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ORCHARD AND GARDEN

December 1-8

Mulch the strawberries with about four inches of good, clean straw any time before heavy snows.

More than a million dollars' worth of ginseng is grown in the United States each year.

We need fewer varieties of all horticultural plants and seeds. The lists should be cut greatly and only the very best kept. Perhaps our seedsmen and nurserymen will do this some day.

It takes six or seven years to produce marketable ginseng. It is not a get-rich-quick crop. In fact, very few people have the right location and the patience needed to grow a crop from seed to marketable plants.

The orchard trees will appreciate a dressing of stable manure this winter if none has been applied for several years. Put on the ground as far out from the trees as the branches reach. Do not let ferns become dry. About once a week stand in a tub of water so as to thoroughly moisten the roots.

Evergreens such as small spruce and cedar are good in winter window boxes. Stick them into the soil before the ground freezes. They will hold their needles until warm days in spring.

Crop reports show nearly 60,000 acres of cabbage grown in the United States this year and over 230,000 acres of sweet corn.

We should all be thankful for the heavy rainfall of early November. It has given our trees and shrubs a much better chance to get through the winter safely.—LeRoy Cady, associate horticulturist, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

ORCHARD AND GARDEN

December 8-15

Fiber makes a fair substitute for soil in growing hyacinth and other bulbs in the house.

Tramp the snow about trunks of trees and you will disturb the winter home of many mice.

Apple and other trees may be pruned on warm days during the winter when it is comfortable to work outside.

The shallow well on the farm is a splendid breeding place for typhoid fever. Dig the well deep and keep all drainage away from it.

There is still time to plant any bulbs in pots or boxes for flowering in the house next spring.

Overhaul the farm machinery now and scrap all that is of no value. Get new parts and repairs for the rest so it will be ready next year as soon as needed. You remember the tool's weakness now. Two months from now you may have forgotten it.

Fruits supply many elements for building up the human body. Now is a good time to plan a fruit plantation and order the plants. Plant only what you can take care of well.

Gladiolus plants made a good growth of bulbs this year and the weather at harvest time made gathering easy. This ought to make a reasonable price for stock next spring. There are few better plants for the garden or border if we consider the cost, ease of culture and results.—LeRoy Cady, associate horticulturist, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

FARMERS' INSURANCE

COMPANIES TO MEET

At least five farmers' mutual insurance companies—the Carlton at Carlton, the Finnish Local at Cloquet, the Windemere at Sturgeon Lake, the Aitkin County, and the St. Louis County—suffered a loss in the recent forest fires in northeastern Minnesota of more than \$300,000. The officers have reported to the commission of insurance that because of the large percentage of policy holders who had suffered losses it would be impossible for their companies to make good their losses. Accordingly, the executive committee of the state association of farmers' mutual insurance companies has called the annual meeting of all farmers' mutual fire insurance companies in Minnesota for December 17 and 18 at the West Hotel, Minneapolis, to consider an assessment on all the farmers' companies of the state, so that these companies in northeastern Minnesota may pay all losses in full. Seventy-five cents for each \$1,000 of insurance in force will provide ample funds.—A. E. Anderson, Cottonwood, president, and A. D. Stewart, Redwood Falls, secretary, State Association of Farmers' Fire Insurance Companies.

SUNFLOWER SILAGE AS A CHICKEN FEED

The state agricultural experiment station at Duluth is conducting some interesting experiments this winter in the feeding of silage to poultry. The silage was made from sunflowers.

Corn is not a dependable crop in some sections of the north, and the sunflower is being tested as one of the substitute crops for the production of this feed. It has this advantage that it is less susceptible to early frosts and seems to thrive under very adverse conditions during the growing season.

Sunflower silage is worked up readily if run through the ordinary straw-cutter, an implement to be found about any poultry plant of capacity. The common receptacle used is an oil barrel which will hold about 400 pounds. One man feeds and operates the machine while another packs the silage in the barrel. A barrel can be readily filled in half an hour or less if placed below the machine, the silage dropping down direct from the cutter over a trough.

All chickens did not eat with the same relish at first, but it was noticeable that each pen cleaned up a larger quantity daily.

