

[On the Benefit of Salt in Agriculture] Cadwallader Ford

Date: 1786/09/05

Author

Cadwallader Ford

Publication Format

Print

Type

Agriculture

Ingredients

salt
flax
flax seed
oats
winter rye
Indian corn

Places

Wilmington
Massachusetts
America
Halifax
Nova Scotia

Source: Nova Scotia Gazette

Institution: Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:** Microfilm Reels 990, 8162, 8163, 9466

Description

Instructions for sowing salt along with flax and other grain seed to increase yield. Vol. 16, No. 1065. Microfilm Reel 8162. The letter was also published in *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 55, p. 72 (Edinburgh: Murray and Cochrane, 1793) and *The European Magazine, and London Review*, Vol. 23, p.88 (London, 1793).

Transcription

On the benefit of SALT in Agriculture [By
CADWALLADER FORD, ESQUIRE,
of Massachusetts.]

IN my younger days, I studied much how to get the benefit of *salt*, to make the land yield its increase: to that end, I put one peck of salt upon every load of meadow hay, as it was put into the barn; which had a good effect upon the cattle and the dung. And once, when I had sowed three bushels of flax seed, the ground being smooth and clean, I sowed three bushels of salt; which had a good effect: the flax was well coated, taller,

and fuller of seed, than I ever had any before; it was judged there were 50 bushels of seed from the three acres, which as flax seed sells now, at 5s. per bushel, would go nearly to pay for all the labour which is required in dressing and cleaning the flax. Since that, I have read, in Mr. Elliot's book of husbandry, of a gentleman, who sowed a Piece of land with flax, and sowed salt upon it at the rate of five bushels per acre, except a strip through the middle: the effect was that where the salt was sowed there was tall, good flax; but the strip which had no salt was poor and short, and good for little. I judge that five bushels of salt to the acre was too much for the benefit of the land; but, being called off from husbandry to attend other affairs, I left the care of my farm with my sons, who used no salt until last spring, A. D. 1785. The land being very wet and miry, till near the latter end of May, we sowed one acre of flax, and after it was come up near a finger's length, we sowed a bushel of salt upon it, which had a good effect; the flax grew well to a good height, but we had not quite ten bushels of seed, owing, as I conceive, to the unfriendliness of the season. There was none of my neighbours, for two miles round, that had any that would much more than pay for pulling: therefore whenever you sow flax seed, be sure to sow double the quantity of salt to your seed, and you will have a good crop, if the season suit.

I advise all to make the experiment, and try a glad in your oats, and even your winter rye, and all sorts of grain that you sow, and even your Indian corn, at the rate of two bushels of salt to an acre. You may depend upon it, that every bushel of salt sowed, will produce you more than five times the price of the salt; and, *perhaps, ten times* so much.

Annotations

Cadwallader Ford:

(1703-1790) A well-known Revolutionary War veteran and attorney from Wilmington MA.

On the Benefit of Salt in Agriculture recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes: <https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/212>