Farm Crop Queries

Conducted by Professor 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. When writing kindly mention this paper. 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.

G. W.:—How do you think the following plan of mine will work for alfalfa? I have ten acres that I wish to put in corn in the spring and sow to alfalfa in August. Will put on two tons of high calcium hydrated lime and 200 pounds of complete fertilizers, say 2-8-2 on the corn ground, and in August will sow to alfalfa. How will I get the alfalfa in the ground? Do you think this is a good way, or can you suggest a better plan?

Answer:—If you are located in the south-western part of the Province and you intend to cut your corn for green feed or early ensilage it is probable that you will be able to carry out your plans as suggested, with a considerable degree of success. I do not favor sowing alfalfa in the highland regions of Ontario, which means all of Ontario north and east of a line from Toronto to Goderich, in the fall. The trouble is that the young alfalfa plant, which is very tender, does not have time to form a sufficient root to enable it to withstand the hard test of Ontario winters. I much prefer sowing alfalfa in the spring on well prepared ground with a nurse crop of small grain, either wheat or barley.

My advice would be for you to dress the land in question with two tons of lime per acre as soon as the ground is plowed in spring, or even applying it this fall would be alright. The lime will sweeten the soil and prepare it for the growth of the alfalfa and free soil-bacteria next spring. Apply the fertilizer at the time you are sowing the grain and alfalfa. Cut down the amount of grain sown per acre, that is, sow about a bushel and a peck instead of a heavier application which is usually used when grain is grown for its own sake. As soon as the grain is cut and taken off, give the alfalfa a chance to make a good top growth for the following winter. Do not pasture it. If you have not grown alfalfa before, you would do well to innoculate the seed as directed by the Bacteriological Department, O.A.C., Guelph, from which source you can obtain good cultures of the bacteria that grow on the roots of alfalfa. With the foregoing precautions, if your soil is well drained and in good state of tilth, you should have a successful catch of alfalfa.

G. E. S.:—Have a field of new ground which has produced crops of potatoes and oats, was seeded with timothy and clover, but grasshoppers took it. How can I prepare this land for alfalfa? When is the best time to sow? Would it be best to grow it with a nurse crop? What amount should be sown per acre and which kind of seed is best?

Answer:—I would advise you to spring plow the land in question principally because alfalfa requires a very thoroughly prepared seedbed. The answers to most of your remaining questions are contained in the Question and Answer above.

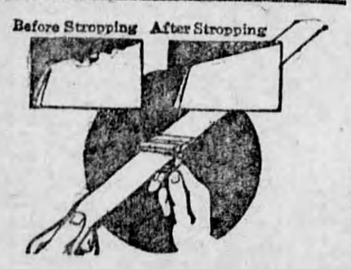
The best seed to use in Ontario is the Grimn alfalfa.

S. L.:—When is the best time to put lime on the soil? Is it a good time now? What kind of lime would you advise if you have any preference? Which is the best way to spread lime? Are there devices for doing this?

Answer:—Lime may be applied any time with good results. If the weather seems open and severe frosts are not threatening, you would do well to apply lime yet this fall. As to the kind of lime, it depends upon the type of your soil and your distance from market. Actual tests show that two tons of ground limestone are required to do the same work as one ton of air-slaked burnt lime. This is on account of the relative purity of the latter kind of lime. Therefore, if you are a long way from your source of lime it will pay you to ship the purer form of lime. Moreover, when applying lime to heavy clay soil, it has been commonly found that air-slaked burnt lime not only corrects the sourness of the heavy clay soil but actually gathers the soil particles together so that the crumb of the soil is coarser after liming than before. This is greatly to be desired on heavy clay soil.

The best way to apply lime is to broadcast it on top of plowed land, then work it in by disking and harrowing. This gives the lime an opportunity to exert its sweetening influence throughout the whole upper surface of the soil.

Considerable special lime-spreading machinery is offered on the market. Most of the leading machinery manufacturers have special types on sale all of which give satisfactory application.



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Horse Sense

The colt's first winter is very important. If the colt goes into the winter thin and in poor condition it has less chance to winter well than if it enters winter quarters in good shape.

Colts frequently lose bloom and flesh at weaning time. To avoid this is important. They should have learned to eat hay and grain before weaning time; also to be separated from their mothers.

