

Suggestions on Clearing Land

CLEARING land is the biggest proposition that the farmer or land holder of the northwest is up against. This applies especially to the region west of the Cascade mountains. Probably no other one thing has served more to retard the development of this region than the tremendous cost in labor, time and money of getting the land cleared and ready for cultivation. Any suggestion or method that will save even a small amount per acre should mean a great deal in the aggregate.

My experience in land clearing in the northwest is limited but I have cleared and superintended the clearing of hundreds of acres in the hardwood regions of Missouri, also the pine land country of Alabama and, while conditions in those states are quite different from those in this country, still, I think out of that experience I can offer some suggestions that will be helpful to the man who is up against land clearing in this country.

Of course, no method or suggestion can be made to apply indiscriminately to all kinds and conditions of land clearing, but each man may discern which suggestions, if any, are applicable to his especial piece of clearing.

To the man with second-growth timber, or timber too small to be of commercial value, my method of clearing pine lands in the south may offer some helpful suggestions. For that country it simply cut the cost in half. I proceeded as follows:

Preliminaries.

In early midsummer—the beginning of good drying weather—I went into the timber with a force of men, pairing them to right hand and left hand choppers, and assigning to each pair a strip of ground about 20 feet wide, these strips paralleling each other across the land to be cleared. The men were instructed to cut all trees nearly to the point of falling, until they had gone some distance, when each pair of choppers was given the signal to throw a tree in the direction from which they had come. I will add that all trees had been cut to fall behind them, as grass behind the mower. This was easy while the timber was straight and the weather usually calm at that season of the year. At the given signal each pair of choppers would fell a tree as nearly simultaneously as consistent, and as the timber was thick these trees, striking others, caused whole areas, sometimes amounting to an acre or two, to fall. This insured, first, the easy felling of all trees in the same direction, and at the same time with less labor than if each tree had been felled separately. The tree trunks all lay parallel and not tangled up. Thus was greatly lessened the subsequent work of piling the poles for burning, after slashing had been fired. In this way the slashing was quickly done and the trees left to dry just as they fell. Right here is a point, if all limbs are left on the trees the sap will be pumped out of the trunks in a fraction of the time it would take the sun to dry it out. This insures a much better burn. Having the timber distributed uniformly over the ground instead of piled insures a more uniform destruction of briars and other small growth at firing time. I let this dry as long and as thoroughly as weather conditions would permit; then, with a force of men stationed at intervals around the slashing, I gave the signal—a revolver shot—to begin firing; each man to fire to the right of him until he reached the point where the next one began. This gave me quickly a circle of fire around the entire slashing which, in reasonably calm weather, causes a current of air from circumference to center of slashing. This air current quickly became almost a gale from all sides of the slashing towards the center. The burn was complete and thorough, nothing much being left except the trunks of the trees which were easily ricked into winrows and burned.

Pulling Stumps.

In this country elimination of the stumps is the biggest item. Here, as there, I find many decayed stumps, especially in the logged-off lands, which, if properly handled, can be burned out entirely with little additional work by burning trash upon them. These stumps are usually coated with a punky substance having great capacity for holding water. With the first firing, if done at the driest time, most of these stumps will be stripped of this punky coating, leaving the harder interior portions now exposed to sun and air. If this slashing, and firing of some, can be done a year or two in advance of the bulk of the grubbing, several advantages may be gained. On the second year—dry time—it will be found that those stumps so exposed will fall a much easier prey to fire than at the first burning, remnants from the slashing fire being used to burn about these stumps. Another practice I have found good here and elsewhere, is this: Where it is feasible sow the land in grass, clover preferably, as early after the slashing fire as consistent. This will serve several good purposes; the clover, being a legume, will prove a good soil builder and make good pasture if desired. If a good stand is secured it will smother briars and other small wild growth, subduing them to a considerable extent. I have also found that clover will greatly hasten the decay of stumps, making the work of grubbing much easier when you get around to it.—A. J. Miller.

Grain Fed Hogs

By G. R. Samson, Instructor in Animal Husbandry, O. A. C.
(Special to the Farm Magazine.)

AT THE present price of grain and hogs, hog feeding looks a little discouraging. If a man has 500 bushels of grain and his pigs return only one-hundred weight for four-hundred sixty pounds of grain consumed, the pigs are returning little more than miller's prices for the grain. To be sure the feeder has some of the valuable part of the grain left in the form of the fertilizing constituents in the manure, but some feeders have not learned that there is any value attached to this product. Most feeders insist on a feeder's profit over and above that inherent in the manure. How to do this without securing a higher price for hogs is a problem which many are asking the Experiment Station to solve. While there are many problems connected with pig feeding on which the Experiment Station is still laboring and will yet have to work out this one at least is largely solved.

When grain is fed alone some of it is not utilized to the best advantage by the pigs because the pigs require something to put with the grain to enable them to make the most complete use of the grain. That is, the grain does not contain all the ingredients in just the correct proportion to suit the pigs' needs. The ingredient which is deficient in the grain is the albuminous or nitrogenous one commonly called protein. A pound and a half of skim-milk or buttermilk with each pound of grain fed makes it possible for the pigs to make much more complete use of the grain.

In the absence of milk or in case an insufficient quantity of it is available, tankage is the cheapest thing on the market to make the grain more efficient. At \$50 per ton, 10-pounds of tankage to 90-pounds of grain will increase the cost of a hundred pounds of feed by ten cents but it will make that hundred pounds of feed produce 2.65 pounds more pork, which at 7c per pound amounts to \$18.55 per hundred. In other words the feeder nearly doubles on every cent which he puts into tankage and feeds in the proportion suggested. In terms of returns per hundred pounds of gain on the hogs, the feeder secures 87½ cents more when he feeds tankage than when he feeds straight grain. In terms of the price which the pigs return for 100-

pounds of grain, the tankage enables them to pay 22.3 cents more per hundred or \$4.66 per ton. If the pigs were only paying market prices for grain when fed grain alone, this \$4.66 may justly be counted as a feeder's profit in addition to which the tankage has added a very considerable item to the fertilizing value of the manure.

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