Farm Crop Queries

Conducted by Professor Henry G. Bell

Henry G. Bell

The object of this department is to place at the service of our farm readers the advice of an acknowledged authority on all subjects pertaining to soils and crops.

Address all questions to Professor Henry G. Bell, in care of The Wilson Publishing Company, Limited, Toronto, and answers will appear in this column in the order in which they are received. As space is limited it is advisable where immediate reply is necessary that a stamped and addressed envelope be enclosed with the question, when the answer will be mailed direct.

Efficient War-Time Agriculture.

One of the nations that, on account of its location, has had to practice strictest economy is Holland. The Dutch have always been in the lead in frugality.

Little Holland—in area only one-twenty-fifth that of Ontario—maintains a population nearly equal to Canada.

Holland—the home of the dairy cow—has done wonders in the direction of maintaining and increasing the land which the noble little nation, with almost superhuman energy, wrested from the sea. Every bit of stock manure is carefully returned to the land. The Dutch maintain over 2,390,000 head of cattle as well as considerable other livestock. As a consequence Holland has a great source of plantfood in the livestock manure.

In addition to this home supply of plantfood—the livestock manure—Holland imports large quantities of fertilizers. Holland is usually held up as an example of a land in which fertility is maintained by the keeping of cattle. It will surprise those who have made this claim to know that Holland in 1914 imported 833,198 tons of fertilizers carrying nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash, enough to supply 310 pounds of fertilizer to each cultivated acre.

The Dutch government recently placed orders for 40,000 tons of acid phosphate although since the war broke out Holland has imported fertilizers with great difficulty. On one shipment which was loading at an eastern U.S. port recently, Holland is paying $40.00 per ton freight for acid phosphate which carries available phosphoric acid; on another shipment she paid $34.00 a ton freight.

Does it pay?

Let the average yield of crops per acre answer.

Crop	Yield per acre. Holland.	Canada.
Wheat	39 bus.	19.3 bus.
Barley	45 bus.	31.2 bus.
Potatoes	290.2 bus.	186 bus.

Such yields in this country would mean paying rates of interest on money invested in high priced farm lands. It would mean a growing agriculture, commensurate with the growth of the Canadian population. It is good business!

A CONSERVATION CHRISTMAS DINNER

MENU
Cream of Dried Spinach Soup
Roast Chicken with Corn-Bread Stuffing
Baked Potatoes Odorless Cabbage
Combination Salad
Spoon Pudding
Mock Mince Pie
Coffee

This Christmas dinner, festive enough for much happier days than these, is composed entirely of war-time dishes.

Cream of Dried Spinach Soup

Soak one-half pint of dried spinach in a pint of water for two hours. Add one small onion, finely chopped, and cooked, and cook for one hour. Heat one pint of milk to the boiling-point and thicken by adding one tablespoonful of flour mixed in a little cold milk. To the thickened milk add the spinach and the water in which it was cooked, straining out the coarse pieces by pouring through a colander. Salt and pepper to taste.

Corn-bread Poultry Dressing

Mix two cupfuls stale corn-bread crumbs, one cupful of ground peanuts or chestnuts, and a pinch of sage. Add a little butter, if you like, though basting is usually sufficient to keep it moist.

Odorless Cabbage

Cabbage should be put on the stove in water that is already boiling hard, and cooked only eighteen minutes, without a lid or cover. There will be absolutely no odor of its cooking in the house. It should be served with plenty of butter and seasoning. It is not only more digestible, but infinitely more palatable than when it is cooked as long as is customary.

Combination Salad

Slice three beet-roots, one large apple, add 1 cup minced celery. Pour over all the following French dressing:

Mix well half a teaspoonful each of pepper, mustard, salt and powdered sugar, and add one teaspoonful of vinegar and two tablespoonfuls of olive-oil. A few walnuts sprinkled over the salad are an improvement.

Spoon Pudding

Beat two eggs with two cupfuls boiled rice. Add one teaspoonful salt if the rice is unsalted. Mix with three-fourths cupful corn-meal, one scant teaspoonful soda, three cupfuls butter-milk or sour milk. Take butter the size of an egg, mix in part of it and put the rest in the pudding-dish. Bake about one-half hour in a medium oven and serve hot with butter, like muffins or corn bread. This recipe makes enough for six people.

