

ISSUED THROUGH NEW DIVISION.

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE NO.6.

MORE SCOPE FOR THE PLOUGH.

TRUSTING THE MAN ON THE SPOT.

The permission for the County War Agricultural Committees to use their discretion in recommending roots, kale and other green crops as suitable crops to be grown in certain instances on newly ploughed up grassland is important. Many cases have been brought to the notice of the Ministry where it would obviously be more sensible for the newly ploughed land to be put into roots and corn grown on existing arable than to risk a corn crop where wireworms are rampant.

County Committees are providing scope for a combined effort in agricultural administration. Landowner, farmer and farm worker are working together for the national welfare and the common good of the industry. There is nothing surprising in this. They have always found agriculture and its problems common ground, as anyone will realise who has been to an agricultural show and seen these three partners in the land meeting without self-assertion or self-consciousness on either side.

But a particular tribute is due to the representatives of the farm workers on these committees. They have been taking a broad view of their responsibilities. They have not sat at the end of the table and only intervened when questions of labour arise, but have brought a full measure of wisdom and shrewd knowledge to the technicalities of farming to the discussions. It is evident that to them, no less than to others who live by the land, farming is still not only a trade but a way of life.



### DEFEATING THE WIREWORM.

Wireworms are the pest most likely to be troublesome on ploughed up land. As many as 500,000 per acre may be present. They continue to feed for a time on turf that has been ploughed, but as it decays they move to a new crop.

If the land has been ploughed in summer and sown in autumn, the time of greatest risk is during the following spring - normally, therefore, to the first crop. But if the land has been ploughed in late winter or early spring the first crop may escape and the second crop be the sufferer. With autumn ploughing the result will depend on the rate of decay of the turf, which varies according to its nature and soil conditions.

The best way to defeat the wireworms at this season is to harrow the ground as much as possible so as to break up the turf and to give the birds the best chance to deal with the pest at the same time consolidating the ground.

Consolidation is of the utmost importance in order that the seed may lie in a compact, solid bed with no "pockets" caused by loose lumps of turf. The object of this is to give the seed the opportunity to germinate and grow in a strong healthy condition, fitted to resist such attacks. With wheat, consolidation may easily spell the difference between success and failure.

Wheat, oats, barley and potatoes are all susceptible to wireworm attack. Winter wheat, because of its tillering power, can overcome a considerable attack provided the soil is solid and fertile. Potatoes holed by wireworms are spoiled for the market, but they can be used for animal feeding and not wasted.

Rye is somewhat resistant, and on very light land difficult to get firm it offers less risk than wheat. Peas will usually succeed on wireworm infested land, also such crops as kale, rape, turnips, mangolds and sugar beet.



"THERE IS A TIME FOR SOWING ....."

Wireworms are most active from late winter or early spring until the beginning of summer, with a shorter period of activity from early to mid autumn. Winter wheat sown at the right time should almost escape the autumn activity and be well established before the spring. But late sown winter wheat is liable to checks by cold weather and the plant will then be so small in spring that it falls an easy prey to wireworms. Plenty of seed should be used when cereals are sown late.

Spring oats are bound to be at the state of greatest susceptibility when the pest is at its maximum. Therefore if oats are to follow grass, they should be sown in fields ploughed after Christmas so that the wireworm can feed on the turf and leave the oats alone while the plant is becoming established. The same applies to spring wheat. Barley, which can be sown later than spring wheat or oats, may escape an attack that would have ruined these other crops because it has not to cope with the pest for so long.

Frit flies are abundant in leys containing much rye grass. But spring oats alone suffer from them appreciably, and they may be ruined if sown late. In the south of England, where Frit attack is most to be feared, it is folly to sow oats late if there is any danger of this pest. Barley should be chosen if the land cannot be got ready in good time and a cereal is required.

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FARM MEN FOR THE FORCES.

21-Year Olds and Upwards Mostly Exempt.

Farmers are reminded that, although all men within the age group 20 to 22 will have to register, the only men to be called up from agriculture will be those who are now 20 years old, and younger men as they attain that age. The Schedule reserves farmers and most classes of farm workers at the age of 21 years.



Men registered this year under the Military Training Act who have since attained the age of 21 years will not be called up; and none of this year's class will be called up until November.

