

USE AND CARE OF MACHINERY IN JULY

By G. H. ALFORD

WE HAVE hustled from early till late during the past four or five months, and the sun is now exceedingly hot and we need a rest. However, let us remain on the job for say four hours early in the morning and four hours late in the afternoon during this month, cultivating corn, cotton, peanuts, cowpeas, grain sorghums, and all other cultivated crops. What is needed now is to keep the land from crusting and keep up the capillary water supply by the frequent use of harrows, cultivators and winged sweeps. Shallow and frequent cultivation with harrows, cultivators, winged harrows and heel sweeps at least after every rain will keep a good earth mulch on the surface of the soil and largely increase the yields of crops.

I admit that it is rather difficult to keep bright, sharp harrow and cultivator teeth from cultivating too deep, especially in sandy land. The cultivator or harrow tooth next to the corn and cotton will cut many large roots in spite of our efforts to save the roots. I know that we may shorten the traces and put them high up on the backband and that we may fasten the singletree in the lowest hole in the clevis and make our arms sore holding the harrow or cultivator out of the ground and then cut thousands of the feed roots of the growing crops.

Tenants and farm hands on my farm gave me considerable trouble for years, but I finally solved this problem. I found by wrapping wire around the harrow or cultivator teeth from one to two inches above the points of the teeth that the wire would prevent them from running too deep and at the same time assist in fining the surface of the soil. After numerous experiments, I found barbed wire to be ideal for thoroughly fining the surface of the soil.

The length of the pieces of barbed wire necessary for the harrow will, of course, depend on the number of teeth, the distance apart of the teeth and the shape of the harrow or cultivator. Just simply wrap the wire around one tooth and then around the next and so on. It is necessary, of course, when wiring A-shaped harrows and riding cultivators to wrap a tooth on one side and then on the other side. In fact, the wrapping and crossing may be continued until there is a perfect network of wire to keep the harrow from running too deep and to form very fine soil mulch.

My original reason for using the wire was to prevent the harrow from running too deep, but later I often used the barbed wire on section harrows and other harrows and cultivators for the purpose of thoroughly fining the surface of the soil. The wire cannot be used on the teeth to the best advantage among stumps and gives considerable trouble when used on trashy ground, but it is a treat to watch a harrow or cultivator equipped in this way with barbed wire pulverize the crust on old land devoid of vegetable matter. The harrow or cultivator teeth go the same depth at all times and the barbed wire thoroughly fines and levels the surface of the soil.

It is very important that all harrow and cultivator teeth, heel and winged sweeps, shovels and sweeps used in the cultivation of crops be kept bright and sharp until all crops are given the last cultivation. It is impossible to do satisfactory work in cultivating crops unless the implements used are bright and sharp.

There is a wagon on the large majority of our farms, and no other tool is called upon to do its work under such varying conditions. During the latter part of this month is a splendid

time to make a careful inspection of every part of the wagon and make note of what is wrong or needed. The wheel is the vital part of the wagon, and the tires, felloes, spokes and hubs should be carefully tested out and all broken and badly worn parts replaced. The skeins, clips and bolts of the axles should be tested and the necessary repairs made. The car inspector uses a small hammer, and the same tool may be used to good advantage in inspecting wagons.

All kinds of haying tools and machinery should be put in first-class condition for the fall hay crops. The mowing machine, the hay rake, the hay tedders, the hay loaders, the stackers and the barn hay tools should be gone over carefully and the necessary repairs ordered at once. The ordering of repair parts should not be delayed until the dealer, jobber and manufacturers are rushed with orders. Transportation is also very uncertain.

Thousands of farmers will put corn

into the silo or shock it for the first time this year. It will be necessary for them to make arrangements with neighbors for the use of their machinery or for them to purchase the machinery. Talk this matter over with some of your neighbors and decide to purchase ensilage machinery and put a large part of the corn crop into the silo, or at least to cut and shock the corn crop and save 100 per cent instead of about 60 per cent of it.

It will soon be time to get busy preparing land for fall crops. In fact, now is the time to break land on which a crop is not growing. The plows, disk harrows, peg-tooth harrows, planters and seeders should be put into first-class condition as soon as possible. The individual farmer or a number of farmers in a community should place orders for disk harrows, planters, seeders and other machinery of this kind at an early date so that there may be no delay in the preparation of the soil or in planting the fall crops.

The crops will soon be laid by, and the implements left out in the rain and hot sunshine to shorten their lives of usefulness. Rust is more destructive than wear, and the wooden parts are more affected by rain and hot

sun than the metal parts. Just as soon as an implement finishes its work for the season it should be cleaned, the wooden parts painted, and the iron parts greased and then placed under a shed.

