

THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interests of Agriculture, Manual Training, and Home Economics in Minnesota High Schools

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EXPLANATION

The first issue of the *Visitor* contained an editorial in which descriptions of the various departments were given. In the future each department will be represented in every issue so far as material that is considered worthy of our readers' time is available.

EDITORIAL

THE SCHOOL PLOT

The best use of the school plot is a debatable question but there are a number of good uses to which it may be devoted. It is the purpose of the writer to give in this article a few general suggestions that may be observed to advantage in conducting the work on most of them.

Land.—The State requires that the high schools shall own the land or hold it under a long lease. Many lines of work are out of the question on short-leased land. Often it is weedy, lacking in drainage, or otherwise undesirable, except for special purposes as mentioned later.

Early Arrangements.—Plans for the work to be conducted, preparation of the land, and ordering seeds should receive early attention to prevent delay.

Use of the Plot.—Simple, comprehensive, demonstrative, not experimental work, may be carried out on the plot under such a rotation as would exist on the ordinary farm and good results be obtained at minimum expense. A portion of the plot should be used to grow laboratory material. Many schools are in need of such material. A ten-acre plot or less will supply an abundance. If the instructor knows what he will need for class use he can easily grow most of it. Home-grown material will be fully as satisfactory as any that can be purchased. Suggestions on this phase of the work will appear in the next issue of the *Visitor*.

In case grade pupils are conducting garden work on the school plot a portion of the plot should be set aside for this purpose and definite plans should be made at an early date so that when gardening time is at hand this work may proceed smoothly.

In many sections of the State a portion of the plot, perhaps an acre, might well be used for an alfalfa demonstration, although clover should not be neglected.

If the remainder of the plot is divided into three fields and these placed in a regular three-year rotation, or divided into four plots and placed in a four-year rotation, the fields will be large enough to be cared for with modern machinery at a minimum expense.

If there are three plots a good rotation would be corn, small grain, and clover. If a four-year rotation is necessary, corn, corn, grain, and clover; or corn, potatoes, small grain, and clover would be good.

Practically every section of the State needs well-bred, high-yielding, early maturing varieties of corn. Increase plots and ear-to-row breeding blocks can do much for the corn crop in Minnesota. If there is no other corn near the school plot, the endeavor should be to produce pure-bred corn for seed. Only one variety should be grown and nothing but the best of seed should be distributed. While this corn should be all of one variety, it could be handled in several different ways. Part might be on fall plowing and part on spring plowing; part might be cultivated shallow and part deep.

In case adjoining corn fields prevent the production of pure seed a farmer's variety test may be conducted. For this secure samples of seed corn from farmers' planter boxes when they are planting. A pint of each variety is sufficient. Number the sample and make a record of its source. Mark out the land and plant the corn by hand, three kernels to the hill. From each sample plant a plot ten hills square, i. e. 100 hills. Planted three feet six inches apart, one acre would contain thirty-five different samples. Some ordinary corn should be planted on the edge of the field where turns are to be made. Duplicates of each should be run, i. e. each sample should have two blocks, ten hills square at different places in the field.

The corn should all receive the same care. At harvest-time a great

difference will ordinarily be noted in stand, yield, and character of the stalk. A farmers' meeting to look over the plots when ripe is very valuable. Every man will think the best plot is his. After looking over the field and noting the differences, the records should be produced showing whose corn is in each 100-hill block. This is usually an educational moment. Later the yields can be checked up and noted. Of course no one will make the mistake of using this corn for seed purposes.

The small-grain plot or plots might be seeded to some excellent variety for increase. For example, most communities would be benefited by the introduction of improved Minnesota No. 169, or perhaps Marquis wheat, or Minnesota No. 281, Minnesota No. 295 or other good oats. Only a few varieties should be grown, so that the plot will be large enough to cut handily and also to be threshed in a regular threshing machine.

In the potato section of the State, hill selection of seed potatoes would be of great value to the farmers.

Few sections of the State are growing enough clover. Some sections grow very little. A good plot of clover would be a valuable object lesson.

