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REMARKABLE DISCOVERY IN CORN CULTURE

Evidence at Recent Corn Congress of Farmers Who Have Tried the "Plan" With Great Success—The Questions and the Answers.

From The Columbia State.

Mont Clare, Darlington County, Dec. 21. — "The most important agricultural discovery ever made in the Southern States." So says Prof. Harper, the brainy professor of agriculture at Clemson College.

"An amazing discovery, destined to revolutionize agriculture in the South." So says Prof. C. Lewis Newman, associate professor of agriculture.

"A success beyond question and too far ahead of existing methods to permit a comparison." So say thousands of farmers, from Virginia to Texas, who have tried the plan.

A method that increased the yield of corn from 100 to 800 per cent. will certainly work a revolution—not merely a change, but a far-reaching revolution.

Mr. E. McIver Williamson of Darlington county has evolved a plan for increasing corn yields that has done these things indicated above.

So much has been published about the plan and so many people are talking of it—so much hope rests upon it—that it is necessary to say that the plan has resulted from ten years' careful experimentation. There was no chance in it. Parts of the plan had been in use before. But as a whole, Mr. Williamson has brought it out and while he does not claim it as perfect, nor even yet complete, he does assert, and the facts back it up, that the true principle has been found and on this all subsequent development must rest.

IDEA OF STUNTING THE CORN.

The principle rests on the idea of stunting the corn. Stunting is the word. This may be done on any kind of soil, according to the verdict of the farmers at the recent corn congress in Darlington, although Mr. Williamson himself says he has no river land and therefore knows nothing of the effect on this kind of soil. Others say it makes no difference. The principle is the same in every case, although it may be varied according to conditions.

The plan will be described in detail further on in the article. Some of the results as obtained by practical farmers are given herewith, and the testimony was altogether voluntary. Any one who has tried to get farmers to talk will recognize how hard it is to get expressions of opinion from them, and these expressions are the most valuable in light of that fact.

THE CORN CONGRESS.

At Darlington, on Dec. 13 last, a meeting had been called to discuss the Williamson plan and there was a gathering in response of the leading planters of Darlington and adjoining counties. Owing to some confusion and misunderstanding as to the date, Prof C. Lewis Newman of Clemson college, associate professer of agriculture, who was asked to act as umpire, was not present and this was regretted. As it turned out there was no need of an umpire, opinion being unanimous and experiences practically identical.

As published in The State, Mr. R. H. Rogers, one of the staunchest and most conservative farmers in the state, was made chairman of the congress and Mr. A. J. Howard, secretary.

Mr. E. McIver Williamson, originator of the plan, was called on to state the object of the meeting and he did so briefly, with characteristic point. He spoke of it as "our plan" and prefers that it may be called by some other name than his, of course this is now impossible.

After briefly reviewing the plan he stated to the meeting that the farmers present would be called on to give their experiences with tbe two plans, the old way and the Williamson plan and said that while he knew farmers were not talkers that in this case every farmer should consider it his duty to make known his experience. Time and money had been spent to bring this plan to a working basis and the world should get the benefit, especially the farmers of the Southern States. For as the Southern farmer had been situated he had to take the price for his cotton which the buyer set. But with plenty of corn the Southern farmer can bide his time, hold his cotton and the manufacturer would have to pay full value for cotton.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

The questions were: How much corn was raised under the new plan? How much under the old way? What improvement was there in land? What changes were necessary in the orriginal plan, as first published in the Hartsville Messenger?

Mr. R. H. Rogers said that when he quit planting corn, because it was unprofitable, he was raising from 10 to 15 bushels to the acre as a maximum crop; the average was much lower. Four years ago he began with the Williamson plan and the first season got from 30 to 33 bushels to the acre. The next year he planted 15 acres and averaged 43 bushels. The fertilizer cost $8 an acre; the next year, which was bad for corn, he got also 43 bushels average. This year he averaged 53 bushles. There had been vast improvement in land under this method. The fertilizing material left was worth all of $15 an acre. The article in the Hartsville Messenger covered the case fully. (This article was republished in The State, and is republished again today on account of its importance to farmers.) On one acre, on which he had put $25 worth of fertillzer he made 101 bushels and 17 quarts. There were 15,000 stalks on this acre.

