

FROM PROF. SPILLMAN.

Washington, D. C., Aug. 19, 1902.

Editor The Ranch:—The department of agriculture wishes to get in communication with farmers who have grown pencillaria, or pearl millet, during this season or previous seasons. We should like particularly to know the amount of seed used per acre, where the seed was obtained and at what price, and whether or not a good stand was secured. We should also like to have the opinion of your readers as to the value of this crop as a fodder crop, and how best to utilize it. In return for information which any of your readers may furnish us, we shall be glad to reciprocate by sending them publications of the Office of the Argostologist.

W. J. SPILLMAN,

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Cider Making.

In gathering apples for cider, they are usually shaken from the trees, picked up and placed in heaps on the ground where they are allowed to remain until the grower has time to take them to the mill. Much bruising usually results from shaking apples off, and if allowed to remain too long in the orchard, the cider will be of very poor quality. If the very best of cider is desired, the apples must be sorted, and all wormy and partially rotten ones thrown out. In large orchards, bruising is prevented by the use of canvas placed under the trees; where cider is made on a large scale, it pays. The whole width of the canvas should never be less than 25 feet, and the safest plan is to have it 32 feet; when this size, an apple seldom falls outside. The outer edge is held up, 3 or 4 feet from the ground by means of stakes. When the apples fall upon the canvas, they roll at once toward the trunk of the tree, and are little damaged by bruising. If the canvas is properly made it can be used for many other purposes. Cider apples should never be piled directly on the ground. They are liable to become musty, or at least take on an earthy flavor which is transmitted to the cider. If they must be piled in the orchard for some time, make a bed of straw for them. In most farm communities, sweet cider is to be had for only a few weeks in autumn. Of course, if one has his own cider-mill, sweet cider may be had any time after the apples begin to ripen. As a rule, however, the average farmer depends on some one who makes cider for the neighborhood. After coming from a mill of this kind, the cider will remain sweet for only a short time; dependent, more or less, upon the weather. There is now a demand for clear sparkling sweet cider which retains the original fruit flavor. Good cider must be made from fairly well matured apples, free from worms and rot. Old mills, tainted with pomace, and with the wooden portion soaked with vinegar, will not produce first-class cider, as acid ferments will be introduced, resulting in a rapid change. Use clean cloths, vats, presses, etc., keeping them clean by scalding at least once a day. Endeavor to keep the cider from coming in contact with the microorganisms, which are in old pomace around most cider mills. If these get into the cider, fermentation begins at once, and it will be impossible to completely check it. Fermentation is more rapid when the atmosphere is humid and the temperature high. Consequently, the cider is to delay making until late in the fall,

Half and Half.

The dyspeptic may well be represented pictorially as being half masculine and half feminine, and combining the least desirable characteristics of either sex. He has all the stubbornness of the man with the peevish irritability of a sick woman. He's not pleasant company at home or abroad.

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when the days are clear and dry, and the air cool; then, too, the fruit contains more sugar, late in the season, which tends to preserve cider, as well as to improve the flavor. The only easy method known for preventing changes, is to heat it to a temperature of 175 to 180 degrees Fahrenheit, then place at once in sterilized, self-sealing jars while hot. The writer has never tried any other kind of jars or bottles, but no doubt there are other kinds that would be just as good. One might safely use the same methods as for canning fruit, except that tin should never be used. If cider is properly put up according to this plan, it will keep almost any length of time. Of course, heat causes slight changes in the flavor, and the deterioration takes place rapidly when the jars are opened; therefore, the cider should not be exposed to the atmosphere, for any length of time, before being used.

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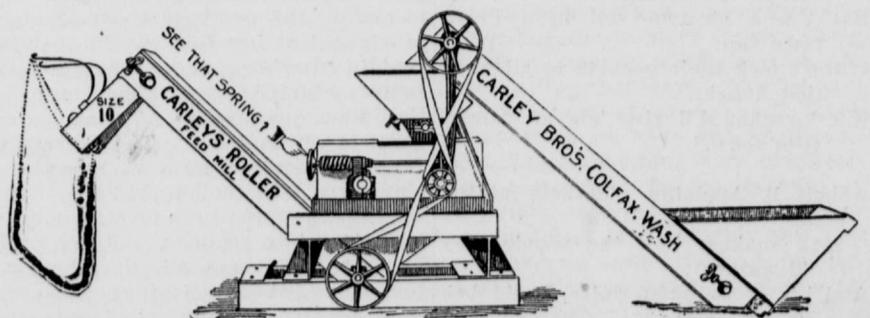
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