Mock Mince Pie

1 cup seeded raisins, 2 cups finely cut apples, 2 tablespoons chopped beef suet, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ⅛ teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ cup brown sugar.

Wash and dry the raisins; put them through a food chopper; place in a saucepan with one cup of water, and boil for five minutes. Remove from the fire and add the rest of the ingredients. When cold, it is used in the same way as mincemeat. This makes a very good mincemeat substitute.

Your Problems

Conducted by Mrs Helen Law

Mothers and daughters of all ages are cordially invited to write to this department. Initials only will be published with each question and its answer as a means of identification, but full name and address must be given in each letter. Write on one side of paper only. Answers will be mailed direct if stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.

Address all correspondence for this department to Mrs. Helen Law, 235 Woodbine Ave., Toronto.

Lulu:—1. Three little plays for children's acting, which are good patriotic stuff, are : A Canadian Fairy Tale, The Making of Canada's Flag, and The Key to Jack Canuck's Treasure-house. 2. A scrim curtain in white or ecru is inexpensive and makes a very dainty curtain for a bedroom. A little cross-stitch border of pink and blue ribbon that comes especially for embroidering finishes off the curtain. In the shops made-up scrim curtains can be bought with draw-work borders. These are pretty. Dotted Swiss curtains are as sweet and dainty as can be. A tiny border finishes off the edge of these. Figured lawn, too, is pretty if there is a plain wallpaper in the room. Otherwise use plain unfigured lawn. 3. The Tale of Two Cities and David Copperfield, by Dickens, very carefully read, might help to improve one's English. 4. "Mother," by Kathleen Norris, would be a suitable gift for a girl of eighteen. 5. One of the most welcome gifts to the military hospitals in England and France are scrap books which serve to entertain men who are too weak to enjoy reading very much. They are made on sheets 43 x 27 inches, folded three times, and form a book of sixteen pages, convenient in size. The book is tied together at the back by a bright colored ribbon. The cover picture of the book is colored, and the books contain pictures, both black and colored, little anecdotes, very short stories, short poems and jokes. The pictures must be placed straight on each page, as many men would be too weak to turn the book around to see a picture pasted in sidewise. In selecting the pictures, one must remember, of course, that they are for grown men, and not for children.

Mrs. L. O. S.:—1. To cure your boy of biting his nails, apply tincture of aloes to the finger tips after each washing of the hands. 2. Good books for children are the following: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, The Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, Children's Stories from Dickens, The Water Babies, A Child's Garden of Verses, The Real Mother Goose, The Red Book of War, Anne's House of Dreams, Under French's Command. Then there is the "Every Child Should Know" series, a collection of unusual merit, that holds the interest while it educates and broadens the child's mind. They are well illustrated. The series includes: Birds Every Child Should Know, Legends Every Child Should Know, Famous Stories Every Child Should Know, Heroes Every Child Should Know, and many others. A splendid book on the war is "The Children's Story of the War." It is beautifully illustrated. 3. Oleomargarine is composed of beef fats and vegetable fats. By vegetable fats is meant those made from cocoanut, peanut, olive and refined cottonseed oils. 4. The white of an egg added to thin cream will make it whip more quickly and will produce a thick, fluffy cream.

Inquirer:—1. Patent leather is not recommended for children's shoes. Calf is much more durable. 2. Recipe for Trench Cake: Mix a quarter of a cup of butter, 1 cup brown sugar, 1 cup boiling water, 2 cups seeded raisins and half a teaspoon salt in a saucepan; bring to the boiling point and boil for five minutes; cool and add 1 teaspoon powdered cinnamon, 1 teaspoon powdered ginger, ½ teaspoon powdered mace, 1 teaspoon soda and 2 cups flour sifted together; beat well; pour into a well greased and papered bread ban and bake in a slow oven for one hour. 3. Obtain commercial fertilizer from the florist and apply to your Christmas cactus. 4. It would be much more satisfactory to send your white velvet hat to a cleaner to be dry cleaned, than to attempt to do it yourself. 5. All fruit jars should be enclosed in paper bags before being placed in the fruit cupboard. This keeps the jars free from dust and excludes the light, thus preserving the color of the fruit as well as the fruit itself.

