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Practical Farming

Helpful Facts Gathered from Reliable Sources Of Interest to Montana Farmers :: :: ::

(NOTE) If you have any idea to offer to the other readers or wish anything to appear in these columns kindly send it in.

LIVE STOCK AND FENCING

If ever there was an opportune time for the farmers on the prairie to invest in livestock, that time is now. The northwest never produced a crop like that of the past season. While the price of wheat is less than was expected, it is relatively good compared with the prices paid in recent years, with the exception of 1914. While no doubt much of the return will be wanted in other ways, surely some of it can be spared for making a beginning in live stock by those who have not had any. The one obstacle in the way is the high price which the stock commands. It is not so high, however, but that the farmer who has been favored with a big crop of wheat may not spare from the proceeds enough to pay for a couple of cows, or a few brood sows or a small band of sheep. This will call for some fencing, but the amount called for need not be large. A beginning will thus be made. The stock will soon increase and ere long the farm will be stocked to its full capacity.

If the question is raised which kind of stock should be purchased, the answer is that circumstances should determine the investment, where there is a family, cows should be bought. Where there is no family, sheep or swine may answer the purpose better. Another man may prefer to raise horses from the brood mares which are used in doing the farm work. The natural tastes of the individual should govern also, at least to some extent.

The danger is on the part of those who invest in stock that they will want to purchase more than they should. The American farmer seldom wants to begin in a small way, and there is merit in such an ambition but like an unruly steed, it should be firmly kept in place with bridle and bit. It would be a great mistake for one to go largely into keeping livestock who is not well used with the same. The person who does not live on his farm and who cannot give it close personal supervision should also go slowly with live stock investment.

If the claim is true and it certainly is, that the areas now devoted to the growing of grain exclusively will give a better return when farmed on the mixed farming plan, why should it not thus be farmed, and why should not the farmers generally begin to farm it thus. A few animals on the farm may carry the farmer through in a year when the grain crops are a failure.

In nearly all areas of the northwest a cow can be carried for a year in good form on the produce of three or four acres of land, should the products grown be winter rye for pasture, and corn and alfalfa for fodder. This can be done on almost any dry land farms. The cream from that cow should be worth \$75.00 per year in the average market. Her calf well raised should be worth \$50.00 in a good market at one year old. The return from the cow and calf for one year should be \$125.00.

The two should be kept during that year on the produce of five acres. This would mean a return of \$25.00 an acre. Of course the labor must be taken into the account. The man who can do that can live and make some money on the dry land farm.

But should it be objected that the farmer and especially the beginner in northwestern areas where the markets are not well adjusted cannot get these prices, which is probably true. Then let a destruction be made of 20 per cent or one fifth of the whole, the return from the five acres is \$100.00 or \$20.00 an acre. Now if the dry land farmer can get a return of \$20.00 an acre for his labor, where has he any ground for complaint. Even though it took 7 acres to feed the two animals there is still \$14.00 an acre and it is a sure thing. Twenty bushels of wheat per acre in dry areas is not a sure thing nor are twelve bushels always sure. I have seen corn in the northwest during recent months, one acre of which had enough of food nutrients in it to feed a cow for a year.

THOMAS SHAW.

FARM BUSINESS

The business side of farming grows more important daily. Production alone does not bring success. Formerly each farm consumed most of its products and produced the supply of most of its needs. Today we sell most of our produce and buy most of our supplies. The stock farm even buys milk for family use and the grain farm, cereals for the table.

Society is organized into groups each producing special articles. These

are concentrated, sorted, graded and re-distributed. Dealing with large units on small margins is becoming the rule in business. One reason farmers find buying and selling unsatisfactory is because they deal with relatively small units. Pooling the product of several farms is advantageous and organizing all the producers of a given product is still better. Buying in car lots saves money, does not mean elimination of the retailer or the middle man—far from it. In the evolution of business more and more is given to distribution for services rendered.

Farm management and farm business are coming to be among the most important branches of agricultural science. A whole course in farm management was given at Bozeman last winter with six instructors. Similar instruction will be included in the Farmer's week program this year, January 24th to 30th.

A FARMERS' HIGH SCHOOL

The Flathead county high school farmers' week prospectus has just appeared with the suggestive heading, "Mr. Taxpayer, have you realized that you are a stockholder in this institution?" How many taxpayers have forgotten that they are stockholders in county high schools with

a voice in school affairs and a right to a share of the dividends? How many county high schools are recognizing their obligation to all the people rather than to an exclusive few?

