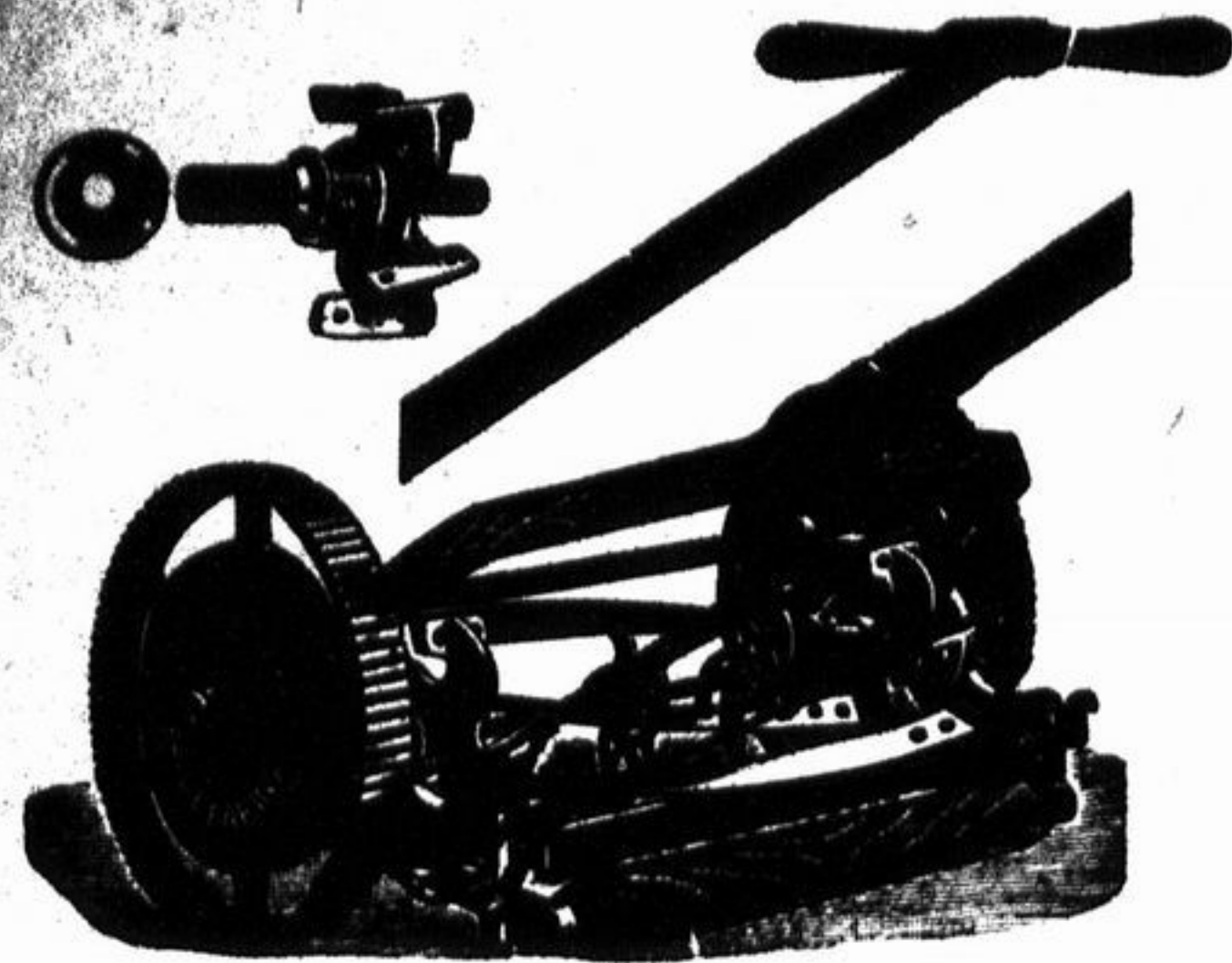


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RURAL TOPICS

TESTING FARM ANIMALS.

The capacity of an animal for the performance of labor or travel is seldom correctly known by its owner because the conditions under which the animal is tested are seldom favorable to its best possible performance.

In order to know each animal it should be closely observed and tested, not only at certain seasons, but at periods ranging over the whole year, in order to thoroughly understand all the conditions.

