Soils and Crops

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CAN WE PULL DOWN OUR SILOS?

BY N. A. DRUMMOND.

The harvesting of the corn crop last fall was rather a heavy operation in many localities; hence the question is (a popular one for discussion): Can the silo be abolished? Some of the farm papers have opened their columns for a rigid discussion of the problem, and I have followed them closely. Now I am living in the Province of Quebec, and pretty well north, therefore I think I am in a position to voice an opinion on the corn crop as a safe one for eastern Canadian farmers in general. On the farm on which I live corn, alfalfa, and all clovers seem to thrive equally well; and they all are giving satisfactory results and none of them are to be despised. There has been a silo on our farm for many years; in fact, so far as we know, my father's was the first in Pontiac County, and he probably harvested the first alfalfa seed in the county. I am comparing corn to alfalfa because, if corn were not grown, the alfalfa alone could replace it, I believe. And the change from the one to the other, if it were ever considered, should be cautiously and carefully executed.

The corn crop we have just harvested was exceptionally heavy and much lodged by fall rains; hence, it was a very heavy and difficult operation, to say the least. The field consisted of eight acres which filled our silo, 33x14½, after refilling it three times; besides this we had 50 loads to stook. And, drawing and stooking corn takes time. Not only was this heavy labor, but it cost money; for an engine $2.50 an hour was paid. Then paying neighbors' time when we should have been at home cultivating the stubble. No doubt a corn crop, provided that it has been well cultivated, leaves a field in a good state of cultivation, but if the same time which is lost in filling silos were spent in after-harvest-cultivating, more than an equal advantage would be obtained.

Then there are other costs: In this section the life of an ensilage cutter has averaged about four seasons; at least they were laid away and pronounced unsafe, and, of course, no man would venture to use them. And who would blame them? The life, too, of a jointly-owned binder is very short. Thus the cost of silo, seed, cutter, binder, cultivator, twine—besides the application of all the barnyard manure is enormous; without maintaining the labor. However, there is one consolation—a silo sets off farm buildings to advantage, and silage seems to have a tendency to keeping stock healthy—this itself is worth much.

On the other hand, alfalfa has many merits in which corn falls down. In the beginning, if one cultivates the field the previous autumn and then sows the best alfalfa seed available—grown in your own locality if possible—a good catch is almost assured. Of course, it is better to inoculate the seed. Now you have it established, and when established little further trouble will be encountered. It's grand stuff to have! In this district, 3½ to 4 tons per acre are often harvested with a value equal to bran, and bran is $30 per ton; therefore, an acre of this crop is worth around $100. And this is not all. As it grows it collects nitrogen from the air, deposits it in the soil; and it also sends its branch roots and rootlets far down into the soil, loosening and making plant-food available. And so, instead of depleting the soil of plant-food, as corn does, it deposits and makes more available by its action.

Which shall it be—corn or alfalfa? Or some of each? Which can be grown to best advantage on your individual farm? Find this out. If you live near a city where land is of high value your opinion may be biased in favor of the corn, but, generally speaking, the other has merits which weigh heavily upon my mind at present.

POULTRY.

A bred-to-lay male birds should have four things, each of almost equal importance, because the lack of any of them will adversely affect the offspring. The four characters are breed type, bred-to-lay breeding, constitution and vigor.

The male bird should be fairly typical of the breed he represents. If he does not possess breed type, the general type of the flock will not be uniform and the sale of his progeny, especially the male progeny, will be very limited. No good poultry breeder purchases male birds simply because they are male birds. Breed type in the male either sets or scatters type in the poultry flock.

That the male should be of the right breeding is of the greatest importance if high egg production is the desired object. There is no surer way to failure than to introduce a male bird of a poor producing line. The degree of success met with in the egg production of his daughters depends almost entirely on the amount of high producing ancestors he has had. Certainly his dam should have produced 200 eggs or over in her pullet year, and if his granddam has laid 200 eggs or over in her pullet year so much the better. His sire should be the son of a high producing female, and the more high producing females the male side of his pedigree carries, the greater are his chances of passing on that desirable character to his progeny. So important is this one character that a good bred-to-lay strain can be ruined in one season by an inferior male.

Constitution is very necessary if the stamina of a high producing flock is to be maintained. To improve the laying ability of a flock is wasted time unless the birds have the constitution to withstand the strain of high production. A male of poor constitution seldom if ever passes on rugged constitutions to his offspring. The right male bird is one well grown for his age, and that stands straight on his legs. He should have a good full breast, good depth of body, and above all, a good masculine head.

