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Selecting Seed Corn.

"Selection" is the key-note of progress the world over. It is by the process of "natural selection" that, in all her kingdoms, Nature continually improves upon the quality of her gifts to men. It is by selection that the best men, as a rule, come to fill the best places in the activities of society. It is by selection that the speed of the race-horse has been developed; that, in the place of the inferior cattle of our sires, we have the superb Short Horns, Jerseys, Guernseys and Herefords of today. Selection has given us the Berkshire, the Poland-China and the Chester White hog in the place of the razor-back of old. Equally, selection is capable of giving us better crops on our fields, if only its methods are intelligently and persistently pursued.

Particularly has this been proved true of corn. By the testing and selection of varieties and by the selection of seed from the varieties found capable of doing best under Minnesota conditions as to soil and climate, it has been demonstrated that corn—once deemed an exotic here—can be made largely productive over almost the entire area of our state. And by pursuing the process in association with intelligent tillage, it is practically certain that the present average yield of thirty bushels can be raised, within a few years, to from forty to sixty bushels to the acre.

The proper selection of seed ears is such a vastly important step in the work of so increasing the yield, that the Extension Division of the University Farm is making strenuous endeavors to bring about a general observance of "Seed Corn Week," Sept. 12 to 17, inclusive. The enthusiasm with which the Division is pushing this idea of selecting seed, will, it is to be hoped, prove generally contagious. The governor's proclamation, seconding the Division's proposals, shows how large would be the gain to the state if both the acre given to corn, and the product per acre, should be raised to easily practicable limits. There is no movement which more truly "boosts" Minnesota than this for the observance, by every farmer, of some one day in the week named, by going through his corn-field and selecting the best ears for seed.

The short, 8-page bulletin, No. 9, which the Extension Division has issued on this subject, and which gives the best method of selecting and storing, should be in the hands of every farmer. The University Farm people hold that there is no seed which will do so well, on the whole, as that of corn which has already done well on the farmer's own land.

Winter Rye.

Prof. Boss, of the Minnesota Experiment Station, has just issued a bulletin giving the results obtained, in Minnesota and at the Experiment Station, in growing winter rye. The bulletin shows that the average yield of rye in Minnesota is 18.7 bushels, or 1,047 pounds per acre. This is a few pounds per acre more than is obtained from the oats crop; and rye has the advantage of bringing more money per acre, when sold, than oats.

Another advantage, in the growing of rye, is that it has a tendency to clean the land of weeds, by making fall tillage necessary and by permitting early harvesting of crops. It is one of the best crops with which to fight the wild mustard. It is also a good crop with which to seed down grass. The grass seed can be sown broadcast on the rye in the spring and harrowed in. Thus it has a firm, moist seed bed; and the early removal of the rye crop gives the grass a good chance to grow during the fall.

Winter rye also enables one to better distribute his farm labor than where only spring grain is grown; as rye is seeded in the fall, and is harvested before spring crops are ready.

This bulletin may be had free by addressing the Minnesota Experiment Station, St. Paul, Minn.

Fall Tillage.

There has seldom been a year in Minnesota when good tillage has proven of as great an advantage as it has been during the past growing season. As never before, Minnesota farmers have seen the advisability of storing in the soil as much moisture as possible before a crop is sown. Now is the time to save moisture for next year's crops. Discing the stubble fields at once will check the evaporation of any moisture that may be in the soil, and will loosen up the surface so that rain will more readily penetrate the soil.

Discing will cost not to exceed 35 cents per acre, and may be the means of helping to carry the crop over a dry period next season, when the lack of a very small amount of moisture would mean a serious loss.

Such tillage is not only valuable in conserving moisture, but it aids greatly in destroying weeds and liberating plant food. The Minnesota Experiment Station urges the practice of discing stubble fields wherever it is practicable to do so.

Horticultural Notes.

By K. A. Kirkpatrick, Extension Division, University Farm.

