SUCCESS WITH ENSILAGE.

THE RESULTS OF SIX YEARS' TRIAL BY AMERICAN FARMERS.

Meeting to Exchange Experiences—Excellent Results with the Succulent Fodder from the Silos—A Cow's Ration—Cost of the Process—Samples of Ensilage-fed Butter.

Several hundred farmers and others interested in the subject of ensilage met at 57 Beekman street on Wednesday to compare notes and recite their experience. Ensilage is the method of preserving green crops in pits called silos. It was first practised in France by Auguste Goffart in 1873. The first to try it on a large scale in this country were the Hon. Orlando B. Potter of New York in 1875, and Mr. Francis Morris of Maryland, who began in 1877. It is claimed that there are enormous advantages in this method of preserving crops, not only in the curing, but in the increased value of the product as food, because crops may be gathered in any weather, put away without drying, and all the succulent and nutritious juices of the food are preserved. Although the process is yet in a comparatively experimental stage, it has attracted much attention from farmers throughout the country. Specimens of green crops preserved in silos had been sent in by H. B. Parker, Lowell, Mass.; Robert Flagg, Fort Plain; Henry Lapham, Oconomowoc, Wis.; W. B. Eager, West Point, Nebraska; Albert A. Reed, Warwick, R. I.; Chas. S. Taylor, Burlington, N. J.; Francis Morris, Elliott City, Md.; G. Merton, Essex, Vt.; John H. Gardiner, Norwich, Conn.; Frederick Loesser, Somerville, N. J.; Edwin Allen, New Brunswick, N. J.; C. W. Wolcott, Reedsville, Mass.; Benedict Brothers, Staten Island; E. W. Wright, Pleasant Mills, N. J., and the Massachusetts State Almshouse, Tewksbury. Samples of milk from cows fed on ensilage food were sent by H. H. Brown, Winterton, N. J.; N. B. Sinclair, New Jersey, and C. W. Mills, Pompton, N. J. Samples of butter were sent by Albert A. Reed, C. W. Wolcott, Francis Morris, W. B. Eager, and J. V. Smith.

Mr. Reed brought a variety of samples including corn fodder, and butter from cows fed on the ensilage food he furnished. There were also other samples of such butter, some of which was pronounced as good as the best.

The sour and fermented smell of the samples of fodder caused general remark. It was asked if the fumes were not intoxicating. Mr. Eager said he had noticed some cows, when a calf had appeared to be totally unconscious by the vapor from the freshly disinterred fodder. In appearance the crops which had been preserved by ensilage were about as green as when they were cut.

Mr. W. B. Brown, President of the New York Plough Company, who originated the meeting, welcomed the farmers. Among them were Orlando B. Potter, ex-Gov. Price of New Jersey, C. W. Mills of Pompton, N. J., Francis Morris of Maryland, Mr. Parker of New Jersey, Gen. Sackett, Edwin Allen of New Brunswick, G. H. Field of Peekskill, the Rev. Dr. Ormiston, M. Benedict of Benedict Bros., W. W. Morrison of Somerville, N. J., A. Mary, Lord of San Rafael, Cal., J. N. Millbank, Cal., Warren of White Plains, Geo. J. Wright of Canton, Mass., W. H. Field of Peekskill, John Crane of New Jersey, Charles V. Tatum of New York, R. W. Stewart, Francis Morris of Maryland was chosen President, O. B. Potter, C. H. Mills and ex-Gov. Price Vice-Presidents, and J. B. Brown Secretary.

RESULTS WITH VARIOUS CROPS.

Mr. Potter gave the results of his experience in preserving corn, grass, clover, sorghum and pea field. Everything that can be raised in this State. He thought that red clover was in most respects, the best crop for ensilage, because it settles in the most compact mass and meets the principal requirement of the process, which is to exclude the air from the mass. He believed that the less part of the crop would be lost by curing or drying. He found that when clover was properly preserved by ensilage, a piece about six inches cube would be a good ration for a cow, because she would eat no other food. He believed crops could be kept in the pits or silos ten years as good as the day they were put. He had raised sorghum for three years, and found it a better crop than corn. It would produce more milk and flesh to the acre than could be from corn, but would not ripen in the seed more. In a favorable season he could get a pretty good second crop. He found that sorghum took a little longer than corn to mature.

