

Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

What Farmers Want to Know.

SOMETIMES THEY ask questions that are entirely out of my line. I am not an encyclopedia, I am not a mechanic nor a builder, and yet a man who seems to have had but one postage stamp, and that on the outside of his letter, writes: "Tell me all about building a cold storage and how to run it."



Only this and nothing more. Now, as I have said, I am not an encyclopedia, and I do not waste time on a man who wants valuable information and does not think it even worth a two-cent stamp. Then, too, I never advise any one in regard to things I know nothing about. I have simply a general idea of the way cold storage plants are built, and have seen the frost-covered ammonia pipes in them, and know that they cost a good deal of money to construct and run. But I never had any stock in a cold storage plant, never built one, and never ran one, and I do not know of any one less qualified to tell a man how to build or run such an establishment. If our friend will write and enclose a stamp to the Superintendent of the Cold Storage at Market and Twelfth Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., he will tell him, I suppose, who builds these affairs and who can tell him how to run them.

SWEET POTATO HOUSES.—A sweet potato house should have double, deadened walls. If the walls are left hollow, the outer sheathing should be made tight by covering with paper and then weatherboarded. Cell inside and overhead. If you pack the walls with sawdust, you will only need to sheath roughly on the outside. If the spot is high and dry, and no water can get in, dig out two feet and use the earth to bank the sides. I make them ten feet wide and as long as needed, but the width can vary as one wishes. The main thing is to have means for heating to a high temperature when the potatoes are first put in. This should be done with the ventilator at top open to let off the moisture. The heating can be done by a furnace at the north end and a flue like a tobacco barn run through the house. In fact, a good tight tobacco barn that is furnished with furnace and flues can be turned into a good potato house, but will need more fire heat in cold weather than a house especially built to keep out frost. Ceiling the house overhead will make a cock-loft above, and this can be used to help by covering the ceiling between the joists with sawdust, and packing the loft with straw. After drying off the potatoes at a high temperature there will seldom be any need for fire heat afterwards. The nearer you can keep the temperature at from 40 to 45 degrees the better. If in warm spells it tends to get higher, open up and let in some night air and close up in day time.

CLEANING LAND OF WEEDS.—"Rich land in the mountain section, very foul. Peas covered with weeds and soy beans likewise. Clover seems to do better. How shall I relieve this?" Do as I did on similar land in the Virginia mountains. I planted corn for the silo, and sowed red clover among it at last working. Cut the clover the next spring and turn the sod at once for corn. Sowed clover again and repeated this several years, and found that I was getting heavier crops of silage and heavier clover, and that the land was getting

cleaner of weeds. This was a rich bottom land, and that plan can be kept up, if the land is kept supplied with phosphoric acid and potash, almost indefinitely. It is a good way to clean foul land, but after getting the weeds down I would lengthen the rotation and bring in some small grain crops.

TIMOTHY FOR HAY.—You can sow timothy on strong moist land in the South in the fall, and can get a crop of hay in the spring, and that will be the last of the timothy. Timothy is the popular hay, but not the best by any means. Much of the timothy I have seen coming South is dead straw from which seed has been threshed. If you want hay for cows, timothy is about the poorest stuff you can get. Peavine hay is worth several times as much as timothy for cows. And as a grass

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THE farmer who has every acre in harness, well fed and properly cared for, is the man who is making his farming profitable in these days. Tile drainage is a wonderful aid in bringing many types of soil into proper business relation with the farmer. These soils have, perhaps, been making only half a crop per year and an occasional complete failure may have resulted during years when ordinary conditions were the least favorable. We had such a piece of land on Sunny Home Farm, naturally strong soil but so filled with wet-weather springs that no dependence could be put upon it. Being only a little piece, about two acres, we had passed it by in our hurry to tile the larger fields. A little swamp grass and Japan clover—and these of little feed value because of being compelled to grow on water-sodded land—were produced on the field annually. Thirty dollars worth of tile was laid in this piece of land the past winter, the soil thoroughly prepared and planted in corn. A hundred and twenty bushels of corn, that is making at least \$125 worth of pork, is being harvested from the little piece, so we feel that the \$30 of tile and the \$20 worth of work expended in laying them is time and money well expended, considering that the improvement will last for a century, and a piece of land that was nothing but an eye-sore has been made a little fat beauty-spot for all time.—A. L. French.

hay the natural crabgrass that comes spontaneously on the rich truck lands, if cut at right stages, is worth more. You can make better grass hay in the various parts of the South by sowing liberally of tall meadow oats grass, tall meadow fescue and alsike clover. Timothy will hardly live over a summer after mowing in this climate.

