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# RURAL TOPICS

## SOME NEW IDEAS IN BREEDING.

Work in plant and animal breeding may seem rather widely removed from a campaign for improved methods of agricultural education and more of it; but these may be said to be specialties, perhaps hobbies, of Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Willet M. Hays. The transition from one to the other is not, however, difficult. It is easy to imagine a liberal man, himself making discoveries, evolving new methods, and wanting to disseminate the information most widely. How better do this than stimulate educational systems to include the subject under which these experiments are conducted. Working upon this theory, then, Professor Hays, has become one of the most distinguished breeders and improvers of agricultural species and varieties and at the same time a strong and practical advocate of an increase in agriculture teaching in the common schools.

In the breeding propaganda Professor Hays takes a long step ahead. Not only may plants be improved or changed in their constituency but these changes directly affect the animals which feed upon them.

"Thus, if we change the percentage of sugar in sugar beets," he says, "we can breed the lean meat thicker on the hogs, hams of hogs and steers. If the percentage of protein and fat can be increased in a variety of corn, we can breed a class which will excel in a combination of lean and butter production."

Professor Hays' ideas of breeding are that we should be thoroughly utilitarian. He does not think much of fat stock and fancy shows. He says: "Instead of the most intelligent being displayed in breeding ornamental plants and fancy or pet animals, the highest science and art should be extensively employed in breeding those staple crops and domestic animals which represent so much of our wealth production. States could well afford to inaugurate a system of live stock pedigree records based on performance, measurements, fecundity, etc. County cooperative associations might record the individual characters, somewhat as is done in the Island of Jersey, with cattle, and the State might properly pay for supervising, recording and tabulating the centigrade records of qualities and performance."

"Under our present system we are losing all knowledge of valuable blood of too many animals of peculiar power and value, and we are emphasizing the blood of too many animals which can win out their form in the show ring, but would fall in a contest on the block, at the milk pail, or on the work team. We base too many breeding records on the show and too few on the intrinsic merit."—Indiana Farmer.

## SOILING EXPERIMENTS WITH COWS.

Very interesting experiments with cows in Germany extended through fourteen years, seven of pasturing and seven of soiling. During the first seven years forty to seventy cows were pastured each year, and a separate account was kept with each cow.

The lowest average per cow was 1.99 quarts during the third year of the experiment. Then seventy cows were kept, and the highest 1.94 quarts during the seventh year when the cows were soiled. The greatest quantity given by one cow was 2,932 quarts, the average being 1,460 to 1,510 quarts.

The average per cow for the whole seven years of pasturing was 1,552 quarts.

In the soiling experiments twenty cows to thirty-eight cows were kept. The lowest average per cow was 2,930 quarts. In the third year of the soiling experiment, when thirty-eight cows were kept, and the highest average per cow was 4,900, during the seventh year, with thirty-five cows. The highest quantity given by one cow was 5,110 quarts. The average per cow for the whole seven years of soiling was 3,442 quarts.

The yield of the same cows is compared for different years. One of the cows gave, during the first year, 3,335 quarts, during the fourth year 4,570 quarts, and during the seventh year 4,900 quarts. Another cow gave during the first year 2,393 quarts, the fourth year 4,453 quarts, and the seventh year, 4,800 quarts.

During the summer the green food given was clover and vetches. The most noteworthy feature in this experiment was the great increase in the milk yield of the soiled cows from year to year.

Not only did the cows remain healthy during the seven years of soiling but the persistent high feeding, oil cake, rye and bran having been given in addition to the succulent food, produced a steady increase in milk.—Weekly Witness.

## FARM NOTES.

Fancy points come largely from the breeding, while good development is the result of breeding and feeding combined.

The value of manure is increased in proportion to the earliness of the period when the plants derive their first benefit from it.

Timothy hay cut in August is poor stuff for winter feeding. The more clover mixed with the timothy, the more valuable will the hay be for feeding to cows.

The dairy cow requires five times as much of the carbon in her food as of the protein, because she must from that, produce both heat and energy.

A good apple orchard adds greatly to the value of any farm property and brings in a more certain profit, everything considered, than any portion of the farm.

The fall is the best time at which to make a start with summer-bred birds. This is because it is also true of

every other season—winter, spring and summer. Now is always the best time.

Some hens will lay an egg once in a while during the molting period, but nothing should be expected other than that a large majority of them will not lay from the time they begin to molt until they have finished.

During the molting season, poultry need the very best feather food that can be supplied. Linseed meal of good quality is a good thing to use; it combines to good advantage with the other feeds, and so aids digestion, and helps to build bone, muscle, feathers and fat.

Dairy workers, test out the cows of low production; and fewer workers will do the work and make more net profit.

