

**ENSILAG: BEING SOME  
NOTES ON  
THE CONSTRUCTION AND  
MANAGEMENT**

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Ensilag: Being Some Notes on the Construction and Management by John F. W. Gatherer

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**JOHN F. W. GATHERER**

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# ENSILAGE.



# ENSILAGE

BEING

Some Notes on the  
Construction and Management  
of the  
different kinds of Silos,  
together with Observations on the  
Value of Silage for Farm Stock.

BY

JOHN F. W. GATHERER.

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1904.





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## TO THE READER.

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The following notes have grown somewhat out of lectures delivered in October last at the Government School of Agriculture, Elsenburg. When, as an afterthought, it occurred to me that a wider use might be made of the observations they contain, I consulted with those in a position to judge, and, meeting with encouragement, resolved to publish them.

In general design the pamphlet retains the character of the original lectures, which were, in accordance to the presumed expectations of a young and progressive audience, an attempt to display the importance of, and necessity for, the general introduction of a more advanced agricultural method.

To prevent any misunderstanding, perhaps I should say that the writer does not claim any of that praise which belongs to those who suggest an altogether new and improved plan for the mitigation of the many difficulties which beset the South African farmer, but he does hope that the intelligible and handy form of this little book will bring the subject to the notice of many who will, he trusts, profit by its perusal.

JOHN F. W. GATHERER.

Government School of Agriculture,  
Elsenburg, April, 1904.

## INTRODUCTION.

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Every few years some part of South Africa is visited by prolonged periods of drought which bring with them severe consequences to the farmer. Those who remember the terrible results of droughts such as occurred in 1890 and 1897, not to mention the great drought we have just experienced, will understand the extent to which we are dependent on seasonable rains for any measure of agricultural prosperity. Of course the natural remedy for our untoward conditions in regard to uneven distribution, throughout the years, of a scanty rainfall, is the storing of water; and it is good to have the testimony of competent men that the possibilities of engineering systems of irrigation in our sub-continent are great. But the construction of reservoirs, canals and the boring of holes, with the passing of the necessary legislation, must needs take a long time, and we would be the last to hurry unnecessarily those on whom it falls to perfect those future sources of wealth, for we agree that such schemes require thorough inquiry and deliberation before they are put into execution. In addition to these periodical droughts, the South African farmer has much to deter him in making that progression of which we have heard so much lately from the lips and pens of those, who, are only armed with a limited knowledge of the many untoward conditions, such as the great prevalence of animal and plant diseases, the difficulty in obtaining labour, etc., under which we struggle. Personally, we have long since come to the conclusion that the systems of farming pursued in the different parts of the Colony are the best under the circumstances, for they have been evolved by a shrewd, observant race of men during generations of varied experiences. It would require, then, a bold man who would come forward and propose any great departure from the old custom, if the conditions under which the old ways had grown up had remained the same, or had shown no sign of changing. But, fortunately—or shall we be tempted to say with some un-