

NEWS FOR THE FARMER

SOIL EROSION

Protection of the cultural and grazing lands from the hazard of wind and water erosion mainly on surface cover. Results of experimental work up to the present time show that a good surface cover of paint residue is the best method to combat both wind and water erosion. Cultivated land with a good stubble mulch may be more difficult to prepare for seeding but the advantages justify the extra work that may be necessary.

In the spring of the year the soils may be granular from the action of winter frost so that even low velocity winds can easily cause erosion on bare land. Research indicates that it is not possible to change the structure of a soil to any great extent by means of soil conditioners or incorporation of organic matter. The incorporation of large amounts of straw into a soil in tests carried over a period of ten years, says Frederick Bial, Soil Research Laboratory, Swift Current, Sask., did not indicate lower erosibility by wind than the soil on adjacent plots to which no straw had been added. Likewise, synthetic soil conditioners do not have the desired effect of creating a degree of granulation conducive to higher infiltration of water but more susceptibility to the forces of the wind.

Simulated rainfall results indicated that loam and clay soils without surface cover had almost equal high runoff after less than three-quarters of an inch of intense rainfall. With a good surface cover there was a decided decrease in runoff and high rates of infiltration were maintained for a long period of precipitation, especially on loam soil.

HOUSING POULTRY

With the coming of fall, the majority of pullets will be approaching maturity. Now is the time to make preparations to help to insure the health of the birds throughout the coming laying year, says G. S. Lindblat of the Central Experimental Farm Poultry Division.

The laying house should be thoroughly cleared out — the old litter removed, and the walls and floor scrubbed with a hot water and lye solution, or some other satisfactory disinfectant. Roosts, nests and other places where the birds congregate should be treated for mites. Old crank case oil painted on these areas will supply adequate protection against these parasites.

After cleaning, fresh litter is added to the house. Chopped straw or wood shavings is satisfactory for this purpose. Ample watering space must be provided for the young pullets, and four to six inches of feeder space is recommended. Three to four square feet of floor space is the requirement per bird — heavy birds such as Barred Rocks or Light Sussex need four square feet, while the lighter breeds, such as Leghorns or Leghorn crosses, will do well at three or three and a half square feet per bird.

Before the pullets are to be housed, make a check to determine if lice are present, and if so, treat the birds. Similarly, if there is evidence of worms, treatment should be carried out while the pullets are still on range.

Plan to house the pullets when they approach 25 per cent egg production on the range. It is wise to house in the morning so that the birds will become acclimated with their new quarters before dark. This may eliminate losses due to crowding in a strange location. Cull the pullets when housing, removing all unthrifty and sickly looking birds.

Pullets coming into production have a three-fold strain on their systems: (1) the maintenance of their bodies, (2) increasing their body weight to mature weight, and (3) egg production. To supply the birds with their needs during this critical period, top quality feed must be used. A 17 per cent protein ration (22 per cent laying ration 50:50 with scratch grains) should be fed at the onset of egg production and continued for a month to six

weeks, after which the ration may be reduced to 15 per cent protein. Oyster shell and fresh water must be available to the pullets at all times.

A consideration of the foregoing points will help to insure the health and well-being of the replacement stock and aid in more efficient egg production.

Counting North America's Cows

Counting the cows is not a complete indication of prospective milk production but it does show probable trends. The June 1954 survey by the Bureau of Statistics of numbers of milk cows in Canada reports a total of 3,233,000 compared with 3,146,200 a year ago, an increase of 2.4 per cent. The rate of increase is considerably slower, however, than the 5.9 per cent recorded from 1952 to 1953.

Canada's milk cow population has now regained much of the decrease that took place after the war when numbers dropped from 3,998,000 in 1945 to the lowest point in 30 years — 2,903,000 in 1951. It is now approaching the 1931 level of 3,371,000.

These changes in Canadian milk cow population parallel somewhat the changes that have taken place in the United States. The Canadian Trade Commissioner in Washington, reporting on the June survey of milk cows on U.S. farms, says: "Milk cows on U.S. farms in June this year, totalled 22.5 million head, about 1 1/2 per cent greater than in June a year ago, but about the same as in December 1953. This levelling off in milk cow numbers in the last six months contrasts with the moderate uptrend that started in early 1952 and extended through 1953. Milk cow numbers continued to gain during the past year in most of the more important specialized dairy States, but turned down in many Central States where other enterprises such as hog raising offered good alternatives to milk producers.

