

**Agricultural.**

**Shortening the Winters.**

It will soon be time for the farmers to put into practical operation the following suggestions in regard to making a long winter short, which we take from our contemporary, *The Cultivator and Country Gentleman*. Indeed many of them who are not yet prepared with suitable shelters and otherwise for winter, cannot begin to soon.

We often hear complaints of the length of our northern winters. Farmers who cannot turn their cattle to pasture until the middle of May, and who have to begin foddering them by the middle of November at the latest, sometimes look with envy at the condition of those farmers south, whose several weeks are gained at each end of the winter season. It would be much better, instead of these vain regrets, they would determine to manufacture or modify circumstances to suit their wishes and purposes. There are several ways in which this may be profitably done.

Several weeks are often lost early in spring in waiting for the soil to become dry. This is a great waste of valuable time, at a period when every day is of much importance. This waste can be well appreciated, but there is another loss, a formidable character, of the heat which should warm the soil, but which goes merely to evaporate the water. The surplus water in one foot in depth of soil often amounts in spring to three inches—equal to more than three thousand cubic feet per acre. In undrained land most of this passes off by the slow process of evaporation, carrying off a vast quantity of heat which otherwise should go to warm the soil. The amount of heat thus lost may be better appreciated by stating that it is equal to that afforded by the burning of twelve cords of the best seasoned wood, and with no escape or waste of heat.

Every water-soaked lot, therefore, must require all the heat that could be derived from 120 cords of the best fuel—over 1,200 cords for each 100 acre farm—to evaporate its surplus water in spring. Good and regular tile-draining will carry off this surplus water in three days—after which all the heat of the sun will go towards warming the soil. We have had occasion the past spring to observe the difference between the condition of a well drained, but naturally heavy soil, and an adjoining piece remaining unimproved. The former was in condition for working in less than a week after it was thawed. It was necessary to wait nearly one month before the soil could be plowed, and even then it was cold and clammy. It will therefore be safe to say that at least three weeks are gained in the length of the season by underdraining heavy soils.

2. We scarcely need allude to the great mitigation of the severity of winter on all domestic animals by providing good shelter. When we have contrasted the condition of those animals which enjoy warm stables and tight sheds, and are protected by tall screens of evergreens surrounding the yard, with those which are foddered from stacks in open fields, we do not wonder that the owners of the latter complain of the long and severe northern winters.

3. The same class of managers complain of the slow growth of their pastures in spring, and find that they are unable to turn out their animals from the barn-yard until the middle of May, or even later. They could easily gain from one to two weeks by providing richer and richer pastures, not by soiling down, but by sowing on hand, which has been well measured, or by top-dressing old grass fields, and especially by protecting the plants which form the sod from the action of cold winds in winter. This may be effected by top-dressing with coarse manure in autumn, by a thin and even coating of refuse straw, and especially by not allowing the grass to be closely grazed on the approach of winter. Any one may satisfy himself on this point by observing the rich and heavy growth of early grass in fence corners, and in other sheltered or enriched spots, while the open pastures have scarcely begun to turn green.

4. Belts of evergreens, on the more exposed lands, will do much towards lessening the effects of sweeping winter winds, to protect herbage and cause it to grow later in autumn, and come on earlier in spring. An eminent florist once remarked that many tender plants, commonly requiring the protection of a green-house in winter, would survive, without injury, if planted in woods, where the shelter from winds, and the covering afforded by leaves, newly prevented the ground from freezing. The same effect, although in less degree, is afforded by occasional timber belts across farms.

5. Dairymen, who are unable to make other than poor white butter in winter, and but little of it, and who complain of winter as an unpropitious season, may overcome much of the difficulty by a good supply of carrots, turnips, beets, &c., which will enable the good manager to manufacture as rich butter in winter as at other seasons of the year.

An observance of the foregoing five particulars, namely, underdraining, sheltered, enriched pasture lands, timber belts, and a good supply of succulent food for cows, as well, perhaps, as some other points of good management, will reduce the effects of the severity of our northern winters, to an amount equal to at least three degrees of latitude, and sometimes much more. Let them be carefully weighed and adopted in practice.—*Country Gentleman*.

**POTTED MEATS.**—It sometimes happens to the ladies, from some unforeseen circumstances, that large quantities of cooked meats, prepared for a party which did not come off, perhaps, remain on hand, which are usually either thrown away or sold at a low price. Cut the meat from the bone and cut up, and season high with salt and pepper, cloves and cinnamon. Moisten with vinegar, wine, brandy, cider and Worcestershire sauce, or melted butter, according to the kind of meat or to suit your own taste.—Then pack it tight in a stone jar, and cover with about a quarter of an inch of melted butter. It will keep for months, and always afford a ready and excellent dish for the table.

**SOFT BISCUIT.**—Stir soft cold water and wheat meal together, making a batter a trifle thicker than for common griddle cakes. These are better baked in the cast-iron bread pans. The pans should be heated before the cups are filled. Fill the cups full and place in the oven.

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