Minnesota, as a State, needs a great deal of drainage. In fact many of the school plots need it. A good object lesson on a low piece of ground would go far to convince people that tiling does not injure the ground. Tiling would also aid in improving sourness or acidity of soil which is common in many sections of the State.

The application of limestone so that clover may be grown is a great problem in some sections.

In certain cases it might be well to lease land for a short time to demonstrate the treatment of acid soils, the growing of some special crop, as clover, or quack grass eradication.

Labor and Expense.—Some of the plots are so conducted that they show a profit and in many other cases they show a loss. It should be borne in mind that the primary purpose of the plot is educational and this purpose should not be sacrificed in order to make it show a few dollars of profit. It undoubtedly will give the plot a better standing in the community if it returns a profit and the use to which it is put will have a great deal to do with this.

On five, ten, or twenty acres it is rarely advisable to hire a man by the month or year. Neither should the agricultural teacher be expected to spend all of his time there. The plot should be so conducted as to allow the instructor plenty of time for extension work and other duties. The plan described, where the land is handled in an ordinary rotation in good sized fields or divisions, is economical and inexpensive. Being in large fields it can be handled economically and labor can be secured more nearly when needed. Handled in this way, the plot can be made to pay and be of value to both the school and the farmers.

Several schools are considering the buying of live stock for use on the school plot. This seems inadvisable as it will place a heavy burden on the school and invite failure. It seems advisable to solve the simpler problems of the school plot before undertaking others. Several schools are feeding some stock during the winter, which is an entirely different problem.

This Division does not desire to be understood as being in position to give the final word on school plots. We are desirous of assisting in their wise use and are studying the question with that end in view. Those in need of assistance may feel free to call on us and we will gladly render any possible aid.—E. C. Davis.

The Division of Agricultural Education is under great obligations to many superintendents for the prompt response to the request for programs and courses of study in the State agricultural high schools. We know you are all overworked but we are very dependent upon you for this live material showing conditions as they are. Through your courtesy we are able to serve the cause of education in the State better. Call on us when we can reciprocate.

We have some very valuable data from the agricultural teachers of the State which we hope to give to those interested, as soon as we can complete the records. Most of the men responded promptly and fully but lack of replies from eight schools has prevented our tabulating the data. We hope to hear from these in a few days.

This is the time of year when Teachers become restless and wonder if

the pasture is not going to be a little greener in the neighboring field. Occasionally a teacher should move for his own good and once in a great while for the good of the school but usually greater service to the cause of education as well as greater satisfaction to the teacher comes from remaining where he is. Think several times before you decide to change your location.

Some school districts do not get the best service from their schools simply because of their own conduct as communities. Education is a flower that does not come to its fullest bloom in an atmosphere of discord. School boards and communities must quit quarreling if they want good schools.

Interest in industrial education is certainly widespread and intense if the demand for speakers is any indication of it. The *Visitor* staff would do little but address public gatherings if they accept all the invitations extended to them. It would be pleasant to do so but there is a more pressing need than arousing more interest and that is preparing teachers to meet the demand which the interest already aroused has created.

THE TRAVELER

The Traveler has seen several most commendable things recently which he wishes you might have seen. One of these has been some successful school plots. To what purposes the school plot should be devoted is a much-mooted question. Things are done on some school plots that could be more satisfactorily done on neighboring farms; other things that could be better done in the pupil's home garden, and some other things that it were better not to attempt to do at all. Are there not some things that ought to be done and that can be done on the school plot better than anywhere else? More than one school at the Traveler has seen, has been used with great success for raising material for laboratory work. Some men have very little laboratory work because they have no material and are not sure what to get and how to get it. They certainly can raise some of it. Will you who have done so help others by telling them in the next *Visitor* what you raised?

The Traveler always grows enthusiastically optimistic when he finds a superintendent and his agricultural instructor working together like brothers. He knows the cause is safe in that locality because team work is the characteristic of broad-minded men and such men soon convince board, business men, and farmers. There are many such teams in Minnesota and should be more.

One of the best school greenhouses that it has been the fortune of the Traveler to see, is a feature of the new school building at Fosston. It is of ample size, well-arranged, and adjacent to the laboratory of the Agricultural Department. We need more such greenhouses in connection with the agricultural work.

