

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

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

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PAPERS.
 Progressive Farmer, State Organ, Raleigh, N. C.
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 Mercury, Hickory, N. C.
 Rattler, Whiteakers, N. C.
 Our Home, Beaver Dam, N. C.
 The Populist, Lumberton, N. C.
 The People's Paper, Charlotte, N. C.
 The Vestigator, Concord, N. C.
 The Plow-Boy, Wadesboro, N. C.
 Carolina Watchman, Salisbury, N. C.

AGRICULTURE.

A successful farmer who is also a success as a citizen and as a gentleman need not envy any man on earth.

Every farm should have its berry garden. Your children will tell you how delicious berries are right from the bush.

Two-thirds of the personal property pays no tax. This is dishonesty, and this unpaid tax money is virtually stolen from the farms.

It is usually his own fault if the son of a successful farmer is not himself a success at the business. The foundations and first story are built for him already.

We have at the present day many judiciously conducted periodicals, and no farmer who has a proper pride in his profession but takes one or more agricultural papers.

The use of absorbents to hold the urine of animals in their beds, and compel them to lie in such abominable filth, should be treated like all other barbarities to animals.

Avoid the necessity of plowing deep in the corn to cover up weeds by not having the weeds. Prevent their starting, and then their seeding. The best time to kill a weed is before the seed leaf has reached daylight. The slightest stirring of the soil will then destroy it.

Every effort to suppress the manufacture and sale of filled cheese deserves the heartiest support of all farmers. The question is of more general importance than many farmers seem to imagine, for the cheese and butter industries are so closely allied that when our export cheese trade is destroyed the butter market cannot fail to be affected.

Much the wiser plan for the young man who is unskilled in the business is to hire out for a season or two with a first-class trucker, fruit grower, dairyman or general farmer, and learn the business in a practical manner; or better still, go to a good agricultural and mechanical college. A green hand at farming can spend his money much more easily than he can earn it.

WEEKLY WEATHER CROP BULLETIN.

For the Week Ending Saturday, April 18, 1896.

CENTRAL OFFICE, Raleigh, N. C. The reports of correspondents of the *Weekly Weather Crop Bulletin*, issued by the North Carolina State Weather Service, for the week ending Saturday, April 18th, 1896, indicate an extremely warm, dry week, with an excess of sunshine. The average mean temperature for the State for this week was 75 degrees, more than 16 degrees per day above the normal. Temperatures of 95 to 98 degrees occurred on Saturday, breaking all previous records for April. The precipitation was very small, and drought prevails everywhere. Reports, however, are not as discouraging as was anticipated. Farm work made good progress, and crops are doing fairly well. If good showers occur the coming week everything will be in excellent condition. Vegetation has made marvellous growth, and trees barely showing any green a week ago are now nearly in full leaf.

EASTERN DISTRICT—Only nineteen out of eighty six correspondents report beneficial showers on Wednesday, which occurred chiefly in the central-east portion of the district. Drought prevails generally. The weather was favorable for farm work, except plowing and planting stiff lands; some farmers have suspended seeding on account of dryness. Corn planting is nearly over, and is coming up with good stand. Tobacco plants have grown rapidly and are nearly large enough to transplant. Cotton, peanuts and melons are being planted. Potato bugs have appeared. Truck crops are looking well, considering the dryness, and shipments continue. A fair crop of strawberries will be shipped and there will be a good fruit crop.

CENTRAL DISTRICT—Only four out of seventy five correspondents report light showers on the 15th. All vegetation is greatly in need of rain, but crops have grown rapidly in spite of the dry weather. Planting corn is further advanced than for some years; upland corn is about all planted, except in the northern portion of the district; corn is coming up fairly well. The planting of cotton has been retarded by dry weather; in south portion is nearly completed, and some cotton is up. Gardens are doing as well as could be expected without rain. Tobacco plants are growing fast and look thrifty. Wheat has improved, oats continue poor. Fruit will still be abundant; apple trees now in full bloom form a pleasant sight. Chinch and potato bugs have appeared in small numbers.

