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The Centre Democrat.

BELLEFONTE, PA. AGRICULTURAL. NEWS, FACTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

THE TEST OF THE NATIONAL WELFARE IS THE INTELLIGENCE AND PROSPERITY OF THE FARMER.

Every farmer in his annual experience discovers something of value. Write it and send it to the "Agricultural Editor of the Democrat, Bellefonte, Penna.," that other farmers may have the benefit of it. Let communications be timely, and be sure that they are brief and well pointed.

Fruit Growing. A practical farmer and fruit grower has been giving the Chambersburg Valley Spirit some hints on fruit growing. He says:

"On taking a young tree from the nursery it is generally divested of nearly all its fibrous roots, through which the tree has been drawing its nourishment from the soil. In such cases we find it profitable to cut back the branches to insure the life and growth of the young tree. We do this in compliance with nature's law of correspondence. Nature true to this law, preserves the proportion of quantity between root and top; hence, after cutting away a large portion of the root, we must make a corresponding reduction of the top by cutting back the branches, otherwise there would be a lack of nutriment from beneath and the excessive verdure could not be maintained, but must languish or die."

"From this experience," he continued, "some are led to the conclusion that much and continued pruning strengthens the growth and vitality of the tree, than which there is no more fatal error. Continued pruning dwarfs and kills. The Osage orange in its native state grows to the size of tolerable tree, so large that the trunks are used for building houses, but when used for fencing and cut back every year it becomes more dwarfed and loses vitality at every cropping until it dies. All this follows strictly in accordance with nature's law, that the roots will die in proportion as the branches are cut off. Many orchards are permanently injured by the severing of large limbs from the trunk and divesting the tree of a large part of its verdure, or more properly its life."

In reply to the question: "Are not many trees killed by unskilled hands engaged in pruning rather than the act of the pruning itself?" he said: "The folly of employing unskilled and inexperienced hands to trim fruit trees is well illustrated by the story of the farmer, who on leaving one morning in early spring told his man, who had been hired the day before, to trim up his apple trees. On his return in the evening he inquired of his workman how many trees he had trimmed. To his surprise he was frankly told by the man that he was not quite done with the cutting down of the trees and that the trimming would be done on the morrow. Tho' we may not encounter the ignorance that would result in such wholesale killing of the trees, it is not a fact that the hand of destruction is too often at work, sloughing off large limbs near the trunk and thus endangering the life of the tree?"

"But let it not be inferred that pruning is unnecessary," said he. "From the first cutting back at planting the attendant should examine his trees every spring with reference to the formation of their tops and take out such branches as would be an interference, allowing no more limbs than the future tree should have, so that there will be no need for cropping limbs in after years. Sap shoots should be carefully taken off. And let it be borne in mind that nothing so much encourages the growth of sap shoots as the cutting out of large limbs, the sap intended to nourish the branches that are separated spending itself in the production of wild shoots."

When asked to what extent pruning should be indulged in, he replied: "Let pruning be studied with reference to the formation of the top when the tree is young and the branches small, when only slight wounds will be effected, and to keep the tree unencumbered with sap shoots, bearing in mind always that excessive pruning will kill the tree. Let the owners of orchards apply more lime and ashes with a plentiful supply of barn-

yard manure to nourish and invigorate the trees and there will be an improvement in the quantity and quality of the fruit."

The Use of Potash Salts. Kainit, or German potash salt, is now being used extensively in all parts of the country, and, as a rule, with very satisfactory results.

The majority of our farmers, however, are not as familiar with its adaptation to special crops as they are with superphosphate. Some valuable information regarding kainit is found in a letter written by Mr. E. Wenig, of Schonenlanke, Prussia, to the American Farmer. Mr. Wenig says that as soon as one kind of plant food is deficient in the soil the crops fall short. To produce 200 pounds of clover hay the soil on which it grows ought to hold (beside other material) thirty pounds of available potash and ten pounds of phosphoric acid in an available state. Suppose within the soil there is at hand, instead of ten pounds of phosphoric acid, only four pounds, then only 800 pounds of clover hay could be expected. Or, if instead of thirty pounds of potash only twenty pounds are at hand, no more than 1,330 pounds of clover hay could be expected, and the surplus of the other substance would appear as dead capital within the soil.

