

Free Press Farm Page



"WELFARE" a prize bull of the Griffin herd poses here with Smith and the hired hand. The bull was a bit reluctant to have his photo taken and had to be held tight by his master. The shorthorn herd was established in 1915 by Smith E. Griffin and has been in existence ever since.—(Staff Photo)

Farm in Griffin family for more than 100 years

R. R. 2, Acton or Lot 11, Concession 6, Erin Township, is well known to all farmers of the area. This farm and surrounding land has been owned and occupied by the Griffin family since 1838. Smith E. Griffin of Smithville first bought the land in 1838 for the sum of 50 pounds. He settled on the land and raised a family of six children. He died in 1859, and left the farm to his son William. William retired in 1911 and moved to Erin, leaving the farm to his son Smith E. Griffin who in turn gave the farm over to his son Harold L. Griffin, and is now operated by his son Smith R. Griffin.

The Griffins are of Welsh descent. Smith represents the 11th generation since his family came to this country and is the fifth generation to live on the farm.

Mixed farming
Mixed farming is not a common practise for all farmers today. Now most specialize in one breed of cattle, dairy or beef, and one commercial crop. The Griffin century farm has pure bred beef cattle with sheep, turnips and registered seed grain.

The pure bred Griffin beef herd was established in 1915 by the late S. E. Griffin and his son Harold and is still maintained under the name of "S. E. Griffin and Son." The herd is comprised of Scotland Sterling and Welfare Sterling breeds. Approximately 100 heifers and two bulls make up the prize herd. Each year some cattle from the herd are entered in 10 or 12 of the local fairs.

Most feed for the stock is produced right on the farm and planted, cultivated and harvested with their own equipment. Feed used for the herd is hay, grain, barley, corn and oats. The cattle pasture outdoors all summer, but are kept inside during the cold winter months. If winter weather is warm the cattle are turned outdoors for a breath of fresh air. "At one time the herd was always brought in during winter," said Harold Griffin. "These cattle are

good foragers and can utilize ruffage exceptionally well. During a storm the herd will gather together under a tree for warmth," he added, "but this is often dangerous as a bolt of lightning could strike the tree, and a good number could be lost."

President
Smith is president of The Ontario Shorthorn Association and recently returned from a trip to Costa Rica, where two shorthorn bulls from the S. G. Bennett farm were sold by private treaty. The bulls will be used on native cattle there as Shorthorn Drummond cattle are rare in that country. The trip was a joint effort sponsored by the Ontario Food Council and the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Aside from a prize herd of shorthorns, Griffin's also have a flock of 20 Suffolk sheep.

The Griffin farm has also specialized in registered seed grain and certified seed potatoes for a number of years. Seed grain is used for commercial planting and is sold locally to farmers, although on occasion it is exported to the United States. The grain is grown and cleaned in the seed plant right on the farm.

The late S. E. Griffin was made a "Robertson Associate Member" in 1937. This medal was given in recognition to a grain grower who had done outstanding work in producing pure seed grain. This medal made him a life member of the association.

While certified seed potatoes are no longer grown on the farm, they also were used for over 50 years. These potatoes won many prizes over the years as well as the grand champion award at the Royal Winter Fair in 1927 and 1928. A silver cup was given for the honor in '27, a gold pocket watch in 1928. Both are treasured souvenirs at the Griffin homestead.

Members of old guard Griffins are members of the "Old Guard" at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, having exhibited

continuously since the snow started. The original Griffin homestead was 100 acres in size but has since increased to 250 acres. The century old house was built by an uncle of the late S. E. Griffin.

In recent years they have specialized in growing table turnips. These eight acres are cut by hand and turnips are washed and waxed right on the farm. The turnip is washed in a large tub and placed in a grocery cart for waxing. The cart is built with handles at the side so the turnips can be lowered into and lifted from the hot wax coating. "Where two turnips touch in the basket means the wax coating is not perfect. Therefore the cart is given a flip, to ensure an even wax coating on each separate turnip," said Smith. And have they ever been burned by the hot wax? "It sometimes splashes on your clothes," he said "but no one has been seriously hurt."

The turnip crop is planted with special machinery, the planter covering two rows at a time. When the root is approximately one inch long, the crop is sprayed with the first treatment of insecticide. The crop is then left for another month, and given a second spray. "Our turnips are late turnips," said Smith. The early ones seem to have such little taste and such a watered centre. "Their crop will be harvested during the first week of November."

Smith was also chairman of the

Ontario Turnip Growers Association for a number of years. Is mixed farming a hard life for the Griffins? "Not hard, just busy," was the reply.

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Canes should be cut and then destroyed

By D. B. McNeill
Raspberries and blackberries have a perennial root system that lives for many years. However, the shoots are biennial, growing in the first season and bearing the fruit crop the following summer. Since the canes die shortly after fruiting, gardeners should remove them soon after harvest. This should be done by cutting them off at ground level with a sharp knife or pruning shears. These canes should be removed from the planting and destroyed as they may carry disease.

It is also desirable to remove some of the new shoots, especially if the plants are vigorous and have produced a large number of suckers. Only some of the weak suckers should be removed at this time.

The complete thinning job should not be done now, as it could promote late growth and lead to winter injury. If left until spring it can supply the planting with extra winter protection by helping to trap snow as a natural protective mulch.

Name winner poster contest

By H. J. Stanley
The Directors of the Halton Farm Safety Council met in the Agricultural office, Milton Aug. 11, under the chairmanship of Sam Finnie Sr. The Safety Poster Competition, open to public school boys and girls, was judged. The winners were first David Stanley, R.R. 2, Rockwood, second Carolyn Bird, R.R. 2, Georgetown, third Paula Kitching, R.R. 1, Moffat and fourth Richard Stanley, R.R. 2, Rockwood.

It is hoped that there will be a good number of entries in the safety exhibit class at Milton Fair this year. The title is to be "Protect Our Farmers of Tomorrow—Today".

Prepare soil now for spring bulbs

By D. B. McNeill
Spring-flowering bulbs planted in early fall generally produce better blooms than late-planted bulbs. Beds for bulbs should be dug well in advance of planting and should be dug deep. Bulbous plants do best on a medium sandy loam soil but will do well on a wide range of soils as long as adequate drainage is provided. Heavy soils may be lightened with the incorporation of sand and organic matter. Well-rotted manure can also help in raising the fertility of the soil.

bulbs can then start growing at the first sign of spring to give the best floral display. Bulbs can be planted until the ground freezes. These bulbs, however, cannot be expected to give their best display as their root systems must develop in the spring before flowering can begin.

For heart-saving diets, ask your Ontario Heart Foundation for "The Way to a Man's Heart" and a companion recipe booklet. To help reduce the risk of heart attack, the Ontario Heart Foundation recommends a diet that uses less animal fats and fewer cholesterol-rich foods, such as eggs and organ meats.

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