Mr. Albert A. Reed of Warwick, R. I., said he had used ensilage two years with corn, grass, clover, sorghum, and rye, of all of which he presented samples. He had satisfied himself of the enormous value of ensilage by weighing his cows and their food and products, with and without ensilage. He presented statistical tables showing that the cows had increased in flesh, would thrive and give better milk, and more of it. He showed a sample of sweet yellow butter, which he said was produced from the milk of a cow whose butter was white and insipid when she fed on other food. In one week he churned the quantity of milk two pounds a day, and the butter was richer than before. He estimated that the cows ate about fifty pounds each of ensilage fodder per day. His statistics showed regular decrease in flesh and loss of milk when the ensilage food was withdrawn. He had to his ensilage corn go to seed before cutting it, and upon taking it out of the ensilage pit he found it perfectly sweet. He let his cattle eat as much of the ensilage food as they would. When eating either ensilage or cured food he allowed his cows a quart of bran a day.

Did you notice any difference in the quantity of water that the cows drank?" was asked.

"Oh, a material difference," said Mr. Reed. "Sometimes they would not drink at all. The food was so moist with the natural juices that they would not drink at all. They ate it when they could get it conveniently, and even warmed it for them, but they would not take much of it when they were feeding on this ensilage food."

Mr. Potter in reply to a question as to the best method of sowing corn for ensilage, said he had tried both ways. If he could be sure that the wind would not blow it down, he would sow it broadcast. He did not think that as much to the acre could be raised where the plants were blown all ways, but he found that it stood up under the wind better. He had tried all kinds of corn, and was, he said, decidedly prejudiced in favor of sweet corn. He found that the mammoth sweet corn that he had raised produced the most milk.

CORN IN THE SILO.

Mr. W. M. White of New York said he had planted corn with drills in rows thirty-two inches apart, and got eleven tons and 200 pounds to the acre. He had tried sowing broadcast, and only got half as much as by drilling. He cut some of his corn three-eighths of an inch long and put it in his silo. After that he cut some double that length. The corn that was cut later was not so satisfactory in feeding. The corn that was sowed latest was most satisfactory when taken out of the silo. That which was older his cattle did not like so well. He approved of cutting the corn in a comparatively green state for ensilage. He managed to stow four tons an hour from the silo to the one silage cutter very conveniently. He had as much as 100 pounds a day for one ration, but eighty pounds was better. In one case an animal gained 100 pounds in weight in forty-two days. He proposed to try a sixty-pound ration.

Mr. J. A. Hedges of St. Louis spoke of the necessity of cutting the corn, and of heavy scalks of corn and sorghum. He had no doubt that American invention would supply the demand for new implements.

Chairman Morris suggested that there was great diversity of opinion as to methods of cutting and sowing, and directed the attention of members to that point.

Mr. Van Hoot n intimated that the machinery and process of ensilage was expensive. He would like to know farmers could make it pay. He had heard the expense estimated at $6 an acre, but he thought that was too much.

Mr. Goodman of Dutchess County said he had planted corn with drills. Some of it had grown seventeen feet high, and the average was fourteen feet. This was Southern white large corn. He had cut it into half-inch lengths and had put it into the pit for ensilage in fifteen minutes. He had four silos, or pits about sixteen feet square and twenty-one feet deep, and covered the ensilage with 500 weight of stones. He claimed that the cost of putting it in the pit was only five cents per ton.

Mr. Van Houten—That's too much.

Mr. Wright of New York described his four silos. They were each 12 by 40 feet and 16 feet deep. They held about 250 tons, and he had filled them in five days. He had used two horses, one to pull in from 30 to 35 tons a day for cutting and putting the crop in the silos. The crop was corn, planted about 22 inches apart. He got about 16 tons out of 40 acres, and planted with drills run by horse power. After he had put in the pits he had the fire tramped down, and then put on 500 pounds to the square foot. He showed a sample that had kept perfectly well.

