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Delay Corn-Planting.

There never was a time when the corn situation was more serious than it is this spring. A large amount of weak seed-corn is sure to be used this year; and, if such seed finds its way to a cold, half-prepared seed-bed, a considerable portion of this weak seed will not germinate. On the other hand, if time is taken to put the seed-bed in a thoroughly-prepared condition, the delay of a few days, or even a week, will do a great deal to assist the germination of weak seed. Most farmers know very well that weak seed-corn has germinated when used for fodder corn. This apparent difference in the germinating power can be attributed only to the better condition of the seed-bed in which it is planted. Where seed must be used that is known to be slightly weak in vitality, it would be wise to delay planting a week or more, and to employ this delay in a better preparation of the seed-bed. Again, the acreage of corn is sure to be reduced to a marked degree through the scarcity of seed; but no one can estimate the loss and the hardship if a late frost should catch a nicely-started corn crop. In view of the known condition as to seed and the ever-present possibility of a frost, it is better to be in a hurry to plant corn this spring.—O. M. Olson, Extension Div., Minn. Col. of Agr.

Orchard and Garden Notes for April.

LeRoy Cady, Horticulturist, Minn. University Farm.

Prune and spray fruit and shade trees and shrubs.

Topworking of plums or apple trees will be done this month.

Spinach and Swiss chard are splendid greens, and are easily grown.

Heart carrots are early, but the antenna is a better late-season variety.

Purchase strawberries and a few raspberry plants for the home garden.

Procure a good supply of garden and flower seeds, if this has not been attended to before.

Golden Bantam sweet corn, though slow in color, is far ahead of other varieties for early table use.

Lay aside and plow a good rich strip of land, near the house, for a garden fruit plantation. It will pay.

White or yellow onion sets, planted early as possible, give bunching onions early, which are much appreciated by the family.

A cold-frame can be made good use of late this month, for growing pansies, celery, cabbage and annual flowers for transplanting.

The Clematis paniculata, Wild Cucumber, Morning Glory, Wild Grape and Virginia Creeper make excellent screens for covering unsightly places.

Sweet peas may be sown this month. Use them plenty of good, rich land. Use named varieties as far as possible, better results are obtained.

A few hollow-crown parsnips and roots of salsify, put in the cellar with other vegetables in the fall, add variety to the winter table, and are easily grown and stored.

Encourage the boys to plant a nice row of water- and muskmelons. Cole's Early and Kleckly's Sweet are good melons; and Rocky Ford, white pan and Emerald Green are good muskmelons.

Population and Prosperity.

It is sometimes argued that the growth of great cities is beneficial to the farmer, in that they afford a ready market, which he would not otherwise have, for his produce. But the population, now concentrated in cities, were spread out over the country, there would be just as many mouths to feed; the produce of the country would be equally in demand; and at the same time, the increase of the population would bring a great element of value to the land. The mercantile houses of the cities would sell just as many goods, also. So the so-called "boosters" of the cities are making a mistake, as the general welfare of the country is concerned, in seeking to draw factoring and other enterprises into many "hands" to their sevens-centers. The growth of the country, as well as of the State at large, is as wholesome if such enterprises are located in the country towns. "Country, build town!" is the slogan which leads to general prosperity.—C. R. Barns.

Co-operative Credit Associations and the Banks.

The use of borrowed capital is general in all the great lines of business, commercial and manufacturing, carried on in the United States. By it merchants and manufacturers are able to multiply, many times over, the number and magnitude of the transactions to which they would be confined did they endeavor to do business on their own capital exclusively—that is, without borrowing. The railroads afford an even more conspicuous example of great wealth accumulated by the use of borrowed means.

That the temporary use of borrowed money may often be of as great advantage to the farmer as to the merchant goes without saying. It is often, to the farmer, not merely an advantage but a necessity, if he would make any progress whatever. And as the farmer becomes more and more a "business man"—keeping accounts with his various undertakings as well as with the men to whom he sells his crops, and so acquiring the ability to see just when and where money may be spent on his land so as to bring the largest returns—it becomes of the highest importance that he should be able to borrow at the times and in the amounts he may temporarily need, just as any other business man does, and without the necessity of mortgaging his farm every time he borrows.

