FARMING

In this department each week will be given general information to farmers and stockmen. No attempt will be made to criticize the work already being done by Canadian farmers; but an effort will be made to present to the farmers of the country summarized information contained in government reports, and the actual experiences of men and women who have achieved success in farming by following modern methods. Farmers who have found new "wrinkles" or have made a success in any special line of agriculture are invited to send short letters to this paper giving their experiences, or criticizing any of the information contained in these columns.

Vegetable Growing

(Concluded from last week.)

Leave Lots of Room

After a thorough spring cultivation of the soil furrows should be run out to a depth of from six to eight inches and from four to five feet apart. This latter distance between the rows is arbitrary, some growers planting four feet and others five feet apart. It is advantageous to leave plenty of room between the rows in order to have ample room for cultivation. Five feet apart for the rows will prove a very satisfactory distance. The furrows should be made in the shape of a V, and this can be done by running out one furrow and coming back and turning one directly away from this.

The plants can be dibbled in in this furrow, or can be simply planted in this by drawing some loose earth around them and afterwards raking in some of the soil to fill in the spaces. The plants should be set from two to three feet apart in the row. The furrow should not be filled in at once, but should be gradually filled in by subsequent cultivation as the plant grows. Where crowns are used they should be in furrows eight inches deep, and should be covered with from two to three inches of soil, which should be firmly tramped down. The furrow should be gradually filled in as above mentioned, planting should be done in the spring as soon as the possibility of severe frosts is over.

The cultivation of the young seedlings should be carefully looked after. Frequent scuffling and hoeing, which will keep down the weeds, will be sufficient during the summer season.

In the mature patch or one four to five years old, the scuffler should be used as long as the tops will permit during the summer. In early spring a light disking as soon as the land is fit will prove sufficient. The cultivation of a mature patch after the cutting season is over should consist of a thorough disking as previously mentioned. Too much emphasis cannot be given to this point.

Harvesting

The asparagus shoots which come through the ground in early spring are the part of the plant which is used for human consumption. These should not be cut on a new patch until the third year after the plants have been set. This must be carefully watched, for if the young plants are subjected to a heavy cutting while young they will receive such a severe check that they very seldom reach the stage of a healthy crop-producing plant. It will pay to wait until the plant has become thoroughly established before cutting is commenced.

The crop is harvested by cutting off the young shoots below the surface of the ground about an inch or an inch and a half. This is best done by means of a long butcher knife, which should be inserted in the ground close to the stalk at an angle so as to cut off the stalk with a sloping end, and yet not cut off the young shoots which have not yet reached the surface of the soil. This can be easily done after a little practice and it will be found that by taking the shoot in the left hand and gently inserting the knife with the right hand and cutting the shoots a large number of hills can be gone over in a short time. The shoots should not be cut unless they are above the surface of the ground six inches. It is advisable to go over the patch every other day and to cut everything that is marketable, because these tender shoots grow rapidly, and if allowed to remain growing long become woody and are not suitable for use. It will be found that many shoots will come through the ground and only be the size of a darning needle. It is advisable to cut these as well and throw them away. Leave nothing all through cutting season, because it will only weaken the plant and harbor insects.

If bleached or white asparagus is grown, it should be cut when the tip is barely coming through the surface of the ground which has been moulded up over the crowns to a height of ten or twelve inches.

The cutting season on a young patch should not be much over three weeks, but in a mature plot the season should extend to July 1st. It is not advisable to cut after this date, and if it is done the patch will become worn out and unprofitable.

Sold in Bunches

Asparagus is usually sold in bunches, the size of which depends on the market. Usually as much as can be easily held in one hand constitutes a bunch. The stalks are trimmed with a knife after grading, so that the butt ends, as well as the tip ends, are even and have a trim appearance. These bunches are usually tied with two bands of ordinary bunching twine, one near the tip and the other near the butt end of the bunch. Elastic bands, raffia, or colored twine are also used. If so desired these bunches can be kept thoroughly fresh by standing them in a pan of water butt-end down. This is done in extremely hot weather to keep the bunches fresh for market. Asparagus is sold by the average vegetable grower in baskets or boxes or any convenient affair to carry it in to town. Where it is shipped to market boxes or baskets holding two to three dozen bunches are used. These should be of light material and yet have sufficient air space left that a good circulation can be kept up, and thus overcome the danger of heating. Where this crop is grown for a canning factory it is purchased by the top, and it is usually hauled to the factory either loose in a clean wagon box or in bushel boxes.