So far as can be foreseen, the annual loss to agriculture in future years will be not more than about 15,000 men, or some 3 per cent. of the wage-earning men and boys regularly employed in farming.

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#### THE MAN WITH THE SPADE

##### News From The Diggers' Front

Reports continue to come in relating how local authorities, great and small, are making their arrangements to provide the extra 500,000 allotments that Britain needs now. The London Passenger Transport Board are offering 20,000 acres of land bordering their railway lines; Middleton Park Golf Course are digging up 1,600 square yards; Sunderland contemplates 2,000 plots; Ramsgate 300 acres; a proposal has been made to plough up part of Newcastle's Town Moor. Scores more might be mentioned. Ilford schoolchildren evacuated to Ipswich are report to have set themselves the task of trebling the number of allotments in that town. The Mayor (Mr. E.L. Hunt) is offering prizes to the best gardeners and Ipswich Council has given them a free hand in the matter of land.

A teacher says that the children are writing home at night to compare notes with their parents who have allotments.

The local authorities' response is most encouraging. So far there are more reports of available allotments not taken up than of would-be allotment holders who cannot get land, but it is essential that there should be no applicant willing to "Dig for Victory" whose need for land cannot be satisfied.



### FEEDING THE LAND.

Manure is certain to be a problem for allotment holders. Less horse manure will be available from city streets than in the last war. But the difficulty can be overcome by using compost, made by rotting down waste vegetable matter in heaps. Any vegetable matter that is not diseased will do. Stinging nettles, for example, or other fresh green herbage, are particularly good because they generate heat. Since the process of decomposition will take some time, the sooner the heaps can be started the better.

There are various methods of composting. Some of them include the use of chemicals to hasten the decomposition, and proprietary materials are available for this purpose. They add to the expense, but very greatly speed up the process. Fairly good results can be obtained by adding an occasional spadeful of nitrogenous fertiliser, for example, sulphate of ammonia, when the materials are brown and fibrous, such as, dead leaves, cabbage stalks and hard stemmy plants and by adding an occasional spadeful of lime when the material is green and succulent - lawn mowings, potato tops, cut grass, green weeds or other plants. Again, if any farmyard manure can be obtained, much good will be done by incorporating it in the heap.

### HOW TO MAKE COMPOST.

Collection of garden waste is easy enough, but kitchen waste needs more care. Potato peelings, cabbage leaves, egg shells, orange peel and such things are all right. Broken glass, tins and china are not. It will be easier to separate them at once, throwing the unusable stuff in the dust-bin and the usable in a separate heap.

A useful size for a compost heap would be 3 yards by 1 yard; if you make it larger or smaller, keep roughly to these proportions. Arrange the refuse available along the edges of this oblong and so make a kind of "frame" enclosing a rectangular piece of ground. Make the height of the frame about 18 inches,



building up to it as the material comes to hand. Then, when the "frame" is complete, dump any more material inside it.

When the "frame" is full, sprinkle with some unslaked lime, after which cover lightly with soil. Continue in the same way with a third, fourth and fifth layer, but slope the sides gradually inwards, like those of a pyramid, except that a pyramid goes to a point and the heap will go to a line.

All that remains now is to cover the heap lightly with soil, both top and sides. Pat it gently into shape with a spade and leave it. A trough stamped out along the top will collect rain-water and help decomposition. At the end of three or four months, turn the heap over and build it again into a similar heap but without making layers or adding more lime.

At the end of eight or nine months you will have a black mass of life-giving compost, an organic fertiliser that would cost £2 a ton to buy or considerably more in smaller quantities.

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#### FUEL FOR GRASS DYING.

#### No Restriction Likely.

Owners of grass-drying plants are likely to be able to obtain their fuel supplies to operate to normal capacity next year. They have naturally been anxious about the position, which of course, affects their ploughing up plans this autumn in many cases.

The Ministry of Agriculture has been in touch with the Mines Department, and although no definite guarantee can be give that all the supplies required will be immediately available, no real difficulties are anticipated.

Local Fuel Overseers have been instructed to give special treatment to premises used for growing or processing food, and they have power to grant complete exemption from rationing in certain cases. Owners of grass-drying plants should therefore communicate with their Local Fuel Overseer and explain their position.