

Many Fields In Chowan Are Green In Winter Months

Health Condition Attributed to Increased Fertility

There are many green fields in Chowan County this winter, according to R. C. Jordan, soil conservationist. Many of these fields are green because farmers cooperating with the Albemarle Soil Conservation District are conscious of the need of conserving and increasing the fertility of their soils. They have planted their fields to the various kinds of winter-growing soil improving crops. Some farmers prefer to use Austrian winter peas, while others prefer to use either crimson clover or hairy vetch. "Regardless of the choice," says Mr. Jordan, "they are all growing with rapidity this warm winter season and they are making green canopies of much of Chowan County's land. Land fertility is being increased by their use."

Carter Bright White of the Center Hill community developed a soil conservation farm plan on his farm in 1944, with the assistance of the Chowan Soil Conservationist, Mr. Jordan. Since then Carter Bright has been growing wheat and vetch as a winter cover crop. He feels that this small grain and vetch combination is particularly adapted to his Norfolk sand soils. Carter says "Considering what it does for my sandy land, I had rather have it planted one year to the wheat and vetch than to have it planted to three years of Austrian peas." This conclusion is based on tests that he has made.

During the winter of 1948-49 Carter planted five of these Norfolk sand acres of his to winter cover crops—one-half to wheat and vetch seeded together and one-half to Austrian winter peas. All of the winter growth was turned under as a green manure crop and peanuts were planted on the whole of the five-acre tract. He harvested 48 bags of peanuts from the 2½-acres that were in Austrian winter peas and 59 bags of peanuts from the 2½ acres that were in the wheat-vetch combination.

Mr. Bright says that in addition to the increased yields from the wheat and vetch he also gets much more hog grazing from it during the winter months.

J. L. Wiggins, another SCS cooperator of the same community, uses vetch as a soil improving crop in his tobacco-peanut rotation. By sowing vetch following tobacco, he takes advantage of a long growing season to obtain good tonnage of green manure crops to turn for his peanuts. Mr. Wiggins says that he, too, likes vetch best for deep sandy soils.

A number of other Chowan farmers are using vetch for their soil improving winter cover crop. Like Mr. White and Mr. Wiggins, they are getting good results with it, especially on the sandy and deep sandy soils, according to Mr. Jordan.

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PART III

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