Under present conditions such borrowing is practicable only in the case of a few individuals, and even these are obliged to pay very much higher rates of interest than are current in the transactions of city men. The consequence is that the farming business lacks the stimulus that would be afforded by the use of ampler means, and opportunity after opportunity goes by unimproved because the farmer hasn't the money to improve it. In our cities, finance and business work "hand in glove"—that is, in practical co-operation for mutual advancement. That they are organized, while rural interests are unorganized, accounts largely for the fact that most of the "great successes" in a material way, are achieved in the cities.

It was the existence of a similar state of affairs among the farmers and small industrialists of Germany, no further back than 1880, that led to a great expansion of the Raiffeisen system of co-operative credit and banking associations; an expansion which has continued until today here are in Germany alone approximately 15,600 such associations, the total amount of whose loans to the farmers of that country—all without any mortgages whatever—now reaches over \$1,600,000,000 a year. The rate of interest in no case exceeds 5 per cent.

These results have been reached, it is claimed, with practically no losses either to borrowers or lenders, through the adoption of two simple ideas:

1. The combined character and assets of all the members of an association are behind every application for a loan.

2. Character, and the productive use of the money borrowed, are the basis of every credit; the motto being: "Credit for consumption is the road to poverty; credit for production the road to well-being." No man, however wealthy, may borrow association funds for the purpose of speculation or extravagance.

It would be interesting to know, were the figures obtainable, how the amount of money our American farmers have been able to borrow at 5 per cent, without a mortgage, in any year, compares with the billion and a half or more so borrowed by German farmers!

Attempts are already being made to introduce the Raiffeisen system in America. As known in Germany it involves the organization of a bank—usually a savings bank—through which the money needed by the members, when such amount is in excess of their share-capital, reserve and deposits, is borrowed of the great financial institutions at a very low rate. The difference between the rate paid on such loans and deposits, and the 5 per cent charged the members pays the expenses of the bank.

That the plan will be welcomed in America, as soon as it is generally understood among our farmers and they can "get together" on the question, there is little doubt. The question is, however, whether the existing banks of the country may not wisely take charge of the movement themselves, promote the organization of a "Co-operative Credit Association" in every rural community, and do its business on the same terms that the German association gives its members. The financial knowledge and ability of our bankers would thus be made available for our farmers, and the bankers themselves would escape a competition which they will no doubt prefer to avoid.—C. R. Barns, Extension Division, Minn. College of Agriculture.

To Editors.

The University Farm Press News is prepared with a sole view to the use of the matter in its columns by the editors of Minnesota papers. It has no subscription list, and is not sent to farmers. The endeavor is to fill 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 editorials or as clippings, just as you may prefer.

The Clearing of the Claim.

As definite a policy and as well chosen a plan should be determined for the clearing of a claim as for any other piece of important business. It often means the difference between failure and success.

This is often too little considered by the settler. He does not seem to realize the importance of going at this work systematically. With little thought and less regard for the future he selects a site for his house, usually in the most open part of his claim. His one idea is to clear the ground—all of it. Without regard to the suitability of the soil he clears the patches which are most easily cleared. He considers fire as the easiest means of accomplishing this end; and, since the whole claim is to be cleared, he takes no pains to confine the fire to any particular area—he lets it run at large over the whole tract. He is always hopeful, and thinks that his farm will be cleared in a couple of years.

As a matter of fact the clearing of land by one man is either very slow or very expensive. In a short time he becomes discouraged. He picks out small patches here and there, which are easily cleared and on which he can make a big showing. In this way he clears a larger area, but it is usually so located that it is practically useless; and all the uncleared land is burned over until it is absolutely barren. There are hundreds of claims, in the northern part of the State, now in this condition; claims on which the settlers are eking out a bare existence by working in the lumber camps through the winter. Such a mutilated piece of land cannot seriously be called a farm; and the man who practices such a method cannot lay claim to the title of a farmer.

Suppose, now, a little thought had been given to the systematic development of that land, and a definite plan laid out, with a definite object in view.

In the first place a little judgment out to be exerted in the selection of the claim. Get it located properly. A claim may possess good soil and be capable of producing large crops; but, if those crops cannot be gotten to market, what's the use? Locate near a line of transportation, even if the soil is a little poorer.

Once located, remember that it will take years to clear all that land. What is to be done in the meantime? Figure out how much cleared land is really needed at present, and clear that much of the very best land. Cultivate it, and grow there such crops as are needed for food of man and beast. Cut the timber from such land as is needed for pasture; sell the timber, burn the slashings, and seed between the stumps. A good crop of grass will be obtained for pasture, and the stumps can be left for several years, to rot. They will then come out with comparative ease. Considerable stock can be taken care of in this way, with a small initial cost for clearing the land.