If the fruited canes of the berry bushes were not removed last month, it should be attended to now. Cut them out with a berry-hook, and collect and burn them. By so doing, many insect pests and their eggs are destroyed; whereas, they would escape if left until spring.

From now the hips of the Rosa Rugosa will be showing red—resembling small crabs to the casual observer. This is one of the ideal shrubs for this section. It is hardy, and free from insect or fungus pests; while its leathery green leaves, its delicate single flowers, and its peculiar fruits, give it a three-fold beauty.

Peonies should be transplanted this month, if it is desired to have them bloom next spring. These plants start growth so early in the spring that the blossoms will be sacrificed if one waits until then to move them.

Geranium cuttings, which should have been started last month, may still be rooted this month. They will still make early spring bloomers in the bay window. Take off about two inches of the tip of the shoot, and insert it about one inch in a saucer of wet sand. Keep the sand moist and the saucer in a rather shady, cool place until the cutting has rooted; then take the young plants up and pot them, using ordinary potting soil.

Protect the tender flowering plants from the first frosts by using cheese cloth or old muslin. By so doing they may still often have a month of blooming weather.

When the tops of cannas and dahlias have frosted, the clumps should be lifted with the earth adhering to the roots. The masses should then be laid in an open shed or under cover, to cure. Just before freezing weather, cut away the tops, and store for the winter by laying them on racks in a cool, dry cellar.

Save seed of your sweet corn before heavy frost. When the kernels have begun to harden, the ears may be slip-shucked, and several of the outer husks pulled back and tied together. Run a small pole or a wire through the loops thus formed, and hang up in a cool, dry place. Do not crowd the ears, but allow plenty of room, so the air may circulate freely about them to dry them thoroughly.

Squashes should be left on the vines as long as possible, but not allowed to frost. This ripens up and hardens the shell, thus improving their keeping qualities. Remove them from the vines without breaking the stems. Handle carefully; they must not be bruised nor have the skin broken if they are to keep best. Pile them in an open shed, to cure and lose as much of their moisture by evaporation as possible, until danger of freezing weather occurs. Store for the winter in a warm, dry place, such as a warm attic or upstairs room. If placed in the cellar they should be on racks near the top of the room,

in order that they may have the benefit of the driest, warmest air. If they are to keep late in the season avoid moist, cold store-rooms.

Seed Grain.

While there is a comparatively small amount of grain seeded at this season of the year in Minnesota, experiments at University Farm indicate the wisdom of selecting seed grain now. Good seed is as important as good live stock. If one had one hundred animals, and wished to keep ten for breeding purposes, he would be considered foolish to open the gate and let ninety run out at random and retain the ten which "just happened" to be left. This last ten might easily include the poorest animals in the bunch. But a similar practice is usually followed with grain. If one has one hundred bushels of grain, and needs ten bushels for seed, it is a part of wisdom to get the ten bushels of the very best out of the hundred, and sell or feed the other ninety. This should be done before a large part of the grain is marketed.

With an ordinary end-shack fanning mill, one can run through about forty bushels of grain per hour. He can take out from fifty to ninety per cent of the smaller and lighter kernels, that can be fed or marketed, and retain for seed from ten to fifty per cent of the plumpest and heaviest kernels.

Experiment Station Bulletin No. 115 gives full information on the selection of seed grain. Every farmer should have a copy of this bulletin, and consider it carefully before he reduces his stock of grain so low that he cannot make a good selection of seed.

The Selection of Seed Corn.

The following extract is taken from Extension Bulletin No. 9:

Spend at least one day during Seed Corn Week, September 12th to 17th, selecting seed corn. Go through the field with a sack over your shoulder, and select at least forty ears for each acre you expect to plant next year. This will allow you to make further careful selection next spring, after each ear has been tested for germination, as but from fifteen to twenty ears are necessary to plant an acre.