"Do the cattle like it?" inquired a delegate.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Wright. "I have 150 cows, and they will take all they can get."

"Do you feel it on the same day you take it from the silo?" was asked.

"I do, sir. It is my experience that it is best to use it on the same day.

"It is mine that it is the best to feed it the day after," observed the Chairman.

Mr. Wright said further that he had never seen any ensilage food like that described by the inventor, Auguste Goffart, of France, which was said to be perfectly insipid, without perceptible odor. He referred to the samples present as proof that no such product had yet been secured by American experimenters. He had raised only 350 tons on forty acres of land, but that was owing to the dry season. The year before he had raised fifteen tons to the acre, and several acres averaged twenty-five tons each.

"Did you reach 16?" inquired a farmer.

"I did not weigh it. I know how much it was because I estimated it," said Mr. Wright.

Mr. Reed called attention to the uncertainty of statements as to the amount of crops not actually weighed or measured.

FIGURES ON THE COST OF THE PROCESS.

Col. J. W. Walcott, from Massachusetts, near Boston, said that last year he had raised 34 acres of ensilage crops. He had produced 460 tons, or a fraction over 15 tons per acre. He had planted corn in rows with drills operated by two horses and one man. His machine planted three or four rows at a time. He had put 40 to 70 tons of corn to the acre, but he had not been able to get off more than 15 tons to 20 tons to the acre. He had raised corn 14 feet high. It made a great difference in the cost whether the product was 20 or 40 tons to the acre. He calculated that his crop cost $2.55 a ton. That included the cost of manure and everything else, including labor. He described his process of raising the corn. Then he told how he loaded the green stuff on his wagon and dropped it in his barn, ready to be run through the cutter and dropped into the ensilage pit. He employed about twenty-five men, and once a day he would get as many of them as he could to get into the ensilage pit and tread the crop down, so as to get it compacted. He had two ensilage pits, 50 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 21 feet deep, and had not been able to fill them. He could not raise corn enough to fill them, although his expectations had been so high that he had made provision to have his neighbor share his surplus. He had great confidence in the value of ensilage. He said that he believed that on one acre of corn a cow could be kept twenty-four months. The way he would do it was to get two crops from the acre in one season. He raised a good deal of market garden stuff for Boston and he found it very profitable. He was pretty busy, but they found time to get on top of the silo and tread down the ensilage crop for him. He managed to get his second crop planted on the same day that the first crop was cut for ensilage, so that he could get the land at least time. He had tried ensilage with corn, clover, sorghum, and golden millet, and liked it very much.

Mr. Hicks of Queens County, L. I., said that in two hours' time his folks had cut no neighbors to make ensilage. He spoke of dumping the load in the barn so that it needed to be lifted to the cutter.

Mr. Potter said he had got over that way of doing business long ago. He built his platform so that when the load was dumped it was even with the floor.

Mr. D. V. Smith of Doylestown, Pa., who, Mr. Brown said, was formerly employed by George Stephenson and later was in the Union army, gave the result of some interesting experiments he had made with ensilage. His pits were 30 feet deep, 16 feet long, and 16 feet wide, divided into four silos. But four of his silos were empty. He had managed to cut two rows of corn with a reaping machine.

Mr. Potter called attention to the fact that it costs less to gather ensilage crops because they can be put in wet weather, and can be gathered in all weather. He estimated that clover could be kept in ensilage pits for half the cost of gathering when it was cured, and the ensilage clover would be a vastly superior article of food to clover cured in the ordinary way.

SIMPLE TRENCHES DO VERY WELL.

Mr. Wright, in discussing the question of cost of gathering in the crop to the silos, said that would depend much on the distance of the silos from the field. The Chairman said he believed the time would come when the silos would be built in the fields. Mr. Potter said the cured clover required twice as much handling as the green clover used for ensilage. He said he had noticed one case where