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## To Editors.

The University Farm Press News prepared with a sole view to the benefit of the farmer in its columns by the editors of Minnesota papers. It is no subscription list, and is not sent to farmers. The endeavor is to put its five columns with short articles relating to various phases of rural life and industry—articles which every intelligent farmer will read with satisfaction, but which we want him to read in your paper, not in ours. You are at liberty to use the articles with or without credit or name of author—as editorial or as clippings, as you may prefer.

## Extension Division Notes.

By A. D. Wilson, Supt.

Farming is becoming more and more a business proposition requiring business methods. Increased land values, higher cost of labor, increased use of machinery, have greatly changed the problems of the farmer. While a farmer does not do business with as many people as does the ordinary business man, he does business with a number of animals and crops, any one of which is as likely to cause him as much loss as is any one of a merchant's customers.

The only way one can know what an enterprise on the farm is doing is to keep a record of the cost, the enterprise and of the returns from it. Only by this method can one know from year to year what enterprise to increase and what enterprise to decrease or change, so that they will bring in a profit. Without such records it is easily possible for one to assume that he is making a profit on a certain class of live stock, when really he is not, but is making his profit off of his corn or clover crop, or some other crop used to feed the stock. When he knows these facts, he then able to change the kind of stock he is keeping, or change his methods of keeping the stock, so that he can convert a losing enterprise to a profit-earning one.

Farm accounts, to be practical, must be of the very simplest possible nature, and require a minimum amount of time for their up-keep. Accounts are valuable only as they are carefully kept. The occupation of the farmer is naturally not conducive to bookkeeping habits. When one works in the field all day, he does not have a rule, feel like working a great deal over books. With some simple and practical system of keeping track of various items each day, in some form of day-book, one can later take time in the winter when other things are less rushing, and work up his balances. Young people, especially, should be encouraged if they show any sign to try to keep farm accounts.

It is not difficult to keep an account of one enterprise, like the dairy, the eggs, or the wheat crop, provided one does not insist on determining the actual cost of labor per hour, but uses some reasonable figure for that as a basis. For example: If a man is paid at \$30 per month and board, one figure, with reasonable accuracy, the cost of his labor per hour. It is safe to assume that it will cost to board a man from \$12 to \$15 per month. If the cost is \$12 for board, and the man works an average of ten hours per day for six days for the month, the rate per hour is secured by dividing \$42 by \$260, which will give a rate of about 16 cents per hour. It is not difficult to determine, by attention for a few days, the approximate amount of time spent each day for the dairy stock. When this is determined, it is easy to multiply the time spent each hour by 30, to determine the total number of hours for the month; and then multiply this by 16 cents to determine the cost of the labor. By adding to this the cost of feed, which can be determined in the same way; that is, observing how much is fed for a few days, and then multiplying the average amount fed per day by the number of days in a month. The other items of cost, such as interest on investment, insurance, shelter, miscellaneous expense, etc., can be determined, with quite a degree of accuracy, by a little careful thought. By keeping such a record, which requires very little time, one can tell accurately, at the end of a year, whether his dairy or other enterprise in question has returned him a profit.

During the winter, when one's time is not so fully occupied as at other seasons, is a good time to give this matter of farm accounts serious

thought. We believe if the question were taken up among the members of a family and carefully considered in all phases, that some one in the family would find some way of keeping accounts with at least a few of the more important enterprises. The keeping of farm accounts is no longer a theory. It has been proved to be valuable, and we believe that few farmers can continue to compete, with satisfaction to themselves, in the highly organized business of producing farm products, who do not avail themselves of the opportunity of checking leaks and making improvements furnished by a practical set of accounts. Minnesota Experiment Station Bulletin No. 117, which reports the accurate records kept on from 24 to 30 farms for the years 1902 to 1907, inclusive, furnishes an excellent basis for the keeping of farm accounts. Everyone interested in this matter should have a copy of this bulletin, which may be had free by application to the Minnesota Experiment Station. This bulletin gives many valuable facts, gleaned from these farm records, such as the average cost of board on the farm, the average cost of man and horse labor per hour, cost of maintaining work horses, depreciation of farm machinery, as well as the various items of cost in the production of most of our common farm products.