Horse Sense

Much of the success with foals next spring depends upon the care and management of the brood mare during the winter season.

We must emphasize exercise. No brood mare can do justice to herself and her offspring if tied by the neck in a narrow stall day in and day out. If she is to raise a strong, healthy foal next May or June, perhaps earlier or later, she must get a reasonable amount of exercise, and the more of it she gets the better, provided it is regular.

Each day, if there is no light work or light teaming for her to do, she should be turned out in a yard, not with younger horses or those likely to kick in play, but where she can exercise quietly and unmolested. Four or five hours a day, when the weather is right, will do her good but if she is to be turned out when the hard weather comes she should be kept sharp shod, at least in front. Almost as surely as a mare falls an abortion results. This must be prevented and precautionary measures must be taken early in the season.

Some keep their mares shod all around, but, sharp shod behind, there is some danger, particularly with a mare that is inclined to be cross when with foal, of other animals getting kicked.

Good rolled oats and clean hay are as good feed as can be given, but the grain ration should not be heavy. Keep the mare in good thriving condition. Some claim that adding a little wheat to the oats helps, but this year wheat is so high in price that very little could be profitably used. Give the mare some roots each day; a good big turnip at noon, or carrots if you have them, will tend to keep her digestive tract in a healthy condition.

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Poultry

Market Calendar.

While the demand for first quality poultry is unquestionably keen during December, it is not such as to warrant all producers selling all the poultry they have for sale.

Almost invariably the months of January, February and March offer much more lucrative prices.

It is a great mistake to conclude that because the cold weather is here the fowl will not be pestered with vermin. There is just as much need for protecting the fowl from these pests now as there ever was.

There are still some poultry keepers who think that if an examination of the body flesh of the fowl beneath the wings does not reveal the presence of lice that there are none present. This is a big mistake. The place to look for lice is above the vent, and the best way to rid a fowl of them is to apply a little salve composed of one part of blue ointment to three parts of vaseline to the place mentioned. One application of this is worth a dozen dustings, and not one-tenth as expensive.

If poultry keepers would realize how effective this ointment is, there would be very little trouble from body lice. Get the druggist to mix it for you. Apply once every month or so, and the expense of keeping fowl free of vermin will be reduced to a minimum.

Poultry love the out-of-doors. Turn them loose when the weather is nice and they will gain in vigor.

Some fowls are more thrifty than others, and it pays to sort out, pick over and work up the flock.

The mistake is too often made of wintering more hens than the quarters warrant. Nothing on the farm is more profitable than hens, provided their house is large enough to accommodate them without crowding.

Success is a thing of many details. Not one of these small matters can be left out or neglected and the fowls not suffer for it.

Feed according to age. Young birds use the food given them in making flesh and size of body. Grown-up hens take it for egg production; while old ones are more apt to turn everything to fat.

Christmas Preparedness.

By Mrs. E. A. Roberts.

How strange that when Christmas comes every year, as sure as taxes, so few of us prepare for it. I have it tucked away in my brain all the time and it makes a warm glow round my heart whenever I think of it.

I have a Bag, a Box, a Bank, a Book, a big Envelope and a Club, all for Christmas. My Bag is of pretty silk. It holds a dainty bit of frivolous sewing all ready to be taken up at a minute's notice when a caller comes or the day is dreary. When finished it is put away for Christmas. I have made myself happy in making it and I give it to some one who will be happy in receiving it.

My Box is my happiness chest. It holds my finished sewing, especially pretty boxes and cards and my White Elephants. These are things I cannot use but that I know will fit in somewhere. Why should I keep a pink-velvet pincushion when my room is yellow and some lover of pink would enjoy it? So the toys put aside, the pictures we used to like, and the outgrown desires are put in the chest, and at Christmas are sent to the various Societies for Distributing Sunshine.

The Bank holds new money. Through the year I save the shining bits, not for regular presents—dear, no! For extras—last-minute editions! Wouldn't you love to buy of all the agents before Christmas, or send flowers to the dear lady who looks lonely, or play a little joke on a friend? Yes! but your regular money refuses to stretch? Never mind, just have a Christmas bank.

My big Envelope holds my gleanings from the magazines through the year. The pictures, jokes and verses are great to illustrate my Christmas letters, make the place-cards "different," or the wrappings on my packages unique.