Every animal on the farm should be tested, whether cattle, sheep, swine or horses. The ordinary cow should have her merits known to the dairyman, and he should familiarize himself with her qualifications, not only as a milker, but as to the kind and quality of food best adapted for her purposes and the most profitable.

WEIGHING THE MILK. Much has been said of the importance of weighing the milk at each milking and keeping a record of the production of each cow for the year, or for the period she is in milk between her times of dropping her calves.

And for those who are obliged to have help in the milking there may be another consideration in favor of keeping a record. A friend who has some forty cows tells me that since he has begun weighing the milk he notices a great deal of evaporation between the men to see which can obtain the best record, or be most free from sudden falling off in production.

Hotel life seems to have its attractiveness for the wealthy families of New York. Because of the shortness of the season, many society folk have not opened their city homes during the winter months.

Within the last eight years the number of harness-using animals in this country has increased by more than 2,000,000.

mixture of oats, wheat bran and alfalfa meal. Formerly I had my lambs come in the winter, but partly to save trouble, I now have them come in April and while they may not attain so heavy weight at a year old, I think that they grow into just as good sheep if well cared for the first year.

SOME POULTRY ITEMS.

A cockerel is a male bird less than a year old. A cock is a male bird over a year old. A pullet is a female bird less than a year old. A hen is a female bird over a year old.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SILO.

Prof. Van Felt claims that the advantage of the silo on the dairy farm is great. He states that two pounds of milk can be produced where under any other method of feeding, except on pasture, there would be only one pound.

GREEN BONES.

Buying green bones on which a little meat clings is sometimes practiced by those who like to feed their chicks meat; but see that the meat is not partly rotten.

HENS WASTE TIME.

Hens should not be made to waste their time with eggs that cannot hatch. There is no more reason why the service of a hen should be reduced than there is why land should be allowed to make only half a crop when a full crop is possible.

The Efficacy of Prayer.

Among my esteemed neighbors there is a family known for the piety of its members and their implicit confidence in the efficacy of prayer. One of the daughters, Miss Kate B., has almost reached the age when she could be referred to ungraciously as an old maid.

Prefer Hotels to Homes.

Hotel life seems to have its attractiveness for the wealthy families of New York. Because of the shortness of the season, many society folk have not opened their city homes during the winter months.

BREEDING SWINE.

A flock owner touching his methods of hauling and feeding breeding ewes, says that he grows about 50 acres of beans for market, the pods of which make valuable sheep feed, and adds: I aim to have the sheep fed sparingly of this bean fodder, so I feed it twice daily, mixed in the sheep rack with bright wheat or oat straw.

HINTS FOR FARMERS.

The following is furnished by the Farm Journal, Philadelphia, Pa.

GUMPTION ON THE FARM.

"Full leaved in pride of deepest green, The Earth in the sunshine basks serene. The wild rose yields her subtlest scents, Where haycocks pitch their fragrant tents."

The longest day's top brief for June. Praise your wife when she gets you an extra good dinner, and you will get many more of them.

Better cut herd's-grass before it blossoms than to let it stand until it becomes hard. If it has begun to ripen seed it will make poor fodder for any creature.

Have the hay ropes, pulleys and all such things good and solid before you begin to take off a load. Stand out of the line of all pulleys when a forkful is being taken off.

Eight acres of good, heavy corn ought to fill a hundred-ton silo. This ought to be grown and put into the silo for a cost of not more than \$200, or \$2 per ton for the silage.

"Frog-Farming As An Industry" is the title of an interesting and instructive article in the May issue of the Technical World Magazine, published in Chicago. The author is W. E. Meehan, Commissioner of Fisheries for the state of Pennsylvania.

One of the most important departments of the farm is too often forgotten in the stress of business, and that is the woodlot. If you have one, see to it that the young trees are protected from the vandal axe man and the depredations of stock.

When you are mopping your face in the harvest sun, consider the good wife in the super-heated kitchen bending over a hot stove in the preparation of food, and ask yourself if you have provided her with satisfactory help. Full barns will bring one little satisfaction if the wife is broken down at the end of the harvest.

ORCHARD AND GARDEN.