Select only medium-sized ears, that have matured early enough to indicate that they will ripen in even unfavorable years. Large ears are not necessary to large yields. For Southern Minnesota select Dent corn ears not longer than 8½ inches when dry. A good stand, and an ear on every stalk, is what makes large yields.

Select well-formed ears, with straight rows of kernels and with kernels of uniform size. No corn-planter can plant irregular kernels of corn uniformly. Special attention should be given to the shape of the kernel. Only kernels that are well filled at the tip, thus showing a large germ, should be selected.

Fall Pasturage

It has been found at the Minnesota Experiment Station, and by practical farmers, that, to get good results with live stock, the animals must be kept in a good, thrifty condition throughout the year; and that any checking of growth or production, owing to a period of unfavorable conditions, is detrimental to the results throughout the year. Every effort should be made to supply plenty of pasturage for animals during the fall. If this is not done, they are likely to be short of feed, and consequently, have a setback.

The second crop of hay on the meadows usually supplies this feed; but this year, wherever there is much of a second crop, it will, in most instances, be needed for hay.

Any grain, like barley, oats or winter rye, sown in the stubble about September 1st, will make considerable growth, and furnish a lot of cheap feed, if weather conditions are at all favorable. The seed may be scattered and discd in; or, if one has a disc drill, it may be put right in with the drill, on the stubble. Such crops will furnish pasturage quite late in the fall, and thus save other roughage, of which there is a shortage this year.

Hogging off Corn.

One of the features of economical pork production, discussed in Extension Bulletin No. 7, is "Hogging Off Corn." Results at the Minnesota Experiment Station show that more pounds of pork can be produced per acre when corn is hogged off than when the corn is husked and fed to hogs in a yard. There is also a saving of labor by following this practice, as the hogs can husk the corn more cheaply than can the farmer. We would urge all those interested in pork production to procure Extension Bulletin No. 7.

Storing Seed Corn.

Seed corn must be thoroughly dry before freezing weather. The same day seed corn is husked, put it in a room where there is a good circulation of air. Have each ear free of contact with other ears, so air can circulate about it freely. An attic over a room in which there is a fire is a good place for seed corn. During dry, warm days, leave windows open. On wet days, and as soon as the weather gets cool, close the windows.

Extension Bulletin No. 9, which may be had for the asking, describes several convenient methods of hanging up seed corn so that each ear is free of other ears and in a position to dry out rapidly.

For Extension Bulletins send name and address to Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

Poultry.

Poultry is beginning to be an important factor in Minnesota farming; and, with a view to making available to farmers in the state the latest facts regarding the raising of poultry, the Minnesota Experiment Station has just issued a Bulletin, No. 119, which gives results of work done with poultry at the Crookston substation. The Extension Division has just published Extension Bulletin No. 8, which gives rather complete information regarding the construction of poultry houses. These two bulletins should be in the hands of every poultry-raiser in Minnesota. Address the Extension Division, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn., and these will be sent to you free.

Experiments by poultrymen show that a cock eats enough each month to produce a dozen eggs, if the same food he consumes were fed to a good hen. Old cocks and nonproductive hens eat but return no income. Half a dozen cocks, with five or six dozen hens, will produce all the fertile eggs needed for incubation; while the hens, after removal of the males, will continue to lay as many, as large and as good eggs as they will when in the company of male birds. The policy of separation of the sexes, after the incubator season, results in vigor and thrift among the remainder of the flock, and in greater profit to the owner. Get rid of the old cocks and lazy hens. They are only feed-consumers and drones. Then select a dozen of your most energetic, active, happy hens, and a male of like quality, the best fighter in the bunch. Give them a small house and yard by themselves, with lots of straw to compel exercise; all the grain they will dig for, milk, alfalfa leaves or other green food such as cabbage, beets, etc., and table scrap; then use the eggs from this pen for hatching. Then, as says the Colorado Experiment Station, if you don't get better chicks than you ever had by the old haphazard way—better hatchers, better growers, better lookers, and better and earlier layers—we'll never say a word against the old roosters again.