Vigor is also very important, for without vigor the hatchings from the matings would necessarily be limited. Vigor in the male bird will give good fertile eggs that will hatch strong chicks, the kind that can kick the shell to the other side of the incubator, dry off rapidly, become fluffy, and get well along the way to maturity with a low death rate and the least trouble and greatest profit to their owner.

SHEEP

Succulent feeds, which are keenly relished by sheep, are valuable for their tonic and regulating qualities. Roots, such as turnips or mangels, are possibly the most satisfactory form of succulent feed, but they cost considerably more to grow and store than silage. It is sometimes more convenient and profitable to feed the latter, as it has been found that good quality silage, free from moulds and low in acid, can replace roots in the ration of the pregnant ewe if proper care is taken as to the amount fed. Some good legume hay should form the main part of the roughage, this to be supplemented with not more than two to three pounds per head per day of silage. If the silage is from a well matured crop and consequently high in dry matter, the larger quantity may be fed. If from a green, watery crop with consequent low dry matter content, then less should be fed. Mouldy silage is more injurious to sheep than to other classes of live stock, so only silage free from mould should be fed. Corn silage is the best known and therefore most recommended for sheep, but other silages, such as peas, oats and vetch, clover or sunflowers may be used, though in the latter case, much smaller quantities would be advisable, owing to the high moisture content. Frozen silage should not be used as scouring and bloating may result. The reason that care must be taken in regulating the amount of silage or other succulent feed fed to pregnant eyes is that it is claimed that too much will cause weak, flabby lambs. The ration of silage may be increased slightly after lambing as it will assist the milk flow and there is not then any danger of affecting the lamb. Ewes which have been penned in good condition in the fall should not require any grain feed when receiving a ration of legume hay and silage.

Another Winter Job for the Farmer.

A suggestion comes from Ohio that could well be adopted by the farm wives of Ontario. This suggestion is to prepare a score card and have the husband to carefully go over the kitchen and measure its conveniences by points on the score card. For instance, fifteen of the 100 points of a perfect score card are awarded for kitchens having both hot and cold running water.

One husband when he arrived at this point, ordered the proceedings stopped and moved immediately that water be piped to the kitchen, and made arrangements to have available, both hot and cold. After that the scoring continued and other conveniences were added as time and finances made them possible.

The eight sections on the score card used allow the following points: The floor plan of arrangement, 15 points; light and ventilation, 16; floor and walls, 10; stove, 10; fuel, 9; water supply, 15; equipment, 15; storage, 10.

Returns From Graded Hogs.

An agricultural representative in close touch with the hog raising situation in Bruce County, Ontario, reports that by shipping a carload of hogs on a graded basis the farmers who contributed the stock gained approximately $80 over the flat rate of shipping which up to that time had been the rule. The load in question graded 75 per cent. selects and the balance thick smooths.

When the crops of one season have been laid away, the seeds for another should be considered.

RELATIVE POSITION OF CANADIAN BACON ON THE ENGLISH MARKET

"Top" Prices of Weekly Report Do Not Represent Bulk of Supply.

For the last twenty months the Dominion Department of Agriculture has issued a weekly report of cabled prices of bacon in England, which, if properly read by Canadian hog raisers, will serve a useful purpose. Like other statistics the report should be read with a clear knowledge of what it is intended to convey. The prices given are "top" market quotations for Irish, Danish, Canadian and American imported "Wiltshire sides" in London.

The variations since March, 1922, can be seen on the accompanying chart. The prices quoted are in shillings per English hundredweight of 112 pounds. No doubt they are as accurate as can be expected of cabled information but they are not entirely representative of the relation of Canadian and Danish prices.

And for this reason: Danish exported bacon comes from hogs of which 85 per cent. rank firsts, and the quantity of their yield for which "top" or near prices can therefore be obtained, is relatively high. In fact, thanks to their splendid uniformity, the bulk of Danish bacon may be reasonably put near the top quotation mark.

