allowing it to roam at will in a field during its growth. The pig thus allowed to roam would when fattened possess double the amount of muscle (lean meat) over one kept in a close pen. The recognition of this principle put in practical use can in time change the character of pigs so as to make them more palatable. Everybody complains now-a-days of pork being too fat, and yet everybody almost persists in growing pigs in the very way to make them too fat. Pig meat is naturally healthy food, and calculated for the wants of laboring people, as it furnishes long digestion and plenty of nutrition, which are what they require. The modern improvements in breeding have resulted in making heavy weights in a short time, and in rounding and thickening the bodies, but the so-called improvement has reduced the demand and the value of pigs for food. I do not mean to be understood that fewer hogs are grown, or a less number exported; but I do mean and know that in proportion to the inhabitants in this country a much less quantity of pork is eaten than formerly, and it is simply because of its over-fatness.

There are two ways to remedy this evil; one is to enlarge the pig-pen to a pig-pasture; the other is to grow pigs of the more muscular breeds, or to select breeding stock from those of any breed which give evidence of more development in this direction than of fat. Chunky hogs should be avoided, as chunkiness means fat. It is singular what follies farmers, who should be the most sensible of people, will pursue. They have been deaf so long on pug-nosed and fat-cheeked pigs that they have nearly expelled the pork barrel from every man's cellar, and one of the most profitable animals from the farm. Northern farmers under the delusion of pug-noses and fat-cheeks have ridiculed the "rail-splitters" of the South, whereas the truth is the Southern planter had more sagacity and practical sense than the admirer of improved stock, for the former has well nigh bred himself out of a staple article of food, and a staple source of profitable income, while the latter has kept up the reputation of his bacon, and maintained his supply of wholesome living. As I have suggested, we want more pig-pastures and fewer pig-pens. Growing pigs should have more range, so that there may be a perfect development of body, bone and muscle. They want less concentrated food and more of a light nature, such as grass, cornstalks and roots, to keep them growing but not fat. Under this treatment there would be more length of body and larger frames, which may be rounded

up in the autumn by richer food. A continuous system of rearing and feeding in this manner would produce breeds of hogs not so heavy perhaps in weight, but more desirable as pigs are generally managed.

Manure as a Farm Crop.

Correspondence of Practical Farmer.

Farmers boast of how much corn, oats, wheat or hay they raise; how many cattle, hogs, chickens or sheep they feed, put did you ever hear farmers boast about the largeness of their manure crop? They count from seventy-five to one hundred bushels of corn per acre a large yield; thirty bushels of wheat a good crop; but how many loads of manure per acre is a good crop? Our Granges and farmers' clubs discuss how they can raise the largest crops of potatoes, tobacco or rye; do they ever talk of how they can secure the largest amount of manure? Our agricultural departments publish reports of the yield per acre of the grasses and grains, but do they publish the yield per acre or per farm of applied manure? Perhaps you know who in your county raised the largest crop of hay or grass, but do you know who raised the largest manure crop? You know who of your neighbors farms corn or wheat most successfully, but do you know who farms his manure pile best? You know who of your acquaintances feeds his stock best, but do you know who feeds his soil best? The answer to all these questions must be, No. Why is this? Is not the application of manure as important as the raising of crops? Is it not fully as important to understand how to restore fertility as to take it. Does it not require as much good management to raise a large crop of manure as corn? And does it not pay just as well? Why, then, is there not more interest taken in the subject? Why do not our agricultural societies offer a premium for the best crop of manure as well as for the best crop of grain? Why not offer a blue or a red ribbon for the load of best manure as well as for the best bushel of wheat?

Now it seems to me that this subject is greatly neglected. One farmer may sell 5,000 bushels of corn, 2,000 of wheat, and 3,000 of oats. Another may sell half that amount and we will say that the first is the largest and best farmer. But hold! The first farmer burns his straw; ditto corn-stalks; feeds his hogs on a side hill where the manure washes into the creek, and allows his stable manure to fire fang. The second carefully saves his straw for manure; sees that it and the stubs of the corn-fodder rot in the compost heap; saves his hog manure for his sandy soil, and makes and applies five loads of manure where the other makes one. The first farmer may put more dollars and cents into his pocket for a few years, but he is steadily impoverishing his soil; the second is yearly increasing his land's productiveness and hence is adding all the time to his capital. The former class are getting very scarce, but they still exist.

Farmers are fond of a beautiful horse—who is not?—of a fine field of wheat waving golden in the sun; of the tasseled maize that promises seventy-five bushels to the acre; of the potato that must be split to get it into the pot; of the high-bred Brahma rooster of majestic carriage that struts and rules in the hen coop; of their patient wives and rosy daughters; of their handy man servants and maid servants; even of their long-eared asses, but what farmer is fond of his manure pile?