MR. J. B. EDWARDS' TESTIMONIAL.

Mr. John B. Edwards testified that he knew Mr. Williamson, had confidence in him and had kept his article, but was prevented from following it absolutely on account of wet weather. He averaged about 35 bushels, with $9 worth of fertilizer, in the following pro portion: 100 pounds potash, 200 pounds nitrate of soda and 300 pounds acid phosphate. He believed he would have made 50 bushels if the plan had been followed closely. Land had certainly been improved to the full value of fertilizer used.

Mr. J. T. Goodson gave an interesting account of two of his neighbors. Mr. E. W. McIntosh had made 45 bushels with $6 worth of fertilizer and Mr. G. F. Wallace 90 bushels with 900 pounds of fertiizer. Mr. David R. Coker here explained that he had seen Mr. Wallace's corn and it had been gathered late, with fowls feeding on it for over two months. He had never seen such a sight.

Mr. Goodson continued, saying that he himself had made 30 bushels average where he only partly followed the plan; where he followed it strictly he had made 45 bushels. He thought the original plan alright and saw no need to change anything in the article. The land had been improved more than the value of the fertilizer used.

Mr. John T. Rogers said that he made 49 bushels three to four years ago and last year he made from 50 to 60 bushels to the acre. On 35 acres this year he had made about 70 bushels average.

On land that has been ruined by a tenant he made thirty-five bushels. The Williamson plan was the correct way to raise corn. If adopted generally, we would be selling corn, especially to Georgia, which is a large consumer of this article. There was entirely too much water this year to be a good corn year. Cowpeas should be allowed to stay on land and there should be no fodder pulled. Land had been improved to more than value of fertilizer.

WHAT MR. D. R. COKER SAID.

Mr. David R. Coker gave some inepended testimony on the subject. Mr. Coker is a merchant and an editor but has keen interest in agricultural pursuits. He thought a merchant did harm to sell corn to farmers. They should raise it and under this plan they could raise it. He thought the plan would make corn as much of a staple in the South as it was in the Middle West. The discovery was a tremendous thing for this part of the country. As to the plan of stunting corn, no one could form an idea of how ugly it looked when being stunted. A farmer passing by Mr. Williamson's place at this stage said that the corn was the poorest he had ever seen and believed he would make nothing. In July it was the sorriest thing he ever saw; four weeks later the same man said it was the finest thing he ever saw.

Mr. W. B. McCown said he had made 80 bushels on an average of six acres. Formerly he made about 10 bushels with 800 pounds of fertilizer. The plan is worth a great deal to land; he would not take $15 for fertilizing material left on the land. He put $13 worth of fertilizer to the acre. The plan needed no change.

MR. R. E. JAMES

Mr. R. E. James had followed the plan. In 1904 on 10 acres, he averaged 40 bushels; in 1905 on 12 acres, he averaged 43 bushels. The corn this season was so thick he had become uneasy and had consulted Mr. Williamson, who reassured him. Two weeks after putting on the top-dressing the crop showed results. In 1906, he had averaged 43 bushels on 14 acres and had the biggest pile of corn he ever had in his life. If he had followed the plan strictly he is satisfied he would have made 60 bushels. It was a bad year for corn. His land would have made 400 pounds of seed cotton without fertillizer. Fifteen bushels was the limit to to the acre before and he always used 500 pounds of fertilizer. He would not have the stuff taken off his land, that was left after gathering corn, for $10 an acre. Land had been improved almost beyond calculation.

AHEAD OF OLD METHOD

Mr. C. H. Ellis had followed the plan for 11 years. It was too far ahead of the old method for any comparison to be made. He always sowed a bnshel of peas broadcast to the acre. He thought the plan perfect. He bad first planted in checks, and made nothing but stalks. Since then he he had planted deep as possible. If the plan were generally adopted corn would be sold to Georgia and North Carolina.

Mr. B. H. Rodgers of Socity Hill had an experience almost identical with Mr. Ellis.

Mr. J. A. Howard always bought corn. Last year, under the old method with $150 worth of fertilizer on 40 acres, he had made 250 bushels. This year he is satisfied there was more than 100 per cent increase although he had not followed the plan strictly. If he had is sure he would have made 2,000 to 2,500 bushels. Material left on the land is worth more than the fertilizer used.