Late cabbage and main-crop celery plants may be set late this month. Don't hoe beans while they are wet. It spots the leaves. Wait till they are dry.

Make three successive plantings of sweet corn this month, at ten-day intervals.

Get ready for the strawberry crop. Provide carriers, boxes, crates, stems, packing shed, etc.

Do not pick berries when they are wet. When picked, hurry them to a cool place out of the sun.

For grape-rot and mildew, begin early and spray the vines with Bordeaux mixture at intervals of about two weeks.

To destroy squash-bugs, lay a cloth or shingle by the plants. The bugs go under it and can be collected and killed in the morning.

Remember the neighbor who has no berries on his farm. Send down a nice basket of them once in a while. Makes your own taste so much better.

Muzzle the horses and pad the outside portions of whiffletrees and harrow when cultivating the orchard; thus avoiding all bruised and "barked" trees.

File the hoes and keep them sharp. Stir the soil frequently, and always remember that a hard crust will form after a rain if you don't loosen up the soil promptly.

Sow cucumbers now for pickling. When the vines begin to bear, pick all the fruit every day or so. Let none go to seed (ripen), if you want the vines to continue bearing.

Frequent and shallow cultivation should be the rule in the new strawberry bed; and also in the raspberry, blackberry, currant and gooseberry patches, if the last four are not mulched.

No grain or grass crop in the young orchard, please. Cultivation is best. Stir the soil every two weeks until August. This a good plan to throw two or three forkfuls of manure around each tree, after a rain.

To prevent a scabby crop of potatoes, soak the seed for two hours in a solution of one-half pint of formalin (formaldehyde) in fifteen gallons of water. Then plant the seed in soil which has not recently grown a crop of scabby tubers.

Watch for the little slugs—darkish, slimy fellows—that are likely to be on pear or cherry leaves now. Fine, dry dust, if thrown in the trees, will kill every slug it covers. Or almost any of the regulation orchard sprays will exterminate this pest.

Pumpkins planted among the corn hills are no special hindrance to the crop if the ground is very rich. They are sometimes a great benefit in a dry season; the leaves and vines cover the ground and keep it from drying up after cultivation ceases.

Cabbage and tomato plants can be safeguarded against cutworms by inserting a circular paper fence in the soil around each stem. Any stiff paper will do. Have each fence about one and one-half inches above ground, and the same distance away from the plant.

A gentleman who made the experiment the past season, recommends moths as an effective means of keeping the striped beetle off the cucumber, melon and squash vines. The remedy is not only inexpensive, but easily applied, only one ball being required for each hill.

