

considered more or less a failure (which it generally is) even before it is put in.

The method by which this topwork is carried out is often debated—one farmer prefers the hustler, another sticks to the old and commendable practice of skimming. If horses are the only source of power, then skimming must be done, as sore shoulders are the only result of working a stiff-tined cultivator in grass land. If, however, a tractor is used, the question of skimming versus the hustler is more often determined by the land to be ploughed. Stubble land is best top-worked by the hustler. Where the pasture is run out to hair grass and catsear and is clean, skimming is probably the best.

Heavy turf consisting of pasture or old browntop is best done with the hustler, but full use must be made of the various widths of points which can be obtained for such implements. The land should be given one or two strokes with the narrow points and then followed by the wider ones. If

wide points are used first, the turf tends to roll off in large pieces, and it is impossible to break them down. If the land has been skimmed, further cultivation is necessary, and where the turf is heavy it may be necessary to cross-plough before cultivation.

Depth to Plough

When top-cultivation is carried out there is always the question of when and at what depth to deep plough. After the consideration of the type of soil, which, of course, determines the limit and the depth of ploughing, the other two points are crop and time. Some crops do quite well in raw soil, two of which are wheat and oats, and where these are to be sown, ploughing is often left to within a week or so of sowing. For the smaller spring-sown seeds, ploughing should be done as early as possible in order that the ultimate seed bed, that is, what will ultimately become the topsoil, may have time to weather. Early winter ploughing and lying in the furrow is,

therefore, the ideal, the depth being determined by the earliness. Where the land cannot be deep ploughed through wet conditions or other causes, early shallower ploughing must be done, as there is less weathering time left. The ploughing should, however, always be sufficient to bury the turf to such a depth that it will not again be brought to the surface by the subsequent work.

This timely and sufficient cultivation is the foundation of the crop. There is nothing new in it. Every man on the land today realises that the only way to get a crop of anything is to carry out cultivation early, thoroughly decay turf or the remains of the previous crop for plant food, and, above all, conserve moisture. Yet, how few do it! How much of the 400,000 acres of rape, swedes, and turnips to be planted for the next season's use is now in the furrow? And that is where it should be at this stage if failures are to be avoided.

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