The old custom of digging the trench for the asparagus crown, of putting in four or five inches of brick bats, etc., for drainagle, is still supposed by some to be the only way to grow asparagus. This method is old-fashioned, unnecessary and should not be followed.

The asparagus being a maritime plant or sea-shore plant in its original state, has been the cause of many growers adopting the practice of applying large quantities of common salt to the asparagus plot. This theory has been exploded and revived many times in the history of vegetable growing, and it can be definitely stated that just as good a crop of asparagus can be grown without the use of salt as with it. Phenomenal yields after the use of salt can usually be traced to some other cause. In no case wi.. a heavy application of salt pay for itself in increased yield, but it is useful as a weed destroyer.

In the fall, the tops should be cut off a couple of inches from the ground, carried off the patch and burned. This will destroy disease spores and insects which might otherwise cause considerable damage to the next season's crop.

THE COW, THE SOW AND THE HEN

HUGH G. VAN PELT.

There are instances innumerable in this broad country of ours where specialized farming proved very safe and profitable.

In certain sections expert gardeners, who know how to retain soil fertility and coax vegetables to grow rapidly, would sacrifice were they to add other phases of farming to their operations.

Fruit growers in large numbers prosper because of their expert ability in this one direction, and there are grain farmers whose knowledge of conserving and replenishing soil fertility by rotating crops and using fertilizers enables them to succeed admirably without keeping livestock.

Breeders of various classes of purebred livestock sometimes become so intensive in their operations that were they to deviate from their course of specialized effort their success as breeders would be curtailed.

Dairying is a type of agriculture fairly well adapted to specialization and there are dairymen who succeed best when they eliminate all other obligations and stick strictly to the dairy business.

In all such instances, however, those who succeed enviably with one specialty to the exclusion of all other phases of agriculture are men who have devoted their lives to intense and exhaustive study and experimentation with the one line of endeavor to which they are peculiarly adapted. They are specialists and experts in their chosen lines. They must be; otherwise they would fail. Because they are specialists and experts in a chosen field they are incapable of attaining full success when their thoughts are divided.

Diversification Best.

Fortunately, agriculture in the main offers more certain, if not greater, success where diversification is followed than where specialization is attempted.

Excepting a comparatively few instances, the gardener, the fruit grower, the grain farmer and others whose preference may be to specialize, succeed with more certainty when they keep a few cows, a few sows and a few hens.

Invariably the poultry man, the horse breeder, the hog raiser, the sheep enthusiast and the dairyman succeed better if they have good gardens and raise some fruit.

It is a conceded fact that the most successful livestock and dairymen are those who raise a large percentage of the feed, especially the roughage, their animals need.

Essentially Animals.

In all phases of agriculture there are three animals that are as essential as is diversification itself. These are the cow, the sow and the hen. They produce the most useful of human foods, using largely of feeds that would be wasted without them.

Incidentally, they are also the three animals that yield the greatest amount of human food in return for the feed they eat.

It is not uncommon for farmers, dairymen, poultrymen, nurserymen, gardeners and breeders to fail, but I have never known a farmer who practiced diversified farming diligently and intelligently to fall short of reasonable success and favorable prosperity, providing he used good dairy cows as his major specialty and good poultry and good swine as the minor associates.

Formerly farmers, as a general rule, looked upon poultry raising as too insignificant to be considered a regular part of their farming operations. The few chickens kept were scrubs and, like Topsy, "jest grew up." They rustled for themselves in the summer time, and got scanty feed—or the axe—in the winter months.

Farmer Has Awakened.

But the farmer—especially the dairy farmer—has awakened. The gradually increasing prices received for poultry and their products made him aware of their importance, and on some farms poultry raising is approaching a par with the other farming and dairying operations.

It is realized that poultry amply repay any extra effort given them. Having realized the importance of having better cattle, the dairy farmer readily sees the advantages of better poultry. And so, the day is past when poultry keeping is to be regarded as merely a pin-money chore for the farm housewife.

Cows, poultry and hogs are about as miserable a mixture as is conceivable where they are allowed to live together in the same barn and lots, but where kept apart and each herd and flock efficiently cared for they form a combination that marks their owner as a farmer plus—a farmer who does everything any farmer does, plus the very things which make success a certainty.

The Farmer Plus.

The farmer plus is the farmer who is found in every community. He is the one who has the best crops, the best buildings, the best equipment, the best home.

