

Correspondence.

A FARMERS' CONVENTION FOR NORTH CAROLINA.

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:— That agriculture is our chief industry and likely to be so for years to come goes without saying. Why would it not be well, therefore, to have a Convention of representative farmers of the State, to be held at Raleigh during the next session of the legislature? There are many matters, doubtless, to be brought up before the next legislature that will have more or less bearing upon the farming interests of the State, and it might be well that such a representative body of citizens engaged in the cultivation of the soil should be given an opportunity to meet together and discuss those questions as well as other subjects in which they are so deeply interested, as for instance: improved agricultural methods, the most economical management of a farm, the labor question, the raising of grasses and the breeding of cattle, the cultivation of fruit, the relative merits of commercial fertilizers, the working of the public roads by convict or hired labor, the advantages of a no fence law, the forming of county agricultural clubs and the many problems that concern the farmer, who finds that the old ways of doing things places him at a disadvantage with his more thrifty and enterprising neighbor in other States of the Union, and who so often gets discouraged, and, breaking up all his home associations, turns his back on the time-honored institutions of his State and seeks a new home among strangers, and, in many instances, the end of that man is worse than the first. I have lately returned from a trip West, and often and over again did the question arise in my mind: what would these people do were it not for the grasses and the breeding of cattle? Deprive them of this source of revenue and what would be left. Yet this one crop, chiefly, makes their land worth from \$50, \$100 to \$150 per acre.

As a source of revenue to the farmer of North Carolina, we may say, practically, hay and the breeding of cattle for market are a nullity. There are but two ways to increase a farmer's profits, viz: by enlarging the yield of his acres or by diminishing his expenses. As long as cotton and corn and tobacco are cultivated to the exclusion of the grasses and leguminous plants it is not likely that our land can be made to give an increased yield, or our expenses in cultivating them be diminished.

We have the example for such a Convention set us by the farmers of our sister State of South Carolina, but as their meetings are for the purpose of influencing the politics of their State, as I understand it, such aims seem to me to be foreign to those of such an organization, which should simply be to consult together for their common good, and, if desirable, recommend to the legislature the passage of certain laws or the repeal of such as have been found not to work to the benefit of the State. If this suggestion of a Convention should be received favorably and be regarded as practical the details could be left for future consideration.

Yours truly,

WM. H. S. BURGWYN.

The Pines, Moore County, N. C.,  
November 17, 1886.

SUPPORT HOME INDUSTRIES.

Practical Thoughts.

NO. 4.

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:— We brag about the resources of our State, but our actions don't correspond with our professions. We send our hard-earned money North for things (goods and implements) that can be just as well made at home. Take paper for instance: how many dollars are sent out of North Carolina every year for paper? (for the schools, wrapping, bags for merchants, newspapers, memoranda, record books, etc., etc.) At the very lowest calculation, eight hundred thousand dollars. These forms of paper can just as easily be made here as any where else. How much do we send off for furniture? and our own cabinet workmen licking their fingers and our country full of the best timber on earth, and our streams waiting to be utilized. How much does the State send abroad annually for matches? for candy? for seeds? (when domestic

are better adapted to our wants and suit the climate and soil better). How much sent off for farm tools? (and our own honest mechanics literally have to quit their trade). Count the stores from the seaboard to the mountains, and twelve thousand dollars worth of Northern-made axe handles are annually sold in the State, while hickory timber to make them was sold at a low price to Northern mechanics. Every bunch of strawberries or peaches that our wives put up must go into jars made by Yankees. And why is it that our farmers, generally, can't learn to take better care of their soil, and to reduce their acreage, until they can work their fields like a garden, and use domestic fertilizers so as to make the lands yield better and bring a superior variety of fruit, and at the same time improve both the soil and the quality of the produce raised. How is it that a Pennsylvania farmer will raise and educate a large family of children, and pay tax only on three acres of land? How was it that Mr. Anderson, of Monroe, raised one hundred and forty-four bushels of corn from one acre, and the quality of the corn improved perceptibly? Occasionally planters, after preparing a field for tobacco, which has to be done scientifically, take a notion to put the field in corn; don't every one know how freely and beautifully the corn comes, and how superior in quality to the remainder of his crop? The sun doesn't look down upon a better country than we have, if we would not ruin our soil by unsystematic and partial cultivation. And while we would do well to improve our systems, we are blatant for Northern and English planters to come here and develop the resources of the country. I go for developing ourselves. We have only to buy fewer things from abroad, make more ourselves and protect and improve our soil.

