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Timely Farm Suggestions

By TAIT BUTLER

The Friend Is Right—"No Ticks, No Tick Fever"

AN Alabama reader writes as follows: "My friend says every cow that has tick fever must get the fever from the bite of the tick. I contend that a cow turned into a pasture where cows are dying from tick fever is likely to catch the fever from the infected cows without being bitten by ticks."

There is abundant evidence to prove that the friend is right: Under natural conditions, the ticks must get on an animal and introduce the disease-producing organisms, by biting or fastening themselves to that animal. Of course, the disease can be produced in a susceptible animal by artificially inoculating such an animal with the blood of an infected cow; but this does not occur naturally and, therefore, in practice, the statement, "no ticks no tick fever" holds absolutely true. No matter how long or closely a susceptible cow may associate with a diseased one, unless ticks get on the susceptible cow and bite her there will be no transmission of the disease. The germ, in nature, is only introduced into the system of the susceptible cow through the bite of one kind of ticks. This is so well established and so generally known, that it is no longer necessary to cite the abundance of proof available.

Good Preparation More Important Than Early Planting

THE best time to plant spring crops is a difficult problem of much importance, about which there is great difference of opinion. There is each season a "best time," but no one can know just when that is until the season is well advanced.

The problem is viewed differently by different farmers. One will insist that planting should begin as early as the ground can be made ready and there is no longer great danger of injury from frost. Others argue that there is no benefit from putting seed in the ground until growing conditions are favorable, and that time spent on cultivating the soil before the crop is planted means that much less cultivation afterward.

When planting of cotton and corn is done with two-row planters, or even with one-row planters, it is a rapid process and there is little force in the argument that planting must begin far in advance of the best time in order to permit of the work being completed before too late. There is usually little difference between the growth and maturing of a crop of cotton planted April 20 and May 1, or between corn planted April 1 and April 10.

While the crop put in the ground at the best time, or as soon as conditions are favorable for growth, will usually yield best, much corn and some cotton are planted too early in the South; too early for the best yields and earlier than is necessary for the most effective work. A crop planted 10 days after the usual early date will, if planted on well prepared land, grow more rapidly, mature about as early, yield better and be cultivated at less expense. There is little if any gain from putting seed in the ground until soil and weather conditions are favorable for growth, and a crop planted 10 days later than the "best time" on well prepared soil

will give better returns than one planted 10 days earlier than the "best time" on poorly prepared soil.

Granting all the advantages that may be shown to result from early planting, it still remains a fact, that with our long growing seasons good preparation of the soil is of more importance than early planting.

Green Rye, Oats and Wheat Not Injurious When Grazed

ALTHOUGH we have advised the use of green rye, oats, wheat and barley for grazing, probably hundreds of times during the last few years, our readers frequently ask us if grazing these crops will injure pigs, mares, and other livestock.

One mail brings us the following inquiries: "I have a young mare due to foal in 15 days; will grazing green rye injure her or her colt?" "I have some wheat; will it hurt pigs to graze it while it is green?" "A neighbor says it will kill my pigs to graze green oats; what do you think about it?"

Green rye, oats, wheat, or barley will not injure any animal that grazes it when green, any more than will any other green forage plant. Most of our livestock is "hurt" by not having these crops to graze, rather than by grazing them. Any animal not accustomed to green feed might injure itself if turned on a luxuriant growth of these crops when hungry, just as it might be if turned on any luxuriant growth of green grazing plants. But this is rare and is probably not the cause of the existence of the popular error that green rye, oats and wheat will injure livestock grazing them. The reason is probably that people sometimes lose animals when grazing these crops, just as they do when no such crops are grazed. Not knowing the cause of the trouble, they follow the common tendency and charge the loss to the "new" feed. Green oats, wheat and rye are as harmless for grazing as any other grazing plants.

Johnson Grass a Good Hay Plant, But Almost Impossible to Get Rid of

I WOULD like to know something about Johnson grass: Of its feeding value as hay; whether it can be killed out when one wants to farm the land; does it build up land; would you advise sowing it?"

The digestible nutrients in 100 pounds of Johnson grass and timothy hay are given for comparison:

	Johnson Grass	Timothy
Digestible Protein.....	2.9	2.8
" Carbohydrates.....	45.8	44.4
" Fats.....	0.8	1.3

We regard it as practically impossible to eradicate Johnson grass from a farm when once well scattered over it. Of course, it can, with much persistent work, be killed in an open field; but it seeds freely and on ditch banks, in fence corners and other waste places it is almost certain to make seed and continue to exist in those places, with the ever present probability of spreading all over the farm.

Johnson grass adds no plant foods to the soil. That is, all the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium it uses in its growth it takes from the soil, but since it makes a great mass of underground stems or rootstocks and a vigorous growth above ground, it

gathers large quantities of plant foods from the soil and these are stored up in the plants. When these plants or parts of plants die they quickly decay and set free plant foods they contain to feed other plants. In this way by storing up humus in the soil and in rendering plant foods more available for other crops Johnson grass improves land, but it does not improve the soil as legumes (clovers, peas, beans, etc.) do by gathering nitrogen for their use from the air.

