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Getting the Farm Work Done

By a Wisconsin farmer,
who, year in and year
out, profitably employs 2
men on his 160-acre farm

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Getting the Farm Work Done

Every paper I take up has something in it about the great need for more food and I guess there is something to it, for we must feed a lot of people in Europe as well as our own growing population.

Naturally enough I feel the need of having more to sell at the prices which conditions seem to promise. I have been thinking several cold days this spring, as I rode the gang plow behind four big horses, plowing sod for corn, what I could do to help out.

One of my neighbors said one day, "What's the use of plowing in such cold weather? We are going to have a late spring and there will be lots of time to plow."

KEEPS AHEAD OF WORK

But I just told him to remember how cold it was last spring until along about corn planting time, and how it turned off warm and he still had to plow his big sod field before he could plant it. I asked him if he remembered how the horses on the gang plow lathered and puffed and had to rest part of the time because the sod had grown tough and the weather was warm and the horses hadn't been hardened up by continuous work.

I made that mistake once, too, but you bet I won't do it again if keeping the plow going whenever the ground is fit to plow will prevent it. Those cold days were great for plowing sod and hardening up the horses for the summer's work.

BUSY IN FAIR WEATHER

I have been trying for several years to work out a plan that will help in getting the work done. The great thing is to get everything done at the right time and keep the odd jobs out of the way of the field work. The plan which has been helpful to me may be useful to others who haven't a plan as good or better, and if anyone has a better one I want to know about it for I'll adopt it at once. I believe every man who reads this can improve the plan, and I wish he would.

Uncertainty of the weather and the shortness of the season in which to do a lot of things make farm management difficult. This plan is one for keeping pace with the seasons and making the most of good weather.

FIELD WORK COMES FIRST

Rule 1. Field work must have all the time the weather and soil conditions will permit us to give it. This is the work

which determines the amount of food we can grow. Nothing, except necessary work like feeding and milking, should be allowed to take us from the field work and it should be planned where possible to get the milking done and keep the horses working ten hours a day. **The best farmer is the one who gets the other work out of the way and keeps the teams moving whenever the land is in condition for field work.**

WET-LAND WORK FILLS IN

Rule 2. There is a lot of work which I call **wet-land work**; in this class falls the cutting of weeds and brush in the fence rows, the repairing of fences, the cleaning up of the woodlot, the repairing of buildings, the laying of concrete walks, the digging of trenches for laying water pipes from the well to the house and to the barn, and a score of other tasks which should be jotted down in a notebook as they are thought of, and done when field work cannot be done. The rule is: **"Plan no wet-land work when there is work in the field which can be done."**

JOBS FOR RAINY DAYS

Rule 3. There is a great variety of work which we can do under shelter and which we should do on rainy days. Shelling seed corn, mending the harness and repairing tools are typical examples. If these matters are not cared for in rainy weather, they are in danger of stopping field work just when the time of men and teams is worth the most. It is necessary to have some means of thinking of these tasks when the rainy days arrive or we will let these golden opportunities slip by unimproved.

One farmer I know keeps his note book in his pocket to jot down the tasks which can be performed on a rainy day. This enables him to plan quickly the work for a rainy day. In planning rainy day work, do first the jobs which are in danger of getting in the way of the next dry weather work. The rule is **to leave no rainy-day work to be done when it is not raining for in this climate our profits are limited by the amount of outdoor work we get done.**

WORK WITH NATURE

We farmers work with nature and must keep pace with her if we are to expect good crops. I have often thought of my work as "rush work" and "get-out-of-the-way work." My problem is to make all the odd jobs which can be done most any time of year if I get at it, keep out of the way of the field work and the regular work in the dairy.

RUSH WORK CALLS FOR LONG DAYS

Rule 4. Feeding and milking dairy cows, sowing oats, planting and cultivating corn, and harvesting oats, are examples of work which suffer if not done at the right time. If we neglect our cows we shall soon have no milking to do. If we delay sowing oats until the warm, dry days of late spring, we will have a light harvest, and if we put off cultivating corn for one week after it is large enough to cultivate the fields will be weedy and the crop poor. This class of work is **rush work** on my farm, because the profits depend upon doing as much of it as possible and doing it well. **In rush seasons we put in long days, expecting to ease up on rainy days or when the rush is over.** At these rush times we follow the rule "**do nothing today which can as well be put off until tomorrow.**"

DOING GET-OUT-OF-THE-WAY WORK

Rule 5. Work which we can do any time within a wide latitude requires our very especial attention, because the time comes when this work cannot be put off longer and it may stop the rush work. For example, seed corn may be tested and shelled any time after it is thoroughly cured, but if the work is neglected until the fields are ready to plant, then that most profitable work in the corn field may be delayed. This may be called "get-out-of-the-way work."

It takes more planning, more thinking and more force of character to do this work in seasons when there is no rush work than it does to concentrate on rush work, for the season calls us to the rush work, while it is only by using our heads that we can get the other sort of work out of the way in advance.

The rule I try to follow when there is no rush work to be done is found in the old phrase "**Put off nothing until tomorrow which can be done today.**" We must apply this rule methodically and with industry if we are going to get ahead very fast. My note book in which I jot down the odd jobs which should be done has proved helpful to me.

These rules have been working themselves out in my mind during many years of experience. They have been useful to me. If they help you I shall be well paid for the trouble of writing them out.