THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

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

Vol. 10. RALEIGH, N. C., FEBRUARY 4, 1896. No. 51

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PAPERS.

Progressive Farmer,	State Organ, Raleigh, N. C.
Caucasian,	Raleigh, N. C.
Mercury,	Hickory, N. C.
Gazette,	Whitakers, N. C.
Our Home,	Beaver Dam, N. C.
The Populist,	Lumberton, N. C.
The People's Paper,	Charlotte, N. C.
The Vestibule,	Concord, N. C.
The Pioneer,	Wadesboro, N. C.
Carolina Watchman,	Salisbury, N. C.

Each of the above-named papers are requested to keep the list standing on the first page and add others, provided they are duly elected. Any paper failing to advocate the Ocala platform will be dropped from the list promptly. Our people can now see what papers are published in their interest.

AGRICULTURE.

In Colorado increased interest is shown in hog raising. Immunity from swine diseases and the abundance of cheap forage is having effect in turning attention to the profitable porker.

In addition to other thoughtful things done for swine and their comfort, give them sheds which are high and capable of admitting plenty of fresh air. This is essential to the best thrift. All living, growing things do best under best conditions

There is a continual advance in the nature of methods which might be made available for general use, but the actual appropriation of these methods to their own personal use by farmers in general is a matter of slow growth. It is well to be conservative, but wrong to be old fogyish.

One secret of successful farming lies in the ready anticipation of what each season's work is to demand of the farmer, and it is in the doing of many things out of season, as some short-sighted people would look at it. Try to transfer a part of the spring work to the winter months.

The Agriculturist says that beans and peas for seed purposes may be kept from the ravages of weevils by placing them in a coarse linen or cotton sack, then dipping the whole into a pot or kettle of boiling water, allowing them to remain for two or three seconds, and then thoroughly drying the seeds.

The advantages and profits to be derived from warm stables, is not confined to the yield, but it also enables the farmers to deliver a better quality of milk to our creameries, consequently enabling the manufacturer to make a better quality of butter, and therefore pay larger dividends to his patrons.

The farm reflects the character of the owner. This is seen in the location of buildings and yards, tanks, orchards, pastures, drives, etc. All these are a part of his life's machinery. The better the arrangement, the less friction. The farmer must take advantage of every short cut he can find. Superior tactics on a common farm may save enough labor in a year to amount to the wages of an extra man.

FREE SEED DISTRIBUTION.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 26—In accordance with a resolution of the Senate, Secretary Morton was present at a joint meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of both Houses on Wednesday, January 15th, for the purpose of explaining his action with reference to the purchase and distribution of seed. The Secretary professed himself ready to answer any and all inquiries made by members of the committee, and his replies to such inquiries presented, among others, the following facts:

AGGREGATE EXPENDITURE—THE LAW FOR PURCHASING AND DISTRIBUTING SEEDS.

No specific amount was separately appropriated for seed distribution prior to the fiscal year 1865. Since and including that year up to date the total amount expended aggregates $2 550,000. The section under which this expenditure has been made reads as follows:

The purchase and distribution of seed by the Department of Agriculture shall be confined to such as are rare and uncommon in the country or such as can be made more profitable by frequent changes from one part of our country to another, and the purchase, propagation and distribution of trees, plants, shrubs, vines, and cuttings shall be confined to such as are adapted to general cultivation and to promote the general interest of agriculture and horticulture throughout the United States.

DIFFICULTY IN SECURING NEW AND VALUABLE SEEDS.

Every annual appropriation act for the purchase, propagation and distribution of seeds contains the words "as required by law." Every year adds to the difficulty of finding genuinely and useful seeds "rare and uncommon to the country," adapted to general cultivation and to "promote the general interest of agriculture and horticulture throughout the United States." The pressure to supply Congressmen has led to the purchase of seed on very imperfect evidence as to novelty and value, the vast majority of so-called new seeds and plants offered by seedmen and horticulturists being merely old varieties under new names. Hence the distribution was kept up during the past three years with great difficulty and doubt as to its legality, and every seed found anywhere offering reasonable prospects of usefulness in any part of the country was purchased and liberally distributed.

SEEDS DISTRIBUTED—RESULTS OF SUCH DISTRIBUTION.

From July 1, 1892, to July 1, 1895, the total distribution aggregated nearly 27,000,000 packages, of which 21,809,994 packages were distributed to Senators and Representatives. During the term of office of the present Secretary members of Congress have received 3,650,104 packages of seed more than during the corresponding period under his predecessor. Although thus diligently carried out, the seed distribution has been unsatisfactory to the people and not calculated to promote the general interest of agriculture and horticulture. Indeed, by inducing the people to expend labor upon things they supposed to be new, but will prove to be either common or unsuitable, the government has actually imposed upon them the loss of money, time and labor.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR PLANTS, TREES, ETC.

