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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.*

Experiments in Fertilizing Wheat.

A fertilizer is generally applied on wheat at the time of seeding, which is done in the fall. If the soil is heavy the fall application answers well, but on light sandy soils an application in the spring has been found to be very beneficial. In order to demonstrate the value of spring fertilizing, Mr. Francis Sanderson commenced a series of experiments, the results of which he publishes in the *American Farmer*, which are important to all farmers who make wheat growing a specialty.

The wheat, which was grown on clay loam soil, was dressed in the fall with 3000 pounds of good fertilizer per acre. The land had previously produced a corn crop, and had been manured and dressed with lime. In the spring, however, a slight application of phosphate of kainit was applied. Departing from the above regular method, in the spring of 1882 ten acres of wheat were dressed with 100 pounds of phosphate and the same quantity of kainit, and in one month a marked difference was noticed on the ten acres so treated—it being of a darker hue and of stronger growth. At harvest it was found that the wheat that had received the spring application of fertilizer was heavier and the heads larger and longer than on that portion which had received no spring application; and when this wheat was thrashed it was found to be brighter and heavier, the yield being thirty-six bushels of measured wheat per acre, weighing 62½ pounds per bushel, while the wheat grown close by on the same soil, but without this top dressing, did not do so well by five bushels. The first wheat was sold for seed and brought five cents per bushel more than the other.

Now as to the cost. The application of 200 pounds of fertilizer involved an expense not only for material but for labor; but the extra yield by this slight application (only twenty pounds per acre), and the extra price paid for the wheat, paid for all the fertilizer used on the ten acres.

In 1883 about 28½ acres were again put in wheat, 20 acres of which was corn ground, and 8½ acres was potato and drilled corn ground. This last being in fine tilth and rich no spring application was given. This was a mistake, as the straw was not stiff enough in the joints, and the wheat fell down. Had kinit been applied such a difficulty would have been avoided. As it was, a few dollars were saved in fertilizer and many lost from failure in yield. The twenty acres of corn-ground wheat, which did not look nearly so promising, was divided into two equal parts, staked at each end. On one part 200 pounds of nitrate of soda per acre was used, and on the other 200 pounds of kainit and 100 pounds of phosphate per acre. The wheat where the soda was grew faster and ripened a few days earlier and the yield was good, producing twenty-eight bushels per acre of fine, bright wheat. But the part where the kainit and phosphate were applied yielded thirty-two and three quarter bushels per acre of equally as good, bright wheat. The clover and timothy crop on the field was also as good as could be desired.

The fertilizers should not be applied too early in the spring, when the heavy rains occur, as they are very soluble and may be washed off, nor should they be applied too late, as they require quite an amount of moisture. April is about the right time, but the wheat should be dressed in the spring at whatever time is most favorable without regard to cost or risk, as the increased yield of grain and larger quantity of straw will be more than an equivalent for the expense incurred.

—Subscribe for the CENTRE DEMOCRAT.

Poultry Raising.

The suggestion cannot be too frequently offered to farmers as to the expediency and profitableness of raising more poultry—at least twice as much as they are now doing. The business, if properly conducted, can become one of the most lucrative branches upon the farm, especially when within easy reaching distance of the Philadelphia or other good markets. It ought to be known to all American farmers the extent to which the business is prosecuted in France, where, from a careful estimate, it is found that the annual sales of poultry and eggs last year amounted to between eighty and ninety millions of dollars, which would, if equally divided among the entire population, give to each between two and three dollars. When it is considered that this is a branch of farming industry that can be managed entirely by women and children, and requires very little capital, the wonder is that it is not prosecuted to twice the extent that it is. The chicken house should be inexpensive, but roomy, well ventilated and cleanly. Every part of the food can be supplied by offals of the farm, garden and house, and the time required need not be taken from the necessary working of the farm, and would really not be felt as a part of the farm labor. Besides, there would be an obsolute pleasure in raising fowls of every kind, even pigeons, the squabs of which sell at the very high price of from forty to fifty cents per brace. As to the disposal of poultry in the markets, who has ever known of a surplus or of its being sacrificed for want of customers? It is true that upon very large farms poultry raising is looked upon as being in the way and not worth the trouble, but as a rule it is only upon such farms, and but a small portion of them where this really pleasant pastime is not enjoyed and the products of it quietly and cheerfully put in the pockets of the mother and children, where it will be ever ready to meet the many necessary and indispensable outlays.

Horses for Farm Work.

