# The Ballymoney Free Press

## AND NORTHERN COUNTIES ADVERTISER.

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## AGRICULTURAL ITEMS.

(From the "Farmers' Gazette.")

### EARLY PLOUGHING.

Despite all that has been said and written about early ploughing, there is reason to believe that even yet its advantages are not generally realised. In many parts of the country the work of ploughing stubble land is not undertaken until late in spring, while less is often not broken until immediately before it is sown with oats.

On all except light sandy soils the time to take preparations in hand, if the best results are to be obtained, is in the case of stubble land, as early in autumn as possible; and with as land the aim should be to have the work completed by the end of January. The nature of the Irish climate is such that on any but the very lightest soils it is impossible to work land to any extent during the winter, and heavy rains in spring often unduly delay tillage operations. The time, therefore, to get work done is during autumn, when the days are long, the weather is fine, and the conditions are favourable.

For a successful root crop it is essential that the land should be not only thoroughly cultivated, but also rendered absolutely free from weeds, otherwise the germination of the seed and the proper development of the young seedlings are interfered with. The soil must be clean, deep, and fine, yet not too dry at sowing time. Experience has taught the successful farmer that to attain such conditions the entire stubble should be ploughed as early as possible, so that he may reap the full benefit of the influence of air and frost in pulverising the soil.

The ploughing of ley ground is often delayed because of a mistaken idea as to the value of the winter grazing it affords. As very little growth takes place after the month of October, it is evident that if leas land is closely grazed in autumn, no object is served by leaving it unploughed subsequently. If it is then broken up, the vegetable matter in the soil will be decomposed and converted into available plant food by the time the oat crop is sown, so that it occupies in the use of manure—an important consideration. Lesser quantities of manure are required for crops on properly tilled land than would be the case where cultivation is hurried and insufficient.

In addition to the advantages detailed above, autumn cultivation reduces the prevalence of insect pests, particularly wire worms and leather jacket grubs, because early ploughing removes much of the vegetable material on which these pests feed during the winter. The soil being in good condition at sowing time, crops make quick and vigorous growth, and the plants are soon beyond the stage at which they are most easily injured.

### IMPROVING PASTURES BY POULTRY

The beneficial effects of running poultry on poor pastures, especially where the soil is of a light description, have been conclusively demonstrated in recent tests among Channel. Where poultry congregate most white clover has been found to increase to a considerable extent, and their influence for improvement on a mixed herbage is remarkable. When keeping poultry manure for use as an ordinary dressing for farm crops the real aim is to dry and pulverize it with as little loss of nitrogen as possible. Peat moss, saw-dust, and gypsum are sometimes used for this purpose, but fine dry soil is quite effective and has the advantage of being readily available. Algaline substances, such as lime or wood ashes, should not be used, for they cause loss of ammonia through volatilisation. In dealing with the accumulations of manure in houses and coops a good practice is to make shallow layers of the manure and of dry earth alternately in the proportion of about two parts of manure to one of earth. The heap is kept under cover and turned occasionally till it becomes dry and friable. Owing to its rapid evolution of ammonia in the soil, fresh poultry manure may injure the roots of young plants. To avoid this it is better to conserve and balance the nitrogen and to use smaller quantities, rather than to ferment away the most valuable constituent by turning over the fresh manure with straw and leaves, as is sometimes done. Unbalanced, it is a forcing nitrogenous manure and suitable as a top dressing for green crops; it is also valuable for strawberries, fruit trees, and tomatoes. For turnips, grass, and on heavy soils it should be enriched in phosphates; for potatoes, mangolds, and on light soils addition of potash as well as phosphates is required.