We would not sow Johnson grass on a farm where we expected to ever want to cultivate such row crops as corn and cotton. As a hay grass, however, we know of no equal to Johnson grass. Its yields are large and the quality of the hay is in every respect the equal of timothy. As a pasture grass it is also of value, but when pastured closely or cut for hay for a few years the growth becomes less vigorous and it should be plowed up, or possibly cultivated for one year. At least, if it is desired to cultivate the land it will be found that the Johnson grass will give much less trouble after it has been mowed or pastured closely for several years.

Estimating the Capacity of Silos

A READER says he has bought "a silo, 14 feet in diameter and 30 feet high, which the seller guaranteed to hold 100 tons of silage."

This reader has also seen our estimates of the capacity of silos of different sizes (Reference Special, March 6, 1915) and says our estimate of the capacity of such a silo is 73 tons.

The weight of silage which such a silo will hold will, among other things, depend on the condition of the corn. If the corn is green and contains much water it will weigh more than if fairly mature. If the corn is cut into short lengths, say one-half inch, it will pack better and more can be put in than when cut three-fourths to one inch in length. If the corn is put in slowly and well tramped or packed the silo will hold a larger tonnage. If the silage is allowed to settle and is then refilled once or twice, there will be less space left unfilled at the top after settling and more silage will be put in.

When well filled with properly matured corn, such a silo will probably contain silage that will average about 35 pounds to the cubic foot and there will usually remain at least three feet unfilled at the top.

The following is our method of estimating the capacity of a silo:

The radius is one-half the diameter ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 14 feet), or 7 feet.

Square the radius: $7 \times 7 = 49$.

49×3.1416 (The circumference is 3.1416 times the diameter) = 153.9384 square feet—surface.

153.9384×30 (height) = 4,618.152 cu. feet.

$4,618.152 \times .85$ (weight of a cubic foot of silage) = 3,925.328 pounds silage.

$3,925.328$ divided by 2,000 (pounds in a ton) = 1,962.664 tons.

$1,962.664$ tons, less 10 per cent or one-tenth (3 feet unfilled at top) = 1,766.398 tons of silage as the estimated capacity of this silo.

If our reader puts 75 tons of silage in his 14x30 silo he will do well. Even if we estimated that the silage in such a silo would weigh 40 pounds to the cubic foot, which it almost certainly will not do, then this silo would only hold 92.36 tons if completely filled after settling had taken place. If it settles three feet the silo will only hold about 83 tons, even if green enough and sufficiently well packed to weigh 40 pounds to the average cubic foot.

As a general rule it will be found advisable to deduct from 20 to 25 per cent from the estimated capacity of a silo, if the actual weight of silage is desired.

COTTON PRICES AND ACREAGE REDUCTION

Whatever the Price, the Farmer Is Foolish Who Raises Cotton to Buy Dollar Corn

A QUESTION that is often asked me these days is, will the advance in the price of cotton result in much less reduction of acreage? Many farmers actually believe that this advance in price is the direct result of an effort on the part of speculators and spinners to induce the farmers to plant more cotton. There is probably little foundation for that belief.

The fact is there never was any good reason for cotton selling for less than nine to ten cents a pound. There never was any reason to suppose that the foreign demand would be less than in years when there was no war. Only about 16 per cent of the spindles of the world are in Germany, Austria, Belgium and France, and over 60 per cent of the spindles of the world are in England and the United States. Moreover, there was never before a time in the history of the world when cotton and cotton goods were destroyed as rapidly as since the beginning of the present war.

Those who sold cotton for less than present prices may justly attribute their loss to the cotton spinners of America—not those abroad—who naturally and, as business is generally conducted, rightfully sought to buy their raw material as cheaply as possible; to the inexcusable "hammering" practiced almost universally by all who are engaged in handling cotton for the American farmer; and to the readiness with which the bankers and business men of America become panic-stricken at the approach of changed business conditions.

After the first few months of the war, as soon as adjustments of shipping and financial matters to the changed conditions could be made, more cotton, instead of less, even under adverse conditions, has been exported, because more cotton and cotton goods are being destroyed. This is not an after-thought, but has been my position, repeatedly expressed, from the outbreak of the war.

The late increase in prices may cause more cotton to be planted than would have been if prices had remained low, but the increase in price has not been brought about for that purpose. Moreover, the production of feed and food supplies is of much more importance than the reduction of the cotton acreage, because these supplies can be grown without materially decreasing the production of cotton.

I am frequently asked to give an opinion on the reduction of the cotton acreage this year. This is dealing in "futures" to an extent which may at least be regarded as "unsafe"; but I may state that in 1894 we increased the acreage about 21 per cent and on December 1 cotton was worth 4.6 cents. After this large increase in acreage and after selling cotton for $4\frac{1}{2}$ cents, we reduced the acreage in 1895 14.8 per cent. This is the largest decrease in acreage that has been made in 25 years. We prefer to let our readers draw their own conclusions as to the reduction in acreage this year; but we repeat that the most important matter in this connection is that Southern farmers produce their food and feed supplies, for it is not profitable to grow 10-cent cotton to buy dollar corn.

A reader wants to know where he "can get some of the old, red-eyed, October, cornfield beans to plant this spring." Who can tell us?