The Blank Book holds the desires called foolish, the fancies of my friends—how I love to satisfy them at Christmas! So surprised they are to think I remembered! The blessed Book also holds a record of our previous family celebrations.

My Club? Well, the children and I meet on rainy days or Saturday afternoons, and write Christmas letters, make scrapbooks for sick little ones, calendars for little playmates, and stars and chains for our tree.

Yes, we all love Christmas, but I adore it. Yule-tide means the summing-up of the busy months, the forgetting of hates, the renewing of loves, the fun of jokes and surprises, the helping hand to the downhearted, and the bubbling joy of the children. A bother? A worry? No, indeed—but isn't it perhaps a question of preparedness?

The Sunday School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON DECEMBER 9.

Lesson X. Ezra and Nehemiah Teach The Law—Neb. 8. Golden Text, Psa. 119. 105.

Verses 1, 2 narrate the gathering of the people. Broad place—Equivalent to "square" or "plaza;" the term is applied to the open square near the city gate used as a market place and for other public gatherings. Water gate—From Neh. 12. 37 one may infer that this was a gate in the eastern wall, near the temple area. According to the Talmud it derived its name from the fact that through it water was carried from the virgin spring to the temple on the feast of tabernacles. Ezra—In Ezra 7. 1-5 the genealogy of Ezra is traced back to Aaron. According to Ezra 7. 7, he came to Jerusalem in the seventh year of king Artaxerxes, who is generally thought to be the first king bearing that name, who ascended the throne in B. C. 465; which would make the date of Ezra's journey B. C. 458. There are serious difficulties in the way of accepting this view; consequently others identify the king with Artaxerxes II (B. C. 404-359); if so, Ezra would have come to Jerusalem in 397. But if Ezra was a contemporary of Nehemiah, as is suggested in the lesson text, he must have made the trip before B. C. 430; and many hold that his work was done in connection with the second administration of Nehemiah, about B. C. 432. Scribe—In postexilic times the title "scribe" was applied to the expert interpreters of the law (compare Ezra 7. 6). Law of Moses—The extent of the law read by Ezra is a matter of dispute. Some hold that it was the Pentateuch in its present form; others, that it was only the part of the Pentateuch known as the "Priestly Code." While the question cannot be definitely decided, to the present writer the former seems the more probable view (see F. C. Eiselen, The Books of Pentateuch, pp. 247-249). Priest—Ezra was both priest (Ezra 7. 1-5) and scribe (Ezra 7. 6). Hear with understanding—Or, "who were capable of understanding what they heard;" that is, children. The assembly consisted of men, women, and children. First day . . Seventh month—The day on which the feast of trumpets was observed in postexilic Judaism. (Lev. 23. 23-25; Num. 29. 1-6).

Verses 3, 4 describe the reading of the law. Midday—The excessive heat made continuation impracticable; the noon hours are a time of rest in the orient. The reading was received with closest attention. Pulpit—The author has in mind a wooden platform on which a dozen or more men could be accommodated.

Verses 5-8 give a more detailed description of the reading. Book—Better, "roll;" this he opened by unrolling it. Stood up—As a mark of respect; they were about to hear a divine message (Judge 3. 20). Amen—The word means "firm" or "established;" the response expresses the people's approval. Lifting up—The attitude of prayer and adoration (Exod. 17. 11). Worshipped—Better, "prostrated themselves;" a position of homage. Verse 7 contains the names of Levites who assisted Ezra in interpreting the law to the people. The translation of verse 8 suggested above brings out the thought more clearly. Ezra read from the book suitable sections, not the whole book; then these sections, read distinctly, were interpreted by him or by the Levites who were with him on the platform; as a result, everyone could get the meaning.

Verses 9-12 portray some of the effects produced. Holy—That is, dedicated to Jehovah and to his service. It being the first day of the month, it was the day of the new moon celebration; as already suggested, it was also the day on which the feast of trumpets was observed; now it acquired a new sanctity because of the reading of the law. Mourn not—Religious festivals should be occasions of rejoicing. Wept—In the light of the requirements of the law the people saw their sins more clearly; hence the tears (compare 2 Kings. 22. 11, 19). Fat . . . sweet—They were to eat and drink the best they could get; it was an occasion of rejoicing, not of fasting. Send portions—The poor were to have the opportunity of rejoicing in the spirit of the occasion (Deut. 16. 11, 14). Joy of Jehovah—That is, the joy they have or take in Jehovah. "He that rejoiceth in Jehovah has a strong fortress from which he can repel all adversaries."