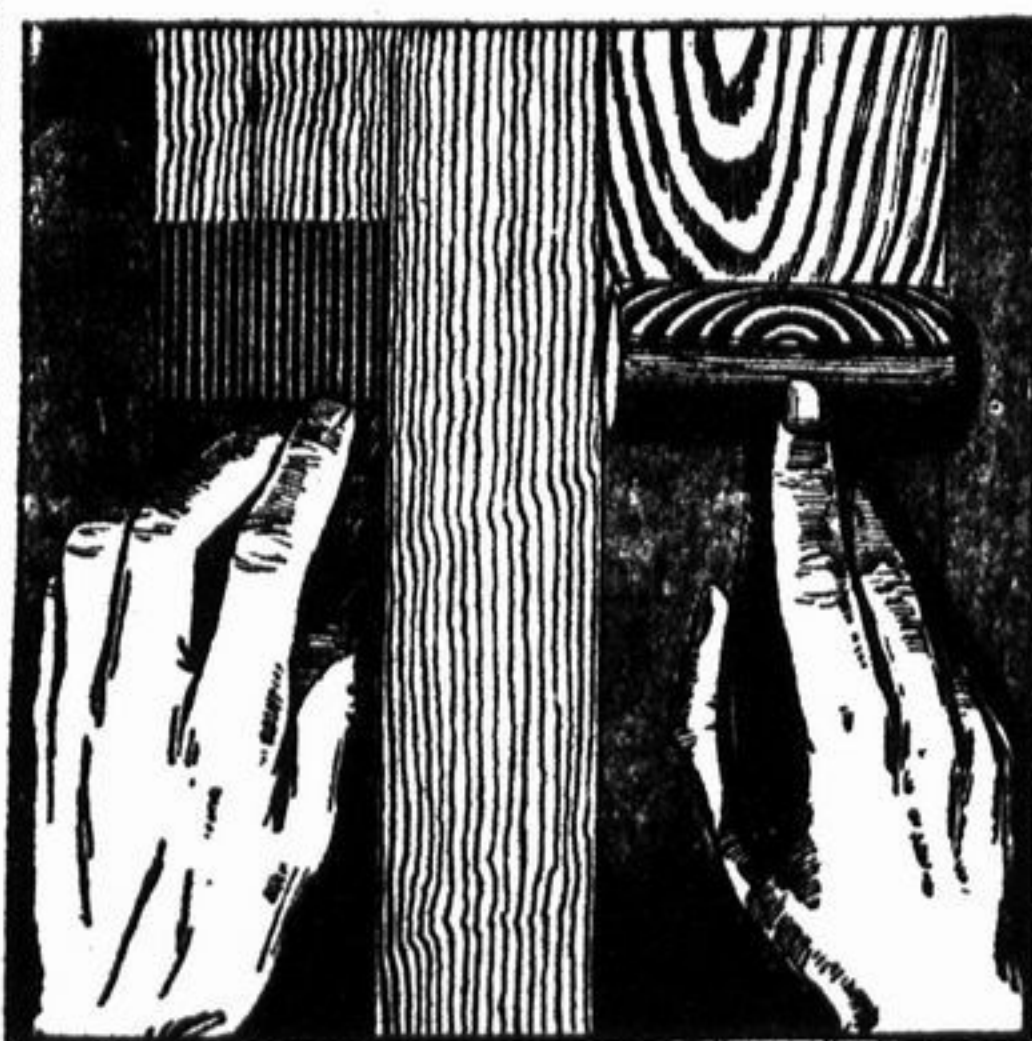
The Bordeaux mixture is the proper remedy to use for all fungous troubles; viz., mildew and rust of beans, potato and tomato rot and leaf blight; melon and cucumber diseases; asparagus rust; celery leaf blight and rust, etc. The half-strength mixture (two pounds of copper sulphate, two pounds quicklime, fifty gallons water) is strong enough to use in the vegetable garden, except for potatoes.

The Road to Wealth. The road to wealth may not be hard, Nor over mountain wind; It may not be a stony path; But oh, it's hard to find!

Mr. Zorge's system places in each "block" of a railroad three circuits, "approach," "locking" and "danger." The length of a block is determined by the nature of the traffic, and at the

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NEW RAILWAY SAFETY DEVICE.

Invention Automatically Places Torpedoes on Track of Evading Train.

A signal device that automatically places torpedoes in the path of trains was exhibited at New Durham, N. J., Saturday by the inventor, Robert J. Zorge, a member of the Chicago board of trade, to a party of reporters. The safety device has been installed on "block No. 3" of the West Shore Railroad, just west of the entrance to the Weehawke tunnel, says the New York Tribune.

The device looks like a big iron boghead sunk in the ground. Inside is a wheel with twenty spokes. On each of the spokes is a tin-cased torpedo attached to an arm, and the duty of the complicated cogs and levers beneath the simple looking wheel is to thrust out these torpedoes upon the track so that the drivers of an engine may cause them to explode.

Mr. Zorge's system places in each "block" of a railroad three circuits, "approach," "locking" and "danger." The length of a block is determined by the nature of the traffic, and at the

Weehawke tunnel it is a mile. A train passing the approach circuit acts, through its iron wheel and axle, as a conductor which carries the electric current from the point where it is received across to another wire, through which it runs to the armature beside the torpedo machine. When the train passes beyond the point, a mile distant, it similarly readjusts the current, leaving the entrance to that block clear.

The point of the device is that if while the train is running through the block another train should come along so close behind as to pass the approach circuit this contact would de-energize the current. Then the mechanism of the signal would be set working and one of the spokes would be thrust out to the track surface and hold a torpedo there to be exploded. The concussion would put the engineer on his guard if he had not noticed the semaphore signal.

Retrenching.

"I tell you, they are retrenching." "But they still have their auto." "Which they run well within the speed limit. Bah."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

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