THE RANCH AND RANGE

A JOURNAL OF THE LAND AND THE HOME IN THE NEW WEST.

With which is consolidated
The Washington Farmer,
The Pacific Coast Dairyman,
The Farmer and Dairyman,
The Farmer and Turfman.

Official organ of the State Dairymen's Association and the State Live Stock Breeders' Association.

Published Every Thursday by THE RANCH CO.
MILLER FREEMAN, - Editor and Manager.

Editorial Offices - - - Seattle, Wash.
Tel. Main 342—Long Distance Connection.

BUSINESS OFFICES:
Seattle - - 104 W. Washington St.
Spokane - Alexander & Co., 521 First Ave.

Subscription (in advance) $1.00 per year.
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Now that by reason of the death of Governor John R. Rogers and therefore the administration of the state's affairs has been placed completely in the hands of the opposite party, the main question confronting the dairymen is: Will there be a change in the office of dairy commissioner? This is a matter of much more moment than at first appears. What will be the effect if the new governor, in order to further the interests of his party, removes the present incumbent, and puts in a new man, whose qualifications are an unknown quantity? Should not the dairymen of this state make themselves strongly felt with the Governor, showing that their interests require and demand a competent official to fill that position? Personally, this journal is of the opinion that the present incumbent is entitled by every qualification to the unanimous endorsement of the dairymen and farmers, considering the very faithful service he has rendered, and the thoroughly competent and business-like manner in which he has fulfilled his duty. By virtue of his position, no one in the state has been closer to E. A. McDonald during the entire period since 1897, in whch he has been dairy commissioner, than tne editor of this journal, and therefore knows whereof he speaks when he says that, although of opposite political beliefs, Mr. McDonald has been guided by a sincere and conscientious desire to do his full duty. We would like to see the dairymen and creamerymen of the state write to Governor McBride, at Olympia, asking that Mr. McDonald be retained. It is a fact that whereas, when he first took office, substitutes and adulterations of dairy products were sold almost entirely unchecked, today not a pound of colored oleomargarine is sold, and the restrictions around the sale of white oleomargarine are so severe that it has been also practically shut out. Today our markets for butter are higher the year around, as shown in Mr. Woll's address printed elsewhere in this issue, by from 1 to 5 cents than any other part of the Union. In addition, since first appointed, he evolved, and succeeded in securing the enactment into law of the pure food bill, the merits of which are well-known to our readers, and which is being enforced with the utmost impartiality.

We realize that these are strong words of endorsement, but we want the dairymen to recognize that the work of the dairy commissioner's office is of such a high order, and so vastly important that it should be absolutely non-partisan. We know that Mr. McDonald has enforced the law without fear or favor; and we believe that the dairymen should in turn do their utmost to retain him in office.

We are promised for publication in onr next issue a contribution from A. J. Splawn, discussing the question of "The Sale or Lease of Public Lands." Also a communication from J. J. Wiley on the important subject of "Water and Watersheds." Both correspondents are pioneer stockmen, and prominent members of the Yakima Stockgrowers' Association; that being the strongest and most active stockmen's organization in the State.

The article on "Summer Fallow" appearing in this issue contains sound advice well worth heeding by the grain farmers of the Northwest. Henry Wallace is a man of large experience, of broad observation, a profound thinker, and himself a successful farmer, as well as being the editor of Wallace's Farmer, than which there is no better farm paper published in the world. That he is highly respected in his own state of Iowa is shown by the wonderful growth of his paper, which is overflowing with patronage, and a handsome circulation among the best and most intelligent of the farmers of the middle states.

The fruit-growers of the Wenatchee valley, who have heretofore been able to congratulate themselves on the freedom of their orchards from fruit pests, and some of whom have therefore thought that their section was immune from their ravages, have now to confront the fact that the more serious pests have taken up their abode in that valley, and are prepared to remain there, too. From experience in other like sections in the Northwest, the orchardists of that section should realize that protection by inspection is a failure, so far as keeping these pests out is concerned; and that their only remedy is for the orchardists to use the spray pump with the utmost vigor. Spraying is a success beyond question, providing it is properly done, and it is to the interest of the Wenatchee fruit-growers to so inform themselves that they can do their spraying in the most effective manner. In this connection we beg to recommend the most practical and timely series of articles now appearing in this journal from F. Walden, on the subject of combating fruit pests. We will continue publishing such articles during the winter and spring from practical fruit-growers, and believe that the information will be of great value to all horticulurists throughout the Northwest.

H. F. Page, the well-known Mission (B. C.) breeder of Percheron horses, reports a very gratifying number of sales recently. He is so well pleased with the business he has lately done that he is planning to go East and make a large importation of Percherons and Holstein cattle. Mr. Page reports that the Holsteins are coming rapidly into demand in the dairy sections of Western Washington.

SUMMER FALLOW.

By Henry Wallace.)

When the writer was a lad, the practice of summer fallow was quite general in Pennsylvania. It has been entirely abandoned forty years ago. This practice is very popular now in the Dakotas, in Washington, Oregon and in some parts of Montana, and the farmers think they have absolute and convincing proof of its wisdom because after a summer fallow the wheat crop is very largely increased; that is, they can get more wheat in three years by sowing twice and leaving the land lay vacant in summer fallow one year. It is quite true that the summer fallow does increase the yield of wheat the year or two years following, but it does not follow, therefore, that it is either profitable or wise. The fact is, it simply hastens the exhaustion of the land.

It is probably well that the unthinking should follow this practice. It will exhaust the available fertility so much quicker and compel them to study farming to some good purpose. If a boy has a few thousand dollars left him which he did not earn and of which he does not know the value, and he is disposed to spend it foolishly, the quicker he spends it the better. He will then be compelled to get down to business and do some solid thinking and will have more years of good work before him than if he had spent it gradually. So it is with the farmer who believes in the inexhaustible fertility of land. He will not listen to good advice until he is compelled to do so, and the quicker he is compelled to do so the more years of sensible farming he has before him. Why?

The summer fallow hastens the exhaustion of the land. Humus is simply partially decayed vegetable matter. It contains very largely the stored nitrogen, and exposing the soil to the action of the atmosphere by cultivation, and especially by summer fallow, simply hastens the decomposition of humus, wastes nitrogen, destroys the water holding capacity of the soil, and makes it bake in a dry time and puddle in a wet time. No matter where a man may farm, he should aim to keep up a supply of humus which can be done only by growing some kind of grass crop, clover or alfalfa preferred, because they can use the free nitrogen of the atmosphere, feeding this to live stock, and hauling out the manure. Exclusive grain raising will use up the suppuy of humus; summer fallowing will do it all the quicker. The man who counts on permanent success in farming on these lines is fore-ordained to fail. He can stand it longer in some sections than in others, but on the best of lands, even in the Red river valley, this course of farming will land him in poverty.

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