Verse 11 is in the nature of a parenthesis; it states that the Levites succeeded in quieting the people. Hold your peace—Do not weep aloud. The people did as they were told; they made the day an occasion of rejoicing because they had entered into a new understanding of the law of Jehovah.

The Dairy

Why Milk Tests Vary.

It is often observed that milk is poorer in fat in summer and becomes richer again in the fall, and the farmers have generally assumed this to be due to the watery condition of grass as compared with the dry feed received during the winter. Tests have shown that the cause of this is not grass-feeding, but the temperature. For some reason there is a tendency for the milk to be richer in fat during cold weather and to become poorer when the weather becomes very warm, regardless of the feed consumed.

A second factor of importance as influencing the richness of milk is the fatness of the cow at time of freshening. A cow high in flesh at calving time gives very much richer milk for some time than would be the case were she thin.

This knowledge is now made use of by every breeder of dairy cattle who desires to make the largest possible record for milk and butterfat production. Another interesting discovery is that when a cow is underfed she temporarily gives richer milk rather than thinner as might be expected. This is of great importance in connection with making tests of cows, and a failure to understand this effect has resulted in wrong conclusions from many experiments conducted with cows in the past.

Bedtime Stories

The Happy Frogs.

"Well, of all things! How delighted I am to see you, Mrs. Bull Frog, and how is that good husband of yours?"

Doctor Bull Frog had called to see Mrs. Bull Frog and pass the time of day. Now, Mrs. Bull Frog, who was always on the lookout, cautiously said, "I think he has gone down to get some music for this evening. You know, we are going to have a 'noise party' at our house to-night. Everyone who cannot sing has been invited."

"I didn't get an invitation," replied the good doctor, sitting down in a chair which was too small for him and getting up with a jump.

"Of course, you didn't. The very idea! No one is invited who can sing. You might come around later in the afternoon and sing for us, and if we decide that your voice is bad, then we will let you come to our party." Mrs. Bull Frog was trying to keep from laughing.

Now, it so happened that all the Frogs were anxious to have some one on the lookout, as the men were mowing in the next field and Rover, the big dog from the house came around ever so often and made them all jump into the pond and be very, very still. You see, frogs are always quiet when danger is near, and when you hear them singing away, "Juger-ump! Juger-ump!" while another answers "Knee-deep! Knee-deep!" you may know that all is well.

Doctor Bull Frog was so fat it was all he could do to get out of the chair. "All right! I'll be there this afternoon, and when you hear me singing, then you can decide whether I am to have an invitation to your party," he said.

"Very good," replied Mrs. Bull Frog, as she ushered the doctor out, thinking what a good lookout he would make.

By and by along came Mrs. Bull Frog's husband, wiggling his big eyes this way and that, looking for a fat fly or an absent-minded mosquito.

"Well, my dear, is there anything new about our 'noise party' to-night?" began Mister Bull Frog, as he entered his mansion.

"You just have your dinner and then take a nap. After that there will be something new," replied his dear wife, giving him a frog hug and a kiss on his big mouth.

By and by Mrs. Bull Frog heard her husband calling and she went to the foot of the stairs with, "What is it, my dear?"

"I can't sleep for thinking of that new thing you told me about."

Just then there was the most terrible croaking Mrs. Bull Frog had ever heard. "There he is! There he is!" She rushed up-stairs, two steps at a time and hurried over to the window. Peeking out she saw Doctor Bull Frog sitting on the top of a mossy bank, singing for all he was worth.

"He wants to come to our party," whispered Mrs. Bull Frog, pointing to Doctor Bull Frog.

While they were both looking, Rover, the big dog, started down the bank of the pond and Doctor Bull Frog had to dive into the cool water with a "Cher-plunk!"

"There!" laughed Mister Bull Frog. "It does not pay to make too much noise in this world."

And what do you think? That night Mister and Mrs. Bull Frog would not let Doctor Bull Frog come to their "noise party" because, they said, Doctor Bull Frog had not sung all of his song!

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