## Suggestions for Forage in 1912.

Owing to the drought in southwestern and western Minnesota during the early part of the past growing season, there will be a shortage in the hay crop again in 1912. Meadows have been pretty well burned out, and the new seeding is practically destroyed. To fill the demand for an abundance of rough feed, it is suggested that oats and peas, or even oats alone, may be sown thickly and cut for hay when the peas are in blossom, or when the small pods have formed. Two bushels of oats and one-half bushel to one bushel of peas per acre should be used. A crop of oats and peas mixed, grown on the Monticello farm, where quack grass eradication investigations are under way, in the season of 1911, furnished an abundant crop of excellent forage. Two and one-half to three tons of cured hay per acre were secured. The crop is not difficult to cure as hay, and is relished by horses and cattle alike. It is especially valuable as sheep-feed. The crop can be cut with the mower, and cured as hay; or, if preferred, and oats are sown alone, they may be cut green and bound. In that case feeding is usually from the sheaf. Threshing is not necessary. Millet is also an excellent forage crop, when cut early enough. It is more difficult to cure than the oats and peas, however, and for horses especially the latter is a more desirable forage.

Between oats and peas mixed, and fodder corn, there is no need of going without plenty of rough forage, though the quality is not quite so satisfactory as would be obtained from a good timothy and clover meadow.—Andrew G. Boss, Division of Agriculture Minn. Agricultural College.

## Northern Minnesota Grasses.

A large quantity of grass seed was distributed by the state in northern Minnesota last spring, and sown largely on the burned-over and cut-over lands. Some was sown with small grains as a nurse crop. The results in many cases have been astonishing, especially where the seed was sown on cut-over and burned-over timber land. Numerous reports have been received, where grass seed sown last spring has provided a ton and a half to two tons of hay per acre this fall. The surprising part of the matter is that germination took place so quickly and the growth made was so strong on raw land. A sample of timothy recently received from the Crookston Experiment Farm, and which was grown in Roseau county, from seed sown on the 18th of May, measures four feet in height. It was harvested on September 10th. Red clover sown at the same time measures approximately three feet in height, and is strong and vigorous in stalk.

While it has been argued for years that northern Minnesota is essentially a grass-producing country, the evidence obtained this year is most convincing.

By taking advantage of burned-over tracts, and of logged and cut-over land, a great deal of grass seed can be worked into the soil and much forage provided, either for grazing purposes or to be cut for hay. Hay is a profitable crop and always in strong demand in northern Minnesota. Meadows can in many instances be easily cleared, and may become a source of considerable revenue in a very short time. Keeping the land in grass will also prevent the growth and spread of noxious weeds on open land.—Andrew G. Boss, Division of Agriculture Minn. Agricultural College.

## State Live Stock Shippers Association.

The awakening of Minnesota stock-growers to the great advantages of co-operation in the shipping and marketing of live stock is emphasized by the fact that such co-operation has already reached the second stage—that of the organization of the scattered local co-operative associations into a central body. The "Minnesota Co-operative Live-Stock Shippers' Association," as it is called, will hold its first annual meeting at the State Capitol, St. Paul, on Wednesday, January 12th, 1912.

The Association's object is such a unification of forces in gathering information, securing fair transportation, and influencing legislation, as shall insure to every local organization, along with the best returns from every shipment, just treatment from railroad and packing interests, and protection against abuses of all sorts. Such a state-wide organization can naturally accomplish more, and at smaller expense, than any number of local associations working each independently of the others. And unless they thus are united, the local associations may often be placed in the unfortunate position of competing with one another.

The meeting will be addressed by a number of prominent live-stock men, already experienced in co-operative work; and it will pay any one who is specializing in beef or pork-production to attend, even though not yet a member of any organization.—C. R. B.

## The Farmers' Institute.

That the people of Minnesota have arrived at a higher appreciation than ever before of the work of the Farmers' Institute is shown by partial reports (up to 25th) of Institutes held in December. Those reported numbered 28; most of them being two-day Institutes. The total attendance at each session was 15,034 or an average of 537. The average attendance at each session was a little over 165. The distribution of Farmers' Institute Annual No. 24, with its wealth of valuable and instructive articles, has been a welcome feature of the gatherings. Few other states provide for their farmers so attractive an annual contribution to their libraries.

The farmer who, having the opportunity, fails to attend one of these Institutes when it is brought close to his door, throws away much that would add, not only to his revenue, but to the satisfaction of life on the farm.—C. R. B.

