NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE FARMER

SELL OFF THE OLD HENS

At this time of the year hens hatched a year ago last spring may be roasted nicely if they are in good condition, and let me say right here it is bad policy to market chickens that are poor in flesh.

A thin hen can be well fattened in three weeks.

She can be made to advance in weight from 4 1-2 lbs. to 6 lbs. and this gain of one third in flesh is surpassed by the advance in price per pound at the hands of a discriminating purchaser.

There is another kind of fowl that the shrewd farmer wishes to get rid of before winter and this is the time of year to do it.

I refer to the hen two or three years old.

The hen that you kept over the last season against your better judgment for you knew that as a pullet and as a yearling she did better work at the egg basket than she ever can do again.

She accumulated fat during last winter and will do all right to stew lots of good gravy about her; or she will if stewed a while first, make nice chicken pie.

If steamed a long time she will even make a prime roast. Sell her now before the price goes down.

In June last year we disposed of our surplus old hens at 15 cents per lb., that is more per pound than they will bring next fall.

From July first to November first, old hens scarcely more than pay for their food by the few eggs they produce and as the price of live poultry drops so fast in the meantime it is best to sell early.

You need the room in the summer quarters for younger and more profitable hens.

You need more room too for the growing youngsters, for by October first, the early pullets should come in to the regular laying houses and they must not be crowded if they are to do their best work. So weed out the fat old hens—T. E. F.

THE PASTURE AND THE MEADOW

A CAREFUL STUDY OF THE SUBJECT WILL DISCLOSE THE FACT THAT A VARIETY OF GRASSES MAKES BETTER PASTURE THAN ONLY ONE KIND

By S. M. Miller.

There is no one matter connected with good farm management that is more deserving of more careful attention than the growing of tame grasses, and the maintaining of the productive capacity of our permanent pasture land. The successful grass grower needs to have a practical understanding of all the species of tame grasses that we grow and cultivate on our farms as well as a knowledge of their requirements and conditions that are essential to their growth. Much of the success and many times all of the profits of our farms are directly dependent upon the amount and quality of hay and forage produced.

Very few farmers bestow much thought, care or attention to their grass land and comparatively few can name the different varieties of grass growing on their own farms. They sow timothy and clover (which is not a grass) in their rotations because the custom of other farmers in their section is to do the same thing. They fail to devote their time or attention to the study of the less common varieties that are in many cases better adapted to their particular kind of soil. After committing a few clover and timothy seeds to their poorly fitted fields they congratulate themselves that they have done all that mortal man can do and either blame the Government at Washington or their weather for their mistakes and failures.

It sometimes seems as if one half of the farmers were doing everything possible to fight nature and when we make a study of the various grasses and their peculiar needs we wonder that we have been succeeding as well as we have in growing good crops of hay. A careful study of the English system of maintaining a permanent meadow and pasture would essentially aid us in the management of our grass lands. There we may find from ten to twenty kinds of grass growing on one sod and all thriving and producing hay and forage.

We go on our meadows when the proper times come, cut the grass, cure it into hay and haul it to the stack or barns and think no more about the whole matter until the next year comes and then we go out and go through the same motions only get a smaller crop and keep this up until the yield is so small that we feel it is necessary to plow up the field and reseed it to clover and timothy again. We don't go to the trouble of top dressing or fertilizing the meadow or tile drain to prevent the water from drowning it out during the wet season nor do we plan to leave a stubble to protect it from the hot summer sun.

Another cause of the inferiority of our meadow lands is the fact that they are supporting numberless useless weeds.

If we could rid our meadows of this pest it would add millions of dollars to the pockets of our farmers. How can it be done? By thorough tillage? By the use of more grass seed? Most emphatically No. That would be in direct opposition to the laws of nature.

We may prepare the soil in the best possible manner and sow on clover and Timothy so thick that the grass will come up as thick as the hair on a dog and in some places we will yet find that the young plants will die out and their places be filled with noxious weeds.