GRAZING CORN STALKS.—One reader finds that when cutting corn off at the ground he has in the rainy weather, common in his section, a great deal of rotten corn, and asks if it would not be as well to let the corn, which has peas among it, stand till ripe and then gather the corn and turn cattle into the field, and put the land in oats in the spring. Cattle will, doubtless, thrive and fatten even after frost has killed the peas, for they will still eat them. The only difficulty is that the tramping of the soil in wet weather may pack it and make it hard to work the next season unless the stock are taken off in time for the frost to pulverize it.

SWEET POTATOES.—Probably the best sweet potato to grow for the Northern markets is the Big Stem Jersey. By bedding under glass in late March you can get the plants as early as it will be safe to set them out, and with the potato named, you should be able to get them in the market in July or early in August at least.

FOUR-YEAR ROTATION.—One reader wants a rotation for four years, but does not want to cut off corn, as there is no shredder in the neighborhood. That needs not interfere with cutting the corn off, for he can still feed the stover. As he does not intend to grow cotton, I would follow corn with two crops of small grain—either wheat or oats,—following each crop with peas for hay and disking the stubble fine for grain, and using 400 pounds of acid phosphate an acre on the small grain, and following the second crop of peas with crimson clover on which all the manure is applied to be turned under for corn again, and peas sown in the corn. Such a rotation should enable him to feed a good deal of stock and make a good amount of manure so that in a few rounds he would have heavy crops of corn, wheat and oats.

LAWN UNDER OAK TREES.—It is hard to get grass where a lawn is covered all over with trees, especially the surface-rooting oak trees. Under such conditions the best thing you can do is to prepare the soil as well as possible and sow plenty of seed. I would sow a mixture of two-thirds Kentucky bluegrass and one-third redtop, and would use five bushels of seed an acre—that is, I would make the soil gray with the seed and then rake them in nicely and roll. Then if you get a good stand, start the lawn mower in the spring as soon as it can bite the grass and keep it going weekly in growing weather, letting all the cut grass lie to mulch the sod. Give a top dressing of raw bone meal every spring.

SCOURS IN CALVES.—For scours or diarrhea in calves, it is best not to check it too suddenly. Castor oil and laudanum given under direction of a competent veterinarian is excellent. But I have had good success by diluting fresh milk with water and thickening it with parched wheat flour and giving this three times a day. It is also said that a tablespoonful of dried blood given in diluted milk three times a day will cure it. I have not tried this. In very stubborn cases oak bark tea is recommended.

LIME AGAIN.—The best lime for black swamp land is fresh water-slaked lime, either that burnt from oyster shells or the stone lime. Always buy fresh lime and slake it for yourself and do not freight a lot of water in the so-called agricultural lime. On land of this kind I would use not less than 30 bushels an acre of the slaked lime. This will hasten the nitrification of the abundant humus in your soil and will sweeten the soil.

SOME FALL VEGETABLES.—Parsley that has been growing all summer can be cut down now and make a fresh growth for winter. Seed of lettuce sown October 1st of the Wonderful, or Shellem, lettuce will make plants that can be set on ridges in November and will make fine heads in spring. Or, the plants can be set thickly on the south side of a board fence or building and transplanted in March to head.

DON'T BUY POOR LAND.—A young man with little means should never buy poor land. Leave that to the men who are able to spend money in its improvement. A poor man with poor land is badly handicapped. Better pay \$100 an acre for ten acres of rich land near market than \$10 an acre for 100 acres away back in the woods and thin land.

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