



THE



PROGRESSIVE



FARMER.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

Vol. 2.

RALEIGH, N. C., MAY 5, 1887.

No. 11.

OUR FARMERS' CLUBS.

What our Farmers are Doing and How the Work of Organizing is Progressing.

Goose Creek Farmers' Club, in Union county, now numbers sixty members.

A new farmers' club at Poplar Springs, Moore county, was organized April 2nd, 1887, with 25 members. The following are the officers: President, T. N. Campbell; Vice-President, W. L. M. Harrington; Secretary, F. G. Sloan; Treasurer, J. H. Kelly; executive committee, J. M. Kelly, John Petty, W. M. McFarland, A. T. Cox and W. W. Harrington. Please send me a copy of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. I want to introduce it in the club to get subscribers.

A. T. Cox.

TRINITY CLUB—APRIL, 1887.

Subject: Soiling and fodder crops. Dr. Joseph Bird:—Every farmer who attempts to carry a decent herd of cattle or even a single milch cow, ought to prepare now a suitable place for a succession of soiling crops. It furnishes an abundance of splendid feed for almost any kind of stock on the farm, and is absolutely necessary for both winter and summer. In dry seasons, when pastures fail, your fodder crop comes in just at a time when most needed and carries you over this bare season without any falling off in flow of milk, and keeps all your cattle in good condition.

I prefer our common corn, sown in drills, on land thoroughly prepared and highly manured. It will out yield anything else we can plant or sow for feed. Some have raised as high as seventy-five tons to the acre. It will require but very little cultivation, simply keep the weeds and grass down until the corn gets a good start. It will soon occupy and shade the ground so completely that nothing else can grow. Do not plant the entire crop at one time, but arrange so that you may have a succession, by planting a portion every two weeks until the middle of July. Sow three or four grains to the foot in the drill; rows three feet apart. Having it thus thick, the stalks will be smaller, and the cattle will eat it better. When the silks appear you may begin cutting. I cut of an evening a sufficient quantity to feed all next day. Horses, cattle, hogs and sheep all relish it and thrive upon it.

If you would pay special attention to butter making, and have it of first-class quality, you must have first-class feed for your cows. To us in this section, butter making is a very important part of our farm work. I am making preparations to enlarge in this line, as I find it already pays me as well, if not better, than any of my farm work.

The various millets, lucern and the sorghums are highly prized by many as soiling plants; but I prefer our common corn. We must not forget clover; it comes early, is splendid green feed and makes first-class hay. When frosts threaten the soiling crop, or when the silks appear, go in and cut it for fodder, and cure and put up for winter, as you do other fodder.

J. R. Means:—I have tried the millets with very little satisfaction. I prefer our common corn and peas sown together. These make the very best kind of sweet hay I ever used. When properly cured and put away, it retains its fine flavor longer than any other hay. It pays me better than any other crop on the same land. When you plant a running pea, it makes such a dense growth with the corn that it is difficult to cure it so as to keep. I have tried several plans, and the best one is to cut in open weather, give it a sufficiency of sun, and put up in stacks with pieces of plank nailed horizontally across the poles at various angles to allow the free circulation of air. I would select for this crop well-drained meadow places where the land is good. Plow, harrow and make it rich. This will

insure you a big crop, and at the same time prepare these almost worthless meadow places for other grasses by re-seeding.

C. H. Leach:—I am satisfied the time is here when we must make our own feed. We should endeavor to make all the feed possible and feed it away to stock and make manure to improve our land. I prefer sorghum to corn, peas or any of the millets. It is sweeter, and stock likes it better. It is foolish to rely upon these old boggy meadows for hay, when we can so easily have an abundant supply of good feed at a small expense.

L. M. PAYNE, Sec'y.

BATTLEBORO FARMER'S CLUB.

By the invitation of J. J. Battle, Esq., of Edgecombe county, the Battleboro Farmers' Club met at his hospitable residence on Thursday, the 14th inst.

It was a pleasant gathering of farmer friends and one tending to the furtherance of one object of the Farmers' Clubs, the cultivation of the social element. * * * *

Capt. Simmons thought the present depression among farmers was mostly attributable to the persistent growing of cotton to the exclusion of products for home consumption.

"When I was a boy," continued Capt. Simmons, "while walking in the old town of Halifax, I came up with a yearling grazing in the street. Possessed with the sudden born and inexplicable impulse of boyhood, I grabbed him by the tail and here we went, helter skelter down the street—people shouting, hurrah Simmons, hurrah calf—until suddenly and unexpectedly turning a corner we parted company, and I found myself sprawling on the ground. Draw a moral, my friends, from this little incident of my boyhood. If you persist in clinging to cotton you may find yourselves badly floored."