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER fills a place in North Carolina that ought to have been filled ever since the war. And our planters ought not only to patronize it but to study its warnings and intimations of improvement. Let every farmer try to improve his system, and, in a few words as possible, send his conclusions to the paper. There are fields and gardens in England that have been in steady cultivation two hundred years, and are now better than they were at first. To see fields growing up in sedge and ruined by gullies in such a country as this excites the sneers of sensible men as they sweep across the State on our railroads. Instead of encouraging our boys to go to the West, we had better advise them to remodel our system of farming and go to our old fields. And as I charge nothing for a suggestion, I want to say, raise a little less tobacco and cotton and pay a little more attention to fruit, the cereals and root crops; and buy fewer fertilizers and make more domestic manure. Truly, &c., J. W. V.

LIME AS A FERTILIZER.

In reference to the use of lime as a fertilizer, there is a great difference of opinion among practical farmers, whose opinions are to be received with respect; but this is observed, that whereas formerly lime was used in great quantities at the present time comparatively little of it is employed in agriculture. The action is believed to be upon organic matter already in the soil and to make this more easily obtained by the growing crop. It thus adds nothing to the soil, only enables the crop to get out more of what is there. This is the present belief in reference to it. It may be seen from this that lime may be used on limestone soil as well as on any other, and also that the use of pulverized unburnt limestone can be of no value, as it has no power to act upon organic matter. Also lime long burnt and exposed to the air and rain so that it is largely transformed back to the carbonate, can be of little value, for it is only the caustic lime which can act upon organic matter to change it. But there are some conditions of the soil which are benefited by lime. One of these is where the land is heavy with humic acids. These the alkaline lime neutralizes, and thus improves the soils; also soils which contain silicate of potash, if limed, the silica unites with the lime, setting the potash free in the form of a carbonate one of the most valued plant foods. Such soils are benefited by lime. So may alluvial and granite soils be benefited in which there is a natural deficiency of lime.—G. G. Groff.

Farm Notes.

UNFRUITFUL APPLE TREES.

It is not worth while to worry if young orchards do not come quickly into bearing. Too early fruitage is a sign of disease or insects. If the trees grow thriftily they will give all the better account of themselves by and by for a little delay while younger.

JAPANESE WHEAT.

Some people in the West are pushing Japan wheat and claiming great advantages for it. The truth about the wheat grown in that country is that it is in every way inferior to that grown by American farmers. Even were this not the case its success here would be very doubtful. Of all the English varieties tried here which are excellent and productive at home few or none have succeeded with us.

IMPROVING THE DAIRY.

It is presumable that almost every farmer has one or more cows which before another season he will wish to work off either because too old or for some other defect. While doing this he should make up the number with something decidedly better the old stock. In this way only can dairying be made profitable. Good cows are very cheap now much cheaper than they probably will be again in the near future.

ROADSIDE FENCES.

On some roads the prevailing winds of winter are such as to drift the highway full, thus spoiling it for use either by wagons or sleighs. Fences found by experience should be taken down every fall and should be of some material which will not make this work difficult. A barbed wire fence with just enough board to it to make it visible will not cause any obstruction in the highway and is generally most satisfactory for such places.

PLOUGHING CLOVER SOD IN THE FALL.

Whether there is or is not much herbage to be plowed under, there is no advantage in turning it before Spring. A second growth of clover left to rot upon the surface will be pretty well incorporated with the soil in the spring and with probably less waste than by plowing. There is nothing in clover roots to resist speedy decay as soon as their tops are covered. Just as soon as fermentation begins we want some crop sown or planted so that its growing roots may use it and prevent waste.

