

Our Farm Department

Devoted to the Interest of Those Who Till the Soil

CONDUCTED BY J. M. BEATY

The Farm Help Problem.

It is getting more and more difficult for farmers to get help on the farm, and surely there must be some reason for this. I have talked with some of the young men about this and I want to give you their side of the question.

In nearly every case it is this: Hours too long, pay too small and no privileges. In other words as one puts it; "You see it is this way, when I worked on a farm I was expected to be up in the morning by four or 5 o'clock and help do chores and get into the field to work by seven or earlier, even during haying and harvest. I came up at night, ate my supper and did more chores until bedtime. Now in the city I get up at six, eat my breakfast and go to work at seven. My work is done at six at night and then I can change my clothes, go to see my girl or spend the evening as I choose."

"It is healthier to work out of doors," I urged.

"Perhaps, but then there is another thing, a farmer does not usually want help the whole year, and from November to March or April there was nothing to do and it took what little I had saved to carry me through the winter."

I could not contradict that, so I said: "What about privileges?"

"Guess you don't have any on a farm. You have to board with the family, of course, and I can assure you farmers' wives are not all good cooks either. Now in town we can change our boarding place if the grub don't suit. Then in the country there is no amusement, nothing to go to—while in the city—"

"In the city there are plenty of places to spend your money," I interrupted, "and plenty of pit-falls and temptations."

"Well, I'll risk the city," was the answer; and so they all say and what is to be done?

Many of the farmers here have solved the problem by building a tenant house and hiring a married man by the year; and where this can be afforded I believe it is the best way. Many little extracts go with it, such as a garden, the keeping of a cow, fuel perhaps, and of course, the house rent. Important items these when a man has a family, and they are not missed on a large farm. But what is the small farmer to do, the one who needs help part of the year and cannot afford to hire by the year?

It is a problem that is confronting many a farmer today, and they do not seem any nearer the solution than they were a few years ago when the country lads first began leaving the farms for the city.

I have a few things to suggest however in regard to the treatment of a hired man, providing you are fortunate enough to get one. Don't forget he is a human; in these days of free schools many a hired man is the equal if not the superior of the man he is working for. Don't forget this and treat him as an equal.

Don't think any old thing is good enough for the hired man. Give him a pleasant room, as good at least as his money would buy in the city. Be sure that the papers and magazines are at his disposal and time enough in the evening to enjoy them also. He is something besides a machine.

Give him a day off once in a while. It will encourage him and he will work the better for it.

This may sound superfluous to some of you, but when I see the way hired men are treated in some families I do not wonder that they are leaving the country and flocking into the city. I do not feel sorry for some farmers either, but I can hardly expect any of that class to read my article for they are not usually the wide-awake, progressive farmers that read their farm papers eagerly for help, but those who know enough to run their farm without the help of any old paper.—Indiana Farmer.

Hog Cholera Treatment.

After studying the question for twenty to thirty years the Department of Agriculture, under Secretary Wilson, last year announced that it had perfected a serum treatment for hogs which, when used in time, would effectively prevent hog cholera and which would cure mild cases if taken early in the course of the disease. Having perfected the treatment, the government leaves it to the different states to apply. In a number of states the matter has

been taken hold of by the experiment stations and serum is now being furnished to residents of those states either free or at the cost of producing it. Nothing has as yet been done for the farmers of Iowa. The Iowa legislature should not adjourn without appropriating the money sufficient to establish a serum station and provide for its continuance.—Wallaces' Farmer.

Farm Notes.

Is it not a sad commentary on the farming conditions in the Cotton Belt that farmers need to borrow money every spring, depending on the one crop of cotton to pay the debt, and then to start in another season in the same old hopeless way, never getting ahead, never with cash, but always at the mercy of the fertilizer man, the merchant and the money-lender? No section can be permanently prosperous when her farmers are working year after year simply to pay debts contracted for the purpose of growing cotton.

One of the greatest faults in the South is the patching of the land, a plot of cultivated land here and a bunch of bushes there, with broom-sedge intermingled. Here in Maryland there are broad, clean fields and not a bush to be seen, but every foot of the open ground cultivated, and worked with no terraces and no gullies, for the plow goes deep, and the farmers have a clover sod to turn when breaking for corn, and either wheat or clover on the land in winter.

The scarcity of manure is one great drawback in the way of better farming in the South today, and every opportunity should be taken to increase its amount or to use it where it will do the most good. The land cannot go on feeding the owner if he will not feed it.—W. F. Massey.

Selling Cattle at High Prices.

High priced corn and a halting cattle market did not seem to worry eastern cattle feeders who attended the Denver Stock Show last week. They took the feeding cattle sold there at prices which indicate a high grade of optimism to say the least. The top price, \$6.85 per cwt., was paid by Casper Beckman, Atlantic, Iowa, for the champion load of twenty feeders, which averaged in weight 981 pounds. Mr. Beckman took another load at \$6.35. A large number of loads sold at prices ranging from \$5.25 to \$6.00. Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska buyers took most of the high priced stuff.—Wallaces' Farmer.

Timber Growing.