### WEEDS AS SOIL INDICATORS.

There is sometimes complaint made against scientists being over busy in laying down rules about the plants which suit soils and the soils which suit plants. This, however, is more or less beating the air, for, just as breeds of animals develop and was strong on certain pasture formations, so do plants, whether a harmful weed or a nutritious grass, show a preference for this or that type of soil. It may be the moisture contents or the physical texture that attracts. Every plant has its own lay, and the dry, sandy soil as much encourages the foxglove as the damp, lush meadow-bottom does the May-flower, or the marsh marigold, as the botanists know it by. It is true, whatever may be gainsaid, that plants are reliable indicators of the character of land and the uses to which it might be put. Weeds are reliable soil indicators; they flatter and they warn. He is an observant farmer who notes them, and takes the assurance and can act on the warning they give. A sour, bitter weed, like sorrel, is a red signal for liming, as much as a full growth of daisies in young pasture betokens the need of more manuring. Sour soils call for a corrective by the herbage they produce as much as hungry soils do by the weeds that take predominance on them. Weeds are, indeed, the surest indicators of soil peculiarities and requirements, and in the end are the best guides to the most effective manurial treatment.

### REPLIES TO QUERIES.

DRESSING FOR RUSHY LAND.

The reason why rushes are common on low-lying bottoms is because the water level is too high, owing to want of fall and hence imperfect drainage results. In some situations draining is impracticable, or would be too costly to attempt. The best thing in such a case is to cut the rushes regularly once or twice a year, and apply, as you suggest, a dressing of lime or slag. It does not seem good economy to apply slag to land which at best can only afford very poor quality grazing. Lime is cheaper. If you can get it within easy distance, and after the rushes have been cut and cleared you might find an improvement by broadcasting a light dressing of lime. The area you mention is so large that we hesitate to recommend you a fixed rate per acre, though a dressing of 1 to 1½ tons of freshly burnt lime is usually counted ample. Half this allowance might do in your case if you can get the lime conveniently and decide to try it. If not, then your other alternative is to apply 5 to 6 tons of slag over the entire area. Slag has this advantage over lime that it is a manure (which means a source of phosphates) as well as being a corrective against the soil acidity that encourages the growth of rushes and other coarse marshy herbage.

MIXTURE OF GRASS-SEEDS TO SOW.

It is very early yet to be deciding on the more suitable mixture of grass-seeds to lay down with oats next spring.

In the interval we might point out (1) That newly-laid down seeds are rarely grazed in their first year, but are usually cut for hay. This practice enables both grasses and clovers to get firmly established, and we doubt if you can depart from it without regret, especially if you buy an expensive seed mixture. (2) There are other ways of getting early grass than by sowing the seeds of such grasses as send out their shoots at the first touch of spring. (3) No pasture can be counted of really good feeding quality unless the herbage contains a high clover content, and the higher the clover content the better is the capacity of the pasture to encourage good milking yield from dairy cows and to put condition on store cattle.

HEIFER AFFECTED WITH TICKS.

You might try the effect of dressing the affected parts with an emulsion composed of train oil, sulphur, and some paraffin. This application should be sufficient to kill the ticks, and so save the pain to the animal of detaching them from the hair by hand. You are probably aware that the ordinary black tick, common at this time in rough mountain and moorland grazings, is the means of conveying the germ which causes the blood disease known as red water in cattle.

### ITEMS OF INTEREST.

During the year 1925 Denmark exported approximately 270,000,000 pounds of butter. Of this quantity Great Britain took practically sixty-eight per cent. and Germany twenty-eight per cent.

A Northern farmer when charged with allowing a bull to trespass on the road pleaded that the County Council had compelled him to cut his hedges so low that he could not keep the cattle within bounds.

You cannot make progress with inefficient cows any more than manufacturers can make headway with inefficient machines. Dairy cows are machines for converting your pasture and fodder crops into milk and butterfat.

A rolled and tightened soil will conduct the heat it receives much rapidly to the lower layers than one which is loose and pulverent. It has been shown that despite increased evaporation there is always a higher temperature below a rolled than an unrolled surface.

While land may be enriched and pasture considerably improved by grazing with cattle or corn fed stock, yet it is quite possible to graze a green field too long or too many years in succession. It is quite as necessary to rotate the live stock as the crops.

Horns in cows, which are fed in the ordinary way, get a check in their growth during gestation, and form a ring or "nick" at the base. The number of nicks is thus an indication of the number of calves a cow has had and consequently to some extent an indication of age. However, when cows are well fed the rings may not show themselves so plainly, possibly not at all.