## LAYER AND THE LOAFER.

There is a startling difference in the productivity of different hens, even in the same flock. By trapping it has been found that some of the likeliest looking hens in a flock are often its poorest layers. In any flock that has not been carefully selected, there are sure to be some hens which do not lay more than one or two dozen eggs per year, while other members have surprisingly large records. These are actual facts and not theories and a trap-net in any untested flock will show this wide variation in prolificacy.

How to tell the layer from the loafer is a hard nut to crack. The singing, energetic hen with the bright red comb, is usually laying, but not always is this so. The only infallible way at present is to catch the hen in the act by means of the trap nest. But the busy farmer has not the time to be examining trap-nests four or five times a day, keeping a careful record of each individual hen in the flock. Many utility poultry fanciers do this, however, and the ideal way for the farmer to do is to get stock of his favorite breed from one of these men and they retrace his blood lines every year or two with fresh stock from the same source.

I do not know of any sure method to tell the lays from the non-layer by observation of their performance. I have spent time and money in effort to tell in advance which hen will lay and which will not, but in vain. The old system of examining the lay-bones (located directly under the vent of the hen) is pretty reliable for telling which hen is laying and which is not laying, but aside from that it is only guesswork; sometimes it hits and sometimes it misses. If the bones are close together the hen is not laying, while if they are spread apart so that two or three fingers may be inserted between them, this shows that preparations have been made for the passage of eggs.—Epitomist.

## MILK POWDER.

The manufacture of milk powder has now reached a stage where the process is considered a success in a business way, and the trouble is to find a satisfactory market for the product. The greatest hindrance is in the sale of the powder made from separated milk from large creameries. The skim milk can be bought at a price which brings the milk powder to a very low cost. For wholesale purposes it can be packed in bags like flour at very little cost for handling and shipping cost for transportation as compared with the liquid milk. Large quantities are expected to be used by the biscuit and cracker manufacturers; also by the bakers and confectioners in the manufacture of milk bread, cakes and pies and such products. As it will keep for any length of time, it should find a market on shipboard and for other uses where a supply of fresh milk cannot be had. It is believed that a large business can be built up without interfering to any great extent with the market for fresh milk.—Weekly Witness.

## USING MORE LUMBER.

It is a striking fact that though lumber prices have been steadily going up during the last half century, the per capita consumption of lumber has also been going up. In 1850, according to the best figures obtainable, the average consumption to each person in the country was 250 feet; in 1900, 1,000 feet, and in 1907, 400 feet. This illustrates what has been found true the world over—that with industrial progress the demand for wood becomes greater and greater.—American Cultivator.

## OLD PASTURES NEED PHOSPHATES.

Recent investigations of worn out pastures in England show that most of the soils were lacking in phosphate of lime, while the choice grazing lands which had been fed to cattle for many years without exhaustion were found to possess soil naturally rich in phosphates. These conditions probably explain the good results obtained from the use of slag meal and other phosphate materials on old pastures. The growth of white clover is encouraged and the quality and quantity of the feed much improved.—American Cultivator.

## Woman, the Illogical.

Woman is not only barbarous—she is illogical and inconsistent as well, remarked a man of letters. I was walking in the country one day with a young woman. In a grove we came upon a boy about to shin up a tree. There was a nest in the tree, and from a certain angle it was possible to see in it three eggs. "You wicked little boy," said my companion, "are you going up there to rob that nest?" "I am," replied the boy. "How can you?" she exclaimed; "think how the mother will grieve over the loss of her eggs." "Oh, she won't care," said the boy, "she's up there in your hat."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

## HALF-BREED IN DIRT PERIL.

Towed by a Wounded Moose, Which He Had Lassoed.

A tale of being saved from drowning by a moose he had shot, and which abounds in startling details, has been brought into Winnipeg, Manitoba, by a hunter familiarly known



Throughout the northwest as "Traps."

"Traps" is noted for his honesty and truthfulness. He says that about a month ago he wounded a great moose on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, and that, when the animal sprang into the river he jumped into his boat and started in pursuit, hoping for another shot at close range.

While trying to reload and row at the same time, says "Traps," he dropped his gun overboard and it went to the bottom. Marking the spot where the weapon went down by associating the location with a fallen tree on the shore nearby, he seized both oars and gained rapidly on the injured animal. When he reached it he made a slip noose of his tow line and skillfully threw it about the great, spreading antlers. This done, he attempted to tow his quarry ashore by backing up the boat, but the frightened beast pulled him rapidly down stream.

The rapidity of the current increased and soon "Traps" was terrified to hear the sound of the falls. His most desperate efforts availed nothing against the current and the frenzied animal. Having no knife, he attempted to unthe the log from his craft, but it was water soaked and his trembling fingers could do nothing with it.

