

SUGGESTIONS FOR OCTOBER FARM WORK.*

For many reasons there should be no busier month with the farmer than October. The planning of crops for next year and the gathering of those grown this year now demand attention.

Crop Rotation.

With the exercise of much care and great skill, successful farming—from a financial standpoint at least—may be done without a systematic crop rotation, but for the average farmer it is much safer to plan a rotation of crops for each field and follow it faithfully. If such a rotation has not been planned, this month will be a good time to arrange it before the sowing of the fall crops. At least the planning of crops for next year must receive attention before the seeding of wheat and other grains begins.

Saving Forage.

The excessive rains during the summer prevented the saving of much fodder, but caused a heavy growth of grasses, and these, if cut at the right time and properly cured, will provide sufficient forage, and at a smaller cost than pulling fodder. Crab grass especially makes a hay of fine quality and is abundant this year. For best hay do not let the grass get over-ripe nor lie in the sun after being cut until it dries up. Rake up and put in cocks soon after it is well wilted and allow it to cure in the cock. In making the cocks do not slight them, but make them so they will turn water in case it should rain before the hay is sufficiently cured to stack or put in the barn. Other work may be pressing, but do not neglect the hay crop.

Pea vines intended for hay should not be allowed to get over-ripe before cutting. When over-ripe there is considerable loss in shedding leaves, also in the peas shelling out. The same is true of soy beans. For cattle and sheep we make no better hay than that made from pea vines and soy beans properly cut and cured. Fed in moderation and mixed with other forage, they are also fine for horses, especially for young stock and work horses.

Persons who have had considerable experience in making soy bean hay advise cutting the vines and putting in cocks as soon as wilted, allowing them to remain until they heat up pretty well; then scatter until cooled out and recock. The heating, they claim, makes them more palatable and softens the stalks.

Selecting Seed Corn.

If your corn is still standing in the field do not neglect to select corn for seed at gathering time. A good plan is to cut the stalk above and below the select seed ears and throw these in a pile with the other corn. These selected ears can then be told from the others by their being attached to the stalk and can be separated when the corn is put into the crib or barn. Too much importance cannot be attached to the selection of seed corn in the field. Select only from stalks bearing two or more well-developed ears. The stalks should not be too high nor the ears placed too high up on the stalks. By selecting in this way we may hope soon to have corn that will reproduce its productive qualities.

Gathering the Crops.

All crops should be looked after and gathered as soon as ripe or in a suitable condition to gather. Cotton, especially, should be picked as fast as open. To allow it to remain unpicked is to take chances of having it rained on, or blown out by the winds, and its market value lessened. It is not necessary to have it ginned as fast as picked, but be sure to have the fields picked over as often as possible so as to get the cotton under cover.

Those who have tried it claim that cotton will improve if left in bulk several weeks or months

before being ginned. They claim the lint is both better and heavier and that the yield is greater from the fact the gins will take the lint from the seed cleaner. It might be worth while to make some accurate experiments along this line and see exactly what is to be gained or lost by allowing seed cotton to remain in bulk for quite a while before being ginned as compared with cotton ginned as soon as picked. However, we caution those who contemplate trying the experiment to be sure the seed cotton is dry before putting it in bulk; otherwise it might injure.

Sowing Small Grain.

In The Progressive Farmer's territory, October is the principal month to sow small grain—wheat, oats, and rye. The acreage in these crops should be increased, but to be profitable, thorough preparation of the land as given in the several articles in last week's issue is imperative. A re-reading of those articles will be helpful to those contemplating sowing small grain. Be sure and sow only the best and cleanest seed obtainable. "Whatever ye sow, that also shall you reap," applies to a great many things. Sow cockle and you will reap cockle, which has no market value whatever, but is a nuisance and robber in a wheat field. It will pay to have all grain recleaned before sowing.

In sowing small grain be sure to use enough seed. There is a great loss each year in these crops on account of failing to use a proper amount of seed. Experiments have proved that it is impossible to get a maximum crop of wheat with only three pecks of seed to the acre, as is now used by many farmers. Under no circumstances do we think there should be less than a bushel of wheat sown to the acre, and more often there should be as much as a bushel and a half. Of oats, two bushels should be the minimum; and never less than a bushel of rye to the acre.

Prepare for Next Year's Crops.