According to the chairman of the Cockkirk branch of the Lancashire Farmers' Union statistics have been got out proving that it cost the farmer £35 per statute acre to grow potatoes. An acre yielded an average of eight tons of saleable ware potatoes for which, at prevailing prices, the farmer received £20, and thus lost £15 an acre. Prohibition of imports from the Continent, except under licence, is suggested as a remedy.

In potato tests conducted by the Scottish Board of Agriculture an outstanding seedling grown by Mr. Mackelvie produced 13 lbs. 10 ozs. from a single root of which 13 lbs. 2 ozs. are were tubers which gave over a two-inch riddle. The crop of this plant consisted of 22 even-sized ware potatoes and 4 small tubers, all free from blight. This is believed to be a record weight for one plant in official trials, and is equivalent to a crop of 52 tons per acre.

Northern flax producers are complaining of the disabilities under which they suffer in connection with flax water prosecutions, and are of the opinion that in many cases these prosecutions are responsible for the decreasing acreage sown in flax. A case was quoted recently where a farmer was summoned and fined for releasing a quantity of flax water through a small pipe into a tributary and a river in which fish had never been found, and about one mile from the main river; the flax water having, in addition, to pass through three mill dams before it could reach any portion of the river where it might be alleged that damage could be done to fish.


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## ULSTER FARMERS' UNION.

### Council and Various Problems.

The quarterly meeting of the Council of the Ulster Farmers' Union was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, the President (Mr. William Jackson, Coleraine) in the chair.

The report of the Executive Committee, which was read by the general secretary, expressed gratification that the anticipation of a good harvest had been in a large measure realised. In the main, the weather conditions were favourable for harvesting operations, but some districts suffered severely during the season from heavy rains, which brought about flooding, with serious loss to the farmers. Generally, however, the crops had been harvested in good condition, though it would appear as if the yield of the potato crop would not prove so heavy as was at one time anticipated. Unfortunately, the depression in prices still continued, and in most cases the prices obtainable fell very far short of the actual cost of production. It was hoped, however, that as the season advanced the outlook would improve to such an extent as would show a decent margin of profit to the farmer.

Proceeding, the committee again urged on all farmers the desirability of improving their marketing methods to the utmost extent possible, as it was quite apparent that Foreign and Colonial competitors were determined to obtain an increasing share of the markets of Great Britain. The success that the producers in overseas countries have achieved by their system of grading and standardisation had acted as an impetus towards further progress in this direction.

Following a reference to the Northern Ireland Land Purchase Act, the report stated that the committee had again considered if any system could be devised for the stabilisation of pork prices. They had invited branches in the various centres to endeavour to secure from the pork buyers an indication, say a week in advance, of the prices which would be paid. Some firms were not adverse to giving this information, but it had been found impossible to secure anything like co-ordinated action by bacon curers and pork buyers. The committee had, however, seen with much gratification the development of a very considerable live pig trade, and were of opinion that if this movement could be encouraged until it reached substantial proportions, it would of itself materially help to solve the vexed question of violent fluctuations in pork prices and other problems connected with the trade.

The committee were of opinion that pork production in Northern Ireland primarily should be much assisted by the prohibition placed by the Imperial Government on the importation of pork products from foreign countries. They supported the demand that this prohibition should be made permanent on the ground—as had been proved beyond dispute—that these pork products from foreign countries had been directly responsible for the introduction and dissemination of foot and mouth disease in England. The prohibition should result in a larger demand for home pork for the right quality of pork from Northern Ireland. The coal strike and the general paralisation of industry in England had brought about a continuous decrease in the purchasing power of those who would in the ordinary way be large consumers; but it was clear that a larger market than ever for Ulster pork lay ready at hand. Some indication of the extent of the market available might be gathered from the fact that in the eight months ended August, 1925, there were imported into the United Kingdom pig products from foreign countries, the Colonies and the Irish Free State to the value of some £50,000,000, a very substantial proportion of which, given the right methods and the right quality, could be produced in Northern Ireland.