"Over the last two decades the number of milk cows on farms (in the United States) has shown some rather wide swings. Following a peak of around 25 1/2 million head, reached in early 1934, milk cow numbers declined steadily to a low point of a little more than 23 million head in 1939, then started an upswing that continued through the early years of World War II. At the high point of this cycle, reached in mid-1944, numbers slightly exceeded 25 1/2 million head. In late 1944, milk cow numbers turned down, with the decline proceeding rapidly for four years, then continuing more gradually for another three. Following a quarter-century low point of about 21 1/2 million head reached at the beginning of 1952, numbers again rose fairly rapidly for two years.

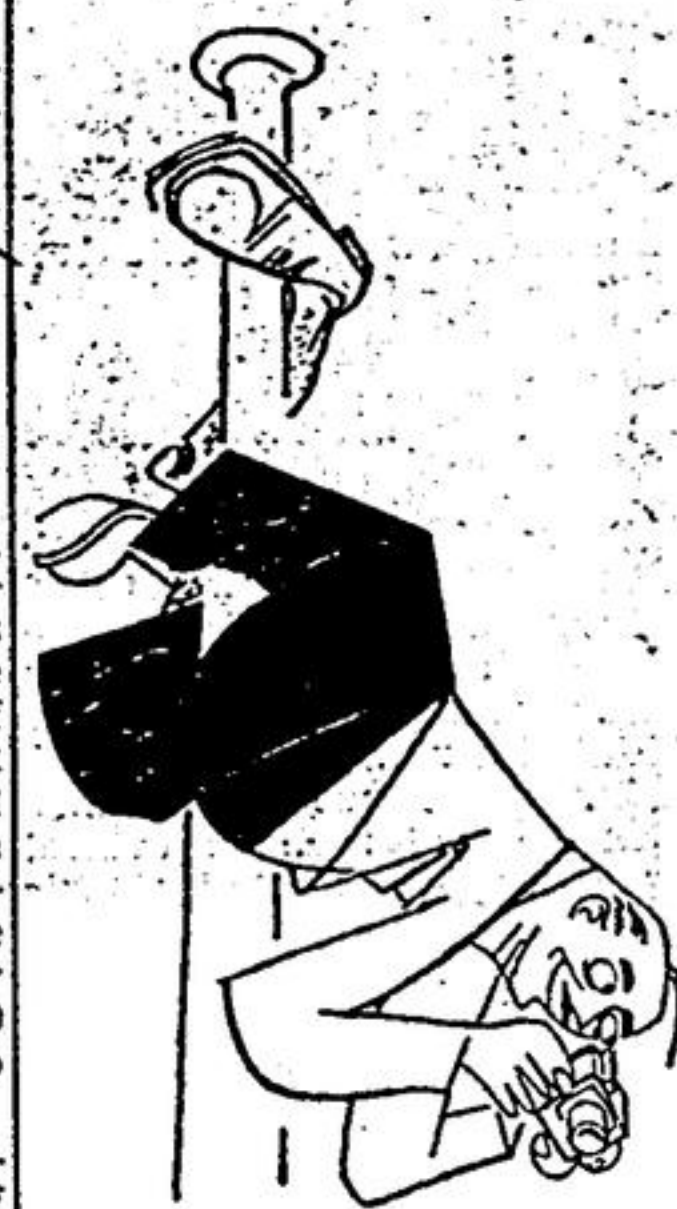
"These figures indicate that the milk cow population in both countries is now about at the level it was 20 to 25 years ago, in spite of the increase in human population, and that any increase in the quantity of milk available is due to increased production per cow and possibly more abundant feed supplies.

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Catholic Women's League of Canada

Nearly 150 people filled the rooms of Riverdale Farm, Pickering, which were beautifully decorated with Chrysanthemums, Gladioli, Roses and Zinnias at the occasion of the Silver Tea of Oshawa Region Civic Action Committee (C-WL).

