

STATE OF MARYLAND,

Serious Effect of the Drought in Harford County.

SHORTAGE OF CROPS OF ALL KINDS.

Sugar Corn and Tomato Packing Interests—The Dry Weather and the Milk Business—Destructive Forest Fires in the Catoctin Mountains.

BELAIR, MD., Aug. 13.—Although a most welcome rain passed over Harford county Saturday afternoon, it was not a sufficient remedy for the evil done by the long-continued drought under which all farming operations have suffered irreparably. Reports are continually coming in from all quarters concerning the shortage of crops of every kind. While everything in the line of growing farm products is very much injured, by far the worst blow has fallen on the crops planted for the canning industry, which is a very large one in Harford.

The tomato crop is very much blighted and will not average one-third of the expected yield. In this line there is another danger threatened. It is in the form of a disease, which appears to attack the growing fruit in certain localities. This disease is a hard black spot in the centre of the tomato. The fruit appears to be perfectly good and solid, but when cut open it is found to be hard and black in the centre and unfit for use. Mr. Howard Amos, of Benson, picked one day this week three bucketsful of tomatoes and from them he saved only six good ones, the rest being affected by the disease mentioned, though to all outward appearances the vegetables were perfectly good.

The corn crop is punning out very short. There cannot possibly be over one-third of a crop, and hardly that much is expected. In traveling through the southern section of the country the writer saw fields of corn in which the stalks were not over three and one-half or four feet high, in full tassel, and no ears at all. The blades in many instances were to all appearances dead or very nearly so. Cannors are much worried over the state of affairs, as many of them have sold futures which they will in all probability not be able to fill from their own pack. This will necessitate buying the balance in the market at greatly advanced prices.

Mr. Charles B. Osborne, of Aberdeen, one of the largest and most successful packers in Harford county, says that with the most favorable season from now out he doesn't think there can be one-third of a pack, either of corn or tomatoes. He also said that in a conversation with W. Beatty Harlan, son of the late Dr. David Harlan, of Churchville, he learned that the appraisers appointed to appraise the estate of the late Dr. David Harlan estimated the crop of growing corn at eight barrels to the acre, where, in an ordinarily good season, the same ground had produced and would produce from fifteen to twenty barrels to the acre. Many fields of corn will not produce enough to pay for the fertilizers put on the ground. Pasturage has suffered much also, and now is completely gone.

Mr. R. Morgan Mitchell, of Aberdeen, who farms on an extensive scale and is also largely interested in canning, is stabling all of his cattle and feeding them on grain, as they could not live on the pasture in its present condition. Some of the farmers are driving their cattle to the canning-houses to feed them on the corn husks, while others are buying the husks and hauling them home to feed to their stock.

Mr. S. Griffith Davis, who owns a large farm on the bay shore near Oakington, reports a general shortage in his crop. He has raised enough for his own stock, but has none for the market.

The pasture shortage is also seriously affecting the milk business, and some dairymen will have to shut down on their shipments. A meeting of milk-shippers was held this week and a committee was appointed to see if they could get the freight lowered one cent and the prices advanced one cent per gallon; otherwise many of them will have to stop shipments, owing to pasture shortage. Prominent among the milk-shippers of the county are Mr. Edward Oldfield, of the Rocks; Mr. Wilbur Wallis, of Forest Hill, and Mr. Wm. Smithson, of Allebone. Some milk-dealers have gone out of the business, and others say that unless conditions become more favorable soon they will have to go out also.

These are only a few of many instances, and many other noted farmers interviewed have given in substance the same reports, all of them complaining of the alarming shortage of crops all over the county. Mr. Wm. Munnikhuisen, tax collector, who has occasion to travel over the county a great deal, says that things generally look much worse than he has ever seen them before. Affairs are becoming very serious, and only very speedy and very heavy rains can help matters now.

Hon. James B. Preston, father of J. Harry Preston, of Baltimore, and Walter W. Preston, State's attorney of Harford county, has been ill for several days past. He has been sent to Johns Hopkins Hospital for treatment.

J. S. Richardson and Edwin H. Webster of J., trustees, sold to Frank C. Beeman Union farm, containing 535 acres, and Montreal, containing 16 acres, for \$2,300.