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Agricultural Journal.

From the Albany Cultivator.

CUTTING AND CURING HAY.

From our notes of the discussion, on "the proper stage for cutting grasses, and the best modes of making hay," at the seventh Agricultural meeting in this city we give the following:

Mr. BEMENT said he had formerly been in the habit of cutting timothy grass quite late. It was easier cured after it got pretty ripe. But he found in using hay thus cut, that it wanted substance, and he had ascertained that the best time for cutting was while the grass was in blossom. In making clover hay, he had adopted Judge Buel's plan. He thought it best not to expose it much to the sun. His practice was to cut it in the morning, let it lay till noon, and then cock it, and let it sweat for two or three days according to the state of the weather. On putting the hay in the barn, he had used about four quarts of salt to the ton. Hay thus managed came out in the spring very bright and sweet. In the ordinary way of curing clover hay, the best parts were wasted.

Mr. HOWARD was aware that there were different opinions as to the proper stage for cutting grass; but he thought the observance of certain principles might afford a guide in the case. For example, the stems of grasses were filled just before the formation of the seed, with a starchy or saccharine substance. In perfecting the seed, the stems were exhausted of this substance, it being consumed in forming seed. Now if the herbage is the object, the plant should be cut before the nutriment has passed from the stems. If seed is the object, the plant must of course be allowed to attain a good degree of maturity. Hay made from ripe grass may "go farther," or "spend better," as the argument is; and it is admitted that this may be true, for animals are less inclined to eat it; but this is no proof that it is more nutritive. He spoke of the different modes of curing hay, with nearly all which, he said, he had been acquainted. Clover hay was altogether better when cured in cock, than by any other mode he knew practiced. All hay was better for undergoing to some extent, a sweating in the cock. Coarse timothy was thus rendered much softer, and was less strawey and stiff, and every description of hay was less likely to be "mow burned."

Mr. BETTS was not in favor of mowing a great deal of grass while the dew is on. He was in the habit of spreading the swaths as soon as the ground was dry, and he always had it well cocked up before night. The next day, if the weather was good, he opened it again if it did not dry enough he put it together again; but his object was to get it so that it would do to put it in the barn. He was in favor of using a little salt with it. He had sometimes found his hay spoiled too much in the mow. From being fermented, he had occasionally put a load in the barn too green. To stop the heat and fermentation which had ensued in such cases, he had made holes in the hay with a crow-bar; and scattered in salt. In this way he had stopped the fermentation and saved his hay in very good order.

Mr. GARRETTSON, of the Assembly, from Otsego county, said he generally cut from 150 to 200 tons of hay per year—chiefly timothy and red-top. He generally began when the grass was in blossom, spread the swaths lightly, and in the afternoon put it in cocks. The next day if the sun came out, it was again spread, and if made enough, put in the barn, with a little salt sprinkled on it. About three quarts of salt to the ton was as much as he used. There was danger of using too much. He had formerly used more salt, and was satisfied his animals, particularly sheep, had suffered by it. It occasioned scouring—and by keeping their bowels out of order for some time, they died. He usually got about two tons of hay to the acre. In the latter part of the season it would sometimes make enough in one day.

Mr. MACK always directed his men to make hay as rapidly as possible. He

had often made it and put it in the barn in one day, and never had better hay. He was always particular to secure it from dew when it must be left over night. It is said by some who had much practice in making hay, that it is never injured from its own internal juice, but only from rain or dew.

Mr. SOTHAM did not like the plan of salting hay, neither did he like the hay that was made in one day. If it could be so made that it would take no hurt, in one day, it must have been too dry for good hay before it was cut, or else very light burden. He would as soon have a good bright straw for cows or sheep, as timothy hay after it had gone to seed.

He cuts clover when a part of it is in blossom and part in the head. Cuts all his grass early. It takes longer to make hay cut thus early, but for cows and sheep, especially, it was a great deal better. The objection to salting hay was, that animals were forced to eat salt whether they wanted it or not, and it made sheep scour. His hay came out of the barn of a bright green color, and his stock would fatten on it. There was another great advantage in cutting early—the roots retained their life and strength better, and the after feed and future crops were much more abundant. He did not like timothy for hay—he never saw it in England—the farmers there thought it was too coarse and wiry for stock. Rye grass made good hay—would yield in England two tons per acre. Pacey's was the best variety—red-top made good hay. He had tried sainfoin—it did not come up well—there was always a difficulty about it in this respect, because the seed was good only a short time—it could hardly be brought across the ocean and vegetate. If we could get it here, it would be very valuable, especially for dry lands. As to pasturing mowing lands, some land would not bear it—particularly if wet—but he fed his dry lands very close, in the fall, with cattle and sheep and experienced no damage from it.