These interspaces may be filled ever so often with fresh seed and the result will be similar which is conclusive evidence that every soil has a capacity for supporting a certain number of one kind of plants and it will produce no more than that number of that variety no matter how well it is tilled or how many are germinated on that particular soil.

When we fill these interspaces between the plants with another specie of grass a certain lot of its plants will grow and the rest will die soon after they have germinated.

The ones that grow will not interfere with the other varieties and the yield will be increased.

It has been found that land will not produce its maximum yield of grass unless it is occupied by a number of kinds of grasses.

Practical experience has shown us that any soil will be more certain to yield larger and better crops of forage and hay when it is seeded with mixed grasses than when sown to clover and Timothy alone.

Our flocks and herds will thrive better when fed on mixed grasses, (no matter whether in a green condition or cured for hay) than they will when fed on any one or two varieties sowed alone, no matter how nutritious these grasses may be.

We will find it in every way as important to balance our forage rations as it is the grain rations if we obtain the best results from a minimum amount of feed.

All animals that depend upon grass will thrive better when fed on a mixture for the elements are furnished in greater abundance and in a manner better adapted to their needs.

If you have ever noticed a horse or a cow at liberty you will have observed the fact that they are constantly going from one kind of grass to another while they are eating.

Animals will often walk from one end of a large pasture to another to get a nibble of some variety of grass that is different from that in the other end of the pasture.

Pastures that contain the greatest number of varieties of grass are invariably the ones that will support the most stock.

It is one of the greatest evils of our system of farming to plow up a good pasture for it requires a number of years to get a good turf established.

In selecting grass seed for a permanent pasture select kinds that will bloom in succession from early summer until late in the fall so that when one kind is not growing there will be another to occupy the soil and prevent weeds from growing in where the soil is not occupied.

In selecting grasses for the meadow select varieties that flower about the same time so that they may be cured for hay at one cutting.

Select those that furnish the most leaves and thus diminish the amount of woody indigestible matter in the hay.

It is folly to try to skim off a second crop from the meadows. If the growth is too rank in the fall pasture it off with young stock but do not pasture it close enough to injure its chances of living through the winter.

Nature provides for winter by promoting a rapid fall growth. The old ideas of getting something for nothing have been exploded for a long time and if we cut three tons of hay from our meadows we must feed them accordingly and keep the bare spots covered with grass instead of weeds.

If we supply better forage rations for our livestock they will come through the winter in better condition and will requre less grain to keep them in a thrifty condition.

We, as a rule, are feeding too much grain to our animals and unless we devote more attention to providing nutritious forage rations we must expect less hardy and vigorous animals.

HELPING THE HAY CROP

On many farms where the number of animals raised on the farm and kept through the winter is dependent upon the amount of hay harvested, the farmer is unable to winter all of his stock when the hay crop is a failure unless he grows catch crops to supplement his hay crop.

Oats and peas make a very good catch crop and will produce a large amount of palatable and nourishing hay.

Corn fodder makes an excellent catch crop and can be sown at almost any time before the first week of July and afford abundance of rough feed, although corn that is allowed to reach a more mature condition will afford the most nourishment.

Millet is another excellent catch crop and will thrive under a wide variety of conditions, but like most other crops will produce better crops when it is raised on land that contains an abundance of plant food.

Barley and peas are very valuable for fall feeding and may be cut late and cured for hay the same as oats and peas. This mixed crop may be used for soiling purposes until late in November. Rape is a member of the turnip family and makes an excellent late forage crop for sheep and hogs and many farmers pasture it with young cattle but it is not adapted for feeding dairy cattle, owing to the danger of its giving the milk a bad odor, similar to that imparted by the turnip when fed in large quantities.

Soy beans are recommended highly as an economical scource of protein and may be grown in most sections of the country where live stock is fed. Many fail with this crop because they do not wait for the ground to become warm before they sow the crop. Soy beans may be drilled, planted in hills or in rows.

On farms where there is a silo they will do well when sowed in the corn field and run into the silo with the corn crop. It improves the food value of the ensilage and has no bad results—M. T. K.

