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Timely Farm Suggestions

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No Reason to Expect Reduction in Prices of Farm Products

IF THE laws of supply and demand operate, it is difficult to see why we should expect a decrease in the prices of farm products, or for that matter, of other products unless it be those on which there has been profiteering or those not shipped out of the country.

In 1919 the United States produced only 3 per cent more than in 1913, or six years before. This is not enough to take care of the increase in population. But in 1919 it is stated that we exported 60 per cent more than in 1913.

Either some other influences than supply and demand have been operating, or must operate in the future, if under such conditions of production and export American prices are to come down much. To the average person it looks as if the only way to reduce prices is to take speculation and undue profits out, as far as possible, and produce more or send less out of the country. There is no reason to expect any great reduction in the price of farm products to the farmer in the near future.

Efficient Methods of Handling Stable Manure

A READER writes: "I have a lot of manure I cannot conveniently place on the land until fall, owing to crops being on the land, and would like to know the best mode of preserving its fertilizing elements. How should stable manure be kept so that it will not leach and burn out?"

There is no practicable way of saving stable manure so that some loss will not occur. That is, any method which might prevent all loss will generally cost too much to be of practical use. There are at least two sources of loss in stored stable manure. When exposed to rain or sufficient water to cause this water to pass through the manure and run off, the soluble fertilizer elements are leached or dissolved out and are carried off in the drainage water. Any plant food, nitrogen, phosphorus, or potassium which becomes soluble in water may be carried off and lost in this way. The other source of loss is by the escape of nitrogen or ammonia into the air. When manure is piled and moisture and other conditions are right for fermentation or rapid bacterial action, the loss of nitrogen into the air is often considerable. The manure becomes hot or "fire fangs" or "burns out" under these conditions. The losses from stable manure from these causes are very great, in many cases exposure for six or more months resulting in a loss of half the original fertilizer value of the manure. Thorne of Ohio found that it took rather more than two tons of fresh stable manure to make one ton of well rotted manure, but that a ton of this well rotted manure was worth no more, produced no more increase in crops, than a ton of the fresh stable manure, giving a loss of fully one-half the value of the manure in the process of rotting.

Many think that manure must be well rotted before applying to get the best results from it, but this is not true, as shown by Thorne and others. If it be well mixed with the soil, or

spread upon the surface, or applied to a growing crop, the sooner it is put on the land after it is made the more benefit that will be obtained from it. Others think that unless the manure can be plowed under or mixed with the soil, that if it is left on the surface, there will be loss of fertilizer into the air. This is also untrue. If spread upon the surface it dries out too quickly for any appreciable loss into the air to occur. If on land where no crop is growing, a small part of the soluble nitrogen which passes into the soil may be lost through the drainage water, but this loss will usually be small as compared with the loss which occurs when manure is left in heaps. And there will practically be no loss of phosphorus and potassium, these plant foods being caught and held by the soil.

There are, therefore, several excellent reasons why stable manure should be applied to the soil as quickly as possible after it is made. It is not practicable to store it without considerable loss, except at great expense. And any practicable method which will prevent great loss involves much expense and labor in providing shelter, handling, etc.

Three general methods may be mentioned. First, by means of a manure pit, where, by tramping or excess of moisture which cannot escape or by both, fermentation is largely prevented.

Second, by leaving the manure in deep stalls where it is tramped so tight that the air is excluded from the mass of manure and fermentation is prevented.

Third, by placing under shelter and by wetting and packing and the use of certain materials such as acid phosphate the loss of nitrogen from fermentation is partly prevented. In fact, when any method of storing manure is employed, it is well to mix say 50 pounds of acid phosphate to every ton of manure, which will tend to catch and hold any nitrogen which might otherwise escape into the air when fermentation takes place. And in the use of any of these methods it is almost impossible to prevent some

fermentation and loss of nitrogen into the air.

The manure pit is generally too expensive for general practical use.