GROWING SMOOTH POTATOES.

There is a great difference in the loss in peeling and cooking various kinds of potatoes on account of the tendency of some to grow misshapen. Too little seed on too rich ground is one reason of this loss, and fresh manure may cause a still greater one from rot. The shape of the seed has however, much to do with it. The housewife all Winter is presumably culling the fairest and smoothest, as they are much more convenient for using. Enough, however, of the best should be saved for seed another year.

IDLE HORSES TO WINTER.

It seems necessary for most farmers to keep through the busy Summer season more horses than can be profitably employed in the Winter. How to do this least expensively is an important problem. They should not be kept entirely idle, nor should all grain be withheld. Enough work or driving should be given daily for exercise to keep the muscles firm and strong for Spring work when it comes. Such horses may, however be put off with coarser feed for the main ration than those hard at work every day.

STABLES FOR COWS.

In laying a stable floor for milch cows the animals can be kept more cleanly if a drop or gutter is made just behind where they stand for excrement to fall into. We do not like to scrimp a cow too much for room and her standing-floor should be from five feet to five feet four inches for ordinary size. Back of this at least two feet should be allowed for the droppings and as much more for the attendant to walk past the animal as the stable will afford. Cows kept there nights should be turned out daytimes for exercise.

KEEPING HORSES SHOD.

Horses kept in use either on the farm or road need to be well shod, and never more than during Winter. Frozen roads are all the worse on horses feet from the fact that the latter are more apt to be brittle

than during the warmer weather. The hoof does not grow so rapidly in Winter; but with some horses it grows unevenly, requiring frequent resetting to avoid sprains. Teams at work will well pay for good shoeing in increased efficiency, besides preventing danger from accidents. Horses kept on hard, frozen icy roads should be kept sharp shod. Any other policy is cruel as well as dangerous.

CORN MEAL FOR MILCH COWS.

As cold weather approaches some part of the cow's ration should be corn meal. It may not be better than linseed or cotton-seed meal freed from husk, but farmers have become accustomed to its use, and are in less danger from overfeeding. Some kind of oily food is necessary to overcome the loss of heat from exposure to the cold. For this reason it is equally important that cows should be sheltered from severe cold as much as possible. If the milk is very blue in cold weather few stop to think that the reason is that the carbon in the food which should go into cream and butter has been taken by the cow to maintain animal heat. In other words, the cow has practically been eating cream and butter, which is certainly rather too expensive either as a feed or fuel.

BASEMENTS FOR SAVING MANURE.

The first barns constructed in this country were mostly made nearly or quite level with the ground, or perhaps elevated by large stones at each corner or in the middle of long beams. This afforded a fine harbor for rats and other vermin. Stables for cattle and horses were made on the ground floor, with the wind sweeping beneath, rendering it almost impossible to keep them warm. The greatest waste, however was in the manure, the more soluble parts of which leached through the same cracks that let the wind in. Farmers who have walled basements under their barns regard the saving of manure as one of their important advantages. The bottom should be made of either matched plank or concrete so that even the liquid excrement need not be wasted. In many places the stores of accumulated manure under old barns will more than pay the expense of elevating them and putting them on a wall. Under a barn that has stood some years and has been used as a stable, the earth will be rich manure for the entire for the entire depth it has to be excavated in making the basement.

A DAIRY OF SIXTEEN COWS.

For the purpose of encouragement in these discouraging times to those that may be thinking of changing from dairying to something else that might pay better, I will give you the results of my dairy the last year beginning January 1, 1885, and closing January 1, 1886. I have a small farm of 105 acres and have kept on it during the year three horses, one yearling heifer, one yearling bull and sixteen cows. This tells the amount of stock that can be kept on the place. I have done all the milking myself with the exception of about twenty one times I was absent. The cows were the same ones kept the entire year except three old ones. I sold and bought one with two yearling heifers to take their places.

