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[ESTABLISHED 1888.]

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Entered at the Harrison post office as second class matter.

THURSDAY, NOV. 19, 1891.

Growing and Feeding Beets.

By request of a reader of the *Ohio Farmer*, Waldo F. Brown furnished an article for that paper on the cultivation and value of beets as food for stock. Mr. Brown says that he has found by experience that beets are an excellent and economical food for brood sows in winter and he believes that the small farmer can grow and preserve succulent food for winter use cheaper from beets than to build a silo and put up ensilage. He says: "In corroboration of my statement that beets are an excellent food for brood sows, I will state that I visited, some years ago, Mr. Joseph Harris' farm, on which he kept over sixty pure Essex sows, and he was just harvesting ten acres of beets, and he told me he relied on them as the principal food for winter. At an institute in Williams county, Ohio, last winter a farmer read a paper to prove that there was the greatest profit from pigs pushed from the start and sold at six months old. He stated that he kept twenty-five brood sows, and of late years had wintered them largely on beets, and that he not only found them cheap food, but that his sows lost very few pigs and suckled better than when he fed corn. The largest and best developed sows at one year old that I have ever raised were wintered on beets, with one small feed of corn each day.

Beets should be sown early on good, clean land. I have had the best success with them from sowing early in April, and I should not hesitate to sow the last of March if the land is in good condition. I sow in rows thirty inches apart, so as to use a horse in cultivating them. I prefer to use plenty of seed, as it is much easier to thin a crop than to transplant and fill vacancies. Sown early, before the sun has much power, it will not be necessary to cover deeper than one inch. If one is growing a half acre or more yearly, it will pay to own a good seed drill, and also a hand cultivator for the early working. Cultivation should begin as soon as you can see to follow the row, but unless your land is very weedy all that will be necesary will be to run through them with the hand plow, which should be done every four or six days until they are four inches high, at which time they should be thinned and thoroughly hoed. In thinning leave them from eight to twelve inches apart. After they are thinned nearly all the work of cultivation can be done with a horse and cultivator, as they soon make a growth which shades the row so that no weeds can grow in it, and the cultivator keeps the middles loose and clean.

In growing beets for hogs I would always recommend the globe variety rather than the long kinds, as the latter grow a long, woody neck above ground which is not palatable to hogs, although cattle will eat it, but even for them I believe the globe varieties the best. Beets should be harvested before it is cold enough to freeze them. Every one who expects to feed beets regularly every winter should have a cellar in the barn for them, as it is very inconvenient to take them from pits in cold weather and they are heavy to carry from a house cellar to the barn. My nearest neighbor, whose barn has no basement, made a cellar that would hold over 800 bushels at a cost of less than $25, but this did not include a cement floor, which is necessary to make it rat proof and easy to keep clean. He removed the floor from one-half of the hay lay at the side of the barn floor, which gave a space of 15 by 20 feet. As it was three feet to the ground, he only raised the floor four feet above its former level and he had a cellar with a seven-foot ceiling. Eight-inch studding were set at the sides and boarded on both sides, and the bottom of this space was filled with grout so that rats cannot get in, and then sawdust was packed in the space to the top. It is not necessary to have a double floor overhead, as a load of hay, straw or fodder can be kept on it through the winter. A door next the barn floor and a window on the opposite side gives the necessary ventilation and enables you to unload directly from the wagon into the cellar on either side, and the roots can be taken out to feed without going outside of the barn. In a basement barn the cellar can be on a level with the stable. I have such a one thirty feet by twelve, and when not needed for roots we store sawdust for bedding in it and have also a bin for oats and bran.

When I first began growing beets I chopped them for my stock, but I now feed them to hogs and cattle whole and find that they eat them without waste, and cattle are really less liable to choke on them if cut. I do not feed them beets in the fall, as they undergo a ripening process and are sweeter and better after being in the cellar for a month or two, and besides, stock needs bulky, loosening food more in the winter than in autumn. A series of experiments made at our Ohio station proves that beets are fully equal as food to the best corn ensilage.

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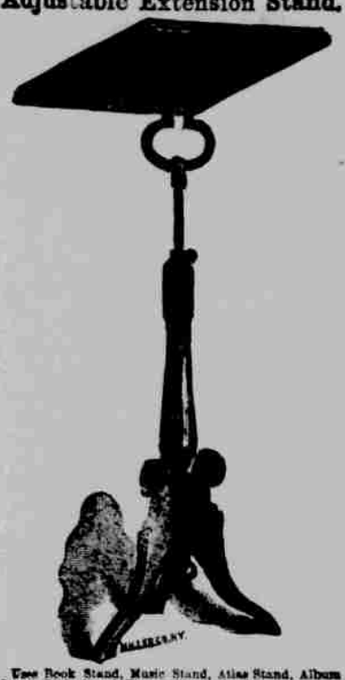

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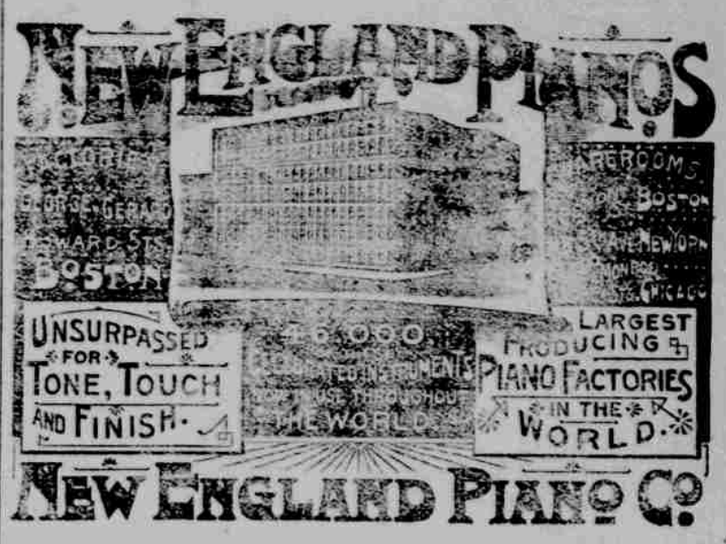

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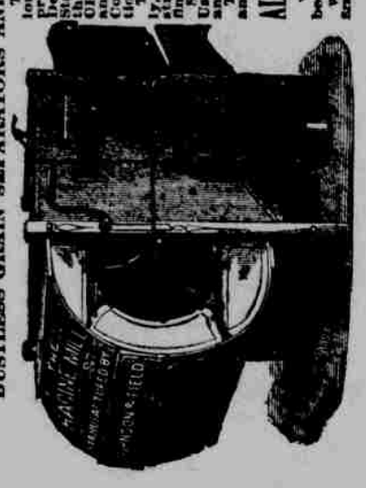

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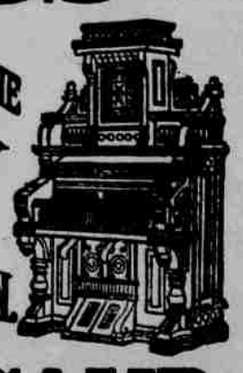

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