In a final effort to carry out the law in strict accord with its requirements the Secretary, after consultation with the Attorney-General, caused an advertisement for plants, trees, etc., stating the requirements of the Department in the language of the statute, to be published in the lawful numbers of papers and addressed to all seedmen and horticulturists on the Department list. The latest date at which seed could be delivered in Washington to be available for suitable distribution was November 1, this arrangement giving only from 70 to 100 days in which to clean, test, sort, and label the seed for distribution to members of Congress.

CHARACTER OF THE BIDS RECEIVED

Bids were called for to be opened July 1, and the board appointed to open and examine the same found only three which in form came up to the requirements of the advertisement. One offered flower and vegetable seed and two kinds of grasses. The board found the flower and vegetable seed were not rare, and the Agrostologist attached to the department reported one of the grasses to be widely grown in this country, and offered for sale by leading seedsmen for a number of years, and the other common in those parts of the country where it is considered valuable, while in other sections condemned as an objectionable weed. Another bid offered "rare and useful flower seed," new mangel, turnip, and spinach. The flower seed ran from $25 to $128 per pound, and the board decided that at these prices they were not adapted to general cultivation. The vegetable seeds offered were decided to be neither new, rare, nor unique.

The third bid offered several vegetables and only three specimens of field seeds. The varieties were neither new nor rare, the great majority having been already distributed by this department. It was further found that the total amount of farm and field seeds offered under this bid if purchased would have averaged less than 10 pounds of seed for each Senator, Representative and delegate in Congress. In the hope of finding something conforming to the requirements of the law, informal examination was made of the bids set aside as defective in form and of bids received after July 1st. None offered anything conforming to the requirements of the statute. Among things claimed to be new were 100 pounds of teosinte, a sub tropical American grass. Seed of this plant was distributed by the department in 1886, and has frequently been advertised for sale by leading seedmen. In none of the bids were offered trees, shrubs, vines, plants and cuttings as defined in the law.

UNSATISFACTORY NATURE OF REPORTS RECEIVED

While one purpose of the law was to secure reports as to results of actual experiment, the reports actually did not amount to one hundredth of one per cent. of the persons supplied. Nor were those received sufficiently definite to be of any benefit. A careful review of the department reports, especially those of the chiefs of the Seed Division during the past decade, in which over $1,100,000 was expended for free seed distribution, fails to reveal a single instance of benefit to agriculture attributable to this distribution.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE SEED BUSINESS.

Of hundreds of papers, mostly agricultural, received at the department, not one is found to commend the distribution, many of them persistently ridicule it, most of them condemn it, while grange associations and other agricultural bodies have adopted resolutions to the same effect.

Market the pork sooner and raise another lot of pigs. Early maturity makes desirable hams and bacon. Many farmers persist in feeding up their hogs to mountains of fat, although retailers want leaner meat and smaller pieces for their customers.

DIVERSIFIED FARMING.

Diversified farming throughout the entire region where cotton has heretofore reigned supreme has, during the past season gained a foothold where it will hereafter firmly stand upon its intrinsic merits. It is a fact that the wise policy of diversification has now become successfully established. Home-grown supplies, sufficient to more than meet the home demand, and a satisfactory advance in the price of cotton, tobacco, grain and orchard products, have culminated in a most satisfactory and encouraging condition of affairs. With a determination to continue to diversify cropping, raise much and buy little, the outlook for the coming year is one of hopeful promise. The safety of the farmer lies in the line of complete independence of cotton, grain, transportation, or other grasping trusts or monopolies.—American Agriculturist.

Sixty per cent. of the world's supply of sugar is contributed by the sugar beet, much as this fact may surprise us. Most of us would declare that we had never tasted beet sugar, for, of course, we would know it if we had. This does away with the fallacy of beet sugar being yet but an experiment.

GROWING AND HARVESTING POTATOES.

The potato crop can be grown with as little expense as the corn crop, and even cheaper. With proper machinery for planting and digging, at least three-fourths of the labor can be saved. The slavish labor of planting by hand, or the common way, is dispensed with by the use of the two horse planter, by which one man and team will plant from seven to eight acres a day, and the work will be done far better than it can be done by hand.

The depth can be regulated much better by the use of the planter than it can be done when the furrows are made in the ordinary way by the plow. The width between hills is regulated perfectly, so that they may be made any desired distance apart—from ten inches, thirteen inches, seventeen inches, up to twenty six inches.