A very satisfactory method of weaning is to let the colts nurse in the morning and take them away, not permitting them to see or hear their mothers until the ordeal is over. If they have learned to eat hay and grain they can be weaned and gain in weight during weaning time. Recently a bunch of colts gained twenty pounds each during the week they were weaned. After weaning, a good blue-grass paddock surrounded by fences on which colts can not injure themselves, plenty of good fresh water and good grain, together with exercise and satisfactory shelter, should keep colts in good condition up to the time winter sets in. If a colt is worth having it is worth taking care of.

The Dairy

Many people do not realize that fall freshened cows pay far in advance of spring freshened cows. Winter dairying is the farmer's salvation. He can well utilize his leisure time during the slack season by milking a few cows. Such a plan is especially advisable when a hand is kept the year around. Cows that calve in the fall usually produce more in a year than those that calve in the spring of the year.

Beginning with the first day of September cows and heifers kept for fall freshening should begin to come in rapid succession. This means that the cows should be bred about December 1. The little calves should be hand fed and well cared for, so as to keep them growing and to have them in good shape when cold weather sets in.

Cream can be kept sweet much longer in winter than in summer, and invariably reaches the market in better condition after shipping, commanding higher prices than otherwise. Quotations also soar upward as cooler weather advances.

Loose Matches.

Matches should not be carried loose in a man's pocket. A match may easily be dropped in the hay or other inflammable material and if stepped on cause a fire. Avoid the danger of burning up your buildings and stock by not carrying matches loose.

Big nails, when used for hanging up harness, are pretty sure to scratch the leather. Get some big hooks, or put up some wooden pins firmly. Lots [illegible]

The farmer's wife, strong for economy, gives her spouse a powerful hint about his habit of leaving the farm machinery outside for months in all weathers.

YOUR PROBLEMS
BY
MRS HELEN LAW

Address all correspondence for this department to Mrs. Helen Law, 23 Woodbine Ave., Toronto.

Minerva: For a general chronological history of the war, Frank H. Simond's "History of the World War," takes first place. More picturesque, more intimate in the ground which they cover, are Philip Gibbs's famous books, "The Soul of the War," "The Battle of the Somme," "From Baupaume to Passchendaele," and "The Way to Victory." "The Times History of the War" is regarded by several authorities as essential. "Belgium Under German Occupation," by Brand Whitlock is the best account of Belgium's sufferings and heroism. The story of the first British troops to take the field against Germany—"the contemptible little army" of which the Kaiser spoke—is told in Ian Hay's "The First Hundred Thousand."

The heroic but ill-fated Gallipoli expedition has had no abler chronicler than John Masefield, who tells the story in "Gallipoli." It was in the Gallipoli campaign that the "Anzacs" first shed their blood for the Empire. Canada's story is told in "Canada in Flanders." To understand the war in its entirety one must read of the British campaign in Mesopotamia, which has nowhere been more interestingly set down than in Eleanor Franklin Egan's "The War in the Cradle of the World."

"France Facing Germany," by Georges Clemenceau; "Serbia," by L. F. Waring; "Italy in the War," by Sidney Law; "When the Prussians Came to Poland," by Laura de Gogdawa Turczynowicz, a Canadian girl, are interesting books.

No collection of war books would be complete without an account of the work of the British Navy set forth in "The Grand Fleet" by Admiral Jellicoe, and "The British Navy in Battle," by Arthur H. Pollen.

Many thousands of war poems have been written. One poem stands out. It and other verses by the same soldier-poet have been collected into the book which may well be included in the war library. It is "In Flanders Fields," by that gallant son of Canada, Lieut.-Col. John McCrae.

A most interesting book, just published, is written by Col. G. G. Nasmith, the noted Canadian physician who discovered the antidote to poison gas. Dr. Nasmith sailed on that famous convoy in 1914, sloshed through the mud of Salisbury Plain, crossed to France in February, 1915, and was with the 1st Division at Ypres, when Canada's sons saved the situation on that forever memorable St. George's Day of April, 1915. Col. Nasmith vividly describes the outbreak of the war and the incidents which led up to it. He devotes a chapter to Britain's response to arms and to the magnificent deeds of French's little army in those early, awful days of the war, paying generous tribute all through the book to the gallant men of the British Isles.