THE CITY BRED FARMER

The government land offices and real estate dealers in the West generally report that more farm lands are being sold to the city men at this time than ever before. The development of irrigation in the far west seems to have a peculiar attraction for city men and the vast areas of cheap lands in the southwest which are being cut up into small tracts and sold on the installment plan are finding thousands of buyers.

But, there are many dangers confronting the non-resident land owner.

Farming is a business which requires as much knowledge and application as any other business. Farming cannot be successfully carried on at long range and too often is a failure at short range with the owner on the job every day.

The city man who buys irrigated land at from $100 to $150 per acre and who has had no previous knowledge of farming must not expect to become a successful farmer or fruit grower and make enough money out of his farm to support his family at the start. It requires not only good knowledge of farming but capital as well to make a profit on high-priced land and the inexperienced city man who has been led to believe that he can wrest a living from the soil at the start is almost sure to be doomed to disappointment.

If city men are determined to engage in farming let them buy small tracts close to a good market, well watered, with rich soil and in a kindly climate and start on a small scale. They will be unwise to make the venture without enough money to support their families for at least the first year, and even with that they will find other lean years stretching out between their experiments and success.

We have no desire to discourage city dwellers who want to change a life of ill-paid toil in a dirty smoky city for the freedom and cleanliness of the country, but we cannot help urging caution.

For the man and his wife thoroughly in love with farm work, who are not deceived by the glamour of the country, and who have ambition and determination to study modern methods of farming and can start with sufficient capital, there are many opportunities awaiting them in every state of the Union today.

Woven-wire Cribs Used in Many Places in Nebraska For Curing Sweet Corn Seed

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD ROADS

By W. L. Spoon.

The climate is a factor of importance for the road builder to consider. In the eastern sections, where the soil is plastic, the rains are most abundant, while in the western sand hills the climate is semi-arid and quite strong south winds prevail. These conditions introduce an important matter for consideration. Sand roads are best when wet, and clay roads when dry, but climatic conditions operate adversely and must be taken into consideration seriously. The rains make the eastern roads muddy, while dry weather makes of the western roads deep shifting sand. The suggestion offered by this natural condition is to add sand to the eastern clays and clay to the western sands in order to bring about, between the soil and the climate, the balance necessary for the betterment of the roads. Additional encouragement is afforded by the natural distribution of the material, which in most cases is abundantly provided for all needs.

In the eastern portion, where rains are abundant, the question of drainage is very important, and, moreover, a greater percentage of sand (65 to 85 per cent) must be used, while in the West, in the semi-arid sandhill section, the reverse proportion is not only permissible but often necessary. In the East the road must meet, as its supreme test, continued wet weather, while in the West continued drought furnishes a maximum strain on the binding power of the clay. In the East the road is likely to fail by reason of mud holes and washes; in the West it must resist pulverizing and blowing away as dust. Between these two extremes lie all the possible methods of sand-clay road construction. Upon the judgment of the supervisor, therefore, depends the character of the work to be done. He should know how to select the best available clay for the conditions to be met, and likewise how to select the sand and incorporate it with the clay so as to obtain the best possible results.

Which Kind of Road Runs By Your Farm?

All forms of hard roads should have a good crown, varying from side to center. The slope of the crown should be greatest at the sides and flattened as it approaches the center. Only a sand road requires no crown at all. Where nothing but deep sand prevails, the surface should be concave for the purpose of conserving, as far as possible, the moisture. Sand alone is improved by water.

The farm motor is rapidly taking the place of horses on many of the large western farms, where they are used for nearly every kind of heavy farm work, requiring power.

June pastures ought to be rank now so be careful about turning on them, sheep that have been on short dry pastures or dry feed. Bloat may follow.

MAKING THE FARM-HOME BEAUTIFUL

TO INSURE BEST RESULTS, SHRUBS—PROPERLY SELECTED AND CAREFULLY TENDED, SHOULD BE PLANTED AROUND THE HOUSE

By Eva Ryman-Gaillard.

Shrubs furnish one of the most effective aids in making the Farm-Home-Beautiful, but to get the best effects from them they must have good care, which includes intelligent pruning, after they are planted.