Judge CHEEVER said he would cut his clover in blossom, not sooner. He would let it take the sun one day, but not enough to have the leaf break off, then put it in small cocks and cure it, until by a few hours drying, by turning over and breaking the cocks, the fluids would be so far out of it that it may be housed without hurting. The length of time necessary to cure it will depend upon the state of the weather, and the larger, or smaller growth of the crop. Upon this the farmer must exercise his judgment.

He would not cut timothy until it had passed out of the blossom. Professor Davy, in his Agricultural Chemistry, says that 64 parts of clover hay cut in blossom, produced 19 parts of nutritive matter, and the same taken in seed. Timothy, 10 parts in blossom, and 23 in seed. This in the timothy is probably too much; but that the nutritive matter in timothy improved after the fall of the blossom he had no doubt. Red-top comes to maturity later, and he did not think there was much difference whether cut in blossom or soon after. He believed timothy cut in blossom would, pound for pound, produce more milk when fed to cows or sheep, than it would cut afterwards; but for horses and other stock, he thought it more nutritious to stand a little longer. It certainly improved in weight.

He preferred mowing his hay, as far as he could, when free from dews or water. He let the swaths take the sun a few hours, until the top got a little wilted or seared, before turning. It thus held up the greener parts when turned over and spread, and permitted the air to circulate under it; it also gave the ground between the swaths, time to dry, which was important in hastening the curing. In this way he avoided the necessity of turning the hay after being spread, which was one of the most tedious processes through which the hay had to be passed, and of course the most expensive. He never permitted his hay to take a dew when it had sun enough to wilt it considerably, if he could help it. The dew discolored it, and he had never been able to restore the fine fresh color

afterwards. He preferred letting his hay stand overnight in the cock. He could then better tell of its fitness to be housed. It is very easy to break up the cocks and give it more sun if necessary; and the slight fermentation or sweating in the cock, which is checked and dried off in carting, is a great preventive against heating in the mow. Hay heated in the mow is sure to be discolored. Some people insist that it is not injured for feeding, especially to cattle. It may be so. I know that flour, corn or oats, which have been heated until they are musty, are thought not so good. I do not know why hay should be.

On the approach of rain, I always put all the hay that has had any sun of consequence, into the cock. If the storm is a long one, it may turn yellow, so that it cannot be restored, but it will retain most of its nutritive matter and its weight, whereas if left spread out to take the rain, it loses both, and is much worse discolored. I never use salt upon my hay, but upon compulsion. When the weather is good, I dry my hay sufficiently to keep and as soon as I can, I house it; but sooner than leave it out to take a storm, even in the cock, I would put it in a little short dried, and apply salt to save it, as I would sooner have it salted than musty.

Dr. LEE thought it the best way to mow grass after the dew was off—spread it, dry it as much as possible, and rake it into winrow. If it was dried enough, and it would frequently be so, he would load it from the winrow, and save the labor of cocking it up.

From the same.

DESTRUCTION OF WEEDS.

The present month is one of the most rapidly growing seasons of the year. The farmer's crops not only make great progress, but weeds too are ever vigilant in thrusting up their heads and asserting their claims to the ascendancy. If they once get the upper hand for a week, the crop may feel the injurious influence for the whole season. Let them be attacked then at the very outset.

Weeds among root crops and corn, are destroyed with one-half, and often with one-fifth the labor otherwise required, if taken when about one inch in height. In a week or ten days they will be five or six inches high, will cost three or four times as much to destroy them and will have exerted a seriously injurious effect on the crop. Hence it would be cheaper to hire a man at a dollar a day, at first, than at half a dollar afterwards. By adopting this course the last year with ruta bagas, hoeing them well before the rough leaves were an inch long, the work was done with great ease and expedition; and although the land was hard, dry, and not rich, and so stony as to render broadcast sowing necessary, the whole cost per pushel was only about three cents and a half.

