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The Centre Democrat.

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.

Improving Pastures.

The following suggestions from the National Live Stock Journal may be of value to those who are in condition to buy mill feeds, and to cultivate part of their lands for fodder crops for summer feeding:

Put on a few more cows than the pastures will support for the whole season—say 25 per cent. more—or as many as will consume the grass while growing vigorously in the spring and early summer; and as soon as that begins to fail, supply the deficiency with some of the other rich foods named, using enough to keep up the flow of milk. This course may be continued till clover, peas and oats, or fodder corn, can be given for soiling, to take the place of dry feed in part. By supporting the herd partly on grass, partly on dry feed, and partly by green soiling, the milk they will give above what they would produce on grass alone, will pay for all the extra feed and labor, and something besides as a profit, and the large amount of rich droppings which will be scattered over the pastures will soon tell upon their fertility. It would pay to start up the pastures by soiling over them equal quantities of bone flour and land plaster, mixed, rather than to leave them as they are, but it will be much better to enrich by extra feed, as that pays its own cost.

Top dress the meadows in the fall with barn-yard manure, if you have any, and if not, do early in spring, with the finest manure you can get—leaving the coarser quality for plowing under. The rich manure you will get from feeding well with rich food will give your meadows a start at once, and repeated applications will soon give you heavy crops.

Profit in Sheep.

Every farmer, no matter how small his possessions, may keep sheep with profit. At all seasons of the year they will consume fodder that would otherwise go to waste. Says a writer in the Breeders' Gazette: Many persons suppose that it is not feasible to keep sheep with other stock in the same pasture or feeding yard. It is not safe to keep sheep in the same pasture with young horses. Both animals feed on short grasses and also weeds, and playful young horses sometimes injure sheep by racing them. With cattle the horns are the only danger, and sheep soon learn to keep out of the way of them. While it is better that sheep should be kept by themselves, especially in winter and in the case of large flocks, decidedly so, yet when few sheep are kept they may be safely allowed to run with cattle in the pastures, and also in the feeding-yards in winter. Indeed, sheep soon learn to follow the cattle rather closely, especially in regions where predatory dogs are common, and instinctively so for protection. It is a fact that dogs seldom attack sheep kept with cattle, unless in the case of some old rascal, and then only when the sheep are found at a considerable distance, for the instinct of the cattle is to attack animals found chasing or worrying other stock near them.

A good egg food for feeding poultry once or twice a week is to boil a quart of beans to a thick soup. Then thicken with meal; add salt and pepper. The fowls will eat it quickly, and the beans furnish quite a large proportion of nitrogen for the albumen of the eggs.

For chicken cholera fasten the fowls in a tight building and throw in a quantity of slaked lime. Let them breathe the dust as long as safe.

PULL the rye and cockle out of the wheat, and mark all stumps in the mowing and grain fields with stakes to save a broken machine.

Soiling.

This subject is still claiming attention, and near cities where land is dear, or on small farms that are nearly all suitable to plow, there are many points in its favor. It seems to be the nearest approach to high farming of any system yet presented. It puts the manure back in the soil where the food came from; while under the present system cows run in pastures and are driven in at night, and most of the manure that is not dropped in the highway is put on the tillage land, and the pastures are growing poorer.

If New England plowing is ever reduced to anything like system, we shall probably see cows, at least, fed by soiling, and the rough, hillside pastures with sheep and colts. L. B. Arnold, in the American Cultivator, closes a thoughtful article with these remarks, which are peculiarly adapted to Eastern farming: "Granting, however, that the cost of soiling and grazing are equal, soiling, even then, will reduce the cost of milk, because it produces so much more milk from the same outlay. By reason of better milk producing food, and a constant and full supply, independent of the fluctuations in the weather, soiling, even though practiced the middle half of the season only, will produce 50 per cent. more milk than grazing, the expense of keeping being the same. Grazing may do well enough in the West, where land can be had almost for the asking, and it answers in the East during spring and fall, but eastern dairymen cannot afford to graze during the parching season of mid-summer. It is too uncertain in its character, and results in finally producing a minimum of milk at a maximum of cost."

Henry Stewart says: "It is the laborer always that produces, and if the work of one man at \$1 per day will care for and feed thirty or fifty cows with cut green fodder in a barn, and these cattle will make manure enough to produce fodder to feed one head to the acre, then it is easily seen that this small expense will strike a very favorable balance between the cost of feeding one cow upon an acre costing \$100 and one cow upon five acres costing the same. It is not the area of land cultivated that makes the profit, but the weight of the produce from each acre. Many a farmer is poorer with 500 acres of land than another with 100. A farmer who keeps twenty cows on 100 acres is poorer than one who feeds as many on twenty acres, and he makes actually less yearly income than many a market gardener who cultivates on five acres and employs five men to the acre."

