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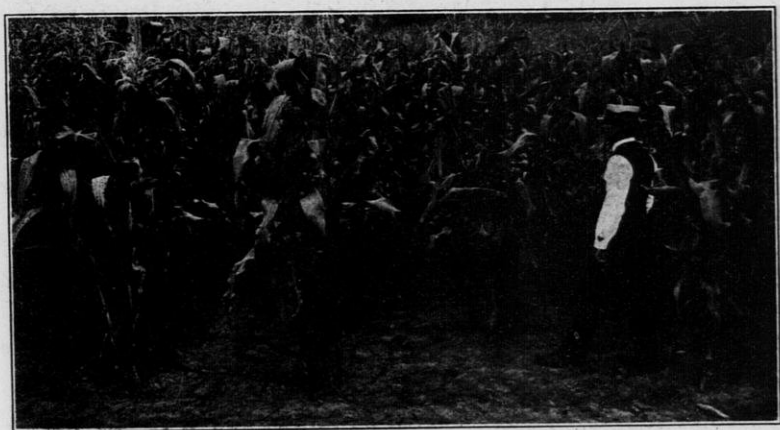
WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

When Pastures Are Short

By

ROY T. HARRIS

Supervisor of Wisconsin Dairy Tests



INSURANCE AGAINST SHORT PASTURES

At low expense of time and money silage furnished excellent succulence for summer feeding.

File this bulletin where you can find it

Distributed by

Wisconsin Bankers' Association

W. A. von Berg,
Chairman Agricultural Committee,
Mosinee

George D. Bartlett,
Association Secretary,
Pabst Building, Milwaukee

When Pastures Are Short

LET'S THINK OF YOUR PASTURES AS CROPS.

Pasturage is a farm crop just as much as corn, oats, hay, or potatoes. Of course, it is not always a profitable crop but neither would these be if neglected in the way many pastures are.

It is true that much land is given over to pasturage because it is not fit for much of anything else but that is no reason why it should be neglected instead of yielding the best possible return. On an efficient farm, each field must do its share according to its ability and the efficient farmer will see to it that pastures do not become short if this can be prevented.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION WORTH A POUND OF CURE.

We are told that the Chinese pay their doctors for keeping them well. This seems a very sensible arrangement. When sickness comes the pay stops. We have a saying "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," which expresses the same idea. Perhaps we may not be able to keep pastures from becoming short but there are some things which may be done to make the trouble less frequent and severe.

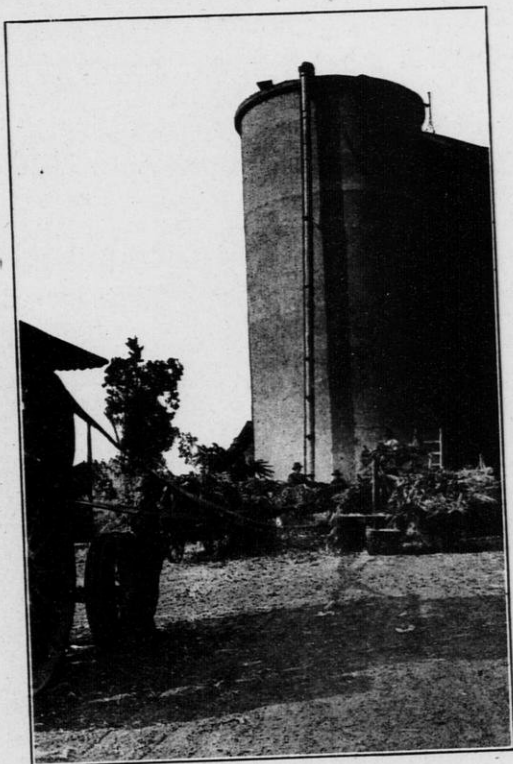
To be durable, pastures must be large enough to provide for the number of animals to be kept and still allow a margin for safety. Overstocking is a frequent cause of shortage and also makes pastures short-lived. Turning on too early in the spring is another bad practice which brings similar results. We often see herds out on "grass" almost before the grass has started. Animals must then do an extra amount of walking in order to get enough to eat and this tramping of the soft ground puts it in poor condition to withstand dry weather besides injuring the grass and reducing the yield.

A REST IS GOOD FOR PASTURES TOO.

It works well to divide pastures and turn the herd in on alternate days, or other periods, giving the grass a fresh start.

This system can also be made to furnish more variety to the herd. Pastures should not be allowed to become stale or unproductive but should be broken up and reseeded as often as necessary. Rotation applies to pasturage as well as to other crops.

Pastures will stand fertilizing and permanent pastures, especially, require regular top-dressing, and lining if the soil



SILO FEEDING MEANS LABOR ECONOMY

Dairymen will find greater convenience and profit in feeding corn silage rather than sowing crops to cows on scant pastures.

becomes acid. Brush, weeds and stones occupy space which more profitably could produce grass. Briars and thistles are especially objectionable since they interfere with the use of grass which surrounds them.

All grasses sown should be perennial or such as will certainly renew themselves and as far as possible should form a succession so as to have pasturage throughout the season. June-grass alone will not make a good pasture for it becomes tough too early.

MONTH OF AUGUST IS TRYING FOR PASTURES.

However, after all has been said and done, pastures will sometimes be short. There may not be enough land which can be given over to this purpose for the number of animals which must be carried on the place. There are also limitations as to soil and climate and, especially, long and severe drought may get the better of even the best pasture land. Preventive measures are helpful and may answer in most years, though in states like Wisconsin, August is a month which tries pastures to the limit.

If we knew that at certain times our property would be especially liable to damage by fire or tornado, we would think it only the part of wisdom to carry insurance against such loss. This would not prevent the damage, mind you, but would only distribute the loss so it would not bear so heavily on one individual. Against pasture troubles we have a better form of insurance for by its use we both escape loss at the time and if it is not needed can use it profitably later on, or even another season.

SILAGE BEST INSURANCE AGAINST SHORT PASTURES.

A silo is a good insurance policy for any time of the year but its value for summer feeding has not been fully appreciated. Silage is better than soiling crops (crops like corn cut green and fed to stock) for several reasons: (1) It provides cheaper succulent feed. Comparisons show that soiling is more costly in labor even when fairly satisfactory in other respects. (2) It is more convenient to use. Bad weather does not interfere with feeding of silage as is the case with soilage. (3) If the anticipated emergency does not come to pass, the silage will not be wasted, as it is ready for use later, while soilage cannot always be preserved for future use without considerable loss and extra labor.

Summer silos should be well-made of good material. Some thought may well be given to the location as regards convenience in feeding and protection from extreme heat of summer. The diameter should be less than that of a winter silo of similar capacity as the exposed surface will deteriorate more rapidly in warm weather and to a greater depth. Particular care should be taken in filling and the litter, straw or other material used for covering left undisturbed until silage is needed.

If plenty of good silage is available with hay, and grain fed according to production, we can be quite independent of pasture.