Mr. Charls Law said he followed the plan strictly and had no apologies on that score. On 10 acres, four-foot rows he had made 45 bushels. In the old way he would have made 10 bushels on the same land. Land was improved to the full value of the fertilizer. On 20 acres of abandond land he had averaged 30 bushels. Mr. Law here testified to a fact which all farmers admitted, namely, that it was easier and cheaper to cultivate corn under the Williamson plan than under the old method. He was forced to build new barns to hold his corn.

REMARKABLE TESTIMONY.

Mr. Fred W. Law followed this with remarkable testimony as to his experience. He had tried to follow plan strictly and had averaged 40 bushels on 24 acres. Forty acres formerly did not yield to fill the barn, although five hundred pounds of fertilizer had been used to the acre. On 20 acres under the Williamson plan, he had made one-third more than on 40 acres, under the old plan. The product of the 20 acres more than filled a barn, that had never been filled from the 40 acres and he had to build a new barn to hold the overflow. This was not a good year for corn. The Williamson plan left the land in better condition. It was easier to cultivate land under this method and much cheaper.

Mr. Wayne G King testified that he had made 80 bushels on same acres. He had in all 26 acres and the average was 60 bushels, with $7.15 worth of fertilizers to the acre. It was not so expensive to cultivate corn this way and it was easier. His land was good average land that would make 500 pounds of cotton without fertilizer. The Williamson plan was all right in every particular.

A CHESERFIELD FARMER

Mr. R. S. Grant of Chesterfield county had formerly made 10 to 20 bushels average on good land. He had tried the plan for the first time and had made 76 bushels on an average on 10 acres. On one tract of 20 acres he had made by actual measurement 2,300 or more than 57 bushels to the acre. Saves fully the amount spent for fertilizer for coming crops. On the 10 acres which he made the 76 bushels to the acre he had formerly made 20 bushels. He stunted corn by keeping fertilizer and soil away from it.

To this remarkable conclusive testimony I wish to add other that goes straight to the mark and does not lack exactness of description. Mr. G. Walter Abbott, of Mont Clare, Darlington county, said when asked for his testimony: "On two and one-third acres I made five and a half wagon loads of corn. The wagon body shelled out 19 2-5 bushels and the total amount was 102 1-2 bushels, or 44 bushels to the acre. The land was a sandy hillside without clay subsoil and it was a first attempt. On this land I would have made about six bushels of corn this year with about two hundred pounds of fertilizer. It would have brought 300 pounds of seed cotton without fertilizer. I did not hold off fertilizer as long as the plan called for. Did not stunt enough and am sure I would have made 12 bushels more an acre, if the plan had been strictly followed. Corn planted in the old way grew off fine and I got scared. Improvement of the soil more than exceeds value of fertilizer used. There are about two tons of stuff left to the acre, mostly pea vine hay. I used following fertilizer: 300 pounds cotton seed meal; 200 pounds kainit; 100 pounds nitrate of soda, equal in value to $7.60."

A VIVID CONTRAST

In vivid contrast to this modern method is Mr. Abcott's experience with seven acres cultivated in the old way. This was better land—about the best land he had—had made a bale of cotton to the acre on it. He worked it more than land under the Williamson plan and used $2.40 worth of fertilizer per acre. Good farmers said on the 20th of June that it would make more than the Williamson plan.

He gathered all the corn off those seven acres in two wagon loads, and it was mostly nubbins, shelling out 5 1-2 bushels to the load.

He thinks the Williamson plan O. K. and that the word "stunt" should bə emphasized. The Williamson plan will be generally adopted next year. The old way does not improve the land

ANOTHER EXPERIENCE.

Mr. Manly J. Moody, who lives at Riverside, Darlington county, planted 4 1-2 of good sandy upland that would make 1,000 pounds of seed cotton when well fertilized. He followed the plan closely The yield was 47 bushels and 1 peck to the acre. He used 400 pounds ammoniated fertilizer and 100 pounds of nitrate of soda. On ten acres old plan, which was worked more than the corn under the Williamson plan, he made 10 bushels to the acre. This corn grew off fine and promising. The Williamson plan takes less work.

