

## THE FIRST LAYER.

The whole success of the process of silage-making may be said to depend on the management of the first layer. The farmer should carefully study the instructions in regard to this before proceeding with the building of the stack, especially as local conditions and the season of the year largely influence the procedure to be adopted.

Much depends on the condition of the material to be made into silage. For instance, in the spring it may be of a rank succulent nature, whereas in the latter part of the summer it may be too ripe, and therefore rather dry for the purpose. In the former case it is difficult to get the heat up in the desired time, and sometimes it is necessary to wait a day or two to secure the desired temperature, whereas in the latter case it may be difficult to control the temperature. Where silage is being made on a large scale and the cost of labour is a consideration, a good plan where very succulent material is being handled is to start the work of stacking at the end of the week, so that the day of rest may be availed of to bring about the desired condition in the foundation of the stack before building is proceeded with. With dry material—of course, if succulence has quite disappeared silage-making is out of the question—the desired temperature in the foundation layer will be probably secured at once; and in dealing with this ripe fodder it is generally necessary to stack as rapidly as possible, and get the weight on without delay. Weight—provided by the silage material's own bulk and by the earth on top—is essential to stop the oxidation process when it has proceeded far enough, for if the oxidation (which takes place in the presence of air) continues the material will be burnt up and be useless.

The simplest method of ascertaining the temperature of the bottom layer is to insert perpendicularly a 1 in. galvanized-iron pipe in the centre of the stack, to within about 3 ft. from the ground. In this suspend a thermometer attached to a string. The bottom of the pipe will of course remain open, but the top end of the pipe must be closed by a cork. A cheap and fairly reliable thermometer, very suitable for the purpose, can be obtained from suppliers of dairy requisites, and probably may be secured from the nearest dairy factory.

## BUILDING THE STACK.

In making the stack the ordinary procedure in stack-building should be reversed. Thus, instead of the centre being the highest part of the surface it should be lower, if anything, than the sides, the idea of this being that the sides press out to a level with the centre when weight is applied.