This plan is suggested to any person in northern Minnesota who is troubled to find a suitable winter succulent feed for his birds, or to add to those feeds they already use with profit.—M. J. Thompson, superintendent, Duluth Experiment Station.

HOME EATING OF POULTRY URGED

Because of a shortage of cars and of space in cold-storage plants, the poultry and egg section of the federal food administration requests that as much as possible of all kinds of poultry be held on the farms until January 1 and that poultry production and consumption at home be increased.

Poultry as food compares favorably with other meats. While chicken is lower than beef in food value, duck and turkey furnish more food units per pound than beef, and goose more than pork chops. Eggs furnish vitamins which are essential to the growth and development of children.

To save the cost of feeding, poultry of all kinds may be canned, and when freezing weather comes several birds may be killed at one time and frozen until needed. For instructions in killing and dressing poultry, cooking and canning, call on the county agent or write to the poultry department, agricultural division, University Farm, St. Paul.

The food administration also asks that local foodstuffs be used to as great an extent as possible for the holidays, thus relieving railway congestion.

Do you like ice cream, iced tea and other cool things in summer? If you do, better build an icehouse now and fill it next month with good, clean ice.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Request for School of Journalism

The late W. J. Murphy, owner and publisher of the Minneapolis Tribune, left a large part of his fortune in trust for the establishment of a school of journalism in the University of Minnesota. While the fund will doubtless not be available for several years, the interest of the press is shown in this bequest, and the University is looking forward to developing the work already begun.

"Tip" for the County Agent

"There is no way in which the county agents could so easily and effectively further their work as through the columns of the country press," says one of Minnesota's live-wire editors, but it is an unfortunate fact, he adds, in substance, that 90 per cent of them are dumber than horses as to this sort of thing. Instead of writing stuff that is good as news, they too frequently send in long arguments (which do not convince) for the continuance of their work, or something of that sort. Moreover, these men spend days on the farms of their counties and return to their offices without anything in the nature of live newspaper stuff that you can get out of them with a corkscrew.

This may be an exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis, but it is largely true, and many country editors will approve what this editor—George W. Kelley, of the Detroit Herald—has to say.

There is no one medium through which a county agent can reach practically all the people of his county every week so effectively as through the local press. Failure to use this is to lack efficiency. Now a few county agents in Minnesota are cooperating with their local editors, but there ought not to be a single exception in the entire state.

FARM BUREAUS WILL HOLD STATE MEETING

The farm bureaus of Minnesota, representing every county in the state and a membership of 50,000, will hold their annual conference at University Farm, St. Paul, during Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week, January 3 and 4. Rooms in the Engineering building for farm bureau headquarters are to be set aside, and in them will be organized a clearing house and arranged accommodations for committee meetings.

The aim of the conference will be to formulate a program of agricultural activities for Minnesota for the coming year.

Farm bureau officers and members, county commissioners, county agricultural agents, and any others interested in the plan to develop a program for Minnesota's farm development are being urged to attend.

MINNESOTA ANNUAL

RAT TAX \$3,000,000

Minnesota's rats probably cost farmers and others \$3,000,000 annually. This estimate is based upon a government estimate of \$200,000,000 for the entire United States. In other words, it requires the constant labor of 2 men out of every 1,000 to make up the loss caused by rats.

This great waste may be very greatly reduced. For this reason the division of entomology and economic zoology of the Minnesota college of agriculture, University Farm, St. Paul, is seeking to encourage the people of Minnesota to begin a campaign against the rat by building rat-proof structures for the housing of foodstuffs and by thorough-going trapping and poisoning.

F. L. Washburn, who has the campaign in charge, urges Minnesota's people to keep all attractive food away from the pests and to remove litter and refuse that may give them shelter. Communities wishing to put on local campaigns for the destruction of these expensive pests should correspond with Mr. Washburn at University Farm, St. Paul.

HEATING WILL KEEP CEREALS INSECT-FREE

Great amounts of wheat flour and other cereal products have been lost through the presence of insects ("bugs," "moths," "worms," "weevils") this year. This is probably because of the use of so many coarse flours and cereals.

