

Agricultural Department

Potatoes as Food for Stock

Potatoes in many localities, distant from the market, are this season so abundant and cheap that they can only be used to advantage in feeding out to stock. It is true that certain agricultural writers have of late endeavored to show that this valuable tuber was of little or no value for such purposes, but it is very probable that the contention they advance is only a theory, and not a practical agricultural fact. The value of the potato as a food for man and many of our domestic animals is too well known to be discarded at this late date in consequence of anything which may be written by theoretical chemists or agriculturists.

But while the potato has been a bone of contention among agriculturists for many years, its practical and specific value as food for stock has never been disproved when put to the test. The celebrated veterinarian, William Youatt, in speaking of the value of the various kinds of roots as food for stock, says of the potato: "Among the various vegetable productions that have been appropriated to the stall-feeding of cattle, none have occasioned greater discussion than the potatoes. They furnish an excellent supply, particularly when cut and steamed; they appear to be quite to the fattening of neat cattle in combination with comparative small portions of other food." In the excellent volume of the British "Annals of Agriculture," we find some statements from Mr. Campbell of Charlton, Eng., which bear directly upon this question. He observes that his hundreds of potatoes, and a couple of hayricks, were sufficient to fatten any animal that thrives tolerably well. They should at first be given in small quantities and gradually increased to one or two bushels per day of dry food being always mixed, and the proportion of hay being uniformly regulated by the effect which the potatoes produce on the bowels. The hay should always be cut in order that it may be more readily mixed with the potatoes.

The Use of Shellac on Farms

This is the way a western farmer talks about raising squashes: "I tried last season, with such satisfactory results, that I wish to share them with others. For several years I have kept an open-mouthed bottle of shellac, dissolved in alcohol, for application to my fruit trees, when I cut off a limb, in season or out of season. This is about as thick as molasses, and is put on with a small brush. Whenever my Highbush squashes have progressed to about the third rough leaf, I found there were bugs coming out of the plant, and I went for the whole crop—so I went for them. They are a large, flat, black, round body, with a few dark spots, and a powerful horn, when pinched, of an overripe Bartlett pear. Near the plant in each hill I placed a single flat on the ground. Now, there is nothing new or original in this proceeding—the pinch comes to the side of the leaf, and the insect is taken, at least, from one to seven are found at each examination, and many of them, evidently, were married couples. About this time their eggs were deposited on the underside of the leaf, and the existing leaves, placed in the shape of an old-fashioned harrow, placed in circles, placed in solid squares, and placed point-blank. Did I pick the leaves off? No, the plants were too small to hear it. Did I scrape them off with my thumb nail? No, that would have taken too long, and would have injured the leaves. I took the fore-said bottle and brush and covered the eggs with the shellac and covered the leaves, and they never developed, nor could the application be discovered on the upper side of the leaf, and this is what I claim as original, the change from what would have been transient visitors to permanent fixtures. The two fore-said drops of the shellac, every eight days, and resulted in a fine crop."

STARCHING STRAWBERRIES

There is not much danger of making land too rich for strawberries, especially if it has been cropped for several years previous. Twenty-five tons of stable manure ought to be the good dressing for an acre of soil turned over in the fall, and the 50 tons you have on hand will probably be sufficient for the two acres. If the plants do not grow as rapidly as desired, then add ashes, or ground bone as a top-dressing, as this is the best way to apply these materials. A dressing of lime and ashes might be applied with benefit this spring, after the first plowing, say 20 bushels per acre of the lime and five of the latter. These will aid in the decomposition of the vegetable matter in the soil, but add little in the way of fertilizing. But the ashes and ground bone may be applied with benefit, and at any time of the year. But just after the fruit is gathered in the summer, give the plants a vigorous start in the fall. The hoeing or cultivating will mix these materials into the soil deep enough to reach the roots, and do more good than to be plowed under deeply. A ton of either will not be too heavy a dressing. If worked in with a hoe or cultivator. If applied just before a good shower, there will be no danger of injuring the leaves of the plants.

We never knew a farmer to take

any one of a better kind of road and break a wheel here, and a brace there, and crack this section, and clip that one among his farm machines, wagons and implements—that is, unless his was drunk! But some of these pretty good fellows, too, in most things, get about the same results in a roundabout way. They store the mowing machine in a leaky shed, where it is used as a turkey roost, the lighter implements are away where cattle knock them down and break them; the carriage and harness are kept where the stable fumes spoil the varnish; and the general slipshod style knocks off 50 per cent. from the value of the farming equipment. The farmer who keeps things "ship-shape" is generally the thriving man. "Down-at-the-heels"ness will spread the black frost of mortgage over a farm nearly as quick as run-drinking.

An inkstand was turned over on a

white tablecloth—a servant threw over it a mixture of salt and pepper, and all traces of it disappeared.

Educational Department

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