

Agricultural Department

TEST YOUR SEED.

The time to test the seed you expect to plant is now. Do not wait until planting time to make the test and find that some of your seed are worthless for planting, and be handicapped in securing seed of good vitality. Test the seed of all the grains that you expect to plant so that if any are found below a profitable percentage of germination you may secure other seed and test that also. Many farmers have learned the value of seed testing by costly failures, in some instances the entire crop being lost and in others the amount of yield being below the profit line.

The process of testing seeds is such a simple operation that any one may conduct a test successfully. A couple of dinner plates and some pieces of cotton flannel, blotting paper or absorbent cotton with clean water for moisture, and the apparatus is provided. The plates and material used for moisture carriers should be sterilized to destroy any mold spores or fungi they may contain. Upon an up-turned plate place a layer of moistened cotton flannel. On this lay the seeds to be tested, of the small grains a hundred or more, and half the number of corn. Over this place another moistened strip and cover with a similar plate. If more than one variety of seed is to be tested at one time another strip may be laid on top of the first set, the seed placed and covered as before, using two pieces of cloth for each variety. This gives the seed an aerated and more or less sterilized germinating bed. Set the plate in a somewhat darkened place where temperature of 70 to 80 degrees F. during the day and less than 50

degrees F. during the night, may be maintained. The length of time required for germination will depend largely upon the nature of the seeds, from six to ten days usually being required. With alfalfa and certain others of the clover family, a small percentage of the seeds will remain apparently sound at the close of the test. An allowance is usually made for these, counting 1-3 as capable of growth. Where only a small percentage of the seed falls to germinate the grower may provide against a poor stand with a heavier seeding. Where the percentage of germination is very low, the indicated vitality of the germinated seed will also be found below normal and it is advisable to procure a new stock of seed.

ROTATION OF CROPS

Rotation of crops is the most practical and powerful means of combatting the insect enemies of corn. The losses each year are something enormous.

When the enemies have taken possession of our cornfields there is no immediate remedy. The insects will take the corn in spite of us and we must take our "medicine." We are, in most cases, simply reaping the perfectly natural consequences of our own or our neighbors bad methods of the past.

It is most fortunate, indeed, that that system of rotation of farming which will give the most profitable return from each acre and for each day's labor under normal conditions in the Central West, even is there were no insect enemies, is also the system which will most successfully combat those enemies.

Continuous cropping with the same crop is vicious. It means dependence upon the success of one crop, and lack of distribution of labor. It means poor soil and a poor physical condition of that soil, and consequently poor crops and favorable conditions for the development of the insect and fungous enemies peculiar to that crop.

In making a careful study of the conditions throughout the corn belt last summer, it was very apparent. First, that little or no damage was being done to the corn crop from insect enemies where the farmer practiced a good system of rotation of crops, and this was especially true if his neighbor also had an equally good system of rotation. Second, that the reverse was almost invariably true. Third, that corn continuously on the same ground was almost always seriously damaged by the corn root worm, and generally by the corn root louse.

DAIRY NOTES

Mistakes will not be made before and after calving. When the cow is dry her feed should consist largely of roughage, bran or oats; or a mixture of bran and a good grain ration before calving. Keep the cow quiet just before and after calving. Give her a box stall if possible at the time the calf is dropped.

To prevent leaking of milk immediately after milking, wipe the teat dry, and with a small brush apply to its end a small quantity of colodion that may be had at the drugist. This at once forms a thin rough membrane or skin which prevents leakage and is easily removed before milking.

When cows are stabled to stand face to face they become restless and nervous.

A kicker is often the result of a first milking by one who cannot hold his temper.

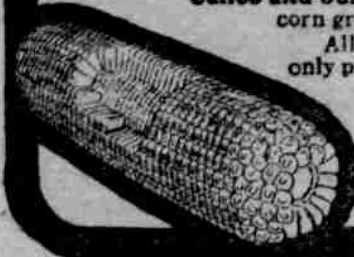
If calves are kept for dairy uses, see that they have all qualifications for a place in the herd.

Fat is not desirable in a dairy calf.

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Winter food for calves should be clover, hay oats and bran.
When calves are developed as they should be there will be no trouble in breaking the heifer to milk.
It is a bad investment in buying poor cows. They will never meet your expectation nor give satisfaction.
Sell your poor cows and begin anew with good stock. Too many farmers do not appreciate the difference between good and poor cows as they should.
Now is a good time to buy improved stock, so get started, and let your scrub calves, colts, swine, sheep and poultry go at any price, and see that they are the last scrubs on the farm.

THE GARDEN SOIL

There is no piece of ground that has to grow such a variety of crops as the garden patch. It is hard to find a small plot that will be ideal for all plants. There are tropical plants like to tomato, melon and bean that would do better on the south slope of a sandy soil. All very early

truck would likewise be benefited by such soil. Then there are such as late cabbage, parsnips, beets and other slow growing plants that would be better on a heavy soil with a north slope.

The garden soil should be rich. Fine, well-rotted manure will give richness and humus. If the sand pit is handy, the farmer could haul a few loads when not busy and scatter that over a portion of the garden if it needs warming up. By all means, keep the soil in fine tilth, so wheel hoe will work easily. Poultry and sheep manure are very good for the garden. Coarse manure, or weed stalks half plowed under an an abomination and cause much loss of time and crops.

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