Half of the 160 acres will be all that can be used for the first generation. Why burn over the other half, and make it absolutely worthless? Whether the 160 was logged over or not when the clearing was started, why not keep the fire out of this last 80 acres, and let it be producing timber until such time as it is needed for the production of more valuable crops? It may appear to be nothing but waste land; but, if the fire is kept out, a second growth of timber will be thriving there before any one realizes it, and that second crop will have a value. Remember that the price of timber is going up, and the minimum size which can be used is coming down. Species which cannot be sold for any purpose now will ere long be bringing good prices. It will require a very small growth on that eighty acres, twenty years from now, to yield a profit that will pay for the clearing of that land and probably a good little roll of money besides.

There is no reason why the uncultivated half of the farm should not yield an income, when it is willing to do so if it is only left alone. It is a simple matter to keep the fire out. Do it, and have the whole farm producing. The use of a little judgment will in this way easily double the income of the farm during the first thirty years after settlement.—E. G. Cheyney, Forester, Minn. Col. of Agriculture.

Dry Farming in Minnesota.

How far the methods of so-called "dry land farming" are applicable to Minnesota conditions was the subject of an address by William H. Peters, one of this year's graduates, on Commencement Day at the School of Agriculture—an address in which the attitude of the University Farm experts in relation to this type of farming was no doubt reflected. Some of the points in part covered by the address are as follows:

Dry land farming is generally practiced in sections where the annual rainfall is less than twenty inches. But it does not follow that in Minnesota, where the average rainfall is about 27 inches, its methods may not be advantageously applied. For, in the first place, it sometimes happens, as in 1911, that the rainfall is considerably below 20 inches; and that, even when it is up to the annual average, it is so unfortunately distributed that, while at one time the crops may be "drowned out," at another they suffer greatly for want of moisture. The distinctive features of dry land farming are directed to the conservation of whatever moisture is available, in such manner that it shall afford the crops a supply when needed. They involve considerable extra labor in cultivation; but they are attended with this result: that not only do they practically assure an average crop in a season of drouth, but they assure a better than average crop in a season of ample rainfall. In other words, the farmer receives, in any case—so far as moisture affects the result—an ample reward for his extra labor. As said Mr. Peters: "If they"—the methods of dry land farming—"had been practiced in Southern Minnesota last year, a yield of fifteen bushels of wheat could have been raised instead of six bushels. One inch of rain, if utilized for crop production, will give two and one-half bushels of wheat to the acre. Ten inches of rain, then, will give twenty-five bushels of wheat to the acre." Of course he did not mean that an annual rainfall of ten inches would produce twenty-five bushels, but that if the ten inches is applied during the period of growth, "our problem is nearly solved." And "dry farming" not only conserves moisture for the growing crop, but prepares the land against future drouths, expected or otherwise.

Such preparation includes, except on sandy soils, deep plowing, done in the fall, as early as possible—if immediately after the crop is removed, so much the better. The plowing should be followed by disking. The ground is thus put in condition to absorb all the moisture that falls during the autumn and winter, and the disking forms a soil-mulch (a better term than dust-mulch), which cuts off the capillarity through which so much moisture escapes by evaporation. "If the conditions are such that plowing cannot be done immediately after the crop is removed, the disking should be done on the stubble." This will cut off capillarity, and will also help the plowing later on. This later plowing, however, should be followed by another disking; and this, in all cases, by harrowing. The use of the subsoil packer, before harrowing, affords a further instrumentality for keeping the moisture in the subsoil.

Increasing the capacity of the soil to hold moisture, by the addition of organic matter in the form of manure and by the cultivation of leguminous crops—although often spoken of as a feature of "dry" farming—is no more peculiar to "dry" than to other farming. It is essential to good farming under whatever name.

It will be seen that "dry" farming is simply another method of achieving the results sought by irrigation—the maintenance of an adequate supply of moisture in the soil during all the season when wanted. It is a question whether, in places where water is easily available, irrigation may not be advantageously substituted—whether, in the long run, the cost of irrigation works may not be less than that of the extra labor involved in dry farming.—C. R. Barns, Extension Division, Minn. College of Agriculture.

