

**Farm Department.**

CONDUCTED BY  
**J. M. BEATY.**

**TAKING UP STUMPS.**

In the best farming communities land is not considered fully cleared until the stumps are taken from the fields. It is surprising that farmers in any section will work around them year after year and never try to get them out of their way. We know fields that have been cleared fifty years and the old lightwood stumps are still there to hinder the farmer.

Stumps hinder work when cultivating the crop. There can not be as much nor as good plowing done in fields where they are. The hoe is hindered by them even more than the plow as it has a large part of the plow's work to do where the land is stumpy. Hoing around them is hard work and it seems to us that a farmer would not hoe around many before he would resolve to take them up and get them out of his way.

Stumps hinder the crop yield. From one to two stalks of corn or several stalks of cotton could be made in the place occupied by a stump.

Stumps break plows and other farm tools. The item of breakage alone would help considerably in paying for taking them up. There never was a time when improved farm implements and machinery were in such demand as now, but they cannot be used safely and successfully unless the fields are freed from stumps. Much grass was wasted by leaving it in the fields this season because the land was too stumpy to run a mowing machine. This hay was all needed for the stock. Improved methods of farming require that land be put in the best possible condition every way.

Stumps cause land to wash. Hillside land or land that is somewhat rolling cannot be stopped entirely from washing while they remain. Water will be turned out of some rows by stumps into others and thereby washes are started and a wash once started is hard to stop.

Some farmers look on getting up stumps as the hardest work ever done. This is a mistake. Much of the work done on the farm is as hard as that and some is even more so. Go at it and you will not find it so bad. Some have them taken up by the regular farm hands. Others have it done by paying so much each. Where they are mostly small you can have them taken up at three cents each; others would cost you four cents each, and where they are mostly large it is worth about five cents each. The farmer who gets stumps from three or four acres each fall and winter will soon find his farm free from them. The writer advised a farmer a year ago to take the stumps from his fields. He said he could do any farm work other than this but he could not do it. Later, however, he decided to make a beginning and got along far better than he expected. About three hundred were taken up and he says now all that remains must come up this winter.

The crops will soon be housed and November and part of December is the best time to do this work. It should be commenced as early as possible as it is hard to do much at it in midwinter when the ground is so much of the time very wet or frozen.

**Concerning Fertilizers.**

You ask me what brand of fertilizer might be best. If there is any one thing, aside from the common injudicious use of fertilizers that our farmers err in it is the buying of their fertilizer by the brand name. They should buy the analysis of the goods and get that which their land needs without any attention to what particular name it is called, for there are hundreds of brands

that are all made of the same materials in the same proportions, and the only difference in them is the brand. Very often two brands are put up and both taken out of the same pile. The important things in a complete fertilizer are the nitrogen (which the fertilizer men generally put on the bags as ammonia, because the figures look larger. Ammonia is a hydride of nitrogen and the nitrogen is all that is of value in the ammonia.) Phosphoric acid and potash. Now if the farmer is practicing a good short rotation of crops and is bringing in peas or clover on his land every three or four years, he does not need to buy a complete fertilizer, for he can get nitrogen or ammonia he needs through the peas or clover.

After a while perhaps our farmers will realize that the feeding of live stock and the making of manure is worth more to them than the dependence on the fertilizer mixer, and then they will realize that the place for a liberal application of the phosphoric acid and potash is on the legume crop. A crop of peas that has been liberally fertilized with acid phosphate and potash will not only give a larger crop of forage to feed to stock but from the greater development of roots will be able to fix more nitrogen in the soil, and in a little while through a good rotation of crops we can get to the point where we need only use the acid to help the growth of the peas or clover, and they will do the rest for us in a better manner than the direct application to the grain crop. When a farmer raises forage enough to feed stock enough to make manure enough to broadcast his corn field, he is getting to a large extent independent of the fertilizer man, for the broadcast application of good manure from well fed cattle will not only make him corn, but the small grain crop following the corn can be made from the same manure, and if this is followed by peas to which a liberal application of acid phosphate is made the crop following these will be better without fertilizer than if there had been none applied to the peas and some had been given to the crop direct whether this be cotton or wheat or what not. An application of three to four hundred pounds per acre of acid phosphate on the peas will tell more in the permanent improvement of the soil than a complete fertilizer applied to the sale crop.

