

Blacksmithing on the Farm

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One of the most important things in farming is to know how to do a large part of your own blacksmithing. If a farmer has some mechanical ability, it will take very little experience to do this. A farmer having a shop of his own, will be able to do nearly nine tenths of his blacksmith work, repairing machinery, etc.

Perhaps in no phase of farm work does a farmer so little realize how much time and money he loses in going to a blacksmith shop.

First, there is the time spent in going, then the time spent in waiting for the workmen to finish other jobs ahead of him, and then he is obliged to pay a good round price for a small job.

A workshop on the farm is always a good sign that the farmer believes in having a place where he may profitably spend his time on rainy days that otherwise would be wasted.

The shop should be large enough to make it convenient in all ways for the work that can be done inside, also have a sufficient amount of windows so there will be plenty of light.

The first thing to consider in furnishing a shop is the forge. Be sure to get it large enough, to avoid trouble when heating a large iron. A good forge will cost from fifteen to twenty-five dollars. This is the most expensive part of the outfit in the shop, but it is the most useful.

The anvil is the next in importance. This should weigh at least eighty or a hundred pounds and should be made of the best material so that it will stand hard pounding without fear of breaking. A good anvil will cost about twelve or fifteen dollars, but it pays to buy the best. The same is true of the vise. Get one that will stand hard usage. A vise made of wrought iron and steel jaws is the best. It will cost from four and a half up to six dollars.

The hammers are one of the essentials in a shop. They should weigh from one and a half to three pounds. A hammer weighing a pound and a half is the most convenient size for common use, and a hammer of two and a half or three pounds will be convenient to have for heavier work.

A farm shop should also have two pairs of tongs, a plain pair and a pair of bolt tongs. Also a set of stocks and dies for cutting the threads on bolts, etc.

There should also be a good drill press and a set of drills in the farm shop.

Besides these tools there will be needed a supply of blacksmith coal, iron, steel and numerous other small things. A blacksmith outfit with a small supply of coal, iron and steel would cost about sixty-five dollars or more.

On buying coal for blacksmith purposes one should be careful as to the kind he is getting. There are various kinds of blacksmith coal on the market. For blacksmithing, the very best coal should be used, because a poor grade of coal contains a large percentage of impurities, as sulphur, gases, etc. Iron cannot be welded with this kind of coal, and steel would be injured if brought in contact with it while hot. As iron cannot be welded in the presence of sulphur, great care