

CONVERSATIONS



Planting Corn

By L.E. Buchholz

Planting — We had a John Deere and a Case planter on our farm near Lehr, North Dakota. They were complete with a neck-yoke, pole, and team evener. Each was pulled by a team of horses, and had rope-spaced marker arms. Each planted two rows.

Planters looked like light and simple machines. But they required a good driver and needed careful attention. We put the seed in 10-gallon cream cans, and set them at the fields' ends. The cans were weather-proof, and were easy to pour from.

Cultivating — We used two cultivators at a time. One was an IHC and the other was a John Deere. They plowed one row each at a time, and were pulled with a team of horses. These machines had four and five handles each, together with foot guides. If one enjoyed long hours of team field work, driving through an 80-acre field three times per season, then this was the kind of work to do. At the end of the day, the shovels had to be oiled to prevent rusting.

Hand Cultivator — This had handles like a breaker

plow. It could be set for wide or narrow rows. It had a front wheel, and was pulled by one horse. The leader walked in one row, the horse in the other, while another man guided the machine.

It would save much hoeing in the watermelon patch rows. But we still had to get down on our hands and knees to pull plant weeds. The machine was easy to load and haul. We did not favor any single horse work.

Binding — The corn binder might well be called a harvesting machine. It was pulled by three horses, and cut one row at a time. The driver was seated, and the machine had a bundle carrier. This allowed the bundles to be lined in rows for shocking. We would cut eight to 12 rows at a time and then make big shock piles. We put them up green for curing because we wanted this work done before it had any chance to be hit by frost.

Stallioners — From about May 15th to July 1st, draft horse stallion leaders were out with their horses



Corn cultivating (left) with blue roan mares. Sorrel mules (right) planting corn.



on the highways and byways. In most cases, it appeared that the stallion seemed to be leading the man. In their days, those community, or company, stallions were ruled over with an iron hand and kept under lock and key. A breeding road-stallion had to be kept under control. He had to perform well on strange farms.

Some local, historic sayings have stood the test of time in that they are still alive:

It was near the turn of the century that a Swen Carlson and his family became restless in the state of



Son Henry Buchholz leads stallion by name of Duke Scotty Farceur 29393.

Iowa, near Pilot Mound. He sent some of his sons and overseers to our part of North Dakota with orders to eye out a township of land, or 36 sections. He told them to make sure that good water and a grazing supply were in existence.

The men, on arrival, found the people to be hard-working Germans, living on small tracts of land, not even interested in the vast territory which lay in virgin sod. The lowans then sent a telegram back home, saying: "Dad, it's endless and hopeless as far as the eye can see, and as far as a horse can be ridden, there is grass waist-high to the horses and plenty of lakes."

And so one of the great stock empires of our time was established, headquartered two miles west of us. But the ranch failed. In our country, the winter cometh. And it can prove deadly. Feed gives out. Water freezes over. Lakes that are four- and six-feet deep can freeze solid to the bottom.

Now for a closing contrast. In 1934, an uncle of mine, on my mother's side, pulled into the yard. With great alarm and anger, he shouted: "What do you want with all this stock? There's not a blade of grass or leaf of hay in the 40 miles separating us! Shoot them all! They are worthless!"

"Take it easy," answered my father. "Calm down. When one door closes, another will open."

Those were true words my father spoke. But, believe me, things became rough. Nevertheless, we stayed on. The fact is we are still here. □