

FORAGE FOR DAIRY COWS.

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A QUESTION which often proves perplexing to the dairy-farmer, and one which requires serious consideration, is how to provide a supply of early spring forage for in-calving cows. The subject is of vital importance, as each spring numbers of cows drop their calves before the ordinary pastures are producing more than sufficient to maintain life. At such times the value of artificial feeding is inestimable. Numerous crops are well adapted for supplying the dairyman's requirements, and the virtues of several have already been expounded by the writer.

A plant which has not received the attention it merits for this purpose is chou moellier, though it has formed the subject of numerous favourable reports. As forage for dairy cows it probably excels.

An important experiment in this connection has been conducted at the Moumahaki Experimental Farm, the primary object of which was to test the value of various forage crops for fattening lambs for the early market. On the 29th March, 1912, several acres were sown with rape, Buda kale, thousand-headed kale, silver-beet, and chou moellier. The seed was sown on ridges 26 in. apart, and the plants were afterwards singled to, roughly, about 15 in. apart. The crop was horse-hoed late in the autumn and during the early spring, but very little cultivation could be given owing to continuous rains. With the exception of silver-beet (which was sown at the rate of 6 lb. of seed per acre) the other varieties of forage received 3 lb. seed per acre. The manure, $3\frac{3}{4}$ cwt. per acre, was similar throughout, being basic superphosphate, 3 cwt.; sulphate of potash, $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.; and nitrate of soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt.

Chou moellier produced the heaviest crop, and on the 16th September, when stocking commenced, the approximate yield was 20 tons per acre. It was not so readily eaten as rape, though as cow-feed it certainly appeared pre-eminent.

Considering that chou moellier thrives during the winter, is easily cultivated, transplants readily, and gives a wealth of feed during the early spring, it will amply repay the farmer to give it a trial next autumn.