

SEASONAL NOTES.

THE FARM.

SOWING OF GREEN FORAGE CROPS.

IN nearly all parts of the Dominion November is the principal month for the sowing of summer and autumn green forage crops, both for the supplementary feeding of dairy cows and the fattening of sheep and lambs.

For rape, if the land is dirty, it is good practice to sow in drills 21 in. to 28 in. apart and intercultivate. By this method the land is well cleaned, and heavy crops of good feeding-quality may be obtained. Seeding will range from 2 lb. to 3 lb. per acre, with from 2 cwt. to 3 cwt. of fertilizer. Generally freezing-works mixtures are considered very suitable for rape, and they give big yields, but in moist seasons rather much leaf is produced and the crop does not ripen as quickly as desirable, the nitrogen content doubtless accounting largely for this. Many farmers complain that they get heavy crops but very poor fattening results. Practice goes to show that a pure phosphatic manure such as super and Ephos, super and Nauru, or basic super, while not growing such a leafy crop as a mixture containing nitrogen, produces a much better fattening-crop. The heavy leafy crop is all right for dairy cows, but the shorter, firmer one is better for lambs.

For cow-feeding Buda kale is preferable to rape. It is not so heating, and the subsequent growths are quicker. The same rate of seeding and manure recommended for rape will do for the Buda kale. Thousand-headed kale also has many good qualities as a forage crop.

In many districts, notably in Otago and Southland, chou moellier has proved an admirable crop for dairy cattle and sheep. It does not bloat cattle nor impart taints to milk. Further, although a member of the Brassica family, it is not affected by club-root to the same degree as turnips, a point much in its favour. Sown at the beginning of November this crop under usual conditions will be available for feeding off during February. It should be sown in 28 in. drills by the turnip-machine, at the rate of 1 lb. of good germinating seed per acre. Thinning has to be resorted to in order to give the plants plenty of room for development, and a distance of at least 14 in. between the plants should be allowed. The use of a mixture of 1 cwt. superphosphate and 1 cwt. finely ground rock phosphate should give good results. Intercultivation between the rows is necessary to obtain freedom from weeds.

Field-cabbages, especially of the Drumhead variety, are well worthy of trial for autumn and winter feeding. Excellent results have been obtained from them in the South. On club-rooted ground this crop would prove very susceptible to the disease, and consequently should not be sown in such land.

Maize may be sown when danger from frost is past. The Ninety-days variety is among the best for green feeding, sown at from 1½ to 2 bushels per acre. Suitable manures are those recommended for rape, at the rate of 3 cwt. per acre. Seed should be buried at least 1½ in., and guarded so far as possible against birds.

Japanese millet is a good fodder crop for cows and sheep, and should be given a trial in districts where rape does not do well. It requires a sheltered position to give good returns, and should not be sown too early—any time after the middle of November in the warmer districts, and the first week in December in colder situations. Sow through every coulter of the drill 16 lb. to 20 lb. of seed, and manure with superphosphate at 2 cwt. to 3 cwt. per acre. To get the best from millet feeding should start when the growth is 6 in. to 9 in. high, and the crop should be fed off in breaks. Treated thus it will give a number of feedings.

In tests of millet against rape for lamb-fattening the former has shown up very well, in several cases lambs having shown a bigger gain per head on the millet (see special article elsewhere in this issue). On the other hand, a good crop of rape will in a good season fatten more lambs per acre than the same area of millet. If not ready to start feeding millet when a few inches high it may be allowed to grow up to 18 in. or more and then be fed. So long as it is not allowed