These experiences are exact, and both Messrs. Moody and Abbot are men of unquestioned standing in their communities. Mr. Abbot also says that when he saw Mr. Williamson's corn June he said it would not make two bushels to the acre, and that a month later he was ready to stake his judgment thrt it would make 100 bushels to the acre. So wonderful is the change wrought in such short time under this method.

Owing to the interest manifested in the Williamson plan of corn culture The State today reproduces in detail the discovery of a successful Darlington county former. It follows: "For a number of years after I began to farm I followed the old time method of putting the fertilizer all under the corn, planting on a level or higher, six by three feet, pushing the plant from the start and making a big stalk, but the ears were few and frequently small. I planted much corn in the spring and bought much more corn the next spring until finally I was driven to the conclusion that corn could not be made on uplands in this section, certainly not by the old method, except at a loss.

"I did not give up, however, for I knew that a farmer who did not make his own corn never had succeeded, and never would, so I began to experiment.

First, I planted lower, and the yield was better, but the stalk was still too large, so I discontinued altogether the application of fertilizer before planting, and knowing that all crops should be fertilized at some time, I used mixed fertilizer as a side application and applied the more soluble nitrate of soda later, being guided in this by the excellent results obtained from its use as a top dressing for oats.

Still the yield, though regular, was not large, and the smallnes of the stalks now suggested that they should be planted thicker in the drill. This was done the next year with results so satisfactory that I continued from year to year to increase the number of stalks and the fertilizer, with which to sustain them, also to apply nitrate of soda at last plowing, and to lay by early sowing peas broadcast. This method steadily increased the yeild until year befor last (1904) with corn 11 inches apart in six-foot rows and $11 worth of fertilizer to the acre, I made 84 bushels average to the acre, several of my best acres making as much as 125 bushels.

"Last year (1905) I followed the same method, planting the first week in April 70 acres which had produced the year before 1,000 pounds seed cotton per acre. This land is sandy upland, somewhat rolling. Seasons were very unfavorable, owing to the tremendous rains in May and the dry and extremely hot weather later. From June 12 to July 12 the time when it most needed moisture, there was only five-eights of an inch of rainfall here; yet with $7.91 cost of fertilizer, my yeild was 52 bushels per acre. Rows were six feet and corn 16 inches in drill.

"With this method, on land that will ordinarily produce 1,000 pounds of seed cotton with 800 pounds of fertiliver, 50 bushels of corn per acre should be made by using 200 pounds of cotton seed meal, 200 pounds of acid phosphate and 400 pounds of kainit mixed, or their equivalent in other fertilizer, and 125 pounds of nitrate of soda, all to be used as side application as directed below.

"On land that will make a bale and one-half of cotton per acre when well fertilized, a hundred bushels of corn should be produced by doubling the amount of fertilizer above, except that 300 pounds of nitrate of soda should be used.

"In each case there should be left on the land in corn stalks, peas, vines and root, from $12 to $16 worth of fertilizer material per acre, besides the great benefit to the land from so large an amount of vegetable matter. The place of this in the permanent improvement of land can never be taken by commercial fertilizer, for it is absolutely impossible to make lands rich as long as they are lacking in vegetable matter.

"Land shonld be throughly and deeply broken for corn, and this is the time in a system of rotation to deepen the soil. Cotton requires a more compact soil than corn, and while a deep soil is essential to its

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The Williamson Plan.

We are publishing at length in this issue an article on the discovery of a new method for planting corn which, if successful, will unquestionably revolutionize the farming interests of the South. As the entire wealth of the Nation originates in the country, and on the farm, anything that benefits the farmer is a boon to the country at large. We hope that Lincoln county farmers will make a thorough test of Mr. Williamson's plan for raising corn, and trust it will prove all that is claimed for it. The article published is copied from The State, of Columbia, S.C., and our attention was called to the matter by Mr. D. W. Robinson, a Lincoln county boy, whom we all know and admire. In the many successes which have come to him since leaving his old home Mr. Robinson remains true and loyal to his country and people, and this is an evidence of his thoughtfulness for their welfare.