## More Successful Co-operation.

Another instance of "success from the start," in the co-operative shipping of live stock, is afforded by the recently-organized Shipping Association of Cannon Falls, Minn. This organization pays its manager, or "buyer," ten cents per hundred weight of live stock handled—a price which secures the services of a thoroughly competent man. He has already shipped four carloads of hogs, selling them at prices which netted the farmer \$5.89 over all expenses. This is 39 cents per 100 pounds more than was being paid by the local buyer at Cannon Falls. Also, instead of a deduction being made from expected returns, on account of "shrinkage in transit," the hogs were reported as having actually gained in weight, to the further advantage of the co-operative shipper.

At Cannon Falls, as elsewhere, there are some few among the stock-raisers, who refuse to come into the co-operative movement, claiming that "the old way is better." But the spectacle of their wiser neighbors getting a bigger price for their stock must soon break down their opposition, and bring them into the co-operative ranks.

What is being done at Cannon Falls simply reinforces the object-lessons heretofore furnished by the Shippers' Associations at Litchfield, Dassel and elsewhere; which teach that, by simply "getting together" co-operatively, stock-raisers can everywhere realize from 5 to 20 per cent more than by the old plan on their cattle, hogs and sheep.—C. R. Boss, Extension Division Minn. Agricultural College.

## The Seed Corn Situation.

A little observation of the exhibits of corn at local Corn Shows furnishes ample reason for the belief that the seed-corn situation is a serious one. It is none too early to begin to think of the seed-corn supply for the coming season; and it is out of the question to consider the unhusked corn of the shock or stack as a source of supply.

A farmer may have saved a generous supply of seed-corn last season, and have only a small amount of strong, vigorous seed at present. The weather conditions have been far from ideal, and a great deal of good seed-corn has been injured in vitality during the curing season. The proper thing to do is to find out the amount

of good, strong, vigorous seed on hand; and, if the supply is short, to take immediate steps to increase it. We must grow corn, and should use only seed of good vitality. If seed must be purchased, it should be secured from a reliable source. Insist on its being an adaptable variety, and of known vitality. Tested seed will cost more, but it is worth more. In times of uncertainty, it is the cheapest in the end.

We should hardly expect to reduce the present acreage of corn in next year's planting. Neither can the farmer afford to cultivate missing hills of corn. To secure both a full average and unbroken rows will require that our corn-growers shall give timely attention the seed supply for this coming season.—O. M. Olson, Extension Division Minn. Agricultural College.

## An Acre-Yield Contest in Corn.

A new contest has been planned for the boys of the state for the coming year. In addition to the regular State Industrial Contest, held in connection with the Minnesota Educational Association each year, the Agricultural Extension Division is planning for a State-wide Contest in Corn-Growing. This contest will be open to all boys between the ages of 10 and 18 years on July 1st. Each boy entering the contest will grow one acre of corn; the awards being made on the following basis: Yield of dry shelled corn 70 per cent; financial statement of cost of growing crop 10 per cent; written account, telling how the corn was raised, 10 per cent; scoring of 10-ear exhibit selected by the boy from his acre, and exhibited at the State Industrial Contest, 10 per cent.

Liberal cash prizes will be awarded by the state in each section for the highest yields. In many counties additional prizes have been offered by the bankers, commercial clubs, county fair association and others, to stimulate interest in the contest. Every boy who follows the rules of the contest throughout the season, and turns in a complete report, will be awarded a badge entitling him to membership in the State Improvement League.

The educational value of such a contest is at once apparent. A study of every phase of Corn Growing must be made, because the Contest continues throughout the season. It is not only a good thing for the boy, but it is a good thing for his county. It arouses an interest for better corn, which spreads throughout the county.

County superintendents, teachers, parents and others should endeavor to get as many boys interested in this Contest as possible. The Extension Division invites the co-operation of County Fair Associations, Commercial Clubs, bankers and all others who desire to do something for their boys and for their county, in the matter of awarding prizes for this contest. Rules and regulations will be sent out from the Extension Division to all boys wishing to take part in the Contest. Send in your name.