The farmer plus has these things not just because he is lucky, but because he does everything good that every other farmer in his community does and then he recognizes the possibilities of the three greatest of all classes of farm animals—the sow, the sow and the hen.

The farmer plus gives his cows good care and by the use of their by-products he is enabled to raise the best chickens and the best pigs and do it in that manner which nets him the largest possible profit with the utmost certainty.

As surely as diversified farming is known to be the safest type to follow, so is it known that no combination can excel the cow, the sow and the hen. They are the three great factors upon which diversified agriculture is based.

THE COW

A poultry paradise on the dairy farm is a very logical ambition.

No farms offer better opportunities for utilizing the efforts of the hen as one of the principal factors of diversification than the farms where cows are milked.

On no farms can poultry be raised more successfully and with greater profit than on those farms where an abundance of skim-milk is available.

The cow and the hen are the two animals that are worthy of much consideration and respect; they are the two farm bonds from which coupons can be clipped with rare regularity.

Their products, milk and eggs, are the great sources of vitamines which have been proved to be essential to life and growth, to development—physically and mentally.

On dairy farms it is well to keep good poultry, and on poultry farms it is well to keep good cows.

Each profits most where the other serves best.

POULTRY

THE EGG

NUMBER OF EGGS TO SET.

This will vary with the size of the eggs, the size of the hen and the season of the year. For eggs of ordinary size, from 12 to 15 is the usual number. Early in the season, perhaps 12 or 13 will be sufficient for a hen of medium size. Later, in warm weather she can handle 15 equally as well.

A number of hens may be set at once. If not many chicks hatch they may be given to some of the hens and the others reset. Reset those in the best condition.

FEEDING DURING INCUBATION.

The broody hen frequently does not take her meals very regularly and is not very particular as to her bill of fare. If there is some whole grain, preferably corn, but, lacking that, buckwheat, oats or wheat, nearby, and also a pan of water, little else is required. Occasionally she likes a little grass or other green stuff and a little grit or gravel and these can easily be supplied. It is best to have the nest so arranged that the hen can come off to eat or exercise whenever she desires. Occasionally a hen will leave the nest a little too long or too often, but this seldom happens if she is a good setter.

(Continued next week.)

EARLY HATCH, EARLY LAYERS

Chicks Should Be Out by the First of May.

Hatching should be completed by the first of May, if possible. Chickens hatched before this time will have a good chance to mature and be in laying condition as pullets before the cold weather of fall sets in, and should in consequence, be producers during the entire fall and winter. This is one of the chief reasons poultry specialists of the Department of Agriculture are urging the importance this year of the early hatch.

Early hatched chickens are easier to raise, as they live and thrive better than those which are still small when the hot weather begins.

City Chickens Need Room.

Whether the backyard poultry keeper should try to renew his flock either by hatching or raising chicks or by purchasing and raising day- old chicks is an open question. Raising chicks should not be attempted unless a plot can be provided separate from that to which the hens have access and upon which there is grass or where a supply of green feed can be furnished. Hatching under these conditions can best be done with hens.

DR. G. C. CREELMAN
Who is Going to England as Agent-General for Ontario.

THE CHICK

NUMBER OF CHICKS WITH HEN.

This will vary with climatic conditions and the size of the hen. A medium size hen in warm weather can satisfactorily care for 18 or 20 chicks. In the early season when cold spells are more or less frequent 15 chicks will be sufficient. If the hen is small 15 in warm weather and 12 or 13 at the most in the early season will be all she can cover and raise well. A hatch of 20 to 25 chicks early in the season should by all means be divided between two hens. It is false economy to take chances by giving each hen more chicks than she can properly care for.

MOST SATISFACTORY BREEDS.

The medium-size breeds of poultry, such as the Plymouth Rock, Wyandotte, Rhode Island Red and Orpington are the most satisfactory for raising chicks. The larger breeds, though they may cover more chicks, are too heavy and clumsy. The small breeds like the Leghorns cannot cover as many chicks as the larger and are sometimes wild and nervous. They are likely to injure or kill some of the chicks if they are molested. A hen for raising chicks should have a kind and quiet disposition.

PROTECTION AGAINST LICE.

Before chicks are placed in the coop, especially if they are hatched by hens, they should be examined for lice. The control of lice on broody hens is very difficult, especially in hot weather, hence when the chicks hatch they are almost sure to be covered with these parasites, which usually gather on the top of the chick's head and at least part way down the neck. A simple and effective treatment is to rub a little lard on the down of the head, neck and throat. If the lard is melted when applied there will be less danger of its running into the chick's eyes and causing trouble. Lard in the solid condition is likely to be applied in too large qualtities, which when melted by the heat of the chick's head will spread out and run farther than intended. Great care must be taken after applying lard to see that the chicks are not forced to run in the hot sun too much. This is advisable at any time.