Pruning, whether it be pinching out the bud or sawing off a limb is simply cutting away one part of a plant for the betterment of what is left, yet the majority of amateur growers seem to think that pruning and destruction are synonymous terms, instead of being the surest way of improving the bush and forcing it to produce finer foliage and flowers, and more of them..

Each class of shrubs has its own requirements but the grower who learns a very few general facts will make no mistake as to what these requirements are.

For instance the lilacs that bloom in May produce the flowers at the tips of branches that grew the year before—in fact the buds are stored away in the branches during the fall months.

As this fact is equally true of all early-flowering shrubs anyone giving the matter consideration will know, without being told, that cutting the branches back in the spring is cutting off the buds.

The same bit of knowledge makes equally evident the fact that shrubs of this class should be pruned immediately after blooming, to force them to send out new branches in time for the wood to ripen and the buds develop before the end of the growing season—ready for opening the following spring.

On the other hand, hardy hydrangeas and most other fall-blooming shrubs produce their flowers on wood of that year's growth and should be pruned very early in spring to force new lateral branches to develop, and give plenty of "tips" to produce blossoms.

Watch a shrub as it grows and blooms until its habits are known—whether it blooms on wood formed the year before or whether wood and blooms are produced the same year, and no other knowledge is needed in order to know the right season for doing needed pruning.

When the question of how often and how much a shrub should be cut back comes up widely differing answers are given: Some saying "A little every year," and others advocating severe pruning at longer intervals but, in the experience of the writer the condition of each individual shrub has seemed to indicate, plainly, when any cutting is needed and how much.

Sometimes there are heavy, woody branches that need cutting out entirely and mid-summer is a good time for this work because the wounds heal more quickly, with less loss of sap, when the bush is in full foliage and crowding or criss-cross branches are more easily detected.

If a shrub is not too densely wooded and is in good form with plenty of blooming points there is no need of pruning every year, but a watchful eye should be kept on them and any branches that take from the beauty of the bush removed as soon as found.

Another thing to be remembered is that pruning does not always imply the use of saw or knife, for very often it is most wisely done when nothing more than the thumb and finger nails are needed—pinching out the tiny branch, or bud that would develop into a branch out of place and take vitality from the plant, only to be cut away when grown.

Sometimes old shrubs that have been neglected until the main stalks have become miniature trees come into ones possession and the wise thing to do, in such cases, is to cut them entirelly off to within a few inches of the soil.

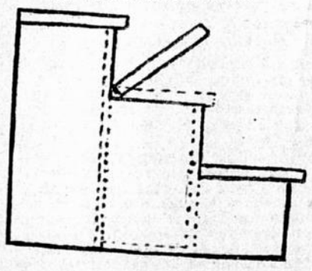
With such shrubs the pruning may well be carried below the surface by taking the roots up; cutting them apart; trimming off any that are dead, and replanting. This means a sacrifice of bloom for a year, or perhaps two, but after that the flowers will be vastly finer than the old shrub could be forced to produce.

REAL NATURE STUDIES.

Nature study has come to have an important place in the curriculum of our public schools and colleges, and the most successful teachers fully admit that greater progress is made by taking classes into the fields and demonstrating by actual sight what great things are being wrought in nature's great work shop, than by any research in books, though the latter may act as aids and incentives to study.

Now does the busy mite make trouble for the poultry. Spray kerosene, burn sulphur, and whitewash.

A GOOD SHOE BOX.



THE CRIMSON RAMBLER.

Cutting is the best means of propagation for the Crimson Rambler. Under glass, short cuttings two or three inches long can be made in November and December, from wood of the current year's growth. They should be planted in sand, in flats or pans and kept in a cool place.

They root in February or March and can be either potted in thumb pots or kept on in flats until May or June, when they should be planted out in rich beds.

CARE OF COWS IN FLY TIME

A few calves will occupy but little stable room and will require but little additional food and attention.

We can make no greater mistake than to compel them to suffer day after day fighting flies in the blistering sun.

