Build your own low-cost library

J. A. Mallett

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Build Your Own Low-Cost Library

Although I have managed to acquire a fairly extensive library of farming books, I find that the most useful volumes on my bookshelves are not the products of the recognised publishing houses. For a number of years I have been making collections of the Department of Agriculture bulletins on various farming subjects. These, when bound and indexed for easy reference are far more informative than most of the standard publications.

This is quite understandable. Take, for instance the case of a farmer who spends three or four guineas on a book dealing with stock diseases. He usually finds that 80 per cent. of the book is devoted to diseases which he is not likely to encounter, or which he couldn't do much about, even if they did appear in his flocks and herds.

Because of the book's wide coverage, the diseases which are likely to be encountered in Western Australia may be dealt with somewhat briefly, and—as standard textbooks are not published at very frequent intervals—the treatments, preventive measures and other details may not be up-to-date.

On the other hand, the Veterinary Division of our Department of Agriculture has published bulletins on most of the diseases which occur among stock in this State—comprehensive articles covering cause, symptoms, preventive and curative measures. They are revised at fairly frequent intervals so that they incorporate the results of recent research work.

These articles usually appear in the Journal and are then reprinted in bulletin form, and these bulletins are available free of charge. By paying a small sum to have them bound, the farmer can obtain a cheap, but very informative book.

I found however that a disadvantage of this method of compiling a library was that just after I had bound all the available articles on a certain subject into one volume, another excellent article would be published and this would have to be held—perhaps for some years—until I could accumulate sufficient material for another book.

Some sort of loose-leaf arrangements which could be added to from time to time was the obvious answer to that problem, but nothing really suitable was available at a reasonable price.

I discussed the matter with a Perth bookbinder and he was most co-operative. As a result of our talk he made up some inexpensive loose-leaf binders which proved ideal. I have several now in use and thought that I would pass on the information as I feel sure that many Journal readers would like to build up similar low-cost libraries.

Cheap and Lasting

The covers cost only 8s. each, including postage and they are made to last a lifetime, being fully cloth-covered on stout boards.

They measure about 8in. x 10in.—a convenient size which takes our Western Australian Department of Agriculture bulletins, also those of the C.S.I.R.O. and the Departments of Agriculture of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

There is a ruled sheet for the index, and the width across the spine is about 1¼in. so that they will hold a good number of bulletins.
The loose-leaf attachment is a simple metal gadget with two thin flexible metal tongues; a grooved metal strip with slots to take the tongues, and a sliding cover to hold the tongues in place.

**PREPARING THE BULLETINS**

To make a neat job of filing the bulletins, measure down about 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) in. from the top edge of each one, and make a pencil mark at this point. The grooved strip is placed with the top slot over the pencil mark and a narrow chisel (I used an old screwdriver ground to a sharp edge) is placed in the slot and given a tap to drive it through the paper. Repeat the operation on the lowest slot of the grooved strip and the bulletin is ready for filing. The diagrams show the idea.

**MANY USES**

At 8s. each, these covers are cheap enough for the average farmer to buy several so that he can make up books on sheep, cattle and dairying, weeds and poison plants, horticulture, insect pests, plant diseases, gardening, poultry or whatever subjects he is interested in. The housewife could make up a very useful volume of the "Farm and Home" articles, or by including some blank pages could make a useful scrapbook for recipes and handy hints.

A full list of the departmental publications appeared in the September-October issue of the Journal, and I would suggest that the list contains sufficient good material for an excellent farm library. The loose-leaf binders are available from the maker—A. Pritchard, 130A Murray Street, Perth, at 8s. each.
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