The pieces are left in a straight row, which cannot be done by hand planting, and this enables the cultivator to do the very best work. If the cultivation is properly done at the first, so that all weeds and grass that have started to grow are fully destroyed, and at each subsequent cultivation the same is accomplished, there will not only be a larger yield of crop, but the growth of weeds and grass will not be there to so seriously interfere with harvesting the crop, as is so frequently seen in the potato field. Clean ground is important if a good crop is to be harvested

The planter will drop any desired depth, from three to five inches, just as it is set to do, so that a regular depth is always had; and this is very important. Deep planting often means doubling the yield of crop; for in a dry season, unless the roots start out below the drying out line, they will perish, and the plant cannot be sustained in growth. If a wet season comes, then, by frequent cultivation, the excess of moisture will be assisted in its passage away from the roots of the plants, both in passing downwards and escaping with the air by evaporation; so that deep planting is, in all cases, to be practiced.

The coverers of the planter leave the rows freely ridged up so as to shed the rains, leaving the soil open to admit the warmth of the sun, so favoring growth to the greatest extent.

The next important matter is harvesting the crop. The elevator digger will do this work both rapidly and well, leaving the potatoes on the top of the ground ready to be gathered up without any uncovering with the hands, and this is a very important item, as one person can gather up the potatoes when left on top of the ground as fast as three persons can uncover after the plow or any of the old fashioned two horse cheap diggers. In fact, one person will gather up and sack four times as much as can be done by the hand, as is always the case when the common plow or digger is used, so that the economy of the elevated digger, used generally with four horses, is a settled and fixed fact. With the planter, digger and sprinkler, a crop of potatoes can be grown and harvested much cheaper, as far as labor and everything else is concerned, than a crop of corn can be grown and harvested, for with the planter six to eight acres can be planted in a day with one man and team of two horses, and the digger with one man and four horses the same number of acres can be dug in a day. The sprinkler used with one horse on two wheels will effectually destroy the bugs, so that a full crop may be had, and that with little expense.—E. S. Teagarden, in Western Plowman.

Upon the form of the carcass depends not only the power of endurance, but the capability to produce the greatest possible amount of wool to the least weight of carcass. It is quite as possible to put a strong and healthy constitution as it is to put a heavy fleece upon a sheep with long, slender legs and neck, and a thin, lathy, loose body.

POULTRY YARD

POULTRY POINTS.

Do not expect eggs unless the hens are in a bright, healthy condition; neglect neither food, exercise, cleanliness nor protection; and then have a purpose in feeding, and feed for that purpose. Do not feed merely to keep the hens alive and to satisfy their hunger.

Regularity in feeding procures rapid growth in chicks. More food of the same kind given at long, but irregular, intervals will not give them the same vigor or size. The man who follows haphazard ways in anything these times will get behind the procession.

If the hens stop laying at this season of the year, as is not unusual, a change of feed for a few days will often start them into business again. Always, and with any variety of hens, variety in feed brings the best results. Appetites are renewed and new elements supplied.

There is nothing like going to market with attractive goods. Eggs should be clean and in tidy packages; but do not make a rule of washing them, for it takes away the appearance of freshness. If the soiled spots are wiped off before they become stains, nothing else is required.

There is a surplus of small potatoes this year, and they can be utilized as poultry food. Boil, mash and mix with meal and bran; feed while warm. Feed moderately, and not every day, remembering that hens need a variety. Too many potatoes will make light colored yolks.

As a usual thing scalded chickens sell best to the home trade, and dry picked to the shippers. Dry picking is more easily done while their bodies are warm. Be careful not to break nor tear the skin. The same directions should be observed in dressing turkeys, but always dry pick them.

As a health measure, where large numbers of fowls are compelled to range on a limited enclosure, air-slacked lime should be liberally used. Let it be scattered late in the evening, after the chickens have gone to roost. It will greatly counteract the decomposing matter which is so deleterious.

It must not be overlooked that the largest proportion of the meat sold off the farm, in the shape of turkeys, geese and ducks, costs the farmer little or nothing; and if some knowledge could be gained of the actual cost it would be shown that the receipts are nearly all profit, and this should encourage him to increase his stock. Hens pay better as producers of eggs, and ducks are also excellent layers, but the largest profits from poultry are procured from turkeys and geese, as they can support themselves a large part of the year unaided.—Western Plowman.

FATENING POULTRY.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

In 1865-7 I became interested in how to make the farm pay, and occasionally lectured on the subject before farmers' clubs. In the studying chemistry I learned a large proportion of the carbon fed was expended in keeping up internal heat and supplying nerve force. In the summer time ten pounds of flesh to the bushel of corn could be secured, while in the winter four pounds was near the average.

I was satisfied that the maximum of flesh to the bushel should be twenty pounds. I instituted experiments in the winter of 1867-8 that would settle this question to my satisfaction. I chose chickens of the improved breeds but not full blood, but all had access to all the corn they could consume.

My theory was reduce combustion of carbon to the minimum and the remainder would be deposited as fat. When the blood passes to the lungs it comes in contact with the oxygen, it is decarbonized or burned up and converted into heat and nerve force. To reduce the combustion of carbon and convert the remainder into fat, two conditions were necessary. A warm room would reduce the combustion of cerbon, and convert it into heat. The fowls must be kept quiet and free from worry, reducing the expenditure of never force to the minimum. These two conditions secured there would be an increase and rapid deposit of fat.