Practically all such losses can be avoided. All of the cereal products with which households have become familiar since the beginning of the war as "substitutes" should be heated in the oven as soon as they are taken home, whether there seem to be insects in them or not. The heat will kill eggs or young insects, and if the cereal is then put into a clean can or jar no insects can develop in it. The federal food administration for Minnesota has recommended the use of a wax which melts at a temperature of 185 degrees to indicate when the cereal has been heated enough.

The days of food saving are not done. The world is in desperate need of food. To neglect to sterilize foods and allow them to be destroyed when the loss may be prevented easily is, therefore, a grave matter.

If your grocer hasn't the wax, ask him to get it from his wholesaler.—Royal N. Chapman, division of entomology and economic zoology, University Farm, St. Paul.

HENS LAY BEST IN CLEAN QUARTERS

If you do not believe that a clean poultry house, sweet smelling and sanitary quarters, will pay handsomely, just observe two flocks, one that is kept in such a house and under such conditions and another that is kept in a house that is seldom cleaned and as a consequence is filthy and filled with foul odors. Note the difference in plumage, activity and general appearance of the two flocks and the number of eggs received. That alone will convince you of the absolute necessity of clean, comfortable quarters for hens.

The poultry house needs a good, thorough cleansing before real cold weather. Brush down the walls and ceiling, remove the old litter from the nests and floor. Whitewash or spray walls, ceiling and fittings. Fresh, dry earth or clean, dry sand or sifted gravel makes the most comfortable floors to be had when covered with a litter of straw—rye straw preferred. Do not put in all the straw necessary at once, as the hens cannot stir so much; add a little every day or two as long as desirable. When these requirements are fulfilled, and not until then, can the hens begin their winter's work.—A. C. Smith, poultry division, University Farm, St. Paul.

FARMERS' PROBLEMS AFTER WORLD'S WAR

The farms and the homes of America are to face serious problems as a result of the world war and the conditions that have been produced by it. So serious are these that men and women in positions to know best what the conditions are are asking what is to be done.

This question is going to be handed on, with some attempts to answer it at Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week at University Farm, St. Paul, December 30 to January 4, Minnesota's great annual congress of farm and home interests.

The whole program of the "week" as it has been announced will deal with problems which will help to point the farmer and the home-maker aright in meeting the issues of the reconstruction period patriotically and yet to their own advantage.

The subjects to be dealt with at the regular sessions will include taxation, farm crops, farm management, soils, livestock, dairying, vegetable growing, fruit raising, plant pests, farm engineering, poultry, bees, and animal diseases. They will include for the women the planning of meals, food conservation, fabrics and the designing and making of clothes, home management, child welfare, and the home care of the sick.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' BABY BEEF CONTEST

The boys' and girls' baby beef calf show, which was postponed on account of influenza, will be held at South St. Paul, December 11 and 12. This postponement has given the contestants an opportunity to put more finish on their calves; therefore, a show of most excellent quality is expected.

All calves must be in the Stock Pavilion, South St. Paul, at 9 a.m., December 11. The judging will begin at 1 p.m. J. C. Robinson, Evansville, Wis., will judge all calves.

An auction sale of all calves belonging to contestants who wish to dispose of them will be held at 1 p.m., December 12.

The boys and girls will be shown through the stockyards and packing plants.—W. A. McKerrow, secretary, Minnesota Livestock Breeders' Association.

RIGHT VENTILATION STUDIED BY MAIL

During the present epidemic of influenza the question of proper ventilation has come to the front everywhere. Cities have been more strenuous in enforcing existing laws on the subject; street cars have been run in cold, damp weather with windows wide open—all in the interest of public health. If fresh air is good in time of epidemic, why not at all times? More time should be given to the study of ventilation in offices, schools, and homes, as a matter of practical hygiene. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is still good advice.

The General Extension Division of the University of Minnesota offers a practical course on heating and ventilation which is very timely. It considers what proper ventilation is, what bad ventilation means, and how ventilation is related to the various heating systems. Information concerning the course may be had by writing the General Extension Division. It is particularly valuable for janitors and for those who look after the heating and ventilating of large buildings.

