ADVANTAGES OF SUBSOILING.

As Set Forth by an Enthusiastic Advocate of This Mode of Cultivation.

A Topeka correspondent of the Kansas Farmer, who approves of the modern subsoil plow, has the following to say on the subject of subsoiling: The subsoil plow is simple and inexpensive and is peculiarly adapted to run deep in the hardest subsoil with a moderate amount of power. This would permit the harrows (same we have to specially go down from the surface and be fastened far enough below the surface to not be evaporated upon by the hot sun, and would be exactly in the right place for the growing crops.

The hard subsoil, that has been getting harder and harder for ages, is all right, because when this new subsoiler is used thoroughly in that subsoil it makes the best reservoir possible for a beautiful supply of moisture and fertilizers. No danger of the fertilizer dropping out of it—and there is very little danger, if any, of ever getting an oversupply of water except in a cloudburst. And as for the hot, dry season it would work to damage. Another most desirable thing would result from possessing such a reservoir below the surface. It would tend to keep the surface of the soil cool, and thus induce considerable rains by condensation of the vapor in the atmosphere, which otherwise would be driven off by the heat rising from the ground.

One great disadvantage is not having the ground subsoiled is that in a long wet spell the thin portion of soil that has been made mellow by cultivation becomes so soaked that it cannot be worked for some time after the rain has ceased, and often by that time the hot sun has baked it so hard that it is almost next to impossible to cultivate it with any kind of tool.

Another point is that this late invention of a subsoiler is the only kind of plow that is needed on the farm. First, it can be used without any furrow being made for it to run in, by using a rolling cutter on it. It breaks and loosens the ground to first-class shape to the depth of two feet or easy at the second time of using it and leaves the surface soil all on top, just where it ought to be. The surface ranks of all plants are the feeders. Other roots that go deep are mostly for moisture. Then the best seeds, which generally are quite small in size if not in quantity, soon find their way down so low in the ground that they will never sprout or grow.

So say gently to the mold-board plow, because it is very poor practice to turn the soil over. Besides being a much more expensive way, it is many times more work and labor both for man and team. But rather, after having subsoiled the ground two feet deep, run a light gang subsoiler or spitter that would stir the soil 45 inches wide at a time, 18 to 15 inches deep, with one good team. If corn stalks or stale and stubble were on the surface, a rolling cutter could be used to prevent the spitter from clogging, or a cheap and simple tool could be constructed that would gather the trash into piles to be removed into a heap in a convenient spot to rot, and when done put back on the land much easier and with less expense than to turn it under and the weed seed up where it will grow.

The Russian Thistle.

That the thistle is spreading there can be no doubt. It is estimated that the Russian pest has now spread over 40,000 square miles of territory, and that the borders of this area are constantly increasing at the rate of 10 to 15 miles a year. There are over 1,000,000 acres of wheat land contracted in this western Dakotaland, and careful estimates of the agricultural department last year placed the loss at $2,000,000 from this weed alone. This last year it has caused a loss in that region, it is calculated, exceeding $4,500,000. At this geometrical ratio it is easy to conjecture what is going to happen in a few years. The danger is so appalling that the states and congress have been asked to provide relief and protection. Senator Hansbrough has introduced a bill providing a scheme of warfare to exterminate the thistle by digging it up before it goes to seed.

The foregoing is the popular verdict regarding the thistle. Following is one man's opinion. That man is a sheep grower in Dakota, and he regards the Russian thistle as a blessing. His sheep will eat it, and if cut when somewhat green it makes good hay for any kind of stock. Mr. Roberts thinks the Russian thistle only injurious to those who grow wheat year after year on the same land. It will force them to change their system of farming. But the tendency of the Russian thistle to spread everywhere makes it dangerous for farmers to rely upon it for forage. Mr. Roberts is evidently trying hard to take a hopeful view of what threatens to be a serious evil.

Experience With Spring Rye.

As Iowa correspondent of The Homestead contributes his mite of experience in the matter of growing spring rye. He states that his father in the spring of 1892 purchased two bushels of seed from Buck's county, Pa., sowed it on a choice piece of land, full plowed and harrowed it but one peck. He sowed it the next spring on stalk ground, but on account of dry weather at time of ripening the yield was but seven bushels per acre and of poor quality.

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Dated the 12th day of February, 1894.

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