Many soils, although rich in phosphates, are lacking in potash, and consequently do not give a full crop. Peaty or swampy ground, after being freed from water, receives the most benefit from potash. Next to peaty soils the light sandy soil is most benefited by applying potash salts, as both soils are, as a rule, very deficient in potash. Soils consisting most of weather-beaten basalt, or fieldspar, are seldom in need of potash, unless potatoes, sugar beets or tobacco raised uninterruptedly have taken away the soluble potash within the soil. Even for more loamy land the reports from experiment stations assert that potash salts are indispensable in consequence of their indirect influence. Experiments have shown that an application of 100 pounds of phosphates, with 50 pounds of potash, had a better effect than 200 pounds of phosphates used alone. This fact shows that potash salt not only acts as direct food for plants, but its indirect influence—its solvent action on other substances, especially on phosphates—is of the greatest importance, sometimes more than as a direct food. This indirect influence appears again by applying potash salts either to potatoes, sugar beets or to barley and oats. The first named roots are great consumers of potash; the grains want but little, still the grains are generally, as experiments show, benefited in greater degree by applying potash salts than the potash consumers—potatoes and beets.

An indirect gain by using potash salts is that a soil well manured with potash salts retains more moisture, which is very important for light, sandy soils. Most all soils deficient in potash are likewise in need of phosphates; therefore, whether as direct food or as a solvent agent, it is advisable to apply both at once—say 100 pounds of phosphates to 50 pounds of kainit (sulphate of potash). Either used alone has no effect. Only the lupines are satisfied with kainit alone without any additional manure, and another condition in applying it is that the land should contain lime. The rule to apply potash salt is to spread it long before sowing or planting, preferably in the fall. Plow it in and mix it with the soil intimately, as there is no need to fear its sinking into the subsoil, washing away or evaporating.

Frequent Milkings. The influence of the frequency with which milking is practiced during a period of twenty-four hours, both upon the animal and upon the milk, has been extensively discussed, and still remains far from being settled. Whatever may throw light upon it, or furnish facts that may find practical application on the farms, must be received with gratification on every hand. The results of the experiments of Erlenmeyer will, therefore, be considered with no little interest by those engaged in the dairy business. This able investigator made a series of experiments and observations with

milking and feeding to determine, first, the influence of the feed, and, second, the influence of the frequency of milking or the time intervening between the several milkings upon the quality of the product. Contrary to an opinion accepted to no small extent he concludes from the first part of his work that the quantity of milk produced depends not only upon the activity of the glands but upon the quantity and quality of food administered as well. When the animals are subjected to three daily milkings, that drawn in the morning is greater in volume but poorer in the valuable constituents, especially fat, than that drawn at other times. This is accounted for by the longer time intervening between the milkings. The milk drawn at midday is richest in fat, and is therefore preferable to that drawn at other times. The whole subject is worthy of further and more thorough examination than it has already received, and there will doubtless be found in it much of interest and value for dairymen of every class.

Light and Heavy Manuring. A question often occurs as to the amount of manuring which is most profitable to apply to land. A light dressing, over a wide surface, is by some believed to be best, while others insist on heavy manuring on a limited scale. The question is answered by the manner in which the manure is applied. If merely spread on the surface and plowed in, a wide and thin coat would be most profitable. A large mass would not become intermixed with the soil, and in a dry season might be worse than useless. Five thin coats, plowed under in as many successive years, would be much better than one coat five times as thick, simply turned under at one operation. A large amount may be applied in a single season, provided it is first finely broken and pulverized, and then intimately intermixed with the soil by repeated plowing and harrowing, or on a small scale, with the spade, hoe and steel rake.—Country Gentleman.

Quack Grass. A Massachusetts correspondent of the Elmira Farmers' Club, destroys quack grass by the following process: He plows the land just before planting of any crop, nine inches deep, which puts all the quack roots, four inches underground, then spreads plenty of manure, harrows thoroughly with one of the efficient new harrows, making the surface as mellow as possible for the new seed bed. The crop is cultivated very thoroughly till it completely shades the ground. Cabbage or corn fodder answer well. The roots plowed under, having no breathing, will rot, and enrich the soil. Isaac Meckel, of Cayuga county, N. Y., stated at the late Cane Growers convention, at Geneva, that by planting a ten acre field every year with amber cane, he had entirely eradicated all the quack grass. He draws back to the field all the bagasse to enrich it.

Canada Thistles. Mr. H. Owen tells the Michigan Farmer of his successful treatment of numerous patches of Canada thistles during the last ten years: "I keep, on an average, about 200 sheep, and whenever I discover a patch I manage to salt the sheep there, putting a small handful of salt in each thistle at the root. Besides the action of the salt, which tends to destroy them, the thistles are eaten by the sheep close to the ground, and after one or two saltings the grass among the thistles, as well as everything else that hides them from view, has been eaten off so that each thistle is easy to be seen and to receive its handful of salt. After this treatment it is seldom that any thistles are seen the second year."

SEED CORN may be made safe from wire-worms and other vermin by soaking it, before planting in a mixture consisting of one pound of blue vitriol or sulphate of copper in a gallon of water. The solution should be lukewarm and the seed may soak a day or a day and a half. The poison will not only kill the worms but it will also destroy any injurious fungus germs that may be on the grains. Care should be taken not to get any of the solution on the hands, as it will make sores.