Since the last meeting of the Council the Minister for Home Affairs (Sir Dawson Bates) had received a deputation on the question of losses to farmers as a result of sheep worrying. The deputation from the Union was accompanied by the Minister of Agriculture (Right Hon. E. M. Archdale), and at the close of the interview the Minister for Home Affairs promised that the matter would receive his sympathetic consideration.

On the subject of flax water prosecutions the committee expressed the opinion that it was time this matter was taken off the subject of further legislation. There was no doubt, they stated, that the extensive prosecutions that had been instituted in recent years had been one of the direct causes in contributing to the substantially decreased and decreasing acreage sown in flax.

The adoption of the report was proposed by the President and seconded by Mr. A. J. Pilkington, J.P. After some discussion the resolution was unanimously passed. The financial statement was adopted, on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Robert Gregg (Ballymena).

By resolution it was unanimously decided to support officially the demand by the Executive to have made permanent the prohibition by the Imperial Government of the importation of certain foreign pork products. It was also unanimously agreed, on the motion of Mr. Robert Gregg (Ballymena), seconded by Rev. Robert Moore (Coleraine), to support the activities of the Executive in developing the live pig trade in Northern Ireland.

On the motion of Mr. M. Smith (Roe Valley), seconded by Mr. Thomas H. Hardy, the following resolution was unanimously passed:—Instructing the Executive Committee to bring forcibly before the Northern Government the great disparity in the prices paid to the farmers for their produce and the prices paid by the consuming public. The opinion was expressed that at a time when producers' prices represented a loss on the cost of production, some action should be taken by the Government to reduce this disparity.

THE DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

On the motion of Mr. George Thompson (Richhill), seconded by Rev. Robert Moore (Coleraine), the action and policy of the Executive in regard to milk prosecutions and analysts' certificates was heartily approved. The view was unanimously expressed that it was unfair and unjust for samples of the morning milk only to be taken, which might show naturally a slight deficiency in butter fat content, whilst the evening milk—of which very few, if any, samples were taken—might show such an excess of butter fat over the legal requirements as would make the morning and evening milk on an average sample show a butter fat content higher than the minimum required.

Arising out of a question by a delegate, the general secretary stated that he hoped shortly to be able to report that definite action had been taken in connection with the request lodged with the Ministry of Agriculture for committees of inquiry into the co-operative movement and the dairying industry in Northern Ireland. The Executive Committee were instructed to take steps, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, to have these inquiries instituted at the earliest possible moment.


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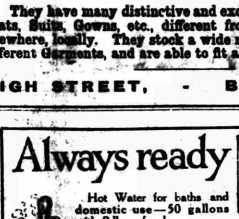

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### AGRICULTURE IN ANTRIM.

County Committee's Schemes for Next Year.

At a meeting of the County Antrim Committee of Agriculture Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick, D.L., was elected chairman and Mr. Charles B. Smith, J.P., vice-chairman.

A resolution was passed expressing regret at the death of Mr. J. Stoupe M'Cance, D.L., who was chairman of the committee from 1921 until his death, and invested a good deal of time to furthering the interests of agriculture in the county.

The following schemes were adopted for the year 1927-28, and money was allocated for same—Instruction in agriculture, agricultural classes, instruction in horticulture and bee-keeping, poultry management and poultry stations, butter making, live stock, subsidies to shows, and agricultural overseer. Under the special development grant the schemes will provide for instruction in agriculture and an agricultural overseer and W.A. classes. About £11,000 was allocated for the various schemes.

It was decided to establish classes at Armoy, Martinstown, Antrim, and Stoneyford.

On the results of the examination at Greenmount Agricultural and Horticultural College conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, the following students were awarded scholarships to the college:—Messrs. A. J. Boyd, Ballymacbeth; H. R. Orr, Willowbank Gardens, Belfast; D. M'Mullan, Rasharkin; J. G. Reid, Dosgh; J. L. M'Coy and A. Henry, Rasharkin; F. J. Mowilliam, Glenone, Larne; A. D. Farnford, Rasharkin; A. Wright and E. J. Brennan, Ballyboley; and T. B. G. Hunter, Gortfad.