Men Who Can Help Farmers

EACH town, under the leadership of its most active spirits, such as its chamber of commerce or county council of defense, itself should immediately make a survey of all able-bodied men who have had farm experience and obtain pledges to spend a day or two out of each week, or a week if need be out of the month, at the periods of greatest demand, in order to help the farmers. There are many men working in the towns whose places can be taken by the women. I have in mind particularly men waiters, elevator boys, and clerks whose works can be well substituted, if the business sentiment of the town will act resolutely and persuade employers to use women temporarily in order that the men may be released for farm labor as the occasion may require.—Clarence Ousley, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

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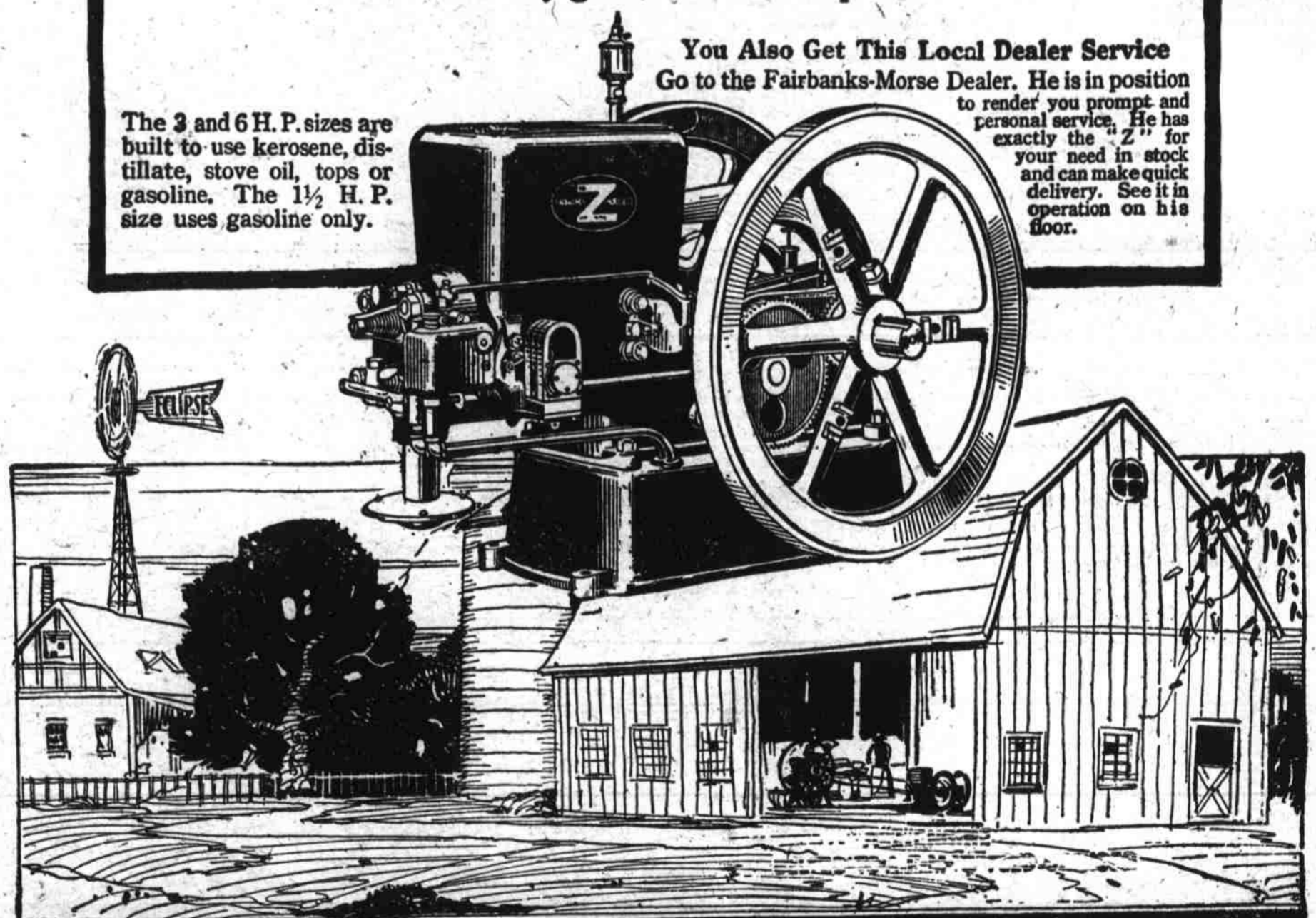
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