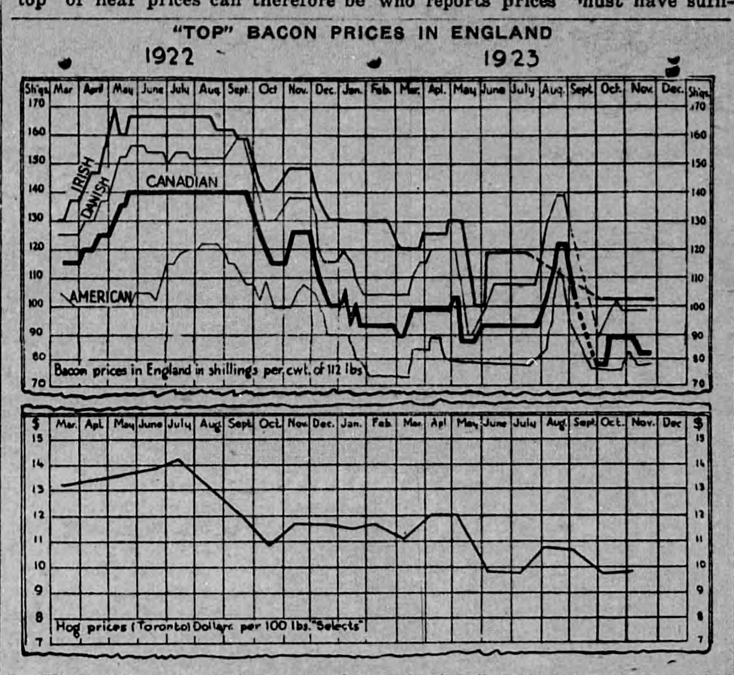
This is not so true of Canadian bacon. As the percentage of our hogs grading "select" is smaller, uniformity in product is difficult to attain. Much of our bacon does not get the "top" prices. There is often a difference of ten shillings below the cabled prices paid for a considerable part of the shipments.

These facts should be known in the Dominion, for there is always a tendency natural in the circumstances, for the seller of hogs to relate his prices to the prices he may fancy is paid for all export bacon. The fact that the cabled reports are official makes one all the more ready to assume for the prices a degree of accuracy that they as a matter of fact cannot possess, taken only on one day in the week.

A staple food like bacon is very sensitive to conditions of demand and supply, such as those sketched below by Professor W. C. Mitchell, a world authority on commodity prices.

"We commonly speak of the wholesale price of articles. . . as if there were only one unambiguous price for any one thing on a given day, however this price may differ from one day to another. In fact, there are many different prices for every great staple, on every day it is dealt in. . . . Of course, varying grades command varying prices and so as a rule do small lots; for the same grade in the same quantities different prices are paid by the manufacturer, jobber and local buyer; in different localities the prices paid by the various dealers are not the same and even in the same localities different dealers of the same class do not all pay the same price to everyone from whom they buy the same grade in the same quantity on the same day." He adds that the man who reports prices "must have sufficient technical knowledge to be sure that his quotations are for uniform qualities or to make the necessary adjustments if changes have occurred requiring recognition. He must guard against the pitfalls of cash discount, premiums, rebates, deferred payments and allowances of all sorts."

Now, the best Canadian bacon is as good as the best among Irish or Danish; of that packers and technical men are convinced. Yet there are many factors of public choice and predilection for this or that kind. Consumers who have known a brand continue to ask for it; this is a benefit to the trade when once a brand is known. Irish and Danish markets have profited thereby. The salient fact from the producer's point of view is that there is no reason in the world why the mass of Canadian bacon should not, by quadrupling our percentage of "selects" to the total, be improved in quality, uniformity and volume so that it may at least equal Danish.



The upper part of the graph shows the "top" prices paid by English importers for Irish, Danish, Canadian and American "Wiltshire sides" from March, 1922, until November, 1923. The figures are those reported by the Dominion Department of Agriculture in their weekly cables from London. Figures at the sides are in shillings per hundredweight of 112 pounds. Broken lines in the chart last fall indicate nominal prices reported.

In the lower section are charted the average monthly prices for "select" hogs on the Toronto Stockyards, also reported by the Dominion Department of Agriculture in dollars per 100 lbs. Notice how closely they follow the main line for Canadian bacon in England.

Music's Effect on Health and Happiness

"Music," said Plato, "is a moral law. It gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything. It is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless dazzling, passionate and eternal form."

Certainly, if music is all that Plato says of it, it must have its place in restoring health to a morbid and unhappy mind. It should be capable really of giving gaiety and life; and thus leading to good and cheerful thoughts it should renew the vigor of body and mind.

Just now I felt worn and tired. Plato's suggestion of music as "a moral law" made me think of my radio. Turning it on I find myself listening to a dizzy "jazz" played by some unseen and far-away orchestra. Plato probably had in mind some higher order of musical expression, but I am no longer conscious of fatigue. There is no doubt of the stimulating and restful effects of even some modern music.

It is a pity to live in such a way that the universe is without soul. If your particular universe is dead, your own nature is just as dead. Unless there are wings for the mind and flights for the imagination you might as well be a batch of dough or a lump of putty.

The secret of happiness in life is to have a spirit capable of and ready for flight. Pour water on the wings of a butterfly and it is incipable of locomotion, and becomes no better than a dead insect.