The cry of the falls came nearer and nearer and the boatman had given himself up for lost when the moose's feet struck bottom.

After some stumbling the beast braced himself and walked to a little island about five feet in diameter, composed of rock, and rising in the center of the river ten feet from the edge of the falls. "Traps" boat swung around over the falls, the stern projecting over about three feet. The moose braced his feet against the pull, fearful of being swept from his point of vantage.

Realizing that his preserve could not hold out much longer against growing weakness and continued loss of blood, "Traps" began cautiously to pull his boat to the little island, hand over hand. The moose looked on the approaching enemy with terror, trembling visibly. When "Traps" was within four feet of terra firma he sprang from the boat and after a scramble succeeded in getting to temporary safety, wondering the while whether or not the moose would gore him to death in revenge. But his fears were groundless, for the animal, in a frenzy because of his nearness, sprang into the swift current, and moved toward the boat and went over the fall.

"Traps" had been on his little island without food for three days when he was discovered by passing hunters who hoisted him a line from a safe distance and he was dragged ashore. He recovered his boat and the dead moose entangled in the branches of a fallen tree eight miles down stream two days after his release, and has brought the antlers to Winnipeg as a souvenir of his wonderful experience.—Exchange.

## In St. Petersburg.

The Grand Duke—What's the latest report from the plague? Speak, man.  
The Aid—I regret to announce that the disease is spreading.

The Grand Duke—Send for the leading sanitary engineer of the empire.  
The Aid—He was driven out of Russia last month, your highness.

The Grand Duke—Call up the city's best plumber.  
The Aid—He was sent to Siberia, your highness.

The Grand Duke—Summon the chief authority on epidemics.  
The Aid—He is a fugitive, your highness. The secret police have lost all trace of him.

The Grand Duke (after a pause)—Well, go out and order the seizure of three newspaper offices and the arrest of forty suspected revolutionists.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## Discrimination.

Wilden Woolly—How much to Shy-cargo?  
Ticket Agent—Eight dollars.  
Wilden Woolly—And how long does it take?  
Ticket Agent—Nine hours.

Wilden Woolly—Nine hours! Why, out in Nebraska we've got roads you can ride on a whole day for 33.—Fortimore American.

## Happy Immigrants.

"There's one advantage in being color-blind, anyhow," said one marked by this unusual peculiarity.  
"What's that?"  
"Why, all I know of the red necktie is based on hearsay."—Philadelphia Ledger.

## Pumps.

"Women," declared she, "have bigger intellects than men."  
"I won't dispute it," responded he. "A man can't wear footgear that has to be kept on by mental power alone."—Kansas City Journal.

Considering the number of hair doings a woman takes off at night, and the number of pastes and lotions she puts on, women who are expected to rescue her in case of fire, should be paid larger salaries.

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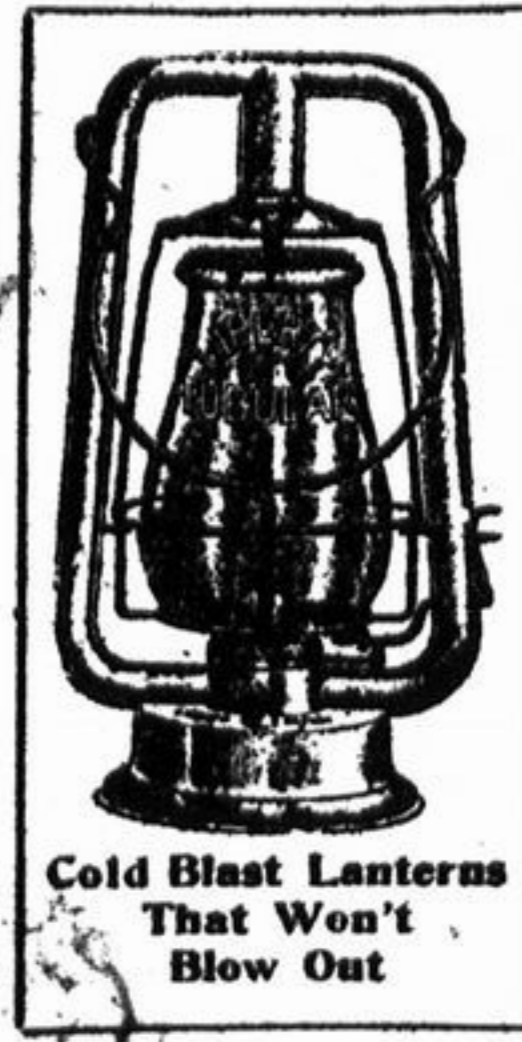
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