The book bears the title "Canada's Sons and Great Britain in the War" and contains thirty-nine chapters, of which a few samples are: "The Empire Springs to Arms," "Canada in War Time," "Canadians on Salisbury Plain," "Canadians Save the Situation at Ypres," "Canadians Capture Vimy Ridge," "Canadians Win Mons."

Isabel: My brother was a medical officer in the army and he is bringing home an English bride. We will give them some kind of a reception but there are two things that bother us: Will people think it is an advertisement to get him started in his profession, as one of our relatives remarked, and would it be all right for us to hire a hall inasmuch as our home is very small?

You have not said in your letter that this reception is partially a scheme to introduce your brother to he people in the town and thus give him a boost professionally, but I suspect it is, and I admire you all the more for it. People cannot be too retiring and modest these days, especially returned soldiers, many of whom come back to find their places filled by others who did not or could not make the big sacrifice. Give the reception by all means and invite everyone. Hire the hall; decorate it prettily and make the affair as pretentious and festive as you can afford. Your brother and his wife should receive with your mother and father, and maybe with the minister and his wife if you like. If you wish only simple refreshments, have some kind of fruit punch with your pretty girl friends to serve it.

Blue Bell: How can a person not gifted with a cheerful disposition cultivate one? What kind of girls do the boys admire?

First of all, you must keep your system in order. There is nothing quite so depressing as a disordered liver, or a system poisoned because the waste has not been eliminated from the body. If you cultivate regular habits, seek fresh air, sleep in a well-ventilated room, and make up your mind that you are not going to be irritated over trifles, but will make the best of things, you can do much to improve your disposition.

As to the kind of girls the boys like, I might say that the variety is endless; it depends upon the boy. Look about your neighborhood and consider the women who have married. You will find no two of them alike. The same rule applies to husbands. Human beings vary, but a cheerful and helpful person is always admired.

Churchmouse: Have you thought of poultry-raising as a means of acquiring not only "pin money" but a substantial income? It has been tried with great success by many women. One has only to consider the present price of eggs to see that the field is an inviting one. Go in for pure-bred stock, of course, and write the Government Poultry Husbandman at Ottawa for bulletins. There are girls, too, who have worked up a good business in candymaking, using the nuts which abound in their locality. Regarding story writing, test your ability by telling stories to children. If they listen with rapt attention and clamor for more, lose no time in sending that story to a publisher. But if you can't hold the attention of your audience, give up the idea and direct your efforts elsewhere. But, honestly, Churchmouse, every girl should know how to knit. Best of luck. Write again, more in detail next time.

Hogs

Barley and whey—these are two feeds that swine raisers do not use to the best advantage. In a series of feeding tests conducted by the Wisconsin Experiment Station, ground barley was mixed with whey at the rate of one pound of barley to two pounds of whey, and fed to a lot of pigs. An average gain of 2.53 pounds a day was made, at a cost of $8.72 for 100 pounds gain, barley being quoted at eighty-four cents a bushel. Other lots of pigs were fed mixtures of barley and tankage, barley and middlings, barley and linseed meal, barley and skim-milk, and barley, whey and linseed meal, but the cheapest gains were made with the barley and whey mixture.

At first glance it seems strange that whey should prove superior to middlings, skim milk, tankage, and linseed meal as a supplement to barley. Whey is almost entirely water, containing less than one pound of protein for every 100 pounds. Many farmers in the cheese districts feed their whey to pigs, either using it as a basis for slops or else letting the pigs drink it clear. While whey has some small feeding value when used clear, the protein it does have is largely wasted.

Just as we have already known that it is wasteful to feed skim milk with corn or other cereals except in the proper proportions, we now know that whey must also be fed correctly in order to obtain the greatest benefit from its use, and we also know that barley is one of the best grains with which to combine whey. But when barley is not available, whey may be mixed with any grain in about the same proportion.

The Sunday School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON NOVEMBER 23.

Jesus Corrects John's Narrowness—Mark 9: 33-42; 10: 13-16; Luke 9: 46-56. Golden Text, Eph. 6:24.

Mark 9: 33-42. The Lesson of Greatness.

"Who was the greatest?" When questioned about it they were ashamed of their debate and did not answer. They had, no doubt, been thinking of that kingdom of material splendor and power which they still expected Jesus was going to set up. Which of them should have first place? Who should be greatest? They were men of widely different gifts and qualities and they may have discussed the question of what gifts and qualities would be necessary for greatness in such a kingdom. Jesus answers their question, and His answer is complete and final. Greatness is through service, even through lowliest service. "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all." For example, Jesus took a little child in His arms. To receive, care for, protect such a little one is to receive the Lord Himself. To minister to one of the least is to minister to the King. To do good to a human soul is to render high and holy service to God. Compare Luke 9: 46-48.