It will be better because it adds more humus or vegetable decay to the soil, and this will make all fertilizer applications more effective. The past two seasons should have taught a valuable lesson to the cotton farmers of North Carolina. Last year, owing to the intense drought that prevailed, the land destitute of the moisture retaining humus failed to dissolve the fertilizer and it was largely lost, for the nitrogen was all washed out in the winter. This year the opposite conditions have done about the same thing. In the manufacture of fertilizers for the crop of this season the manufacturers found that nitrate of soda was unusually cheap, and a majority of them used this to add nitrogen to their fertilizers. Nitrate of soda dissolves very rapidly in the soil in presence of moisture, and all over the land we see high sandy soils on which these fertilizers were applied where the farmers say that the cotton has been drowned out by the heavy rains. The fact is that it has not been drowned out at all. It has been starved out by the heavy rains washing the soluble nitrate out of the reach of the plants. Now if these men had had plenty of vegetable matter in their soils through the growing of peas, there would have been organic nitrogen coming into use all through the summer, and the crop would have been fed instead of being starved by all the nitrate washing away.

The lesson then that the cotton farmer should learn from these two seasons is the folly of a dependence upon commercial fertilizer alone for the getting of crops, and the importance of growing peas or clover in a short rotation to supply them with the needed organic matter both in the roots of these plants and in the manure that would be made from the feeding of a rich food material.

This brings us to the point of noticing the difference in manure. Manure made from animals that stand out all winter and have only straw or shucks to eat, or even cotton hulls, is very poor stuff. The manure made from highly nitrogenous food like pea hay or clover hay and grain is also rich in the nitrogenous element, and a load of this manure is worth four times or more than

a load of the common manure on many farms. Shucks and cotton seed hulls are poor feed and poor feed makes poor manure, for the plant food must be in the feed before we can get it in the manure.

Then too the manure that is made under cover and is at once hauled out on the land is worth far more than the same manure left in an open lot for the rain to wash its valuable constituents out and let run down the hill. Spread out on the field where some plant will ere long be growing, the manure loses less than in any other way. The clay soil will absorb the soluble parts that would run to waste in the yard and will hold it till some plant calls for it.

And yet, almost in sight of where I write a man owning a dairy farm built his stables on top of a sharp hill right above a branch. He has a dry cow lot, for the best part of his manure washes right away to the branch, and his farm got little better through years of dairying which should have made it rich.

A writer in one of the Northern Agricultural papers recently said that he had seen farm after farm in New York State where the manure has been left lying under the eaves of the barn for a year or more leaching away. I replied that nothing of that sort could be seen among our southern farmers because they did not have the cattle to make the manure, and of course did not pile it under the eaves. But what little they have in many places is left in the open lot till it is hardly worth the hauling even if it had been good manure in the first place.

But there is a growing interest in stock keeping in some parts of the State, and strange to say there is more of this interest in the Eastern part of the State than in the Piedmont section that is even better adapted to live stock husbandry than the east.

We can grow the feed for cattle cheaper than the farmers of the North and West can, and our soil needs the home made manure worse than theirs, yet we still keep on in the cotton districts growing three bales of cotton for every steer we fatten, while we should be fattening three steers for every bale of cotton, and in the tobacco districts our farmers are afraid to enrich their lands for fear they will damage the tobacco crop. Better quit the tobacco if it condemns you to poverty of soil and go to growing grain and cattle and enrich the soil and make more in the end than tobacco will make. I know one man in the State of Maryland, in fact I have known two there, though one is now dead, who became millionaires at farming with wheat, corn and clover. One of these, Capt. Andrew Woodall, of Kent county, Maryland, is now 83 years old and still directs personally twelve of the thirty farms he owns, and his crops this year were one hundred thousand bushels of wheat and one hundred and twenty-five thousand bushels of corn. He has become more than a millionaire at farming, and yet there is nothing more common than to hear men say there is no money in farming right here in a country where the cotton crop properly managed is a far more profitable crop than the grain crops that have made Capt. Woodall's millions.

But he and his tenants farm and do not gamble on the chances with a little fertilizer in the hill. And we have here in North Carolina thousands of acres of land that would grow larger crops of wheat and corn than the lands he undertook to improve years ago.

We need here men with means who have faith in North Carolina soil, and faith in good farming.—W. F. Massey in North Carolina Christian Advocate.

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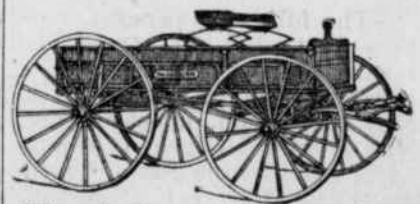
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