WESTERN DISTRICT—Very light showers were reported by ten correspondents out of seventy six; most reports indicate favorable progress in growth and farm work, notwithstanding excessive dryness. Ground not yet broken is getting too hard to plow. Corn planting is generally completed in the south, with much of it up, and is progressing well in the north. Planting cotton goes on uninterruptedly, though some farmers will not put in seeds before it rains. Spring oats nearly all planted and doing well, as are all small grains, especially in bottom lands. Gardens still late. Grasses are suffering for rain. Apples, cherries and late peaches are in bloom, and as further killing frosts are extremely improbable an excellent fruit crop may be expected. Trees are putting out foliage rapidly.

Corn ground should always be plowed early and left in the furrow a few days to be warmed by the sun and air before being harrowed down. If, however, it has been plowed too wet, the harrowing should be done before it has thoroughly dried. Some farmers put off plowing their corn ground, thinking to get a larger growth of grass or clover to turn under. But the warming of the furrow is worth more than the small amount of green manure that can be grown before a later plowing. Besides, on any old sod it is very important to have it begin to rot as early as possible. This is best secured by early plowing and thorough surface cultivation. When the sod begins to rot it furnishes considerable warmth to the soil above it, which is just what the corn plant wants.

ALFALFA OR LUCERNE.
 In the South alfalfa can be sown in either spring or autumn. For a hay crop sow twenty to thirty pounds of seed per acre; for a crop of seed sow fourteen to eighteen pounds per acre. Do not cover too deep. Alfalfa does not attain maturity until the third

or fourth year, therefore do not sow it expecting to get the best results in less than that time. Alfalfa grows best on a deep, sandy loam, underlaid by a loose and permeable subsoil. It will not grow if there is an excess of water in the soil. The land must be well drained. Alfalfa is a deep feeder; plow the land thoroughly, the deeper the land the better. Cut for hay when the first flowers appear; cut for seed when the middle clusters of seeds are dark brown. There is no better or cheaper way of growing hogs than to pasture them on alfalfa. One acre will furnish pasturage for from ten to twenty hogs per season. Horses or young, growing stock, can be pastured on alfalfa. Alfalfa hay is not a complete ration, but must be fed with corn fodder, ensilage, etc. Keep the weeds mowed and raked off the first season or they will choke out the young alfalfa. Alfalfa should be sown alone without any nurse crop, as the latter is often just as harmful as the weeds.

GIVE THE FARM A NAME.

It has been frequently suggested that great good would result from each farmer placing his name and that of his farm in a conspicuous place on his barn or road gate. Not only would persons driving for the first time to the place more easily find it, but it would add much pleasure and interest to people driving from place to place. This latter result would have especial effect with regard to well kept and pretty houses. An observing person will seldom pass a beautiful farm without a desire to know who its enterprising owner. If such a practice were general, a marked improvement in the appearance of our farms, and therefore our country, could not fail to result. Every tidy man would feel a heightened interest in making his farm front roadsides, etc., more beautiful, knowing that every passer by would commend him as the owner. It would also have a good effect upon the untidy man's farm, because the contrast between his slovenly place and his neighbor's well kept home would shame him into fence repairing, tree planting and other lines of improvement. The idea of naming the farm is certainly commendable.

ONE WAY OF RAISING SWEET POTATOES.

The rows are laid out by scattering fertilizer in parallel lines about three feet six inches or four feet apart. Without breaking these lines, the fertilizer is covered by plowing, from both sides, two furrows onto it, leaving a solid, unbroken center foundation, from six to ten inches wide, beneath the middle of the row. Then the rows are somewhat flatly rounded with a hoe. The object of this is: Our soil is sandy and highly porous, and the unbroken strip beneath the row prevents the fertilizer from going down below the reach of the potato roots. It also diminishes the profuse growth of elongated roots, and is conducive to forming plump and well shaped tubers. The rounding of the row with the hoe furnishes also sufficient soil to scrape down when weeds and grass need removing. At the second dressing, either with plow or hoe, the row is again brought to its original size, and the vines are laid along the surface of the ridge; spreading anew from these, they will soon cover the field.