Mark 10: 13-16. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

"The little children." The disciples had a high sense of their Master's importance and of the value of His time. He should be occupied only with important people, people of rank and station. Women who brought little children to Him were not to be encouraged. They rebuked them. Jesus did get angry sometimes, and this was one of the occasions of His anger. "Let the children come," He said, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The simplicity, the truth, the trustfulness, the open-mindedness of little children—these are the qualities which shall mark those who are to enter in and possess the kingdom.

How much the words of Jesus in these lessons must appeal to those who have the care of children, whether in the home, the school, the Sunday school, the orphanage, or the children's hospital! Jesus pronounces highest eulogy upon all such service. None shall be greater in the kingdom of heaven, none rank higher in the new social order that is yet to be, than the mother, the teacher, and the nurse. The new age is to be an age of faith, and it is children who show us the way of perfect faith.

Luke 9: 49-50. The Lesson of Co-operation.

"We forbade him." In the zealous mind of John the spirit of intolerance is already flaming up. They saw one trying to heal cases of insanity by using Jesus' name, he said, and they forbade him. He was doing good, or trying to, but he was not of their party. "Forbid him not," Jesus said, "for he that is not against us if for us."

In every age and in every movement for human betterment, the same intolerant spirit appears. It would forbid all activity but its own. It would make itself and its agencies the only true representatives of Jesus Christ. The words of Jesus lift us out of the strife of parties and of sects. We learn tolerance and generous appreciation of the good done by those who differ from us. We learn in every forward movement to co-operate heartily with all other people and institutions which have the same end in view. We learn that God's workmen are in many fields, and that name, or form, or party feeling should never hinder the fullest and freest co-operation in every good work. Of this passage, W. N. Clarke writes: "Jesus expressly told His followers to recognize as their brother the man who was doing His work, though he might not follow with them or do it in their way. All exclusive sectarianism, as if one's own sect were the whole kingdom of heaven, . . . as if one's own way of following Jesus were the only way, are here not only forbidden, but ruled out alike by common sense and Christian sentiment" (quoted in Peloubet's Notes.)

Luke 9: 51-56. The Lesson of Patience.

"They did not receive him." These Samaritans acted very badly. Not only were they guilty of gross inhospitality, but they also showed unreasonable and bigoted hostility to Jesus and His disciples because they were going to Jerusalem. So far did they carry the old feud between Jew and Samaritan. In their anger the two brothers, James and John, would have blasted them with fire from heaven. Perhaps they deserved it. But that was not Jesus' way. Judgment would overtake those childish evildoers soon enough. His ministry was one of grace and of forgiveness, not of destruction.

The same attitude toward our enemies, which James and John adopted, is manifest in much of what we say and do to-day. Should we not rather cultivate the spirit and mind of Jesus? Our mission in the world as Christian men and as Christian nations, is like that of Christ, not "to destroy men's lives but to save them."

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Poultry

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Cut off the head of every hen that loafs on her job. What we are after these days is the hen that does her part with us, working for the ten per cent. profit we must have or go out of business.

Pullets will begin to lay when they are sexually matured—when they are old enough—regardless of the calendar time. They will lay at that time unless the natural development of the ovaries be checked by disease, injury, nervous distraction, or some other hostile agencies.

Buying poor feed is a mistaken notion of economy. It takes more of such feed to produce the same results. Besides, to feed impure or otherwise poor grade stuff is a direct invitation to unhealthy conditions among the hens. No man can afford to economize that way.

Selling my eggs at home cost me $50 one single season. I had no idea it made such a difference. Why did I do it? To get rid of crating and shipping. But I am through; that $50 is just as good to me as it is to the man down at the village. I want him to do well, of course, but I need the money myself.

Dressed chickens all "dolled up," meet with ready sale. In fact, a well dressed fowl is half sold. A bit of narrow red ribbon holding the fowl's legs together has drawing power with many men. Then, too, it pays to use a few sheets of tissue paper in wrapping up the birds. Small things? That may be, but the little things help to make up big ones.

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