### PRIZE COTTAGES.

Popularity of County Antrim Scheme.

The County Antrim Committee of Agriculture's cottage prize scheme has done much to improve the condition of cottages and plots in the county. There were record entries this year, much of the success achieved being due to the efforts of the late Mr. J. S. F. M'Cance, who was chairman of the Committee, and Mr. A. B. Clarke, the secretary.

The judge, Mr. D. W. Baillie, Banbridge, in his report pays tribute to the work of the competitors, stating that very satisfactory progress had been noted. The majority of the cottages entered were well kept, cleanliness and general order being evident. There were a few exceptions where there was room for improvements, but generally they were worthy. It was quite evident that the scheme was doing good in assisting the cottager to make the best use of his plot. The awards include the following:—

Ballymena District—1, David Morrison, Turnarobert; 2, Daniel M'Elroy, Ballycastle; 3, Patrick Mullan, Moyaver, and Archie Diffin, Rasmoan, Ballycastle; 4, Patrick M'Keegan, Tavanaghan, Cushendall, and John M'Neill, Sheane, Cushendun.

Ballymoney—1, Daniel Morrison, Secon; 2, John Morrison, Secon; 3, Albert Steele, Leaney, and Annie M'Lean, Ballymoney; 4, Joseph Stirling, Benvarden, Derveck, and Mrs. M'Quillan, Heatherton, Killagan.

### MARKETING OF EGGS.

Second Reading of Ulster Bill.

In the Northern House of Commons on Tuesday,

Mr. Archdale, Minister for Agriculture, moving the second reading of the Marketing of Eggs Bill, said the most important part of the proposal was purchase by weight. There was a great deal said about a change, since grading had been brought to so high a state of perfection. Since 1921 the export of eggs had grade only dropped until last year, when a material increase was recorded.

Mr. Stanley Elliott urged that there was no necessity for an Amending Act, which he felt, would drive the egg importers out of Ireland. They were getting a good deal of officialdom, which was doing considerable harm to the industry. He had several letters from merchants in Liverpool complaining of the quality of Ulster eggs, stating that there were more bad eggs coming from Ulster than ever before, and suggesting that the washing of eggs should be abolished.

Mr. George Henderson said about 75 per cent. of the Irish eggs exported were being washed. There was no doubt that washed eggs deteriorated more rapidly than unwashed eggs.

Mr. Archdale said at present the sale of eggs by weight was being carried out. It was found that many dirty eggs were being sent to the shops, and the only new order they could make was to prevent the producer from marketing dirty eggs. Since 1925 the price of Irish eggs had been much higher than the price of Danish eggs.

The Bill was read a second time.


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### BALLYCASTLE COAL.

At the Ballycastle Board of Guardians on Saturday, Mr. Samuel Watson, Co.C. (chairman), presiding, a letter was read from Mr. M. J. Brown, clerk of the Ballycastle Guardians, in reply to the clerk's letter of 28th ult. informing the Guardians that, on making inquiries, he found that the output at the Ballycastle colliery was not sufficient to warrant the owners selling any outside the district. It was a pity, he added, as the coal was much superior to any foreign coal, and was being supplied at £2 per ton. The Chairman thought they had as much coal as would carry them on for another four weeks.


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## Kilrea and District.

A dance, organised by the M'Kinley Jazz Band, took place in the Town Hall on Friday evening of last week. There was a good attendance of both sexes, and all expressed satisfaction with the programme. Mr. Wm. M'Kinley discharged the duties of M.C. Mr. Duggie Mullan rendered a vocal item.

The many friends of Master Jack M'Caldon, son of Mr. John M'Caldon, Maghera Street, will be pleased to learn that he has passed the Queen's University matriculation examination. Few boys secure this distinction so young. We wish him every success in the future.

The members of Mullan Division, A.O.H., 278 met on Sunday evening—Br. Patrick Dempsey presiding. Two members were proposed for next meeting. It was decided to conduct a dancing class during the winter. The annual dance in connection with the division will be held at an early date.