W. L. French of Austin, and the boys of his animal husbandry class have bought two young steers. They are feeding and caring for them and expect to share in the profits of the venture. It is a commendable scheme for enlisting the interest of the class.

There are many good things in Northfield, not the least of which is the manner in which the high-school botany is made to support the work in agriculture, and the surprising and cheering feature is that the condition is not due to the fact that botany is taught by the gentleman who teaches the agriculture, for it is taught by a lady reared and educated in the city. Neither her early environment, nor her school and university training are directly responsible for the excellent manner in which this correlation is being made, but it is due to her broad sympathies, her adaptability, and her anxiety to teach so as best to educate her students rather than to "present a subject." We need more such botany teaching.

The high-school agriculturists of southern Minnesota are not to be outdone by the men of other sections of the State, in boosting for the introduction of alfalfa. Almost all of these men are planning to put in cooperative demonstration plots of alfalfa with the farmers of their respective communities. John D. Deets, Secretary of the Southern Minnesota Development League, Mankato, is furnishing alfalfa seed at a very reasonable price.

The Traveler attended several very successful farmers short courses during the last month. At Lanesboro, Lyle, and Waseca the courses were well attended and a pronounced interest was shown on the part of the

farmers and business men. It has been reported to him that the short courses at Madelia, Excelsior, Truman, Madison, and Lake Crystal were well attended. In each of these places a considerable portion of the success was due to the aid given by the agricultural instructor and the superintendent of the local school. In many cases they did all of the local work in connection with the courses.

Some gentlemen not connected with the *Visitor* or with the public schools of the State have kindly reported some things they have found in certain communities. Among the items are reports on what the high school teacher of agriculture is emphasizing. We shall omit the names of the towns but name the kinds of work so men who are wondering what some of the schools are doing may have their curiosity partially satisfied. School No. 1 emphasizes corn, dairying, clover, alfalfa, farmers' clubs, and cooperative buying, shipping, and breeding. School No. 2, corn, dairying, clover, alfalfa, farmers' clubs, and cooperative shipping. No. 3, dairying, clover, alfalfa, farmers' clubs, and cooperative shipping. No. 4, dairying, No. 5, corn, dairying, alfalfa, and farmers' clubs. No. 6, corn, dairying, clover, alfalfa, farmers' clubs, and cooperative shipping. No. 7, corn, dairying, alfalfa, potatoes, farmers' clubs, and cooperative shipping.

The above schools are scattered over the southern half of the State and do not represent selected reports but are the places where these gentlemen chanced to go on other business. As the teachers came from the agricultural colleges of four different states the close similarity of the above reports is significant.

The Traveler is much impressed by the superiority of the public school buildings in Minnesota. Almost universally the school buildings in the various towns exceed what one would expect. Community ideals, local pride, State aid, and State inspection have all assisted in producing this result.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Suggestion For Extension Workers

The teacher of agriculture coming into a community as a stranger sometimes experiences difficulty in getting in touch with the farmers. J. A. Krall, instructor in agriculture at St. James, has used a device which he found very satisfactory. We are reproducing it for the benefit of instructors who are having difficulty in starting extension work. The device consists of the following card:

ST. JAMES STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Department of Agriculture
J. A. Krall, Director

Can I Be of Service to You?

In selecting your seed corn
In improving your livestock
In figuring out a good feeding ration
In testing your milk cows
In starting a good orchard
In grafting or pruning fruit trees
In making your hens lay
In draining your land
In organizing Farmers' Clubs or Breeders' Associations
In interesting your children in farming
What have you for sale?
What do you want to buy?
Send your boys and girls to our Winter Short Course. We have something in store for them. If in doubt, ask those who have attended.
If I can be of any assistance to you, call, write or 'phone me.

Mr. Krall carries a supply of these cards with him when he goes to an auction or other gathering where farmers are present, and distributes them. He also encloses one when he happens to be writing to a farmer. He makes the following comment: "This little card has made me lots of work and many friends and acquaintances as well as gained the confidence of many farmers."

