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Timely Farm Suggestions

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THERE has been much complaint among farmers this year of the high price of seed and these high prices have lessened the acreage planted to many desirable crops. Seeds are farm products and no farmer should complain of the high price of farm products. To grow them and get the high prices is better business than to complain of these high prices and do without the seed.

Drying Off Cows Before Calving

A READER says: "I have two cows that will have calves in about a month. Is it best to dry them off, and for how long before the calf is born?"

It is usually best to dry a cow off six weeks or a month, and some believe for two months before her next calf is born, so as to give her a rest or a chance to build up her body preparatory to the next milking period.

It is also probably better for the unborn calf that this be done, both because it is likely to come stronger and better nourished and the milk of the mother will be in the natural condition best adapted for the first feeding of the young calf. When the cow gives milk right up to calving there is naturally a larger tax on her system, as she must produce milk and nourish the calf both at the same time. If she is well fed this may not prove a serious matter, but as a rule it is believed the average good cow will produce as much or more milk each year if she is given a rest of a month or two before each calf is born. The advantage resulting from this practice, however, probably is greatest from the effect on the calf, for the reasons stated. In this case, however, it is now probably too late to start trying to dry off these cows. It takes a couple of weeks or more to safely dry off a cow and since these cows are within a month of calving the flow of milk will probably begin to increase before the cows can be dried up. Moreover, the benefit of a period of rest before the calf is born is not so great as to justify much risk of injury to the udder in an attempt to dry off the cow too quickly. With some persistent milkers it is very difficult to dry them off. Some also advise against the practice of drying off heifers with first calf, although admitting the advantages stated above, because they think encouraging a heifer to continue milking right up to the birth of her next calf tends to fix the habit of persistent milking.

A Feed for Young Pigs

A READER has on June 1 cross-bred Poland-China-Duroc-Jersey pigs three weeks old and wants to know "what to feed them so as to make meat out of them this fall."

These pigs will not be six months old until December, and if they are to reach a suitable condition for meat-making at that time they must be well and intelligently fed.

To state a good ration for these pigs is easy, but it is not easy to state one that will be found profitable, or without further information one that may be available. It is certain that this is not the way to raise hogs and make cheap pork. The order must be reversed and the question of feeds settled before hand. The cheapest feeds must be grown and harvested by the pigs, and it is also very doubtful if pigs should be made into meat before nine to twelve months of age. If the increase in price for small pigs is great enough it may pay to

slaughter or market pigs six months of age, but the cost of producing pigs (the cost of keeping the mother and father) is usually sufficient to make it more profitable to keep the pigs longer and grow them larger than they are likely to be at six months of age. If these pigs can run on a clover pasture and receive three pounds of skim milk to one pound of corn, as much as they will take twice a day, they should make good growth. But the clover pasture and the skim milk are probably not available and the corn will cost around two dollars a bushel. This illustrates well the unsatisfactory results of asking such a feeding question without giving any information about the feeds available.

Or, corn one part and velvet bean meal two parts should make a good feed for these pigs. Equal parts of corn, wheat shorts and velvet bean meal would also do well. One part of tankage to six parts of corn by weight and pasture are also good for pigs.

But as stated, the feeding of these pigs with the feeds suggested is not likely to prove profitable unless they are extremely well handled.

If these pigs could be given a moderate allowance of any of the feeds suggested and kept on pasture until September and then put on peanuts, soy beans, or later on velvet beans, with only a little corn and run on these until the end of December they might prove profitable; but as stated, pigs intended for meat making in the fall should be born before April 1, and preferably before March 1.

Ration for a Milk Cow

"WILL lintless cottonseed hulls, beet pulp, cottonseed meal and velvet bean meal make an all round good ration for a milk cow, and if so how much should be given at each feed?"

A fairly good dairy ration can be made of these feeds. Of course, the cow will do better if she also has grass or pasturage. If she has no succulent feed like green grass, silage or roots, a little better class of roughage than lintless hulls would also be better. That is, we doubt the wisdom of depending on hulls for the entire roughage. Even if we consider the beet pulp as roughage we still think some succulent feed or a small quantity of some legume hay would add to the quality of the ration.

Assuming that the cow is producing from 20 to 25 pounds of milk a day and weighs 800 to 1,000 pounds, we suggest the following amounts of the feeds mentioned for the ration, or for one days feeding, if these feeds are to furnish the entire feed of the cow.

It is assumed that the velvet bean meal is from the beans in the pods, both being ground together in the usual manner.

Feeds	Digestible Nutrients.			
	Dry Matter	Protein	Carbohydrates	Fat
11 lbs. cotton seed hulls	9.93 lbs.	.08 lbs.	3.66 lbs.	.16 lbs.
8 lbs. beet pulp—dry	7.34 lbs.	.37 lbs.	5.22 lbs.	.08 lbs.
2 lbs. cotton seed meal	2.77 lbs.	1.00 lbs.	.73 lbs.	.27 lbs.
7 lbs. velvet bean meal	6.14 lbs.	1.64 lbs.	3.62 lbs.	.27 lbs.
Total	26.18 lbs.	2.44 lbs.	13.23 lbs.	.77 lbs.
Standard—22 lbs. milk daily	29.00 lbs.	2.50 lbs.	13.00 lbs.	.50 lbs.

The ration is a little deficient in digestible protein as compared with the "standard" for a cow giving 22 pounds of milk daily; but the deficiency is so small that it is of no consequence. Moreover, the protein in the "Standard" is recognized as rather high.

The difference in the dry matter is also immaterial, since the required nutrients are supplied. The deficiency in dry matter is due to the high quality of all the feed, with the exception of the cottonseed hulls. Feeds less rich in digestible nutrients might supply the required dry matter of the "Standard" without furnishing any more nutrients.