A large portion of the failures in raising ruta bagas, beets, and other root crops, have resulted from the heavy growth of weeds during the early part of the season which are not unfrequently suffered to attain a foot in height before they are destroyed. The stunning effect on the crop, and the labor of weeding are obvious.

Repeated plowing and harrowing of the ground for some weeks before sowing roots, to clear it effectually of weeds, is a very economical operation, and saves much labor in weeding.

An excellent practice for keeping potatoes clean, where they are planted in drills, is to pass a fine-toothed harrow over the whole surface, just before they come up, to mellow the surface and destroy the weeds. When they are up, plow from the plants; then a light furrow towards them, thus leaving the hills or ridges broad. The hoe is only used for smoothing the surface and destroying what weeds escape.

It is well known that leaves are the breathing organs of plants; and that if a plant is kept constantly stripped of its leaves, or excluded from the air, during the growing season, the root soon dies. Hence all kinds of biennial rooted weeds, such as Canada thistle and milk-

weeds, are soon killed if kept smothered beneath by repeated deep plowing. As soon as the first appear at the surface, invert the soil upon them, and the roots soon perish. We have known many instances, and in every case completely successful where thoroughly performed, where the Canada thistle was destroyed totally by deep plowing once a month through the season, and which prepared the ground finely for wheat before mid-autumn.

Improvement of Worn out Lands.—Extract of a letter from E. Stabler, Esq. of Maryland—"I have labored hard for some 20 years to improve a farm which was worn out by the 'old Maryland plan' of raising corn and tobacco. By the liberal use of lime, it is now productive and profitable; having within the last 12 or 14 years covered the whole waste part (except 5 acres,) with from 60 to 100 bushels of lime to the acre. Twelve to fifteen years since, there were only 2 kilns within six miles of me; and only used to burn lime for building purposes; now there are within the same distance, not less than 35 to 40 lime kilns, and used almost exclusively for farming purposes."

Potatoe Rot.—J. R. Blair, Kent, Ct., is inclined to think the rot in potatoes last year, was caused by several weeks of wet weather in the summer, succeeded by excessive heat and drouth. He seconds the recommendations in the April number of the Cultivator to plant hardy varieties; says he "noticed white potatoes decayed more than the red ones." In regard to the suggestion about the use of lime, we will just remark that we have heard of several cases where it was put on the potatoes at planting time, without any apparent effect having been produced.

Charcoal Dust.—Extract of a letter from M. S. Camp, Plainville, Ct.—"I will mention an experiment made by myself about eighteen years ago. Having a piece of hill land, of about three acres ready plowed, I seeded it down to timothy. It produced about one ton to the acre. It has been mowed once, every year since, has had no manure, and has not been pastured at all. It has gained one-third, and remains the same kind of grass. About five years after sowing, I burnt coal near the place; I took from the bed, dry dust and fine coal in my cart, and with a shovel sowed twice through the piece which has increased the quantity of grass on those streaks ever since, nearly one-half."

Relief of choking in cattle.—Mr. Dunphy, of Fishkill Landing N. Y., recommends the use of a piece of cable, four feet long and five inches in circumference, with one end made into a soft ball, to be pushed down the animal's gullet. We have generally known tarred rope used for this purpose. The size of the rope about three inches in circumference. A ball of tow, bound with soft leather, attached to one end, so that the end might be as large as an ordinary hen's egg. We have often seen cattle relieved from choking, by the piece of potatoe or turnep which occasioned the difficulty, being with this rope pushed into the stomach. From its flexibility, and the yielding of the ball of tow at the end, there is no danger of rupturing the gullet, as is often done in the barbarous practice of running down sticks, such as hoe handles, &c.

Remedy for "Hoven," or "Blown" Cattle.—Mr. Dunphy informs us that he uses in this case, for "tapping" the animal, a knife which he describes as having a handle four inches long, a blade four inches long, and an inch wide. He says—"previous to using the above knife, an incision may be made with a small knife, one inch in length, downwards, on the left side of the animal, at five inches from the hip bone. Then the large knife may be plunged into the incision to the hilt, with safety, which allows the foul air to pass out and gives immediate relief. Should the wound close so as to prevent the escape of the air, it may be kept open by inserting a small tube, and keeping the animal gently moving."