

# Agricultural Department

## EARLY SEEDING.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the advantages of early seeding. Wheat should be sown as early as possible, as soon as the frost is sufficiently out of the ground to permit the wheat being "mudded" in. Wheat will stand the cold and freezing with little danger of loss. The advantages of early seeding will more than compensate any loss that may accrue from alternately freezing and thawing after the seed has been sown.

Oats also should be sown as early as the ground is in proper condition, generally in the early part of April. Many seem to fear that the crop may be cut short because of freezing after the oats have come through the ground. It may be that early sown oats may be injured by the young plant being frozen, and the crop reduced in size on this account, but even then, on the average, the yield will be much better than when the sowing is too long delayed. The writer has observed the late and early sowing of small grain in Nebraska for twenty-four years, and has invariably found that the early sowing made the best general average crop. In fact all crops should be planted as early as experience has proven it safe to plant them. Experience teaches that corn planted about May 1 generally yields better than corn planted May 15 or later.

## INCREASE YOUR INCOME.

Many farmers in our state have in recent years practically doubled the income of the farm by milking a dozen or more cows and marketing the cream. The separator is part of the equipment of every up-to-date farmer. Since the introduction of alfalfa it has been found that cows fed on alfalfa hay will give as much milk in the winter months as when running on the pastures in the summer. It is common to find farmers throughout the eastern half of our state whose monthly incomes from cream run from \$40 to \$150. By the use of the separator the fresh, skimmed milk is available for the pigs both young and old, which increases the thrift of these animals wonderfully. Again, where cows are fed on alfalfa and milked in the winter, fresh, warm milk given to the chickens has been productive of remarkable results. The farmers of eastern Nebraska in many localities market eggs throughout the winter months at high prices and at great profit, whereas before the introduction of alfalfa and the separator such a thing as the marketing of eggs from the farms in January and February was scarcely known. The calves can be raised on skimmed milk, warm and fresh from the separator, and when a little oil cake is mixed with it the calves thrive practically as well as when fed on the new milk fresh from the cow. Care must be taken, however, not to put too much oil cake into the skimmed milk, mere-

ly sufficient to take the place of the butter fat that has been removed by the separator.

## ALFALFA.

Are you going to sow a few acres of alfalfa this spring? If not, why not? It is the most profitable use to which the land can be put. Every farmer should have at least ten acres of alfalfa, and if farming on a large scale, thirty or forty acres would be the proper amount. Alfalfa will yield from four to six tons of the most nutritious hay that can be raised. It will yield double the amount that red clover will, and its feeding qualities exceed that of red clover at least thirty per cent. Alfalfa is more easily cured than red clover and does not heat and blacken in the stack. Even though the seed be high farmers cannot afford to delay seeding down a few acres to this valuable grass on that account. To do without this premier forage crop is far more expensive than paying the price asked for the seed.

Those contemplating sowing alfalfa this spring should plow the ground intended for this purpose as soon as the frost is out, and plow it as deeply as possible. Next the ground should be harrowed three or four times in order to pack the soil as closely as possible and free the surface from lumps. The plot should now be let stand until about May 10, when all danger of freezing will have passed. The plot should then be disked thoroughly to destroy all weeds that may have sprouted and then harrowed several times to make a seed bed that will be firm and mellow. The ground is then ready for the seed.

It will be found economical in the end to sow not less than twenty pounds of seed to the acre as this amount, if the seed be good, practically insures a good stand. The stand of alfalfa is important, because where it is thick the stems grow finer and make better hay. The yield per acre is always greater when the stand is thick rather than when the stand is thin. If by any mishap a good stand is not secured at the outset it is very difficult, practically impossible, to thicken it afterwards, as the older plants will smother out the young plants where seed is sown for the purpose of improving a poor stand.

Young alfalfa must have the sunshine or it will not thrive. Therefore it is not advisable to sow it with any nurse crop no matter how thinly the nurse crop may be sown. It will be found necessary to mow the weeds and grasses that will grow up with your young alfalfa at least three times during the first season, otherwise the weeds and grasses will smother the young alfalfa plant. The young alfalfa plant will not fight its way the first year against weeds and grasses, and if care be not taken to keep the weeds and grasses cut down during the first season a good stand of alfalfa cannot be expected. After the first year no trouble will be experienced because the alfalfa will start earlier in the spring than the other weeds and grasses, and being a rapid grower, will completely shade the ground so that the others will not cause any further trouble. Alfalfa should never be sown on ground where the water will stand after heavy rains, rolling ground, or at least ground sloping sufficiently to shed water is only fit for alfalfa. This plant can be raised upon the hills and rough lands that are too rough for profitable cultivation, and will do well. The choice pieces of bottom lands that have been reserved for hay can be ploughed up and put in corn and other field crops and double the amount of a far better quality of hay can be raised on the hills and rough pieces than could be raised on

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