The chicks should be examined quite frequently for head lice during the first six weeks or two months of life, especially if they appear to be unthrifty. These lice are large gray in color and are usually firmly attached to the down with the head close to or buried in the skin. Whenever found the foregoing treatment should be applied.

Before placing the hen and chicks in the coop, the former should be dusted for lice with a powder made from crude carbolic acid or creosol, gasoline and plaster of paris. Too much should not be applied however or it may get into the eyes of the chick and cause irritation. The hen should be examined from time to time and dusted if lice are found.

(Continued next week.)

Planting Onion Sets

Onion sets may be planted as early as the land can be worked. Make the onion bed rich. Use well rotted stable manure, preferably cow manure, and mix it thoroughly with the soil.

Pulverize the soil well. Do not leave clods or stones on or near the surface, as these interfere with growing a successful crop.

Use fair to medium sized onion sets. The smaller ones are too slow in making a good sized onion. The larger ones do not develop as quickly as the medium sized ones.

For a small bed, plant in rows from eight inches to one foot apart, and set the onions from two or three inches apart in the row, if they are to be used while young. Even a little nearer will produce excellent results.

If the sets are planted to produce large onions for late summer or winter use, they can be set farther apart, or the bed may be carefully thinned out as the young onions are pulled for early use.

In planting onion sets, always push the little onion down at least two inches below the surface. Cultivate frequently by the use of a rake or hoe. Keep free from weeds and it will surprise you how they grow.

Poultry Lice Remedy

A remedy for poultry lice was developed by the Connecticut station. It is a mixture of one part of mercurial ointment, also called "blue ointment," and one or two parts of vaseline. These are mixed thoroughly, and a bit the size of a pea is rubbed onto the fowl under the wings and about the vent. It is not necessary, nor even desirable, to rub it over the entire fowl as the chicken lice are restless insects and in crawling over the fowls are sure to get into the mixture. This remedy is cheap, efficient and easily applied.

OIL THE HAMMER HANDLES.

A hammer handle costs money nowadays, so it pays to make one last as long as possible. A simple manner of adding life to hammer handles is by oiling them. To do this, bore a hole in the end and fill with lubricating oil, allowing the oil to soak in. If the hammer must be used before the oil has soaked in, a cork in the hole will make this possible. After two or three oilings the handle will be more springy and ready for harder service than would be possible with an unoiled one.

BETTER LIGHTING FOR FARM BUILDINGS.

Few buildings on farms have enough window space. It is a recognized fact that plenty of direct light in the barns, outbuildings and house is the cheapest and best germ destroyer. In the dairy barn there should be four square feet of glass for each cow. Horses should have from two to three square feet of window space. It is best to have one square foot of glass for each 25 to 30 square feet of floor in the young stock or feeding barns. Hogs require all the direct sunlight that can be secured, especially in the spring farrowing months. The windows should be spaced so the light strikes the pens for some time each day.

REPAIRING SPADE HANDLES.

Very often a spade, pitchfork or any other steel implement equipped with a wooden handle becomes useless because the two parts are loose at the joint.

As this joint is usually riveted it is impossible to tighten it and as a result the wood rapidly wears away and the tool can no longer be used.

A simple and effective way to repair it is to clean the joint well, center the handle and pour melted sulphur into the crack. Care must be taken to have the sulphur hot enough so that it will run freely and fill the crack without voids.

This costs but little and can be done in a short time. Once repaired, the implement can be put to use almost immediately, serving as well as a new one.

HOW TO GET THE BEST RESULTS FROM INCUBATORS

See that the incubator is running steadily at the desired temperature before filling with eggs.

Do not add fresh eggs to a tray containing eggs which are undergoing incubation.

Turn the eggs twice daily after the second and until the nineteenth day.

Cool the eggs once daily, according to the weather, from the seventh to the nineteenth day.

Turn the eggs before caring for the lamps.

Attend to the machine carefully at regular hours.

Keep the lamp and wick clean.

Test the eggs on the seventh and fourteenth days.

Do not open the machine after the eighteenth day until the chickens are hatched.

Don't forget that you are invited to give your views on any farm improvement subject in these pages. If you know something new and worth while in farm buildings, equipment or methods, tell others about it here.

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