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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.

THE superabundance of rain we are now having is not encouraging to farmers. Seeding is being greatly hindered by the unceasing wet weather, and the little that is being sown is necessarily put out in bad condition.

In another column we give a chapter on "Apples and Cider," from the American Agriculturist, which is full of useful hints to those whose supply of apples is abundant. Many of our readers will find use for it this year, while others can only lament that they have not the apples.

On Tuesday, the 17th, the Agricultural Department furnished the following summary of the condition of crops: Potatoes.—The New England and Middle States report a high average crop. The Gulf States and three States in the Mississippi Valley report an average above that of last year. The States north of the Ohio River have a promising crop. West of the Mississippi both Kansas and Nebraska report a low average. Buckwheat.—New York and Pennsylvania show a decline of two per cent. in the acreage sown. Minnesota and Nebraska, New States show an acreage nearly the same as in 1879. Hay and pasturage.—The summer has not been favorable for the hay crop. In the States bordering on the Ohio River the average is higher than last year. West of the Mississippi the average is low and on the Pacific Slope it is very high.

Try to have clean fields this year.—Exchange.

That is excellent advice, but we cannot remember a year in which the farmer who makes the trial would have been less likely to succeed than the present. Wet weather is succeeded only by wetter, and weeds flourish almost without precedence. At this writing, with the fall months not yet reached, we look out of our window and see wheat stubbles covered with a growth of rag-weed, smart-weed and weeds of all sorts, quite as thick, and almost as high as the wheat which was taken off only last month. Even in this case, we are "trying to have clean fields," by mowing the weeds, and drawing them into the barnyard to be trampled into the manure heap, where they will "do the most good." But the rains come so fast and so "wet," that even in this we are hindered most discouragingly. Of course we have an exceptionally good catch, owing, as we believe, to harrowing the wheat, and sowing the clover seed upon the freshly harrowed ground) grows in a fair ratio with the weeds, and if we can succeed in getting them cut, and promptly removed, before the clover is smothered, we shall expect to see it make a splendid growth, enlarging and lengthening its roots, and furnishing a heavy coat of mulch for the ground, both of which will greatly tend to prevent it from "freezing out" during the winter.

Exhausted Already.

The older settled districts in Minnesota can no longer be depended upon for the yield of wheat which at first rewarded the labor of the farmer. The land will not produce a greater average than eight bushels to the acre. The ground has been sown and resown with wheat until it is exhausted. New crops must be tried, and the fields from which so much has been drawn must be rested and reinvigorated. Land can be worked to death as well as men and women.—Record.

Just so! And we have in our eye some noted wheat growing districts much nearer than Minnesota which are rapidly approaching the same exhausted condition, and for the same cause. Wheat is good, but "There can be too much of a good thing."

The farm is the last place in the world where slovenliness pays.

Apples, Apple Juice, Cider, Vinegar.

From the American Agriculturist.

This is most emphatically "the bearing year" with apples. Not only are well kept orchards in full bearing, but every superannuated and half-decayed tree, and every scrub and chance seedling by the roadside, is loaded in a manner seldom seen in a lifetime. With this abundance it is evident that with apples there will be a glut in the market. There will be no room except "higher up," and those who send poor fruit to market had better use their barrels for firewood, and save the freight charges. There is always a certain demand to be met, but this year only the most select fruit will supply it. In years of plenty, careful selection and neat packages tell. The almost daily inquiries as to fruit dryers show that preparations are being made to dry a share of this abundance, and we hope by this article to anticipate the inquiries that will soon be made as to disposing of the fruit in the various liquid forms. Apple juice, as it comes from the press, or "sweet cider," is liked by many, and we have inquiries as to keeping it in the unfermented state. Preserving powders are advertised, and some of these from their effectiveness in preserving fruit will no doubt keep fruit juice equally well. The majority will wish to preserve their sweet cider without addition, and these can treat it by the same method used in canning fruit. Heat the cider to the boiling point, bottle and cork it while still hot. When apple juice is exposed to the air, the natural ferment it contains causes a change to take place. The sugar in the juice is converted into alcohol, and carbonic acid is given off. This process may be carried on until all the sugar is decomposed, when it is "hard" cider. The fermentation may be arrested at the desired point by bottling, and sparkling cider will be the result. Cider which is also called "sweet cider," can be fermented in quite finished. The best still cider is made from late ripened apples, when the weather is cool, fermented slowly at as low a temperature as possible, taking care to exclude the excess of air; when fermentation has quite ceased, the cider should be racked off into a clean cask, and kept securely bunged or bottled. The great use of apples in this year will be to make vinegar. In the fermentation of cider, the sugar of the apple juice is converted into alcohol, and in making vinegar, that alcohol is changed into acetic acid. The conditions of this change are full exposure to the air and a high temperature. The richer the cider in alcohol, the stronger will be the vinegar, and the more slowly will the change take place. Ordinarily, the cider is put away in the cellar or some out-building, and in time, it may be two or three years or more, will be found to be changed into vinegar. Those who have heard of the "quick vinegar process," thinking it can be applied to cider, we are often asked to give a description of it. In this process, a liquid containing alcohol, usually in the form of cheap whiskey, is converted into vinegar in a few hours. But this is not applicable to cider, for in the fermentation of cider or other fruit juices, the change into vinegar is accompanied by the growth of a very low form of plant, "the mother," as it is usually called, and this would so clog up the apparatus of the quick method as to very soon put a stop to it. Still, the change of cider may be greatly hastened. Those who make cider vinegar on a large scale have a house especially for the work, and this is heated to about 70°. Vinegar can not be made rapidly at a much lower temperature. Exposure to the air is important, hence the casks are not filled, but only partly so, in order to expose a broad surface of the liquid to the action of the air. Exposure is increased by frequently transferring the cider from one cask to another, letting it run very slowly. Exposure can be promoted by allowing the partly formed vinegar to slowly run down a long trough, and also by allowing it to trickle over corn cobs placed in a cask, the cobs having been previously washed and soaked in good vinegar. Old vinegar acts as a ferment, and hastens the change, and the mixing of new and partly formed vinegar with a portion of old and strong vinegar helps the change. Another method to hasten vinegar making is to add yeast to cider, or what produces the same effect, the "mother" from vinegar barrels. The conditions for the most rapid conversion of cider into vinegar may be summed up: A temperature of at least 70°, all possible exposure to the air, the addition of old vinegar to the new or the use of "mother." It should be remembered that the weaker the cider in sugar the weaker will be the vinegar, and the more rapid the change.