The hostess, Mrs. J. Heffering, the chairman, Mrs. Art O'Connor, Mary I. Foy, Mrs. V. Dowling and Mrs. F. Von Pills received members and guests from Toronto, Oshawa, Pickering, Whitby, Ajax, Port Perry, Uxbridge and Clarendon.

Rev. Fathers, Dr. Paul Dwyer, K. Lee, M. J. Darby and F. S. Mahoney were present.

Tea was poured by the subdivision presidents, Mrs. J. McAnaney, Ajax, Miss Mary Teffy, Pickering, Mrs. S. Napples, Port Perry, Mrs. A. M. Doucette, Uxbridge, Mrs. S. Sheridan, Oshawa; Mrs. Kelly de Grey, Oshawa; Mrs. L. Rust, Whitby.

A great variety of delicious sandwiches and cookies was served by the citizenship and spiritual conveners, Mrs. K. Fleming, Oshawa; Mrs. C. S. Lee, Oshawa; Mrs. B. Moore, Uxbridge; Miss Ann Mombourquette, Uxbridge; Mrs. A. Love, Oshawa; Mrs. Kay Harper, Port Perry; Mrs. C. DesRosiers, Port Perry; Mrs. W. Barnaby, Ajax; Mrs. W. G. Verner, Ajax; Mrs. Frank O'Sullivan, Pickering, ably assisted by the grand daughter of the hostess, Miss Jane Heffering, Whitby, and large group of juniors from all subdivisions.

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Markham Twp. in Path of Toronto Steam Roller

Reeve Alfred Le Masurier, of Markham Township, knows that Markham is the next area to be covered by the Toronto development steam roller. The township has one of Ontario's richest farm lands.

Reeve LeMasurier believes that Ontario should think twice before allowing these food-producing acres to be lost to agriculture.

At one recent Planning Board meeting, Markham had 23 subdivisions seeking approval for housing developments.

For financial reasons, the township has been holding up mass housing projects, but realizes they are bound to come. The same situation faces many of Ontario's best farming townships.

Ontario has only a certain amount of first grade farm land, and it is time the Province adopted some plan to keep it producing food, Reeve Le Masurier feels.

Super-highways, housing, industrial plants and municipal services around dozens of growing cities, power developments like the St. Lawrence project, all are eating up farm land at an alarming rate, he thinks.

He points out that only a very limited amount of new farm land is being brought into production in Ontario, to feed an ever-increasing population, and says Ontario needs the fertile Markham farms, developed a century ago by Dutch, non-Indians and Pennsylvania Dutch settlers, and since carefully conserved by their families.

Reeve LeMasurier is not a farmer himself. He is in the wholesale paper business.

Land unsuited for farming like the eroded sand hills of Whitechurch township, or less arable parts of Markham, Uxbridge, Vaughan and King townships should be considered first for urban development, and there should be a Provincial plan to make sure this is done, the Markham reeve feels.

Many Ontario groups and individuals have already expressed the same anxiety. Most powerful of these is the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, which has spoken strongly for conservation of good agricultural land, although its members, the Province's farmers, are the ones who make big money when their farms are subdivided.

Also concerned is a committee of Niagara peninsula fruit growers and the Ontario Conservation Council.

V. S. Milburn, secretary-manager of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, says high food prices are a definite prospect if agricultural land continues to diminish. Ontario, last year, had a food deficit — it produced less than its requirements. Shipping food from other provinces means freight charges, additional storage and handling charges, all added to the retail price, he says.

The Federation feels loss of high quality agricultural land should be a concern of city dwellers as well as farmers, and advocates a plan to force use of sterile land first for

zooming, Canada's and Ontario's population increasing sharply, the Agriculture Federation feels action should be taken soon.

One immediate step it would like to see is appointment by the Ontario Government of a provincial conservation co-ordinator — responsible only to the Premier.

Conservation essentially means the best possible use of land, agronomists say, whether it is for city growth, farming, reforestation or mining.

To attain this in Ontario requires a planner of wide au-

thority, thinks the Federation of Agriculture. He should be responsible only to the Premier because so many Government departments are concerned with land use.

His work would overlap some functions of the Ontario Department of Agriculture, Lands and Forests, Planning and Development, Municipal Affairs, and even the Department of Education which is vitally concerned with functions of the Ontario Agricultural College, at Guelph.

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