If the land is rough, with weeds, grass or leaves on it, the rows are laid off by drawing such vegetable matter together with a sharp hoe, the fertilizer is then scattered on the trash, and the rows are finished as stated above. The plants should be set at least 16 inches apart, as closer planting diminishes the yield. The amount of fertilizer to be used depends much on the quality of the land. From 600 to 1,000 pounds of a standard brand per acre, or a common bucketful to a row about 100 feet long, is sufficient. Barn manure is all right on low land, but of no account on high pine land. Hen droppings are excellent in either case, but one must not be stingy in the use of them. Experience has taught me that the lifting of the vines during their growth, so as to prevent them from rooting, is at best useless. These small fibrous roots do not detract a particle from the development of the tuber; they are simply acting as braces; to loosen them would therefore be more harmful to the potatoes than beneficial. Rain or shine, I always pour about a pint of water on each plant immediately after setting. This moistens and firms the earth around them, and insures an unbroken, vigorous stand.—Geo. Berkelmann, in *American Agriculturist*.

POULTRY YARD

THE LOSS OF CHICKENS.

It is because of hawks, foxes, and raccoons proves to be much larger than is usually expected. We have received reports on this matter from quite a number of poultrymen in the Southern, Middle and Central States, most of whom say their neighbors all have similar losses. On the ordinary farm, where 50 to 100 chicks are raised annually, the loss from these causes varies from one tenth to more than half of their hatch. In the majority of cases hawks are the most destructive because most difficult to protect against, but the fox and the coon seem to be increasing in numbers and damages. The general tenor of these reports is for a bounty on hawks of 50 cents, foxes, \$2, and raccoons \$5, or each to stimulate efforts to reduce their numbers. Such a bounty may be offered by town, county or State, and can be obtained if those interested will push for it through their granges and other societies. The evil is certainly one of no small proportions, it affects many women and semi-invalids who are not able to abate it, and will increase if something is not done to arrest it.—*American Agriculturist*.

POULTRY DIGESTION BY HARD SUBSTANCES.

Every one connected with poultry knows the importance of some hard material to assist digestion. After the food has been stored in the crop, it gradually passes to the gizzard, to be literally ground up by the strong muscles and tough lining of that important member of digestion. Hard seeds and grain need this grinding process more than softer food. By watching fowls one can easily see how much they desire some hard substance by their going over the ground and picking up small particles of stone. They are careful about the proper size when they can get it. If the substance is not in too large pieces, it passes in time through with the food; but should they swallow a piece too large to easily void, it stops in the gizzard and wears away till it becomes small enough to pass on. It is a common thing to find a piece of crockery in the gizzard of a fowl, with the edges all worn round, but remaining there until made smaller.

LIVE STOCK.

FINE BREEDING STOCK.

John M. Jamison in the *Farmers' Home* says: Pure bred stock has an intrinsic value above the common animal of the farm that is without pedigree known or unknown, and on account of this greater value for use should be worth more money, but there is a limit to the money value that should be placed on these animals. The high prices that are claimed to have been paid for animals in some herds, particularly by some breeders of swine in the northwest, are out of all reason, and he that takes any stock in these claims, or believes them, is lacking in wisdom.

We would particularly caution the young breeder against purchasing stock at such rates as these high priced breeders ask. There are two reasons at least for this caution. It is hardly possible to get the money back again, and more, paying a high price for breeding stock does not make a man's reputation as a breeder. This is something that money cannot buy, nor bragging establish. Yet these great claims made by breeders induce many to embark in the business of breeding fine stock that are in no way qualified to undertake it. They may have the money to purchase a costly herd, but not the brains or experience to keep it up. When they get the experience somebody else has so much of their money that they find there is no profit in the business, and abandon it, disappointed and disgusted with the whole thing.