THE use of implements of husbandry of imperfect construction, or in bad condition, it is confidently believed, is a greater annual tax to the farmers than all the assessments imposed by law. The hindrance to labor, loss in time, the greater hardship of its accomplishment and its less effectual operation by the toggled chain, the racked cart, the dull plough point, the toothless harrow, the brok-

en hoe, the spade, the rake, the fork, if kept in accurate account by each individual, would present an aggregate of loss reproachful to many and criminal in the most careless.

Ensilage Again.

From the Germantown Telegraph.

Just at present there is a remarkable interest in the question of preserving green fodder in silos, how to do it, etc. That it has merits there can be no question, but the limit of those merits is the question which experience must decide. If a moiety of its claimed benefits and advantages is true, we have a substitute for cooking fodder by steam for stock without all its dangers from fire, etc. Hear something of what Mr. O. B. Potter relates to the Farmers' Club of the American Institute, after an experience of three years with ensilage, applying it to common fodder corn, red clover, pearl millet, West India millet or Guinea corn, green rye, green oats and mixed grasses, in which clover predominates, with entire success in every case. Has never lost any fodder whatever, but has been perfectly preserved and better than when fed fresh and green from the field. The first fermentation being passed in the process, the food thus preserved has no tendency either to sour or bloat the animals fed. It is eaten up eagerly and clean, leaf and stock, without any loss whatever, and the stock thus fed exhibits the highest condition of health and thrift. "For milk cows, to which I have mainly fed it, it surpasses any food I have ever tried; it increases the quantity of milk much beyond dried food, and the quality is better than that produced from the same fodder when fed fresh and green from the field." What is asked for when the process of this with parative is... If the cows' teeth are not affected, as is the case in some instances with hot feed, can anything known be better?

Bits of Agricultural Wisdom.

The good farmer does not pasture his grass fields close in the fall of the year.

Clover that sends its roots deep into the earth is considered the best sub-soiling agent to be had.

If you want to increase your clover fields manure them well; you can not increase them faster in any other way.

Whenever you see a farm upon which year after year no improvement is made you may be sure that the farmer neither reads, observes nor thinks.

Corn cut off in season is 10 per cent. heavier than that left standing, which will pay two-thirds of cutting and husking; then you have the very best of feed in form of fodder, which is worth from 10 to 15 cents a shock.

In all our planting and cropping we should remember that our farm is our capital, and that increasing its productive capacity means adding to our principal, while by reducing its fertility we take away the means by which we live.

Agitate the manure question; throw everything in the barnyard, keep your stock in your yards, do not have them running in every field on the farm and on the public highway. Then you will begin to see what the manure will do for your run-down land.

Do Not Plant More Trees than You can Care For.

Correspondence of New York Tribune.

It is so easy to set out a little tree, and it seems like such a good thing to do for ourselves and for posterity, that there is a great temptation to plant more trees than can possibly receive proper attention. This, of course, does not apply to those who make fruit culture a specialty, but to the busy farmer and others who have little leisure to attend to yard crops and orchards for home supply. The harm done by this system of over-planting is not confined to the owner, who is deprived of the fine fruit that might be his, but such neglected trees furnish a harbor and breeding place for numerous insects destructive to fruit trees, and the little tree planted with such magnanimous intent becomes a curse instead of a blessing. How much better, then, to have fewer trees carefully tended, with more and better fruit, and fewer insects to disturb the peace of the fruit-grower.

Hay Fifty-four Years Old.

From the Reading Eagle.

Peter Deysher, of Washington township, Berks county, sold ten tons of hay that had been in his barn fifty-four years, being part of the first crop that was housed after the barn was built fifty-four years ago.

Mr. Deysher sold the hay on condition that if it was not found good the purchaser need not pay for it, but it turned out to be perfectly sound, and was paid for promptly according to agreement.

All surplus poultry should be worked off to market. Though grain is cheap, it takes a great deal to feed a lot of poultry in cold weather. When the surplus stock is out of the way, attention may be given to special methods of feeding and management to secure eggs.