A Warning against Southern Seed-Corn.

The unusual demand for seed-corn this year has stimulated a desire on the part of the commercial interests to satisfy the people in the purchase of corn. As a result, of course, there is a great deal of southern seed-corn being advertised. The use of southern corn for the production of ears should be carefully guarded against. It is not possible to mature, in Minnesota, a reliable crop of corn from any of the varieties grown in Iowa or southern South Dakota. Farmers who may possibly be confronted with the problem of securing seed-corn should look carefully into this question, and, in case of doubt, communicate with the Experiment Station or some other reliable source of information.—C. P. Bull, Associate Agriculturist, Minn. University Farm.

One Item of Cost.

One of the most important items in the cost of "running the farm" is the large expenditure for tools and machinery. The necessary and desirable equipment of these is often slowly and laboriously obtained. To acquire a coveted reaper or mower, wagon or horse-rake, disk cultivator or manure-spreader, for instance, the farmer will often wear his old suit another year, stint his family expenditures, and deny himself desirable recreation. And even where he has gained a position where such sacrifices may not be necessary, the cost of machinery and repairs remains an item which "counts" heavily in cutting down the net returns from his land.

One would imagine, then, that the equipment thus acquired would be given a degree of care proportionate to the labor and expenditure bestowed on its procurement. But, while this often happens, and is becoming more and more the rule with "business farmers," the instances of neglect are so numerous as to kindle astonishment. For instance, on a recent northward trip, a member of the Faculty at University Farm, as a matter of curiosity, took note of the various machines, to be seen from his car window, which had been left in the fields where last used, exposed to the weather during the fall and winter months, along the road between St. Paul and Hinckley. The list was as follows:

Horse rakes....18 Road Graders.. 2
Mowers 4 Plows 1
Teddies 1 Binders 3

This list includes only such machines as were seen from one side of the car. Others, similarly exposed, may have been concealed from view by farm buildings. Supposing only, however, that the number of exposed machines on the other side of the track was the same as on the side inspected, there were exposed to the weather, on a narrow strip of land about 75 miles long and say one mile wide, fifty-eight expensive pieces of machinery. And unfortunately this area is not, in this respect, an exceptional one. Over practically the whole cultivated area of Minnesota a similar habit prevails. The resulting damage to the machinery can hardly be less than from 10 to 25 per cent of its cost annually; which means a tax of several hundred thousand dollars upon the farmers of the State—a tax self-levied, since it is everywhere avoidable by giving machinery proper shelter and care.—C. R. Barns.

What to do with Old Bulls.

During the past few years the farmers of this State have shown a very commendable desire to improve their live stock. This they have aimed to accomplish by better feeding and care of the stock already possessed, and also by introducing males of some pure breed. All this is entirely the right thing to do. It is customary among our farmers to use such an animal for about two years, or until his progeny are of an age to be bred, and then to sell the bull, rather than to use him on his own daughters. Such bulls are generally, at this stage of their life—when only three to four years old or at early maturity—just at their prime, or but little below it; and certainly, for the good of the live stock interests, if they have done reasonably well as getters of good stock, they should not be sent to the butcher, as is so often the case. The mature male is able to get stronger calves than the immature one; and, when a sire has proved his power to produce well-formed, clearly-marked, robust calves, he certainly should not be cast aside for a young and untried one. There are a good many dairy sires in this State that are right now in such a position. The Dairy Division of the Agricultural College is keeping a sales and exchange list of such animals, as opportunity offers, and will be glad at any time to send out names and addresses of farmers having such stock for sale or exchange; also a list of those who are in the market to purchase. We cannot, of course, promise to find a purchaser for every animal, nor to assume any responsibility as to the merits of the stock, but we shall be glad to do all in our power to enable the stock-owner to find a purchaser, and to inform the prospective buyer regarding stock for sale.

Don't, if it is to be avoided, destroy our best blood just as it ripens into stronger life. We will do what we can to help.—R. M. Washburn, Associate Prof. Dairy Husbandry, Minn. Col. of Agri.

In some experiments made at Cornell University, to test the comparative yield from the stem and seed end of potatoes, it was found that, as an average of 22 varieties for two years, the seed end gave a yield of 180 bushels per acre, while the corresponding yield from the stem end was 151 bushels per acre. It would seem, from this, that it would be good farming to feed the stem ends to the hogs, and plant only the seed ends.