The three did not give more than two-thirds as much milk at any time as the two old ones when sold. I have raised about half my cows, the rest are such as I could buy here and there without any reference to breed. Now as to feed they have during the year. In summer they had what grass they could pick and one acre of sound corn that was fed in the fall, green.

In the winter, all the good early cut hay they could eat up clean, three or four times a day, with plenty of good water, and kept in the stable. I wish I could give the exact number of pounds of bran fed, but I can't. I fed 7,000 pounds of corn meal.

Gallons of milk from 16 cows..	10,904
Average per cow.....	681½
Received for milk.....	\$1,070.50
Average per cow.....	66.50
Paid for feed purchased.....	206.20
Net profit.....	65.21
Net profit per cow.....	54.01

This does not include the milk used in a family of three adults and three children under ten years. The average price received for the milk was a fraction less than ten cents a gallon.—A. D. Mills, in Ohio Farmer.

TOP DRESSING MEADOWS.

There is no better time to top-dress meadows than in the autumn. The soluble portions of the manure will be quickly washed down into the soil by the fall rains. By this means the humus of the manure is left at the surface, just where nature designed it to be. The sooner this is done the better. Yet to get the best results the manure should have been converted into compost, or as nearly as possible. This is not so costly a process as many people imagine and in all districts where manure must be applied to keep up the fertility of the soil composting should be followed, since thus the full integrity of the manure is secured.

To accomplish this, prepare a bed for the manure upon soil that will not leach, by scraping out a hole dishing to the middle, in which to place the manure. Into this throw all matter that will decompose—manure, strong loam, old sods, wash water, and all vegetable refuse. Do not have it rounding on the top, but flat, so it may soak in the rain; keep this moist by pumping the liquid from the bottom over the top occasionally, when the mass gets rather dry. In the course of a season this will be converted into good compost, if turned two or three times.

If you have not compost, spread over the meadow, up to fifteen loads per acre, coarse, littersy manure. The soluble parts of this will be washed down into the soil, and into the spring the light, chaffy portions may be raked into wind-rows with a horse rake, and carried away to the compost heap, or upon the land to be plowed under.—Journal of Agriculture.

WINTER DAIRYING.

No one who has carefully studied the subject doubts that fair profit may be realized from winter dairying. But to make winter dairying profitable as careful attention must be paid to details as in summer. In summer prices are low and the great difficulty lies in preserving a temperature low enough for the best condition of the milk, cream and butter. In the small dairies this is especially true. In winter attention must be paid to the necessity of keeping temperature equal—that is, that it does not go too low. Not only this, but the cows must be so kept that they shall have ample and regular feeding and plenty of water, and the water must be considerably above the freezing point. As to the bodily comfort of the cattle, mere sheds will not do. The cows must be stabled where temperature may be regulated and where the feeding facilities are perfect. By this costly structures are not meant. As much comfort may be obtained in the rough structure that the farmer may improvise as the most costly. Nevertheless this must be at a greater comparative cost, as a matter of course, in the feeding and care. This one thing must, however, be observed: There must be nothing slack in the matter of care and cleanliness, either with the cows or in any of the operations connected with the milk, cream and butter.—Cleveland (O.) Leader.

RIGHT AND LEFT HANDED.

A right-handed man is a man who takes hold of a hoe, a rake, a spade, or a fork with the right hand drawn down and the left hand up, or nearest the body. A man who habitually puts his left hand down, or, for instance, the man who places his right hand on the top of a spade, and grasps the handle or shake with his left hand, is a left-handed man. And so with an ax. A right-handed man and a left-handed man can work together in chopping down a tree. If they were both right-handed or both left-handed, they could not do this unless one chopped on one side of the tree and one on the other side. And so it is in loading earth into a wagon. If the men stand face to face, one should be left-handed and the other right-handed. In hoeing a row of corn, the right-handed man will walk on the left side of the row, while the left handed man will walk on the right side of it.—Scientific American.

—In New York city there are between 3,000 and 5,000 Chinamen, nearly all of the lower class, yet there are less than twenty-five Japanese residents.