The renting of land on short leases—according to W. J. Spellman, agriculturist in charge of farm management, Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington—for the purpose of growing grain for market, is one of the surest means of reducing the productive power of the soil; but the domestic animal, with well-managed pastures and rational systems of crop rotation, is pre-eminently adapted to the development of permanent systems of profitable farming. Land owners must take steps to improve renting methods by stocking farms with a full complement of domestic animals, and by giving longer leases, whereby the renter may reap the reward of intelligent management.

To Editors.

The Extension Division earnestly invites your co-operation in the work of securing a general observance of "Seed Corn Week" by the farmers of Minnesota, as urged in another article on this sheet, and in several preceding issues. The effort to double the yield of corn per acre in our state rests on a solid basis of scientific fact and of actual achievement. Its success means the addition of millions annually to incomes of our farmers. As they prosper, so will prosper the newspapers and all other lines of business in every community. It is hoped that you will not only reproduce our appeals, and the Governor's late proclamation on the subject, before Sept. 17th, but that you will yourself put in an effective word for "Seed Corn Week."

The Farmer's Wife.

"Above all, the conditions of farm life must always be shaped with a view to the welfare of the farmer's wife and the farm laborer's wife. To have the woman a mere drudge is at least as bad as to have the man a mere drudge. It is every whit as important to introduce new machines to economize her labor within the house as it is to introduce machinery to increase the effectiveness of his labor outside the house.

"I haven't the slightest sympathy with any movement which looks to excusing men and women for the nonperformance of duty and fixes attention only on rights and not on duties. The woman who shirks her duty as housewife, as mother, is a contemptible creature; just as the corresponding man is a contemptible creature.

"But the welfare of the woman is even more important than the welfare of the man; for the mother is the real Atlas, who bears aloft in her strong and tender arms the destiny of the world. She deserves honor and consideration such as no man should receive. She forfeits all claim to this honor and consideration if she shirks her duties. But the average American woman does not shirk them; and it is a matter of the highest obligation for us to see that they are performed under conditions which make for her welfare and happiness and for the welfare and happiness of the children she brings into the world."—Theodore Roosevelt's Address to Farmers at Utica, Aug. 23.

Recently a little suburb of Salt Lake City experienced a serious outbreak of typhoid fever, the cause for which was traced to the milk supply; but no case of typhoid was found at the dairy. A correspondent at Salt Lake City writes that the season before a man at the dairy had typhoid, and his excreta had been dumped in an unused outhouse back of the barn. When the hot weather came, the flies, bred in that outhouse, carried the germs from the excreta a year old into the barn, and infected the milk, and through the milk twenty-six families who had to bear the awful scourge of the dread typhoid, all because the contents of the one old outhouse had not been covered with netting. The Extension Division at the Experiment Station calls attention to this outbreak to warn the people of Minnesota of the dangers lurking in outhouses, to the end that they may apply the necessary preventives against the spread of disease.

Any future increase in production and in the profits of farming must come largely from better methods of farming. The soil must be cultivated more intelligently; its fertility must be promoted by the addition of manure, by the destruction of weeds at the season when they may be made useful as fertilizer, and by the complete eradication of such as choke out and prevent the growth and development of field crops. The cultivation of more land will not solve the question of more profits. Too much land has already been broken in the attempt at profit-making, resulting in loss of profits and fertility. The cost of production is increased by slack methods of cultivation and the resulting low yields, or expensive methods of maintaining high yields.

Kill the Weeds.—Plow at once, and give the weed seeds a chance to germinate before cold weather and to be killed by frost. Plow about two inches deep, harrow and disc the land. It will conserve soil moisture as well as destroy weeds. Plow again later in the fall, and cover the weeds not killed by frost. It is important to encourage the germination of weed seeds now.