Did you ever attend a meeting of the Rotary, the Kiwanians or the Lions club? They sing the war songs, such as "Pack all your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile!" The members of the club have all come from business, with all its worries and perplexities. I venture to say that many a man has grumbled to himself, "I just can't spare the time to-day!" Watch their faces! The tired lines fade away. The tightness of jaws and muscles relaxes. The smiles and sparkling eyes tell the story of rejuvenation. Plato was right, music gives soul to the universe.

Armies march to death to the music of military bands. If I were a police administrator I would try music on mobs to see if it is not more effective than clubs. Plato may be right here, too. He says music "is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just and beautiful."

There is no doubt that the home where music is found is a more cheerful, a more agreeable, and, consequently, a healthier place. Music is an important factor in promoting mental and physical health. Let us have more of it!

Grease the Way.

As a little axle grease applied to the point of a nail will make it drive much easier in seasoned wood, so will a little of the oil of human sympathy and interest make the ways of life more smooth for those whose yokes are heavy. Furthermore, as the grease tends to prevent the nail from rusting in the wood, so will the sympathy keep alive the fires of love and joy within our lives.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

FEBRUARY 3

What Israel Learned at Sinai, Exod. 19: 1 to 24; 8; Lev., ch. 19: Deut. 4: 32-40. Golden Text—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.—Deut. 6:5. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Lev. 19: 18.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY.—The book of Exodus carries the story of the journey of the escaping Israelites as far as the encampment at Mount Horeb, or Mount Sinai. Chapters 1-17 tells of the oppression of the people, the call of Moses, his interviews with Pharaoh, the beginning of the great journey, the crossing of the sea, and other incidents by the way. Chapter 18 tells of the visit of Jethro and the reunion of Moses with his wife and children at Mount Horeb, anticipating the account of his arrival there in the first verses of ch. 19. The remainder of the book (chs. 19-40) and Numbers (ch. 1-10) tell the story of the events at Sinai, the giving of the law, the building of the sanctuary, or tent-temple, and the organization of a system of government and administration of justice, and of a priesthood.

Moses appears as the great lawgiver of Israel, and the founder of Israel's national life. God was king, and maker of law, and judge, and Moses was but God's servant.

This was the unifying bond of Israel's national life. To this, the sanctuary of the wilderness bore testimony, for it was Jehovah's visible dwelling place in the midst of the encampment. And Israel's richest inheritance, and the richest gift she had to give to the world, was the sense of his presence with them, and his law which was to govern them.

Deut. 4:32. *Ask now of the days that are past.* There is some reason to believe that this book of Deuteronomy is, in its present form, the work of prophets of the seventh century, disciples of Amos and Isaiah, who wrote for the instruction of the people of their day. They gather the stories of the past, more especially of Moses and the Exodus, and join them with a new edition of the ancient Mosaic laws. They are particularly anxious in so doing, to impress upon the people the goodness of their God, his great love, and his guiding hand, revealed in the story. Here, in the passage before us, Moses is recalling the giving of the law at Sinai. (See vs. 8-14.) How wonderful it all was! Was ever such a story told before? Has any other nation such a God?

V. 33 *Out of the midst of the fire.* Compare Exod. 19: 16-18. As told in Exodus, a great storm of lightning and thunder accompanied the revelation of the law in the mountain. To the Hebrews, the thunder was always the voice of God, and that was hte name by which he called it, while the lightning was the flaming fire which flashed forth from his presence, through the thick clouds which encompassed him. See Deut. 4: 11 and 33:2; Judges 5:4, 5. Ps. 18:7-14. In these tremendous phenomena of nature, Moses recognizes the evidence of God's controlling power and his unique revelation to Israel.

Vs. 34, 35. He recalls also the great and terrifying events which had occurred in Egypt (Exod. chs. 5-11) before their escape from that country, and declares that all these things were done that they might know *"that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him."* It was just in the dark years of the seventh century, B.C., that the people of Israel needed most to learn this lesson. (See 2 Kings, ch. 21.)

Vs. 36-38. *That he might instruct thee.* This, the prophetic writer believes to have been God's great purpose in all Israel's history. All that has happened, whether of good or evil, has been made by him to be a discipline, a means of instruction. So the prophets interpreted the events of their own day.

Vs. 39, 40. *Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart.* Knowledge which is not laid to the heart is of little value. Here the great lesson is that of the uniqueness and supremacy of God. He alone is Lord of heaven and of earth. Therefore should they *"keep his statutes and his commandments"*; and so it would go well with them.