Besides its regular high school courses of four years' duration, short courses are given to farm boys and girls and a big farmers' week for everybody is staged for the new year vacation season.

Six instructors from the agricultural college and almost as many others from outside, co-operate with the high school faculty in giving the course.

The only other event in the state of like interest to farmers at present is the Bozeman Farmers' week, the last of January, where leaders in agriculture from all over the country are assembled.

SILOS.

No forage for winter use is as cheap and as good in its nutritive effect as corn silage. Used with alfalfa hay it forms a well-nigh perfect ration for many classes of farm livestock.

Silos are not numerous in Montana. In several communities they have been tried and the interest is growing. County Agent Taylor of Miles City can probably count more silos than any other demonstrator of their value and use. Hillman at Kalispell, Hansen at Missoula and Christopher at Huntley have been spreading the silo gospel.

In the west where lumber is plentiful and cheap, wooden silos, staves or others are probably most practical. Concrete will be used where lumber is too expensive. Pit silos are quite practical in dry areas and where money is scarce. For fifty or seventy-five dollars a farmer may buy material for a pit silo to be put in with home labor. The silo project is one of the most important ones to be dis-

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J. P. Sternhagen, Mgr.

closed at the county agriculturist conference at Bozeman, January 20-22, just before farmers' week. All the agricultural extension workers will attend farmers' week, January 24 to the 29.

its Chicago run January 15th, after having been presented 452 times.

The American Theatre of Bellingham, Wash. recently showed "The Rosary" to 20,000 paid admissions in two days. This is practically two thirds of the population of that city.

"The Birth of a Nation" will close



A Few of the Buildings Constructed by the Home Builders Investment Company

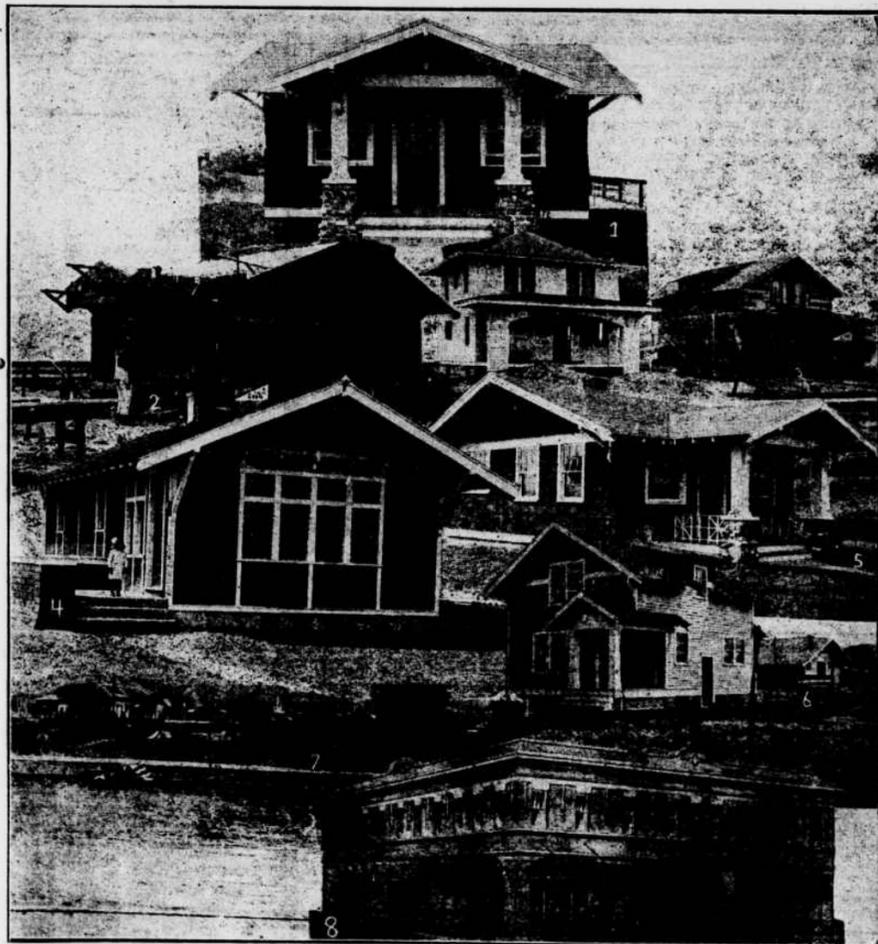
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