Ring the Swine.

When swine are to run on meadow or pasture, experience teaches that it is advisable to ring them. It is not true, as is sometimes asserted, that if allowed to run at large habitually they will not injure such fields. They may not do it for weeks, and the owner conclude that rings are useless, but suddenly his hitherto circumspect animals begin to root up the grass and do more damage in a few days than many times the cost of the ringing. The safest way is to use rings whenever rooting would be an injury.

It is not advisable to use rings the year round, nor on swine of all ages. They are needed most in the spring, but it is proper to keep them on during the summer and remove them in autumn, particularly if the swine are turned on mast, or follow the corn in feed lots or stork fields. Injury to their fellows is sometimes avoided by using rings upon mischievous and vicious swine. Brood sows, in some cases, acquire the habit of lifting gates and rooting down fences. A couple of rings effectually cure them of this habit.

There are not many devices of this kind, and some of these are objectionable. Those are best that are simple, easily inserted and removed, close on the outside, and have not sharp points to cause the animal pain when once in place and to keep its nose sore.

Though we read of heavy fleeces being clipped from merino rams, it should be made known that while a fleece may weigh thirty pounds when clipped the washing and cleaning removes enough dirt and grease to reduce the weight as low as six pounds.

Early Potatoes.

A correspondent of the Ohio Farmer tells how he proposes to get early potatoes: Having what is here called "tight soil" to deal with, we cannot plant as early as though it was sand or gravel; so we allow our seed (Early Rose) to sprout before we plant, preferring sprouts from one to two inches long. Drop the potatoes about eighteen to twenty inches apart in drills, being careful not to break the sprouts. Use just dirt enough to cover the sprouts, as the sooner they come through the ground the better. Have had them up in a week and in full bloom in thirty eight days. Have planted potatoes with sprouts twelve inches long by laying the sprouts lengthwise of the drill, and get the first potatoes large enough to cook off these very sprouts. For early potatoes we plough under horse manure. But do not break off the sprouts; they represent a week's growth at least, and "time is cash," even in raising early potatoes. Also, the first sprouts are the strongest. Cutting or planting whole, manure or not, do not forget to cultivate, and do it thoroughly.

HINTS ABOUT SOWING SEEDS.

One of the most successful seed sowers we have known, says the Germantown Telegraph, allows his garden ground to get rather dry before putting in the seed. He then stretches a line where the seeds are to go, sows the seed on the surface, and then walks sideways along the line, pressing the seed with the flat of his foot. He says that he has never had a seed to miss, and sows them thinly just where every plant is to grow. By this method there is not only no waste of seed, but no time lost in thinning out. There is no raking in of the seed, the whole being as simple as possible. In the portion of the garden adapted to flowers, the women of the family take it in hand. Their flowers always grow, and a paper of seed of each is as much as is necessary for the whole garden. These seeds are in the manner sown directly on the surface, and then the ground is patted down with the trowel and the flowers make their appearance in about half of the ordinary time. Now this is all reasonable enough when we come to think about it. Seeds like to be near the sun and air, as well as near the moisture, too, and it is that necessary to make it so is to press them firmly in the ground as before mentioned. (Of course it must be understood that the seed need not be tramped, the mere pressing is sufficient to cover a little with the soil, which should be very fine.

Gleanings.

The Lancaster Farmer reminds its readers that young trees planted in the spring should be watched and their form regulated by pinching and their shoots that push too vigorously, and by breaking off the shoots which start where branches are not needed. A little care given to trees while young will make latter pruning unnecessary. A graft should be regarded as a tree planted in another tree, instead of in the soil, and its growth needs to be regulated by proper pinching. Often the growth from a bud will be very vigorous. If the top of this be pinched it will become stocky and throw out side branches.

A well-known horticultural writer recommends the following as an efficient preventive of damage to fruit trees from mice: Take one spadeful of hot slaked lime, one of clean cow dung, some soot and one handful of flowers of sulphur; mix the whole together with the addition of enough water to bring it to the consistency of thick paint; with the compound paint the trunks of the trees high enough to be beyond the reach of the mice, choosing a dry day to apply the mixture.

The highest prize for the raising of silk worms in this country was taken by a lady of New Jersey, as was the third prize, on the list of awards by the Woman's Silk Culture Association of Philadelphia. The southern part of New Jersey is particularly adapted to this business.

Col. F. D. Curtis says that to feed young pigs six times a day is much better than to do so less often. He enjoins the necessity of feeding in moderate quantities, cautioning against placing excessive quantities of food before them.