The deep stall method is the best for storing manure when sufficient bedding is used. It is not always practicable, but has few objections. It is not unsanitary if bedding and acid phosphate or ground rock phosphate are used, for the tramping packs the manure sufficiently to prevent much bacterial activity.

If the covered shed be used, and it is such that stock can run over and tramp the manure down, or if it can be kept wet enough to prevent rapid fermentation or heating and yet not wet enough to permit of loss from drainage water, and acid phosphate or ground rock phosphate is used, the loss will be lessened; but there is certain to be considerable loss from manure stored in this way and the cost of handling is always a considerable item of expense.

In the opinion of the writer there are only two practicable methods of handling stable manure: First and best, to spread it on the land, preferably on a growing crop, or mixed with the soil shortly before planting the crop. Second, the deep stall method, where the animals tramp it solidly, and plenty of bedding and acid phosphate are used.

By all other methods known to the writer the losses are too great or the cost of preventing these losses so large as to render them impracticable.

Plant Sufficient Acreage of Crops and Put Them in the Silo

THERE is no use building a silo unless it is going to be filled and, of course, the silos already built are a complete loss unless used. It is not uncommon in the South to find half-filled silos and also those in which no silage material at all has been put. If the mistake has been made of building a silo when it was not needed or the need was not sufficient to justify filling it, then it should not be filled. But usually this is not the reason for failure to fill the silo. The general reason is failure to plant sufficient acreage to silage crops, or failure to make sufficient effort to get them put in the silo when they have been grown.

It is not yet too late to plant silage

crops, and to those who have a silo or keep sufficient livestock to justify the building of one let me urge that sufficient acreage be planted to fill the silo. It is the cheapest and best winter roughage, and, being succulent, it is the only reliable winter pasture in most parts of the South.

Do not overestimate the tonnage the silage crops will make. The general mistake is made of estimating eight to 10 tons per acre when four to six tons is nearer the average yield.

Bearded Barley Not Injurious

A READER has a 10-acre field of bearded barley now nearly ripe and wants to know if the beards will injure pigs if he turns them on this barley to "hog" it down.

We do not think the beards will injure the pigs, but there may be some question as to whether this is the best method of handling the crop. More good would probably be obtained from the barley if it were harvested and threshed, and the grain ground or soaked. But the increased cost of handling might not be paid for by the increased feed value obtained. This is a debatable question. In a probable scarcity of corn an additional reason may be found for threshing the barley. But the beards are not likely to injure the pigs grazing the barley.

VETERINARY PROBLEMS

Treating Mangy Hogs

A READER wants "a remedy for mangy pigs."

What is popularly known as "mange" in pigs is not true mange due to skin parasites, but a rough and irritated condition of the skin due to the using of damp and dirty quarters, bad feeding, or other faults of handling.

First, if there are only a few pigs give them a good washing with tar soap and water, then disinfect them with a solution of one of the coal tar dips or disinfectants, and then grease thoroughly with some non-irritating oil or grease. If the number is too large for individual treatment then spray or dip two or three times, three or four days apart, with the coal tar disinfectant, and then grease or dip with oil on the top of the water in the dipping or wallowing vat. But the best means of relief from the so-called mange of pigs is to provide clean, dry sleeping quarters, grease occasionally to keep the pigs free of lice, and feed them in such a way as to promote good vigorous growth. The best help to the skin and coat of a pig comes from a balanced ration. Tankage, cottonseed meal for three weeks, linseed meal, peanut meal, or any other rich protein feed and added mineral matter have a wonderful effect in improving the coats of growing pigs. The essentials of the mineral matter which should be supplied are: (1) Charcoal or soft coal, (2) woodashes, ground phosphate rock or acid phosphate and (3) copperas, sulphur, etc., to prevent worm infestation and stimulate skin activity.

Pigs that have clean, dry sleeping quarters, that are disinfected, greased or oiled often enough to keep them free of lice and are given enough and the right kind of feed—enough protein—and are supplied proper mineral matter, will seldom be troubled with what is popularly called "mange" in the South.

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