Every successful farmer has a healthy respect for the reputation of his manure pile and a really commendable and praiseworthy pride in the large size and excellent quality of his manure crop. The farmer who has a little, weak, stunted, dwarfed manure pile down in one corner of his feed lot, is considerably behind the times. If the truth was known, I wonder how many farmers make two wagon loads of good manure for each acre that they till? Not many, I surmise; yet it can be done and ought to be done.

Who will start a manure "boom"? Who will stand on his own dung hill and say, "I challenge the world to beat it?" I am not poking fun. For seriously, the time will come when men will take as much pride in a large crop of manure as of corn, and when agricultural societies will not forget to put "Manure, best barrel," on their premium lists.

The accomplished fruit grower is always on the alert to induce his trees to make a moderate, healthy growth, and at the same time to preserve a perfect outline, and an open, regular disposition of the branches. The use of mulching material is unquestionably a beneficial operation, especially whilst the trees are young. Rough, coarse, strong manure will keep the surface of the soil moist and cool, and at the same time supply nourishment to the numerous fibrous roots. Frequently, insects will collect under this mulch in large numbers, but if it be constantly stirred this may be obviated.

At a recent farmers' meeting a speaker gave a receipt for making farming pay, as follows: "Have but one business, and get up in the morning and see to it yourself."

Wheat Experiments.

G. Griffin in Practical Farmer.

I cut four acres of Fultz wheat on the 24th of June, this year, being earlier than I ever cut wheat before. This piece of wheat was on ground that I have been experimenting on. Three years ago last fall I put it in wheat after oats, putting on a light top-dressing—about five loads of barnyard manure to the acre. The next season I harvested only eight bushels per acre. I thought the land wanted feeding, so in the spring I put it in drilled corn, drilling in two bushels per acre. It came up well and proved to be a good crop. In August I plowed it under and sowed to wheat in September. We had it very dry in the fall and it made but little growth. It went into winter looking badly. I think the corn turned under furnished too much underdrainage, making it worse than it would have been. But next spring after the wheat got root, it came on finely and was better than I expected it to be. I had sowed it to clover in the spring, but failing to get a catch, I thought I would try again. So I plowed it up again last season, and sowed it to wheat. When I commenced to plow it I saw that the land had changed its complexion. It looked a good, healthy color. The wheat came on fine, getting a good growth by winter. I sowed it to Peavine clover last March, and I have a splendid catch.

I had been reading in the Farmer about the amounts of seed sown by different ones, and I sowed this field in five different patches, commencing with a bushel and a half on first patch, and running down to half a bushel. In cutting I find more straw in the first sowing, but a great many short heads, but in the last sowing the heads are all of good length. I think the yield of the several patches will not differ much, and the whole piece will perhaps average 35 bushels per acre.

The Economy of Soiling.

Soiling saves feed and labor. One acre of oats will feed 25 cows for a week. An acre of good clover and orchard grass has fed the same number for four days. An acre of half-grown corn planted in rows three feet apart will feed them for 10 days, and when full-grown will last for 20 days. Twenty-five cows will use up one acre of good pasture in one day. In soiling, all the ground can be made to produce two crops, and some of it three, and although the pasture will keep on growing, yet it will not grow so fast as crop on plowed ground and the surface soon becomes soiled and spoiled by the droppings. On the other hand, when cows are soiled, all the manure is saved, and can be gathered and put out on the fields as it may be wanted. There is economy in feeding and in saving manure; and in practice the two savings are equivalent to doubling the stock which any number of acres can carry.

Begin at the Garden.

Correspondence of Rural New Yorker.

I remarked to an old farmer back in the country, whom I had not seen for several years, and whose farm, in the meantime, had improved wonderfully, that his place was so changed I hardly knew it. "Yes," said he, "I've been fixin' up a little. The old woman pestered me to death about the garden, and so I sicked up a little, and fixed about the house, and it looked so nice I went at the farm fences and the brush, and saved more manure, and kept killing the weeds, and the crops got better, and so I kept going on, and things do look pretty good now. Wife takes a paper, and I take one, and get time to read it, too, and I used to think I hadn't time for anything." And so he ran on, seemingly much pleased with what he had done, and his life and his home without doubt the happier for it. Examples of a like kind may be found all over the country.

Clover Rakings.

It is probable that the scarcity of hay this season, will secure a general saving of everything that will do for winter feed. But clover that has been spread thinly on the ground while the crop was being harvested "between showers," is nearly worthless as feed. The blossoms and leaves are broken off, and what is left is dried woody fibre, of little value. It should, however, be raked off rather than left on the ground, as even a thin mulch will entirely destroy the clover beneath it. If not worth putting in the barn, throw it in the yard, where cattle can pick at it if they wish. The growth of clover roots after the first cutting is worth more to improve the land than the thin mulch of scattered clover, which would destroy growth in spots. With the best care in curing, many clover leaves will be broken off and lost. These make good manure, and are so small and fine that they do not injure growth as the stems will.

A SOLUTION of hen manure in water is said to be one of the best fertilizers for vines of all kinds that is within the gardener's reach.

The evil that men do lives after them. Cows likewise do not give oleomargarine until they are dead.