Good stock to start with can be bought at living prices. The pedigree may be plain, but that is not what is wanted to start with so much as quality. Pedigree must be built on quality, otherwise it is without quality. Buy quality first, and so much of pedigree afterwards as your purse will allow; it is much more profitable to go wild on quality than pedigree. If without experience as to quality and pedigree, go slow; pay only such prices as you have good reason to believe you can realize a profit from.

Let the old and experienced breeders pay these boom prices or "swap" at exorbitant rates. No man should launch out as a breeder of pedigreed stock to be sold for breeders that has not had

previous experience in growing such breeds of stock for common every-day uses. From this comes the necessary experience to make a success of the undertaking.

In breeding pigs this year have a thought about the production of bone muscle; don't feed in such a way that you will be compelled to leave the farm to buy bone. This is the general cry of farmers purchasing breeding stock. They want more bone, as their hogs have become too fine boned. It does not occur to them that the breeders of fine hogs have been trying for years to get rid of coarse boned animals, and produce such bone as is required to carry the animal to market; no more of it nor less than is absolutely necessary. The farmer can grow bone cheaper than he can buy it, and it is his interest that he should do it, for a hog that lacks in bone as to size and quality, lacks in vitality. Hence, it is necessary, if we would have healthy animals, that we feed for bone as well as fat.

HARDY CROSS-BRED HOGS.

A western swine breeder has been trying experiments in crossing improved breeds with the wild razor back hog of Florida. He writes to Dr. Salmon, of the Department of Agriculture, as follows:

"For years I have entertained the thought that largely the ills with which the hogs of this day are afflicted are attributable to injudicious breeding, and I may, with propriety add, careless handling; that the arbitrarily breeding to fancy points, has correspondingly bred out the constitution, and thus the hog becomes a ready subject for many diseases.

"The original Florida hog does not 'put on fat' excessively as do our improved strains; nor do they grow so large, nor mature quickly. The quality of meat, however, is superb, tickling the appetite of the most fastidious pork eating epicures, being characterized for rich, nutty flavor, with 'streaks of lean and streaks of fat.' This factor of quality is peculiarly manifest in all the crosses I have made.

"After the first cross these hogs fatten as readily and cheaply as any other breeds. Experts, from a market standpoint, would find them wanting in size of ham, not noticeable in second and third crossing. Size of animal in first cross might be objectionable, yet they run up to 200 and 250 pounds quickly and cheaply. I marketed a first cross barrow at sixteen months old at 480 pounds on foot."

Fair land and cultivation will give about 20 tons of sorghum cane to the acre, and the yield is ordinarily about 12 gallons of syrup to the ton. An acre of land will, therefore, produce about \$100 to the acre. The seed is valuable for feeding, and the leaves make good fodder for all kinds of stock.

THE DAIRY.

BITTER MILK.

Bitter milk is caused by bacteria which seem to be able to change albumen or casein into a bitter substance. There may be other species of bacteria at work which cause bitter milk. One kind of such milk may be caused by peptones, and the other by a special product still more intensely bitter than peptone. Other causes for spoiled milk may be diseases of the mammary glands and of other secreting organs. They are just now being carefully studied in respect to their bacterial or chemical nature. We know that fermenting milk is caused by bacteria and yeast, which decompose the milk sugar and produce from it large amounts of carbonic acid. The so-called Kefir grains, from which Kefir is made, are composed of such bacteria and yeast. Dr. Weigmann utilizes similar materials to produce a sparkling milk which keeps good for a long time.

RAMPANT FRAUD.

