

The Bloomfield Times.

Tuesday, April 22, 1873.

FARM AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Farming in New England. From the report of the Agricultural Department for March we copy the following: A thorough system of crop-rotation is found in but few counties of New England, and in these the routine varies. The large number of towns and cities creates a demand for dairy and market-garden products which do not admit of any rotation. In some counties systematic rotation, and, in fact, systematic farming of any kind is pronounced "out of the question". Farming is here pursued upon too small a scale, or in subordination to some other calling, such as manufacturing, lumbering, &c. A tendency to indefinite repetition of the same crop is strongly developed in some localities. A few small farmers frequent corn and small grain, as they allege, with good results, but cases are exceptional. Others plant potatoes every year. In Coos County, New Hampshire, India wheat is said to produce twenty successive good crops where the land has been annually manured. In Hampshire county, Massachusetts, tobacco has been raised for twenty years on the same land, highly fertilized. In Hartford county, Connecticut, this crop has been treated with domestic and commercial fertilizers to the amount of \$200 to \$300 per acre, securing returns of \$600 to 1,200 per acre. In Rhode Island field-crops of onions are repeated from five to eight years, or until the smut destroys them.

The high price of hay, averaging \$25 per ton in the Boston market, keeps a large area of land in grass. Very frequently the sod is broken up only at long intervals, either for re-seeding in timothy or clover, or for a brief alteration of root or grain crops, to rest the land and prepare it for a new departure in grass-cropping. The period is lengthened by heavy annual top-dressing with barn-yard manure and plaster. In Newport County, Rhode Island, meadows are kept growing for ten to twelve years, by a liberal application of sea-weed every year. Here, however, the white worm, a larva of the May beetle, frequently destroys the grass in two or three years from seeding.

In some counties a three years' course—1. corn; 2. potatoes; 3. wheat—is practiced. In others corn is followed by small grain, and subsequently by several crops of grass, extending the course to 6 or 8 years, as in some localities in Rhode Island. The sod is sometimes top-dressed with manure before breaking for root or grain crops. Grass seed is commonly sown with small grain.

Systematic manuring is reported as the rule in three counties in Maine, two in New Hampshire, one in Massachusetts, two in Rhode Island, and two in Connecticut. The periods range from three to ten years. Generally sod is broken for corn or potatoes, which are followed by small grain and then by grass for several years. In these counties cultivation is generally very thorough, the land being sometimes plowed to the depth of 6 inches and subsoiled 12 inches. Unprogressive farmers sharply criticize the subsoil process, but its results are stated to be very satisfactory, retaining the strength of the manure and saving subsequent cultivation.

Coloring Butter.

A dairy man of large experience furnishes a rule for coloring butter. Like all rules, of this kind, however, it must be used with discretion and judgment. The receipt is as follows:

"Dissolve two ounces of the best Spanish Annatto in one quart of soft cold water; shake well and frequently until the Annatto is dissolved; strain the liquid through a cloth, add one teaspoonful of Ashton Salt, put the mixture into a bottle, shake it well, cork it tight and it will then be ready for use. When the cream is ready for the churn, add, in the ratio of one teaspoonful of the liquid to every six quarts of cream.

"It should be borne in mind that early in the season, before the grass feed commences, a light yellow or straw color is better than a deep yellow, and also, when the butter partially assumes color from the natural feed of grass, the further coloring by this or any other process, will not cause it to keep better through the season. We will add that, while the above rule may serve as a guide, the quantity should be varied according to circumstances, as every successive churning is changed in its natural color. It, therefore, requires the exercise of judgment, which no fixed rule can cover, to cause all the butter to be of one and the same color in each package.

"Doubtless the natural color, as also the quality and flavor, would be improved by extra care and feed for the cows, and this we do not hesitate to advise. But as all may not exercise such care, we desire to give the information we have gathered to those who do use artificial coloring. In our opinion it had better be left undone unless it can be well done.

In reference to the very soft and white churning in the warmest weather we will say, no coloring can make them suitable for packing with other butter for keeping. Put them in a separate package or dispose of them some other way. We will add—the most difficult packages to dispose of are those uneven in color, white at the bottom and yellow at the top, all of which is at once discovered when exhibited in the butter tier.

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