CORN SIRUP IS NOT MADE OF CORNSTALKS

Corn sirup is made of corn, and not of cornstalks, as many people suppose. The corn kernel is soaked in warm water and then put through a long series of machines and processes to remove the bran, separate the germ from the starchy layer, and grind up this starchy layer in water. After the non-starchy materials have been separated from the starch, the latter is further treated and converted into sugar.—J. J. Willaman, plant chemist, Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota.

COWS RELATIVELY LOW IN COST NOW

Cows have been relatively low in cost in 1918, and this despite the fact that in 1914 you could buy a cow for \$80 that would now cost \$120. How, then, can it be said that cows are relatively cheap? The answer is that in 1914 it took 88 bushels of wheat to buy a fair grade cow; now it takes only 60 bushels of the same grain. In 1914 it took 124 bushels of corn to buy a fair grade cow; now it takes about 95 bushels. If the comparison is made in terms of butter at present prices, the difference is still more striking.

MINNESOTA'S GREAT FARMERS' CONGRESS

Minnesota annually holds a great farmers' congress at University Farm, St. Paul. It is known as Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week, and to it come men and women from all parts of the state to consider problems relating to the farm and the home.

This year the question that has been uppermost in the minds of those shaping the program, headed by A. V. Storm, director of short courses, has been, "After the War—What?" An attempt will be made to answer this question as it applies to farming operations of all sorts and to the various problems of the home.

In addition to the regular lectures and demonstrations by those who have been studying the war's effects on agriculture and the home, there will be held the annual meetings of practically all of the farmers' and the home-makers' organizations of the state. These will include the Minnesota Federation of Farmers' Clubs, the Minnesota State Horticultural Society, and many others.

At evening mass meetings those attending will have opportunity to hear speakers of national reputation and to enjoy exceptional entertainment features.

Mr. Storm, the director, believes the week affords an excellent opportunity for the farmer to take a profitable vacation and to give his wife the same privilege.

The program giving details will be ready for distribution in a few days.

HORTICULTURISTS TO MEET AT U. FARM

The Minnesota State Horticultural Society will meet this year at University Farm, during Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week, which is from December 30 to January 4.

This is about a month later than the date originally set for the meeting. The postponement was made necessary by the rulings of the state health department, after the program of the meeting had been issued.

As Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week is the great congress of Minnesota farmers, it is expected that the attendance of the horticulturists of the state will be unusually large.

The programs of both the horticultural meeting and the Farmers' and Home-Makers' Week, the latter having to do especially with after-the-war problems, are both of such a nature that it is believed that the joint meeting will bring together the greatest gathering of farmers and home-makers that has ever assembled at University Farm.

SIGNS OF ADDED PROFIT IN DAIRIES

The business of the co-operative creameries in the state shows that dairy cows may be made more profitable than ever. While most grain feed is high priced, there has never been a time when it would pay better to feed well. The market for butter and cheese is very steady and the present prices will probably continue throughout the winter.

For the month of September butterfat reached the highest price in the history of dairying in Minnesota. Reports from 253 co-operative creameries show 1 that paid 72 cents; 6 that paid 70 cents; 111, between 65 and 70 cents; 86, between 60 and 65 cents; 30, between 50 and 55 cents; and 1, doing a very small business, 47 cents. The average of the 253 was 63.7 cents.

Co-operative cheese factories in Minnesota paid from 70 to 80 cents a pound for butterfat.

With the world calling for butter and cheese and these prices prevailing, no cow should be allowed to go dry through poor feeding and care. Cows may now be fed a liberal ration of grain, and where there is poor hay and other roughage, grain should be fed. It will not only pay well, but the world needs dairy products.—A. J. McGuire, agricultural extension division, University Farm, St. Paul.

GUNS SILENT, BUT FOOD CRY PERSISTS

America held the food line until victory, and now must hold until the fruits of victory ripen into enduring peace.

"Give us food!" is the cry of starving millions in Europe, and America must answer that cry if the world is to be made safe for democracy.

For democracy is not a thing learned of books and written in constitutions, but a working solution of simple human needs.

In the name, then, of those who have died that the world may be free, let us now dedicate our lives and our fortunes to make that freedom a reality.—United States Food Administration.