This ration may be divided into equal parts and fed morning and evening, or if desirable, it might be fed in three equal parts, morning, noon and evening.

Bad Business to Fertilize With Velvet Bean Meal

A SOUTH Carolina reader writes: "Has velvet bean meal any value as a fertilizer? How does it compare with cottonseed meal? I have about 1,000 bushels in the pods and a mill to grind them on, but no stock to eat them just now."

The following shows the plant foods in velvet bean meal—pods and beans—and a medium grade of cottonseed meal:

	Velvet Bean Meal	Cottonseed Meal
Nitrogen	2.75 per cent	6.2 per cent
Phosphoric acid	.50 per cent	2.5 per cent
Potash	2.00 per cent	1.8 per cent

Allowing a value of 25 cents a pound for nitrogen, 5 cents a pound for phosphoric acid and 7 cents a pound for potash, the following shows the values of a ton of velvet bean meal—pods and beans—and a ton of cottonseed meal:

	Velvet Bean Meal	Cottonseed Meal
Nitrogen	55 lbs.—\$13.75	124 lbs.—\$31.00
Phos. acid	10 lbs.—.50	50 lbs.—2.50
Potash	40 lbs.—2.80	36 lbs.—2.52
Total	\$17.05	\$36.02

With these assumed values a ton of velvet bean meal is worth \$17 as a fertilizer, or less than one-half the value of cottonseed meal.

We have no data showing the comparative availability of the plant foods for feeding the crops, but if the velvet bean meal is finely ground we think there would be no great difference between the two meals. The important point in this inquiry is the erroneous idea of using so good a feed as velvet bean meal as a fertilizer. No material of proved and high value for feeding should be used as a fertilizer direct to the soil. At these times of extremely high prices for feeds it is little short of a criminal waste for any man to use such a good feed as velvet bean meal as a fertilizer. With corn around \$2 a bushel in the South, or about \$70 a ton, this velvet bean meal, fed to horses and mules in equal parts by weight of corn, is worth about as much as corn. It is richer in protein than corn, but lower in carbohydrates. Since corn is too low in protein a mixture of equal parts of corn and velvet bean meal will make a better balanced ration than corn alone, and if the hay used is from grasses it will be a better ration for the horses and mules.

This velvet bean meal can be sold for \$35 a ton if our reader will let the feeders of cattle, hogs and horses know that he has it for sale, or it will keep in the pods until it is needed for feed. We advise against its use for fertilizer, although it has the value indicated for that purpose. If it cannot be used for feed on the farm and the stable manure applied to the land, then it should be sold to some man who is buying high-priced feeds, as so many are doing. Below is given the digestible nutrients in 100 pounds of velvet bean meal, cottonseed meal and corn, for comparison:

	Protein	Carbohydrates	Fat
Velvet bean meal	14.6 lbs.	51.7 lbs.	8.8 lbs.
Cottonseed meal	23.4 lbs.	24.3 lbs.	7.9 lbs.
Corn	7.5 lbs.	67.8 lbs.	4.8 lbs.

The men who lead are the men who read.

PASTURE PROBLEMS

A Discussion of the Essential Factors in Getting and Keeping Good Pastures

THE fall grazing crops, if not already provided for, must be put out at once. We have called attention to the need for these so often that little more can be said, but we hope every reader of this column will grow his feeds this year and, among other feeding stuffs grown, will provide fall grazing crops, especially all needed for fattening the hogs; but that is not the subject we wish to discuss this week.

Much is said and written about late fall and winter pastures. Our climate makes it possible, most seasons, for us to have considerable late fall and winter grazing, but nature does not supply this in the uncultivated crops, which grow at that season. It requires an effort on our part with special crops. Of course, the general pastures, especially if they are well set with lespedeza and white clover, will afford good late fall grazing, provided the lespedeza has not been grazed closely during its growing period. Frost stops the growth of lespedeza and kills the plants, but it injures the feeding value of lespedeza less than with almost any other plant. Velvet beans furnish another instance of a plant killed by frost which is still good feed and is freely grazed by livestock. Late fall grazing may be provided by these two plants and they may be helped out by fall-sowed cereals. The fall-sowed grains must be our chief dependence for winter grazing. In fact, with the exception of rape, which is only adapted to very rich land, the fall sowed cereals or grains are about our only means of providing late fall and winter grazing.

Attempts at furnishing winter grazing have not generally come up to expectations. Consequently, it has been stated that "The only reliable winter pasture is a silo." While this is true, especially in the northern half of the Cotton Belt, considerable winter grazing can be obtained an average season, if the crops for grazing are given a fair chance. None of these crops can make growth in freezing weather, nor on land with insufficient moisture. These two facts make it necessary to properly prepare the land to save moisture and to sow the crops early enough so they can make a good growth before freezing weather comes.

When it is not practicable to do these things, and such is sometimes the case, the crops should not be blamed and the whole proposition of winter grazing condemned. It is simply a question of paying the price. To get winter grazing from these crops certain things must be done. If these are not practicable, in any given case, or if they cost too much, then winter grazing will not be had. Until Abruzzi rye was introduced we have believed that barley, wheat, oats and rye, in the order stated, were best on good lands. On medium to poor lands we would exactly reverse this order. But in the Cotton Belt Abruzzi rye seems to be worthy of first place, or at least, to rank with the best. Just north of the Cotton Belt, for instance, in East Tennessee, particularly at the Experiment Station at Knoxville, Prof. Mooers reports that Abruzzi rye has not done well.

For the best winter grazing all these crops must be sowed early on land prepared early and well. Rather heavy seeding is also advisable. These crops will be more fully discussed in this column next week.