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MEETING THE HAY SHORTAGE 1926

A shortage of tame hay in Minnesota brings the farmers of the state face to face with the necessity of careful planning in order to meet livestock requirements for the coming winter. This folder is issued as a means of suggesting ways in which to meet individual needs.

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MEETING THE HAY SHORTAGE

The tame hay crop in Minnesota is exceedingly short of normal production throughout the state this year, and in a number of counties the supply will fall much below livestock requirements for the coming winter.

The first cutting of alfalfa was a disappointment because of the dry weather, and, in many places, because of severe winter killing, and while the second crop as a whole is better than the first it is not very good in many sections of the state. A third cutting is not usually advised as it may result in winter killing, but many farmers will doubtless take a chance this year. The third cutting should in all cases be taken off not later than September 5.

There is a surplus of wild or slough hay in some sections but this is not good roughage for livestock, and, when the freight is added to the f.o.b. price, it becomes exceedingly high-priced feed for the nutrients it contains.

Inquiries have been made relative to surplus hay supplies in neighboring states, and the outlook is anything but favorable for

reasonably priced tame hay for the coming feeding season. When roughage costs over 1 cent a pound or \$20 a ton, the livestock that consumes it must be of exceptionally good quality and of high producing capacity to make it pay. Therefore, when it gets to be $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound, as it probably will, it is doubtful whether many farmers will be able to afford to ship it from neighboring states for the feeding of the ordinary run of cattle.

In view of these facts farmers should consider utilizing every form of farm roughage in order to avoid shipping high-priced hay from a distance.

Using the corn crop

Undoubtedly more corn than ever before will be cut this year for livestock roughage. There are several forms in which the corn crop may be used as roughage.

First, as silage. The farmer this year should fill his silo to capacity. If he has no silo of the usual upright type, he may resort to the trench silo, provided there is a site on heavy, well drained soil. A bulletin telling how to construct such a silo may be had on application to the Division of Publications, University Farm, St. Paul.

Second, by shocking. The method most in favor in using the entire corn crop, is to cut and shock in the field in *large* shocks. After thorough drying, it may be ricked or stacked near the feed-yard.

Third, as shredded fodder. Inquiries as to stack silage—that is, silage put in a fenced enclosure in the form of a stack from 12 to 16 feet high and from 14 to 20 feet in diameter—have been received. This method has been tried at University Farm two or three years without very favorable results, and it is doubtful whether it should be recommended in comparison with the other methods mentioned.

Oat straw for feed

It has been suggested, also, that, wherever possible when the oats crop is threshed, the straw be blown directly from the machine into the barn. Where this is not possible, it would seem desirable to haul as much of the oat straw as soon after threshing as convenient and to plan on conserving as much of the good straw as possible. The straw crop will be short at best because of the shortness of the grain and in some instances there may be difficulty in obtaining

enough properly to bed the stock through the winter.

Fall rye for pasture

Wherever practicable, it seems advisable to seed fall rye quite early, for fall and early spring pasture next season.

The amount of moisture available through August and the early part of September may be the deciding factor in making such rye pasture, but the attempt seems to be worth the risk in view of the feed shortage. Not a few farmers have signified their intention to seed fall rye in corn fields and in stubble fields after disking, in order to provide fall and early spring pasture.

The situation suggests, also, the advisability of preparing now for the planting of more alfalfa and sweet clover next spring. For this, the land should be fall plowed and treated with lime where lime is needed. Grimm seed, well inoculated, should be planted.

Cattle may be culled

It would seem advisable, also, to consider a close culling of livestock, particularly of cattle. The first step would be to take an

inventory of the livestock now on the farm, making an estimate of the feed needed and the feed available. Then if it appears that some of the livestock should be sold, of course the less productive stock should be eliminated. This does not mean young stock necessarily, because some of the young stock might give promise of excellent production in the next few years, and some of the old stock that consumes more roughage per head might be culled out to better advantage. A cow-testing association is an excellent agency for ascertaining the productive capacity and the amount of feed consumed by the dairy herd.

In all of this, there is no desire to advise any particular individual as to exactly what should be done on his farm. This little folder is made available merely in order to emphasize the present situation and to offer suggestions that have come from farmers as to how they believe the present situation may be met.

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