Mr. Geo. C. Battle then took the floor and spoke as follows:—"I agree in part with our venerable friend, gentlemen, that neglect in producing our supplies at home has been a cause of the present depression among farmers. But there are other and greater causes than those of individual mismanagement of farmers. Were it confined only to the growers of cotton, we might readily accept the theory entire. But among the farmers of the North, among those of the grain producing States of the Northwest, and even of the proverbially fertile and wealthy blue grass State we find this depression. Can all this financial strain, gentlemen, be attributable to errors in the various systems of farmers? Does it seem practicable to suppose that nearly every farmer in every section is an egregious blunderer?"

It is true we fall into errors both of omission and commission, (what workers in any vocation do not?), but the fundamental cause of the present depression lies beyond the errors of the farmer in his business. It lies in the various systems originating in our national legislature, systems hatched of errors and fraud, yet so subtle that vampire like they draw the life blood while the victim sleeps in fatal ignorance.

I will not now enter into detailed discussion of the various systems by which the people and especially the Agricultural classes have been robbed for the continual aggrandizement of the wealthy few, the Protective Tariff humbug, the National Banking system, or the Currency Question. Thoroughly consider these systems in their relations to Agricultural interests, and we can but trace to them this onerous pressure, this widespread depression. And let us along with the mere consideration of these questions, study the means of remedy, and act, act conservatively, but with our best efforts for its accomplishment.—Headlight.

Senator Reagan and ex-Senator Maxey have taken the stump for prohibition in Texas. An excited campaign has already begun, and both sides are confident of victory.

[FOR THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.] OAKS FARMERS' CLUB.

Composting and Fertilizers.

The Oaks Farmers' Club met at the regular time April 16th. The subject for discussion was, "Composting and Fertilizers." It is a rule of the Club that every member, when called upon, must say something.

Each member spoke in his turn and gave his method of composting and applying the manures made on his place. All agreed that the waste of manure, or rather the neglect to utilize every particle of what might be made was the common fault of most farmers. When each had spoken in his turn, the discussion became general and conversational, in which the members generally took part.

Without attempting to report what each member said separately, I give you the substance of what seemed to be well-received opinions among the members.

The result aimed at in composting is to secure a thorough rotting or decomposition of the vegetable matter, without loss of the animal and other valuable ingredients of the manure.

One member had composted acid phosphate with stable manure and believed he lost more than half the value by burning. While it was conceded that land plaster or kainit, or even dry dirt sprinkled in the stalls occasionally would tend to fix the ammonia and make the manure more valuable, it was insisted that care should be taken not to burn the manure in composting. Heat was necessary to rot the vegetable matter, but too much heat would burn the manure.

The best plan proposed was to make alternate layers of lot manure, stable manure and woods mould or rich earth, adding two or three bucketfuls of water to each layer of stable manure, the heap to be made in a square rail pen eight or nine feet high.

One member made 75 two-horse loads in this way last year and applied it to 12 acres of corn land, mixing a ton of bone meal with it as he applied it, and the 12 acres made more than 500 bushels of corn. On one acre he broadcast twenty loads before the land was bedded up for planting. On the balance he dropped a handful to each hill at the planting, and afterwards another handful to each hill at the first ploughing.

Another method proposed with much force was to hand the manure directly from the stalls when they are cleaned out, and broadcast it upon the land from the wagon, and plow it under for wheat or corn or other crop when convenient. This would secure the least handling of the manure, and save all the valuable ingredients in the soil for plant food and allow the vegetable matter to rot at its leisure and lie in the soil for future use.

The discussion was animated, interesting and instructive.

The subject for the next regular meeting is "The Proper Construction of Stalls and other Farm Houses."

A. M. I.

[FOR THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.] MOUNTAIN CREEK FARMERS' CLUB.

BOSTICKS MILLS, April 25, '87.

Our representative when at the Convention in Raleigh, promised to stir up the Secretary of the Mountain Creek Farmers' Club, so he might contribute some of our experience to your valuable and interesting paper. It certainly looks selfish to receive all the good things from your paper and give nothing in return. We are not a talking club by any means; only a plain, plodding, persevering set of people, who have been trying to thread our way safely through the many complicated questions which have come before us since we began to cooperate together for our common good. All these matters have provoked much discussion amongst us, but it has been mainly on questions of dry detail (though important) and not of general interest.

At our last meeting we decided to

offer premiums as follows: 1. For the largest crop of seed cotton raised from 1 acre. 2. For the largest crop of corn from 1 acre. 3. For the best crop of sweet potatoes from 1-4 of an acre. 4. For the best garden, examined in August. 5. For the heaviest hog of any age. 6. For the heaviest pig over 5 months old and under 12. 7. For the farm in the best general condition.

Considerable interest was taken, and a good prospect of a lively competition to secure one or the other of the premiums.

The time for questions having come, J. H. Forbes asked: "What is the best mode of preparation and time for planting corn on bottom land?"