Some dairymen keep their cows inside during the worst part of the fly season allowing them to run out nights.

After a run out in the pasture they are put in the stable in the morning and it is darkened so that the flies will remain out side.

A little green forage fed while they are kept inside during the day and the loss in milk and flesh is reduced to a minimum.

Few dairymen can afford to withstand the losses that are due to the fly pest.

It is claimed by good authorities that in some cases an animal loses more than a pint of blood each day and such losses and suffering mean that they can return no profit at the pail when they are handled in this manner.

In nearly every dairy section flies cut off from thirty to forty per cent in the receipts of the creameries.

No dairying section can afford to stand such severe losses.

Until we find some fly repellant of lasting qualities we must avoid losses from this source by keeping the animals where the plague will be reduced to a minimum.

The scientific work of handling the fly problem should be encouraged until in due time we are in a position to handle the question.

If we can plan to keep all but one side of the stable darkened the flies will not bother the calves or cows as bad as when there is no light at all for they will fly toward the light and get lost and not be able to find the stock after flying toward the light.

When we stop and consider the intimate relationship between the comfort of the cows and calves and their milk and growth we will not hesitate to do all in our power to improve their condition during fly time.

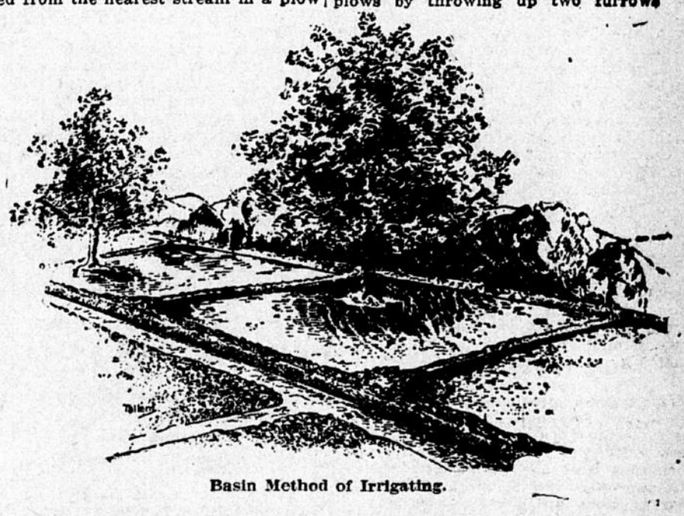
Loads of clover hauled to the stable every three days will keep them in good feeding condition and the manure thus gained will more than pay for the labor of cutting and hauling and the cows will give an even flow instead of drying up.

APPLYING WATER TO ORCHARDS

By Samuel Fortier.

The agricultural wealth of that vast region lying west of the Missouri River was first made known by men who were poor in wordly goods but rich in those physical and mental endowments which go to make up the best type of citizenship. Their poverty, unfortunately compelled them to make use of the cheapest methods in rendering the arid lands productive. Water was led from the nearest stream in a plow furrow and the irrigator in wet feet tried to spread it over the field by use of a shovel. The small and cheap equipment, consisting of a walking plow and shovel, has given place to a large number of implements, and the simple, laborious manner of applying water has been broadened out into more than a half dozen standard methods, yet in studying the latest improvements it is evident that many of them are mere makeshifts and that much remains to be done before the water of western streams is efficiently and economically applied to arid lands.

One of the popular forms of irrigating orchard trees in the arid regions is called the Basin method, which is in all essential features very much like the check method of irrigating a field of alfalfa. Orchards are prepared for irrigation by the basin method by forming ridges of the loose earth midway between the rows of trees in both directions. These ridges are made with ordinary walking plows by throwing up two furrows or else by a ridger. When the top soil is light and free from weeds only the ridger is required, but in more compact soils and on soils covered with weeds the surface should first be disked. This method is well adapted to the warmer portions of California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, where the winter irrigation of orchards is becoming a fixed practice. Water is then abundant and large quantities can be applied when the land is thus formed into small compartments.



Basin Method of Irrigating.