## Junior Short Courses.

The State of Minnesota is this year offering three Short Courses in Agriculture and Home Economics, for farm boys and girls. These Short Courses will be held during the week beginning March 25th, at the three State Schools of Agriculture, at St. Anthony Park, Morris and Crookston. These courses are open to all boys and girls in the State between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Work will be offered in Farm Crops, Animal Husbandry, Sewing and Cooking. Cash prizes will be awarded to the boys and girls doing the best work in each of these subjects. The evenings will be taken up by illustrated lectures and entertainments. Practice will be given in organizing and conducting Boys' and Girls' Clubs. Several excursions will be made, during the week, to points of interest.

These courses come at a time when the boys and girls may be spared for a week from the farm and the home; and when the facts learned can be put into practice on the return home. The cost is very small—\$3 plus the railway fare from the home town and back should be sufficient. The boys and girls will be well taken care of

from the time they leave home until they return. There are hundreds of farmers in this State who can easily afford to give their boys and girls the benefits of this week. It will be a great trip. They will have an opportunity to see some of the State Institutions, and at the same time will receive instruction from our best teachers, along lines of industry and usefulness. Every boy or girl who attends one of these Short Courses will be elevated, broadened and inspired. It will arouse an interest in home and farm life which will be very beneficial to all. Interested persons should write to the Agricultural Extension Division, St. Paul, for a circular of information.

## Feeding Poultry.

The greatest factor in profitable poultry-raising is proper feeding. The fourfold purpose of feeding is growth, maintenance, eggs and fattening. Whatever the object, food should be cheap.

Herein lies the profit. Grains, either whole or ground, are the principal feeds for poultry; hence farm grains are cheapest. Their proper combination, cost of production, market value and efficiency being considered, is the constant problem of the poultryman. The Department of Agriculture, the Experiment Stations, and the Extension Divisions of the several States, issue bulletins to aid the farmer and poultryman in solving this problem. Those who accept this aid, and use the knowledge imparted, are the ones making money from their flocks.

Food should be wholesome. Food and drink affect the quality of the product, as well as the health of the flock. Moldy or musty grains should never be fed for egg-production. Neither should onions or tainted meats be supplied, especially when flocks are in confinement. Flavors are easily imparted, and one must be vigilant lest the delicate, delightful flavor of a newly-laid egg be impaired. To maintain the highest quality is to receive the greatest profit.

Poultry food should be palatable. Some grains are the favorite food of chickens, while others are not. Rye may be fed, but is not generally liked by poultry, and should never be made the principal feed. It may be used in a mixture with other grains, and will be eaten by the flock. Relish is one of the factors of proper feeding.

Food should be varied. The best commercial poultry-foods on the market are combinations of the common farm grains. There are varying amounts of each, according to nutritive value and cheapness—wheat, oats, corn, barley, rye, millet-seed, cane-seed, field peas, buckwheat, sunflower-seeds, and grass-seeds. With these are combined grit, shells and charcoal. These foods produce good results, mainly because of the variety. With a little instruction, one could make such a combination, for the flock, of grains on the farm.

The supply of food should be sufficient. One must feed for the purpose in view. To simply maintain a flock one may feed one or two grains, with but little change and in varying amount; but when egg-production is the object, such procedure will never do. For eggs, hens must be fed just enough; never too much nor too little. If too much, they will get fat; if too little, they will stop laying. In general, non-laying hens are either too fat or too poor. The body must first be maintained; then a surplus for eggs, but no super-surplus for fattening, which will result in paralysis of the laying functions.

Food in some form should be frequent. The busy hen is the productive one; hence she should be so fed as to induce the greatest activity, if in confinement. While the grain ration may be fed only twice daily, it should be buried in deep litter for her to find. Green food, in the form of cabbage, clover or roots, should be fed daily. Dry mash should be provided, to which the flock may have access at the noon hour, at least, if not constantly. Much will depend upon management of the flock, but frequent changes in the food supply, which must never be in excess of needs, will result in constant production, which means continued profits. To know how to feed poultry for profit, is to combine instruction with experience.—N. E. Chapman, Poultryman, Ex. Div. Minn. Col. of Ag.

In thinking over the past season, do not fail to check up your various crops, and determine which has been the most profitable. The unit of measurement for farm crops, the bushel, is very misleading. For example: If one compares the yields of oats and corn by the bushel, he gets a different idea of their relative value than when he compares them by the pound, which represents their relative feeding value. A yield of 30 bushels of oats is equal to 960 pounds; a yield of 30 bushels of corn is equal to 1,880 pounds of shelled corn.