

### Lime, Phosphate And Beef Cattle

By T. W. FERGUSON

Lime, Phosphate and beef cattle or livestock of some kind are certainly a good combination for a permanent system of agriculture. This combination should, therefore contribute largely to a system of successful farming as far as production is concerned. The problem of marketing our products after they have been produced in the most economical manner constitutes an enormous problem in itself. It is a consoling fact to know that much is being done in the state and throughout the nation in a better marketing system for farm products. It is our task to discuss for a few minutes the great problem of economical production.

Our soil in this particular locality east and south of the Blue Ridge has been deficient in lime and phosphate for many years perhaps seventy-five years or more. This condition is partially due to our geographical location. The territory west of the Ridge has always had a greater lime content possibly due to the fact that it is a northern exposure and not subject so much to the scorching sun which is more or less common to our section with a southern exposure. Our impoverished condition in soil as well as in many other respects in this section is due mainly to our methods of farming rather than to geographical location. It is our observation that almost any section can be made into a good farming area if the proper methods are practiced.

Until the Soil Conservation Service was instituted a few years ago the majority of our farmers were miners of the soil instead of farmers. They used a one armed system of farming, employing either a one crop system like corn or tobacco, or if they used more than one crop they were of the soil depleting type using no legumes or soil crops or livestock to consume their feed. Furthermore they did not terrace their lands. Consequently with their one armed system of farming together with no provision for conserving and holding the soil, the farmer not only of this section but throughout the country woke up to a grim realization of the fact that most of the fertility of his soil had been depleted or leached away down the muddy mountain and piedmont streams

to an ocean bed. Some of this leached away soil has been recovered by the shrewd business man of the commercial fertilizer companies in eastern Carolina and shipped back to us at enormous prices as a filler in their product. As stated much of this deplorable situation of the farmer has been offset by the wonderful work of the Soil Conservation service and its agencies, the government extension service and county agents working cooperatively with farmers themselves.

It is, however, the age old story of locking the stall after the horse has been stolen, or is water or all gone over the dam never to be retrieved. We can build only on what we have left and with what nature has so wonderfully blessed us in a fine southern climate and a red subsoil rich in potash which is capable of rapid improvement by using proper methods. Some farmers have been using lime for many years but not until recently has Wilkes and adjoining counties used these very important soil building elements in an extensive way. Our personal experience and observations are that they are indispensable elements in building a permanent agriculture. We cannot grow legumes and the various soil building crops without them. They not only enable the farmer to grow legumes more successfully, but they aid very materially in growing better livestock. In dairy cattle the milk production is much better and in beef animals they are conducive to a bigger bone animal and a far better quality of meat. We would not say that they take the place of Commercial Fertilizers as many farmers think, but they make it possible to grow the legumes more successfully and more abundantly which supply the soil with nitrogen, humus and vegetable matter, thus indirectly eliminating the necessity of the farmer spending all or most of his profit in high priced fertilizers.

The farmer has been more or less a slave to Commercial Fertilizers for many years and which they have enabled him to grow better crops and larger yields, such practices have and are proving very expensive ways to grow crops. The cotton and Tobacco farmers have in particular been slaves to Commercial Fertilizers, to such an extent that they should be called manufacturers of these crops by a chemical process. They really should be classed as Manufacturers instead of farmers, because such a system is not in accord with a permanent system of

agriculture and is destined to prove a detriment to the industry. We would not go so far as to advocate a total elimination of commercial fertilizers in cotton and tobacco culture, but for such crops as wheat, corn and oats and other crops adapted to this area we do believe it is entirely possible and practical for the farmer to grow to a state of independence of commercial fertilizers and when this goal is reached the hard earned money invested in fertilizers may be directed to more lucrative channels.

When a farmer uses commercial fertilizers continually over a period of years he treats his soil more like a dope fiend. When the soil gets used to the quick acting elements in fertilizers it is absolutely necessary to continue to supply these elements in this way or the crops will pine away and produce but little. The plants are pampered and petted like hot house plants. We therefore hold that it is entirely possible for the farmer to eliminate commercially fertilizers entirely, unless it is in the form of fertilizers containing potash. Legumes certainly furnish nitrogen, and vegetable matter, barn yard manures furnish ammonia and humus, and our red subsoils furnish at least a fair portion of potash and I understand there are some plants that if grown will furnish potash, but it would probably come in a more expensive way than in commercial fertilizers.

In conclusion, it is highly important that we first terrace our lands, using lime and phosphate to grow legumes and livestock and this system will eventually build our soils to such a condition that it will be unnecessary to spend the most of the farmer's profit in purchasing high priced commercial fertilizers.

We can therefore highly recommend the use of lime and phosphate and livestock of some kind. Personally I have been growing beef cattle for many years, but have no complaint of the farmer who prefers dairying. I have always been too lazy to milk and prefer to let my calves do that. Beef production for this section has its advantage over dairying. It takes less expensive equipment, a cheap shed is adequate for keeping beef cattle and you are independent of a local market for sales more or less, whereas the dairyman must have expensive equipment in the form of buildings, concrete floors, milk machinery, etc., and he is subject to a strict government inspection

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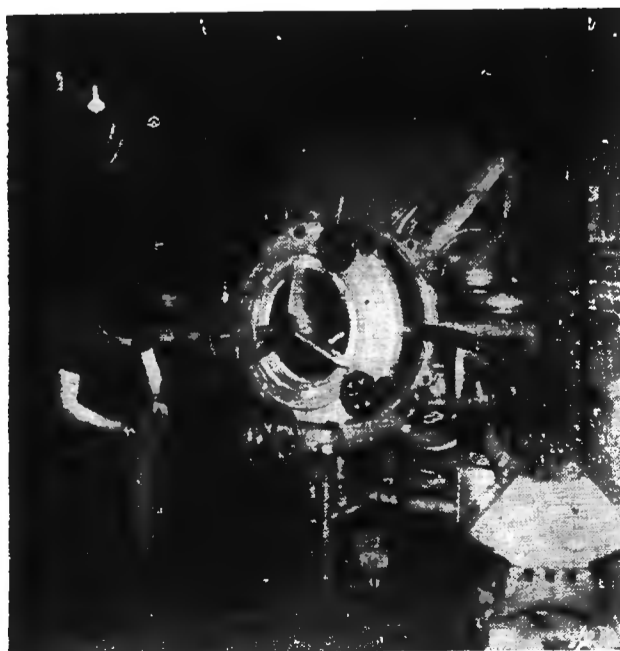
You don't discard your home because the paint wears off; you RE-PAINT—and renew the value. Then why discard slick, worn tires because the surface is gone? Why not RETREAD and renew their value? Retreading tires is OUR business—saving on tires should be given careful consideration. Free inspection service.

### Complete Line Pennsylvania Tires and Tubes for Every Car Or Truck Need.

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