COMING EVENTS

The fourth annual Junior short course for Minnesota boys and girls will be held at the State Agricultural Schools at University Farm, St. Paul, Crookston, and Morris, March 30 to April 3, 1914. Programs for these courses will be issued by each school. They may be secured upon application to the schools.

The manual training men have a meeting in St. Paul Friday and Saturday, April 10 and 11, for which Mr. George Brace of the Central High School is now preparing a program. As Mr. Brace appreciates the importance of manual training in village and country the program will probably cover a wide range of interests.

The agricultural instructors of Minnesota will hold their regular annual meeting in the Twin Cities March 27 and 28 at the time the superintendents meet. Chairman W. V. Longley, of Shakopee, is working on the details of the program and hopes to have a list of strong topics dealing with present problems. In addition to many local speakers, arrangements are being made for an address by Hon. David Snedden, Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts. Mr. Snedden is one of the strong men of the time and all will enjoy his address. Laboratory equipment, extension work, class work methods and other interesting subjects will be discussed by other speakers. An attempt will be made to have one or two meals together and possibly to group the men by native states. Plan to attend.

Many of the high schools of western Minnesota will participate in an inter-school judging contest of agricultural students at Morris some time this spring, probably in March. The Wheaton high-school team will have to defend the cup it won at a similar contest at Morris last year.

NEWS

R. A. Humphrey, a graduate of the College of Agriculture of Wisconsin, has been elected instructor in agriculture at Chatfield. Mr. Humphrey graduated from Ripon College and taught for a year at Marshall, Minn., before entering the College of Agriculture.

At the Lake Crystal farmers' short course the major portion of the premiums offered for the best exhibits of corn were carried off by one of the members of the Boys' Corn Club.

Fergus Falls school authorities expect to erect a building for the industrial work at an expense of \$45,000. Building operations will be started this spring.

The special farmers' short courses held at Austin, Owatonna, and Mantorville were all very successful.

C. H. Hanson, formerly teacher of agriculture at Chatfield, has been selected for a position with the United States Department of Agriculture, in Washington, D. C. The *Visitor* extends best wishes to Mr. Hanson in his new and larger field.

NOTICES OF INDUSTRIAL LITERATURE

Materials and Methods in High School Agriculture, by W. G. Hummel, 375 pages. Published by The MacMillan Company, Chicago, Ill. The purpose of this volume is set forth in the preface as follows: "This book has been prepared to meet the needs of persons interested in the introduction, or in the teaching of agriculture in high schools of towns, cities, or rural communities where large numbers of students are drawn from the farming population, or where the prosperity of the high school community is largely dependent upon agriculture."

The following chapter headings are indicative of some of the topics which are discussed. The First Year Agricultural Work, Animal Husbandry in the High School, Dairy Work in the High School, The High School Poultry Course, The School Farm, and Equipment.

Farmers' Law, by Leonard V. Koons, 156 pages. Published by the Webb Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minn. In the preface the author states that "an effort has been made to couch the law, as far as possible, in layman's English, to omit all verbiage, and to present only the 'bare essentials.'" The following are some of the chapter headings: Contracts, Mortgages, Landlord and Tenant, Farm Laborers, The Seed Law, Weeds, Cooperative Association, Common Carriers, and The Farmer and the Lawyer.

Farm Accounts, by Smith and Thomas, 82 pages. Published by the Laurel Book Company, Chicago. This little volume is intended for use in connection with rural school work in arithmetic. It covers a wider range of work than is indicated by its title.

Rural Arithmetic, by John E. Calfee, 119 pages. Published by Ginn & Company, Boston. A portion of the book is devoted to exercises to give skill in the fundamental processes. The remainder is devoted to the arithmetic of various farm processes, with special reference to farm management.

Farm Arithmetic, by C. W. Burkett and K. D. Swartzell, 288 pages. Published by the Orange Judd Company, New York City. The purposes of this text as set forth in the preface are: "First, it will supply new, concrete, useful, and interesting problems for practice, drill and review. Second, it will tend to develop in the mind of the pupil an appreciation of, and an insight into, the quantitative side of farm life."