Hoard says that a man on South Water street, Chicago, had a man go around recently buying butter. He went all around the city until he had 75 samples. Those were analyzed and 62 of the 75 proved to be butterine. Now, that shows you one thing the matter with the business. The manufacturer makes his goods, the people who buy of the manufacturer know what they are buying, it is the consumer who is deceived. That is why I ask for a law prohibiting the color of it in imitation of butter, he says. Let the goods go on the market as it is. In Iowa since the passage of this same law, since it is not colored it is four cents cheaper than when it was allowed to be colored in imitation of butter. And they talk about helping the poor man.

HORTICULTURE

FRUIT NOTES.

The experience of last year confirms my belief, hitherto expressed, that pears are among the most profitable of our orchard fruits.

Cherry trees frequently do well planted in fence corners, but, like other fruit trees, do better when cultivated. Beyond trimming the small, tender branches of the trees while young to form a pyramidal head the cherry tree should not be pruned, especially the large limbs, as they rarely heal.

The *New York Rural World* tells its readers that apples of all sorts have been growing scarcer during the past few years, and that fine fruit is exceedingly hard to find in the largest markets.

It is no more unreasonable to expect a good crop of quince than abundant crops of good fruits from poor soil. Fruit trees and plants of all kinds are like animals—they must be fed if they are expected to be profitable. It is rarely either of them fails to make ample returns, if they are given wise and faithful attention.

The fruit of the quince is in such great demand in all large cities that it should stimulate farmers and fruit growers to greater efforts to succeed with the trees they set out. Quinces do best in deep, cool soil, though in dryish places they will do fairly well if mulched. To have the roots cool is a great step toward success.

While most varieties of fruit are produced year after year on the same fruit spurs, the peach never produces fruit but once on the same wood, and that is on the wood grown the preceding year. We readily perceive that the peach must not only mature a crop of fruit each year, but also new wood and fruit-buds for the next year's crop. Think of it, farmers! One thousand and ninety-five meals in a year, and yet no garden, no orchard! One thousand and ninety-five meals in a year, gotten up with an ingenuity that is marvellous, and without one complaint, notwithstanding the paucity of the materials. Don't we feel almost ashamed of ourselves?

There is plenty, and more than plenty, of wormy, knotty, scabby, bruised and decaying fruit grown and sent to market. This whole thing should be reformed or discouraged. There is plenty of demand for the best of fruits, honestly and carefully packed; and fair prices will ever await the man who meets this demand.

Experienced fruit growers buy but few varieties of trees and vines, but the new beginners buy everything they hear about.

Hereafter I shall, for a few years, use most of the home made manure on the orchard. The ground needs much feeding to produce a good crop of grass or hay, and a good crop of well formed, large sized apples, too, especially in a droughty year like last; and since superphosphates serve admirably on my land with wheat, clover and potatoes, I can thus save the manure to be used on my large orchard.

It is seed growing that exhaust the vitality. There are no more seed in a large fruit than in a small one, and a large one does not take any more vitality out of a tree. If a Kieffer pear tree has on it one thousand pears, and you take off five hundred of them, the remainder will weigh as much as the whole of them, and bring more money, without weakening the tree only half as much. Our rule for thinning peaches is not to leave one within four inches of another.

The man who owns a farm, or even a few square rods of land, and has not made among his New Year's resolutions one to have more and better fruit in the future than he has had, should make such a resolve now, as it is not too late. Those who have now an abundance of very good fruit are more likely to have made such a resolve than those who have none, but the others can remedy their neglect now.

Even a few currant bushes, gooseberry, raspberry or blackberry bushes alongside the fence, a pear or apple tree in a corner, plum or peach trees in the hen yard, will in a few years yield returns if properly cared for, that will well repay the outlay of time and labor necessary.—*Green's Fruit Grower*

A top dressing of phosphate will add to the nutrition and palatableness of grasses on long cultivated soil. Such portions of a pasture will be eaten close to the ground while the other is left. So will hay be eaten better which is rich in mineral fertility, and do more good than the coarse hay from wet land, containing no such food.