It is still popular, as it always has been to lock the door after the horse is stolen, speaking metaphorically. When the writer of this was a member of the Indiana legislature of 1879 he introduced a bill, and tried hard to have it passed into a law, to offer liberal inducements to land owners to grow forest and timber trees, abating the taxes on a limited acreage to each land owner who would plant, grow and cultivate a given number of trees to the acre. The bill was "laughed out of court" then, but members of State legislatures everywhere are now advocating and arguing this policy to restore in some extent our destroyed natural growth timber. It is a good illustration of the fact that many people see better after necessity and peril is upon the country. There must be timber-growing all now admit and forestry has become popular. The Indiana legislature is advised by our new Governor, and wisely, to take up this matter in an earnest and practical way, and it is to be hoped that his suggestions may be heeded without further delay.—Indiana Farmer.

Rape for Hogs.

Carefully conducted experiments at several different experiment stations show that an acre of rape, when grazed by pigs, will save from 1,500 to 2,500 pounds of grain, and some cases have been reported in which the amount saved was even greater than that last mentioned. With grain at a cent a pound, as it will average now, an acre of rape the coming spring and summer will be worth about twenty dollars when fed to pigs. The cost of producing the acre of rape and harvesting it is less than that of almost every other crop grown on the farm.—Wallaces' Farmer.

The Southern Hog Industry.

Much has been said and written on this subject, but more perhaps on the hog himself than the industry in general, and I believe in too many cases by people who drew their conclusions more from hearsay than from personal observation, and who bankrupted their imagination by making too heavy drafts upon it. However this may be, it is a common belief that our southern brother has not kept an eye open to modern requirements but, as the saying goes, is "behind the times." I am inclined to believe in the fact of facts that the southern breeder has an apology due him. I cannot speak for all the south, but what I do say will be from personal observation and I will try and confine myself to what I "did" and "did not" see.

It was my good fortune to visit the International Fair and Live Stock Exposition held from September 26 to October 12, 1908, at beautiful, historic old San Antonio. I left home on the morning of September 25th and arrived at the grounds forty-eight hours later. About the first thing I did was to locate the hog pens, and after seeing what they contained I had to pinch myself to determine whether I was really in Texas or Iowa. I rather expected to see at least some trace of the old "historic hog," but in this I was disappointed. While the numbers were not as great as at the Iowa or Nebraska state fairs, there were the same breeds and types. The Durocs outnumbered by a few head, with the Polands a close second, and then came the Berkshire, Chester Whites, and a nice display of Tamworths and Essex, and one pen of Yorkshires.

I asked one of the breeders what had become of the old-time hog that we "read about," to which he replied: "The razor-backed hog, the Texas steer, and the long-haired man with his pistols have passed into history." And he must have told the truth, for in my sojourn I did not see either of them. I was told there was only one long-horned steer in the state of Texas, and he is now fourteen years old. I "did not" see him, but "did" see his photo, which now sells for about as much as the steer himself used to bring.

Just how the states of the southwest will ever rank with Iowa and sister states as the years go by in the production of hogs is a debatable question. While they may in a general way rank high, I think the corn states proper will always lead as far as the "fat backs" are concerned, for here corn is king. But with the diversity of soil and resources of Oklahoma and Texas and the conditions so corn necessarily takes a back seat, and it is the conviction of at least part of the southern breeders that cottonseed meal will ultimately become one of the staple hog foods and be utilized to the limit; peanuts also cut quite a figure in the bill of fare. These facts, together with the natural environment, would seem to give the south leverage on the bacon hog. In Iowa, with our high priced land and scarcity of and consequently high priced nitrogenous foods, the bacon hog seems more like a huge joke than anything else. I do not believe the southwest can ever "do us" on the lard hog, but to the Iowa man who contemplates raising bacon hogs for the market I say, Look out for your southern brother, for certain it is the man who thinks the breeders of the southwest do not realize the opportunities at hand will wake up some morning to find his mistake. If anyone is at all skeptical on this point I wish to call his attention to the following facts: Two hundred and eighty-five shares of stock in the National Duroc Jersey Record Association have been sold during the last year. These are scattered over eighteen states, making an average of nearly sixteen to each state. Texas has taken twelve, or only lacks four of the average; Oklahoma has taken twenty-seven, or nearly twice the average. Other breeds have good representation and have just as enthusiastic supporters. This may not seem very large, but when we stop to think what a short time has passed since we could see train loads of both native hogs and cattle coming from these states and now we see practically none, we must conclude the southerner has been getting busy. As the native stock leaves the country, what is taking its place? There is only one answer: The pure bred.

It would be a mistake to say the southwest will have to be reckoned with by and by; but rather, it will have to be reckoned with now.—H. F. Hoffman, in Wallaces' Farmer.

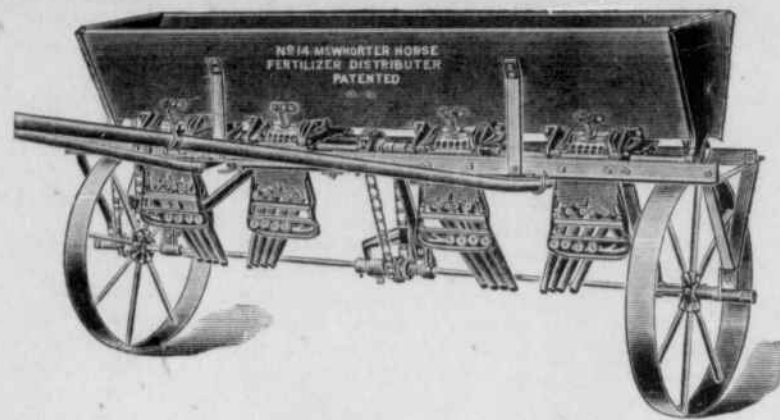
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