I chose a cellar which gave me the first condition. I put 150 chickens in a cellar 16x16 feet, and at the end of the fifth day had secured the second condition. The fowls ate and drank when hungry and remained perfectly quiet. I fed them two weeks and they were fatter than any fowls I ever saw on the market, and the increase of flesh was twenty pounds to the bushel.

I sent these to the Boston market and received 26 cents a pound, a premium of 2 per cent. over the highest market price. I doubled the flesh for the amount of corn fed and the flesh was tender and nutritious. The oldest fowls were as tender as a spring chicken well fattened. An old grey headed rooster netted 18 pounds and was perfectly tender. Six young turkeys weighing gross 3½ pounds each netted seven pounds each. One of these rolled off of the table bursting open, and showing fat one inch deep.

These experiments were continued and I invariably received the same results.

My experiments demonstrated that two-thirds of the carbon was wasted as usually fed, and under proper conditions could be saved.

In fattening poultry we have the old English system of stuffing over a hundred years old. Of all animals fattened on the farm for the market, the turkey and the chicken is the hardest to control.

If rooms are reasonably dry and the weather uniform, there is no danger of disease during fattening. Fowls have good digestive powers and can eat and digest a good deal more than is needed for internal warmth, and under favorable conditions this is deposited as fat. The more rapid the deposit of fat the more tender and nutritious are the fowls.

SECOND EXPERIMENT.

We have concluded our experiments on the native breeds at Bryson City. We gave the native breeds the same attention and condition accorded to the others, and they failed to fatten. We also fed sixty odd turkeys of the bronze variety and signally failed to fatten them. Why were the first experiments a success and the last a failure? The chickens and turkeys fattened in the winter of 1867-8 were fed regular or had access to all the corn they could eat and they did not roam around and developed but little nerve energy. The native breeds were not fed and never compelled to forage over a large territory every day to get food and developed great nerve energy and expended more nerve force in one day than the well-fed breeds did in twenty. The well fed fowls did not, when confined, feel the loss of their liberty, and with a warm room and plenty of feed were quiet, and the expenditure of nerve force was reduced to a minimum. The native breeds, compelled to roam over a large field each day, developed immense nerve force and the combustion of carbon to supply this was increased to the maximum, and when housed they felt the loss of their liberty and the expenditure of nerve force continued, and with this the combustion of carbon to supply the nerve energy. We have demonstrated the fact that fowls that are forced to grub for a living are worthless for fattening purposes. It is folly to buy the improved breeds and leave them to forage for a living. When they have developed sufficient nerve energy to do this they are worthless for fattening purposes. It was the intention of the writer and others to build houses for fattening at central points in the South and fatten for the Northern market buying by the carload and shipping in refrigerator cases, reducing the carriage one-half to two thirds of that by express. Millions of dollars would have been annually distributed among the farmers. The experiments made have demonstrated the folly of such an undertaking. It is the heighth of business folly to buy improved breeds and turn them out to grub for a living, whether they be fowls or animals. It pays to have the best breeds and give them warm shelter and an abundance of good feed, reducing combustion to the minimum, saving feed wasted in keeping up internal heat and suppling nerve force. A dollar saved is a dollar made. Good stock and good farming pays, while poor stock and poor farming never has nor never will pay. Good breeds of poultry well handled pays. The improved breeds at $4 a dozen will pay to fatten, and the other kind are dear at a cent a dozen. From February until June first class poultry is high. During this time the South should furnish the poultry and eggs, and this she should do because of her salubrious climate.

Fifty million dollars annually could be put into the farmers' pockets from the sale of poultry and eggs if our farmers would awaken to their interest. Any of the non setters if well handled, will net two dollars each for their eggs, and connected with an incubator, will double and treble this amount. Eggs from the improved breeds shipped every day will sell to first class hotels for 25 cents a dozen the year around. The market for fresh eggs in first class condition has never been half supplied. We offer to contract fresh eggs of the farmers from the improved breeds that are well fed at 20 cents a dozen the year around to hatch incubators, and 25 cents a dozen for the eggs of Pekin ducks, well handled. There is as much difference in the quality of eggs from well fed and housed chickens and those left to forage for a living and receiving no shelter, as that of the milk of cows well kept and those left to shift for themselves. The quality of the first is twice that of the last. The first will live on one-half the food and furnish three to four times the net value to the owners.

Fowls fed on nitrogenous food and well housed will not be subject to attacks of cholera.

There is an immense field open in the South to those who will go into the business and conduct it on business principles. In a future article we will point out the way by which the immense demand for first-class poultry and eggs can be supplied from the South and the investors make money.

JAMES MURDOCK.