Land intended to be put in corn next year should be sown in rye at once (a mixture of rye and crimson clover will be better if it can be put in by the middle of the month) unless it has already been seeded to some cover crop. By adding vetch to the rye the crop to be turned under for corn will be improved. A bushel of rye, eight to ten pounds crimson clover or twenty pounds vetch to the acre, put in now and turned under next spring, will add several bushels of corn to the crop. This mixture will give a cover crop to the land through winter, prevent the loss of much fertility, and add humus to the soil. It will be well to sow a similar mixture on land intended for cotton next year. If the land is now in cotton, each day after picking sow the rye, etc., and harrow or cultivate in immediately so as to prevent knocking out the open cotton. Many of the best and most successful farmers of the State practice sowing to rye all the land intended for tobacco the following year, sowing at the rate of one bushel per acre and turning next spring as soon as it commences to run up. They advise turning before too old or before it is more than a few inches high. As a rule our lands need more vegetable matter and this is an economical way to supply the deficiency. In addition to serving as a cover crop, this mixture will furnish excellent grazing for stock in late winter and early spring when a bite of something green is so much enjoyed by them, and the increased flow of milk and yield of butter is welcomed by the housewife.

Sow Turnips.

If not already attended to, do not longer delay sowing turnips. Sow a good-sized patch, enough for "man and beast." Sow on well prepared rich land at the rate of one pound of seed per acre. Procure a catalog from some reliable seedsman (you will find their ads in The Progressive Farmer) and select such kinds as will give a succession. In the absence of such a catalog, the following is a fairly good list: Early Strap Leaf for

early use; Norfolk Globe for early winter (and if taken up and banked or put in a cellar at the proper time this will furnish turnips throughout the winter months); and Southern Prize or Seven-Top for spring greens.

The Farm Garden.

The kitchen garden will also require attention this month. Put out onion sets if they have not already been planted. Prepare for setting out a few strawberry plants. In getting strawberry plants select at least four varieties so as to cover the season from the earliest to the latest. There are few things that people relish more in spring than nice ripe strawberries. Now is the time to sow cabbage seed for winter setting. These will produce heads early in May. Jersey Wakefield are best for this purpose. It is not too late to sow lettuce to be transplanted later into cold frames for winter heading. Winter lettuce is a luxury that but few of us enjoy, yet is within the reach of every gardener.

The farmer who wants a table well supplied with vegetables, a real home instead of merely an abiding place, can find much to do in his garden in October that will add very much to the pleasures of life in the country next spring.

Prepare for Winter Care of Live Stock.

During October must begin the special care which live stock requires during the winter season. The dry short pastures which are almost certain to come in late fall and the cold rains of early winter have much to do with the poor, weakened condition of so many animals in the spring. A little extra care and feed in the late fall will save much trouble later. This is especially so with the young colts and calves. The dry, indigestible, frost-killed grasses, even though abundant, are not sufficient to maintain these animals in good vigorous condition. Every winter a large number of calves die from starvation, pure and simple. Good feed may be given when too late, but the lack of suitable feed during the fall has deranged their digestion and the feed given later is of no value to them.

In addition to the long forage already referred to, which every farmer should save, it will also pay to save more of the cotton seed for winter feeding. If the manure be properly saved, it will be worth nearly as much as the seed will bring on the market and the feeding value is worth something. If the animal is kept for beef or pork it will not pay to allow it to lose flesh. The best animal (that is, the animal of the cow kind kept for its growth to be sold by weight), which loses weight is living on beef—and feed is always cheaper than beef, or we ought not to grow beef. But how many young cattle come out in the spring as heavy as when they went into winter quarters? This is the month then to save out enough cottonseed to help supply the necessities of the cattle during the winter.

It is not too early to begin thinking about a good shelter for the farm stock this winter. We do not need expensive, closely built houses, but we do need protection from cold wind and rain. More cattle die from exposure in North Carolina than in Minnesota, and the fact is no credit to us.

'Possum Time.

Oh, dip some taters down in grease
En fling de dogs a tater apiece,
Ram yo' brogans clean er tacks
Split de splinters en fetch de ax.
Hit's 'possum time again!

Catfish tender, catfish tough,
We's done et catfish long enough.
We's tar'd er peas en white side meat,
En we's gwine have supp'n' 'at's good to eat.
Hit's 'possum time again!

De pot's gwine simmer en blubber en bile
Till hit gits scummed over wid 'possum ile.
Hit'll look jis' 's juicy as tar-soapsuds.
Whoop, come along, coon! we's off to de woods.
Hit's 'possum time again!

—John Charles McNeill.

*This department, conducted by our Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. T. B. Parker, and Agricultural Editor Butler, will hereafter be a permanent feature of The Progressive Farmer, an article in our last number of each month giving "Suggestions" for the month following.