The people of Israel were learning the first and simplest lessons of faith and obedience. Through them, we learn to recognize in every law of righteousness, in every principle of justice and of kindness, the law of God. And in Christ we learn that the fulfilling of all law, the highest and crowning law, is love.

APPLICATION.

The effect of environment on religion and life is too large a topic to discuss here, but "there is good fishing up that stream." We trace the story of the Hebrews, depressed by the "inferiority complex" of slavery, through the discipline of the wilderness rigor, and note the hardening of moral fibre. Hardship, dependence, reverence, obedience, become master words in their vocabulary. They tell us the line of civilization is moving ever steadily northward. To it because the languor of the lotus lands becomes a non-conductor of the divine voice, and that men in hardship find God because they need him and seeking ever find? Perhaps the ideal will be found in a condition of wholesome toil amid surroundings of sublimity, amid a "wonderful out-of-doors of inspiring mountains, virgin lakes and streams and wild flowers, where people are happy at their work, play with enthusiasm, and seem to have absorbed some of the fineness, the beauty, and the largeness of the land in which they live."

A People of Destiny.—If Sinai gives us a revealing glimpse of the truth that in the laws of nature "the hand of God hath written legibly;" even more clearly does it show that God works through history. "If ye will obey my voice . . . ye shall be an holy nation." When the people answered together "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do," there was inaugurated the beginning of civil liberty, and of democratic rule. Step by step Israel is prepared to become the people of God, for the benefit of the whole world. Inspired by God, organization, citizenship, civil and moral laws, and institutions of worship become factors in the birth and growth of a national commonwealth, from which all popular government, such as we have in Canada, had since emanated.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

THE LITTLE BOY'S DREAM.

It was all dark outside, and, oh so quiet. Only once in a while did the big yellow moon peek out from behind the clouds to make spooky shadows on the earth.

The little boy went to bed early, for after tramping in the woods all day with his father, he was very tired.

"What a fine pet Bruin will be when I get him trained," thought the little boy. "We will have big times like I and Rover used to have. I believe I can hitch him to my little wagon."

Right then the little boy's eyes went shut and he was off for Dreamland. To-night it was different than he had ever seen it before. There were trees, oh so many, and there were houses among them.

The queer thing about it was that animals lived in these houses. They even came up to talk to him and he was surprised to find that he could talk to them. But the biggest surprise of all came when he looked down at himself and found that he was covered with a coat of fur. He felt of his face and found a long snout where his nose had been. His ears were little sharp wooley ones.

"Why, I really am not a boy at all," he thought, "I am a bear."

He rather enjoyed this new change at first and stopped and talked with all the animal folks he met.

But as he was walking off among the big trees, all alone, something suddenly grabbed his foot. My! how it did hurt, and he cried with pain. Poking the leaves away with his other paw he found that his right one had been caught in his father's big trap.

"Oh, daddy, daddy, help me. I am in your trap," he cried.

It was a long time before a man came, but it was not his father. The little boy tried to tell what he wanted, but the man did not seem to understand. Roughly he put a muzzle with a long rope fastened to it, on the boy's head and let him out of the trap. Still he could not get away. The man pulled and jerked on the rope and led him a long way off through the woods, and shut him up in a little shanty.

He was tired, hungry and thirsty, but could neither eat nor drink because of the horrid muzzle. The bed was so hard and cold, he could not even sleep.

And then! Bl-bu-bang!

"Oh my, where am I?" asked the surprised little boy rubbing his eyes.

Looking around, he found he had been sleeping on the floor. He felt of his foot and it really wasn't hurt at all. It had all been a dream.

"Bears do have feelings, just like boys and girls," thought the little boy. "We treated Bruin so mean yesterday. I never want to hitch him to my cart. Just as soon as the sun is up I am going to skip out and unfasten Bruin's chain so he can go home, wherever that is." And he did.

Bruin couldn't quite understand it all, but he winked and blinked his thanks to the little boy as he limped off toward the woods.

Get the Ice Hook.

One of the ways in which the farmer may employ winter days to aid during the hot busy weeks of the summertime, is to put up an ample supply of ice. Each summer a large percentage of farmers declare themselves that the following winter they will certainly put in such a store. However, when winter comes this job is delayed until too late.

It is important to have everything in readiness when the water has frozen to sufficient depth to be harvested. Erecting loading platforms, repairing of the ice-house and providing an ample supply of dry hay or sawdust should be seen to at once. All tools, such as saws, picks, and other implements needed, should also be ready for use on a moment's notice. Ice, like other crops, must be harvested when it is fit.

The organized marketing of farm products can become efficient and effective only when backed by a well-balanced production program.

In gradually increasing the number of good cows we are following the course of older civilization where the cow is indispensable.