J. B. Covington said as to planting; the sooner the better, if it is warm enough; if put off too late, the bud worm kills it. R. T. Steele thought thorough preparation most important, and should plant last of March or first of April, or defer till May. J. Chappell adopts the rule of Jim Green, of Montgomery: "Plant 20th March, whether it is wet or dry, unless it falls on Sunday, or as soon after as possible." J. A. Ingram: Early planting best; prepares land in single beds, runs scooter in water furrows and then runs two furrows round it with scooter. Other members agreed.

Question—"What is the best way of preparing upland for corn and time of planting?" J. Chappell replied: Break thoroughly with scooter and plant on level last of March.

Our prospect for corn crop is better than for several years, much more pains having been taken in preparation and a great deal more planted. So far, the stand is not very good; dry weather the cause, possibly. More grass has been sown this spring. Wheat looks very promising, but fall oats are pretty badly killed out and what are left don't look well, owing to bad stand and dry weather. Spring oats look promising. There has been a great effort both last fall and this spring to make small grain, in consequence of the very short crop of corn last year.

Our new club house and store is completed, and the members took possession of their new quarters with great satisfaction. We are supplying about 60 of the members, which is a very large increase over last year's trading.

There is a general feeling that the good done by the club does not stop with its members, but is felt by the whole of the upper end of the county.

The use of commercial fertilizers is thought to be smaller this year than in the past, and we hope this is a sign that farmers are not depending entirely on guano, but are seeing that all the manure at home is saved. One of our members has hauled out 250 two-horse loads, instead of paying \$200 for guano.

The meeting then took up the question "Shall the club be incorporated?" This was discussed quite freely. Much time was taken with it, as its importance required thorough ventilation. The question was then put, and it was decided unanimously to incorporate the club.

This letter is already too long, so I must defer, till our next, a few of the reasons causing this decision.

Subject for next meeting; "How shall we poor farmers get back into old-time ways of raising our bread and meat at home?"

With good wishes to yourself, and prosperity to the FARMER in its new quarters, I am,

Yours truly,
JOSEPH L. GALLEWAY, Sec'y.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN FARMERS' CLUBS.

Should we raise our home supplies? What constitutes the comforts of a farmers' home, and are they attainable?

Should not every farmer raise a sufficient variety and quantity of fruits to supply his family?

Why do we not raise more sheep? Can we afford to raise cotton for

less than ten cents per pound?

Can we afford to raise tobacco for a price that will average less than ten cents per pound?

What is the cheapest and best method of raising and fattening pork? What is the best method for reclaiming old worn-out lands?

What is the best method for making manure on the farm?

Should farmers give liens and mortgages for farm supplies?

What are the profits accruing from the use of commercial fertilizers as practiced by our cotton and tobacco farmers?

Should the farmers adopt a system by which to regulate labor?

Does our tenant system pay?

Should not farmers' clubs hold their meetings at the houses of the members?

Should not the farmers of each county secure the services of a competent farmer to visit every township during the present year and organize farmers' clubs?

Should all the farmers' organizations of the country consolidate and organize a national body?

Should the farmers of this county be represented in the Southern Farmers' Convention, which is to be held in Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 20th, 1887?

What benefits do we derive from our State Agricultural Department?

What may this club do to push forward the work of organization among the farmers of our county?

What papers should farmers and their families read?

Here are twenty questions, either one of which might be discussed with profit, in any club in the State. File this paper away for reference, and propose one of these questions at your next meeting.

SUGGESTIONS TO FARMERS' CLUBS.

Meet regularly. Let officers be prompt and faithful. Always have some question for discussion at the meeting that will interest the members. A good plan is to keep a "query box" and let each member at each meeting, bring a question and deposit in the box. Have a "query committee" who will select from the box a query and announce it for the next meeting, and name two members—one each to lead the debate for each side. Wherever practicable, meet at the house of some member, and investigate his premises, his methods, his crops, stock, etc., and discuss them and make suggestions, etc. Have a club picnic once a year, or at least one social gathering of all the members and their families. Adopt some plan by which disputes or difficulties between members may be arbitrated and settled in your club, and thus avoid needless litigation, needless costs and unfortunate feuds.

SOWING GRASS SEED.

Experience has proved that August, or early in September, is the best time to sow grass seed. When sown at this time there is a gain of a season, as clover, lucern and several of the grasses will give a cutting the following spring. Should there be a failure of the seed, an opportunity to re-sow will occur the following February and March. But it is worse than useless to sow upon a parched ground or during a drought. Grass seed, sown late in the fall, is liable to be killed in the winter. If the farmer cannot sow early in the fall, it will be wise in him to defer it until the ordinary time of sowing spring oats. Each planter, therefore, must be governed as to time of sowing by state of soil and atmospheric conditions.—C. Menelas, in Southern Cultivator for May.

An Ohio farmer says that last year he raised 300,000 cabbages and kept the flea beetles away at a cost of a single dollar. His method is to pour a gallon of spirits of turpentine into a barrel of landplaster, and when the plaster is dampened all through, as it will be in a few days, spread it broadcast over the field. It is better than lime or ashes, and may be applied when the plants are wet with rain or dew.