The annual meeting of Kilrea District L.L. No. 3 was held in the Orange Hall on Monday evening—Br. Wm. Shiels, district Master, presiding, with Br. John T. Kelly, D.M., in the deputy chair. The return sheets from the different lodges were received and confirmed. The W.M. referred in feeling terms to the death of Br. George Kerr, Greenock, who had been a life-long supporter of Orangeism in the Kilrea district. A vote of sympathy was passed in silence to his brother, Mr. Samuel Kerr, Kilrea. Br. Shiels, W.M., thanked the treasurer for the support given him during his first year as District Master of Kilrea. He could assure them that he felt very grateful indeed when he looked back at the splendid demonstration held in Kilrea on last 12th July. It was the largest and most orderly demonstration ever held in Kilrea, which spoke volumes for the Orange Institution. Br. Rev. A. R. Staunch, W.M., District Chaplain, conducted the election, which resulted as follows:—Bro. Wm. Shiels, W.D.M.; John C. Neely, D.D.M.; Rev. A. R. Staunch, chaplain; Johnston Holmes, secretary; David Gamble, treasurer; committee—Bro. Wm. M'Alister, Robert M'Neill, Joseph Rea, Stephen Terrens, and David Hassan. The starting of a Juvenile Orange Lodge was brought before the meeting by Rev. Staunch, who pointed to the benefits to be gained and the good the rising generation would derive from such a lodge. The matter was adjourned until the next quarterly meeting. Meanwhile the R.A.F. Chapel was afterwards held, when the same officers as in the Orange lodge were elected. A vote of thanks was passed at the close to the Rev. A. R. Staunch for conducting the elections.

Ratepayers' Association.

At a specially-convened meeting of the ratepayers of the dispensary district in the Town Hall on Wednesday evening for the purpose of inaugurating a Ratepayers' Association, there was a representative gathering. Mr. James M'Laughlin, who presided, explained the object of the meeting and the benefits to be derived by such an association. It was decided to form a committee, with Messrs. James M'Laughlin as chairman, Isaac M'Auley, M.R.C.V.S., as vice-chairman, R. Liddle, solicitor, secretary, and James Hunter, M.P.S., treasurer. Other members are—Messrs. James Rainey, J. M'Donnell, Thomas Woods, S. B. Kane, Robert O'Kane, Edward Henry, W. S. Cromie, and George A. Graham. It was unanimously agreed to form an association, to be called the Kilrea and District Ratepayers' Association. Subsequently a committee meeting was held, when some details were arranged. The Chairman expressed the hope that all who had a grievance would submit it in writing to the secretary, from which it would be ventilated through the proper channel.

## Garvagh and District.

An inspection of horses for stud purposes was carried out in Garvagh on Monday. Two inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture, Br. Hilling and Br. Hanna, accompanied by Mr. Kerrnohan, V.S., Ballymena, carried out the inspection, which was of a searching nature. The horses presented for inspection were all classed as of average merit, and were shown to be good specimens. The inspectors expressed themselves as well pleased with the principle on view.

An united evening service on Sabbath last was conducted by the Rev. W. Lyttle, missionary at Antioch, in the Reformed Presbyterian church, Maghera. There was a large and representative congregation, and the talented preacher gave a very lucid and interesting address on "Sanctified and married" amongst his people at Antioch. The rev. gentleman is a son of Mr. Samuel Lyttle, Moneyharvin, Maghera.

The monthly meeting of the Movenis "Rising Sons of William" L.O.L. No. 662 was held in the Orange Hall on Thursday evening last, and there was a good attendance of members. Br. Thomas Johnston, W.M., occupied the chair, and Br. Thomas Moody, D.M., was in the vice-chair. A handsomely bound Bible was presented to Br. Wm. M'Ilvar on his departure for Australia. Br. M'Ilvar was an esteemed member of the lodge, and it is the sincere wish of all that he may have good luck in the land of his adoption. It was decided to hold the annual ball and social on Friday evening, 29th inst.


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