Breeding first-class horses for farm work is an easy matter on farms that have large pastures, for colts can be raised at a small cost where the farmer is fortunate in possessing good grazing fields and plenty of grass. But in raising a colt everything depends upon the purposes for which it is intended. Some farms are so situated that the horses used thereon must possess strength as well as the ability to move quickly. The size of our horses has been greatly increased of late years by the crossing of our native stock with the Clydesdale and Norman, but the object was heavy draught rather than speed. Such horses are not well adapted for carriage service or for the saddle. The average farmer, on the score of expense, desires to keep his horses for general work, and in order to improve his stock he must select, for the purposes of improvement, animals that combine as many desirable qualities as possible.

The chief requirement at present is a *breed* of walking horses—horses that move quickly at a walk. Such a strain has not been established, but a foundation has been laid by selecting the Denmarks. Not that Denmark was particularly noted for fast walking himself, but that quality seems to be inherent to a certain degree in his descendants, just as the sons of Hambletonian are famous as trotters, while their sire possessed no record at all. Denmark was a thoroughbred, sired by imported Hedgford, who also sired Blue Bonnets, the dam of the noted racers, Lightning, Thunder and Lancaster. By carefully breeding to the speediest travelers of this strain the walking gait may be bred in our farm stock as well as we can increase the power to draw heavy loads or trot on the roads.

Many farmers make a mistake in breeding to trotting sires with a view of procuring good farm horses. The trotter will improve the character of the ordinary stock, but trotters are not always bred from trotting sires. It requires training and years of practice sometimes to develop a trotter, and the farmer usually has no time to devote to such matters. Few trotting sires are so fortunate as to produce a first class trotter. The great Smuggler, the fastest of trotting sires, has been almost forgotten, owing to his failure as a sire, and but few fast colts or fillies can be credited even to Harold, the sire of Maud S. The attempt to breed colts adapted to both the road and the farm sometimes results in nothing of value for any purpose.

An experienced breeder of farm horses gives as his opinion that the best animal for the farm is that produced by crossing the thoroughbred (the running horse) on large coarse mares. If the mares are partly Norman or Clydesdale so much the better; but the use of the thoroughbred insures stamina, endurance and vigor. The small but hard bones of the thoroughbred are heavily covered with muscle, and the horses of that breed are famous for courage, speed and power. The cross produces a horse very similar to the Clevelands, and such horses are not only well adapted for nearly all purposes on the farm, but do not fail till well advanced in years.

Cost of Keeping Sheep.

The cost of keeping sheep is not great, says a correspondent of the *American Cultivator*, as a half dozen sheep will live where one cow would find enough, and as they eat coarser food than the cow they would subsist in many pastures where cows would starve. If it is desired to fatten old sheep, or force early lambs for market, a few roots and a little grain do it easily. It is estimated that a sheep will thrive well upon 3½ per cent. of its weight of good hay daily during the winter. Thus a sheep of 100 pounds weight will need in five months about 500 pounds of hay. If grain or roots be given, poorer hay or straw may be used, keeping the expenses about the same. Such a sheep should shear from five to six pounds of wool and raise at least one good lamb. Larger averages of wool are not uncommon, and it is not uncommon for many intelligent breeders who rear imported sheep to have their flocks average three lambs to each two sheep, one half of the flock having two lambs each.

Gleanings.

The quantity of food needed by stock varies even among animals of the same age and breed, and it necessarily varies to a greater extent among animals of different breeds. Upon this subject a farmer in England says it is sufficiently correct to reckon a sheep consuming twenty-eight pounds of green food, an ox or a cow 150 pounds, a calf forty pounds and a yearling eighty pounds daily. At this rate an ox or cow consumes as much as five sheep. The latter will require 10,220 pounds, or nearly five tons apiece, the former 54,750 pounds, or nearly twenty-five tons of green food, for its yearly maintenance.

Soapsuds, a valuable fertilizer for all forms of vegetation, is especially serviceable for small fruits, and in the fruit garden proper will never be wasted. It makes an excellent manure for grape vines, which may be trained on a trellis in the kitchen yard where the soapsuds will be at hand.

The best farmer at Snow Spring, Ga., is said to be a woman 72 years of age, who has been a widow for 35 years and has managed her own business successfully. Last season she raised more cotton than any of her neighbors.

On very cold nights the fowls should be given a good feed of whole corn before they go to roost, as it is more promotive of heat than any other kind of food that is usually fed. It gives the mil (the gizzard) something to grind.

Among market articles in New York city last week were hot-house dandelions, which were offered at fifteen cents a quart.

A CORRESPONDENT of the New York *Tribune* says: That any one who allows his fruit trees to slowly starve to death and then adds insult to injury by blaming them for not rewarding his indolence with bountiful crops, deserves to be debarred from good fruit the remainder of his life.

—Over half a million people along the Ohio river are made homeless by the recent floods, and the loss of property is estimated at over thirty-five million dollars.