

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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The PROGRESSIVE FARMER is the Official Organ of the North Carolina Farmers' State Alliance.



PRACTICAL FARM NOTES.

Written for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor, and Guy E. Mitchell.

It is now certain that the cotton crop is short. We make no claims to the gift of prophecy but increased price ought to follow. At any rate it does not seem advisable to rush cotton on the market.

A Wake county farmer in the spring of '98 purchased a Poland China pig; the same spring he planted three acres of cotton. Keeping a strict account with each he found he made more profit from the pig than from the three acres in cotton. Do you see the point?

In this issue we copy from the Raleigh Post a letter from Mr. J. P. Allison, of Concord, calling for the organization of a cotton growers' trust. We do not know whether or not such a thing is practicable but the matter should be thoroughly investigated. Discuss it in your Alliance.

"What is the Babcock tester?" asks a correspondent. It is a machine invented by Prof. Babcock, of Wisconsin Agricultural College, for testing the richness or per cent. of butter fat in milk. The milk is mixed with sulphuric acid before testing. With the directions which accompany each machine, anyone can use it and thus tell which of his cows are profitable and which are unprofitable.

When it comes to raising tobacco Col. John S. Cunningham, of Person county, is the champion. He is the largest tobacco planter in the world, and this year, as a special from Raleigh Post, the Durham Sun says, he raised about three million hills of the weed. Last year Col. Cunningham raised something over two million hills, and his crop this year is nearly one third larger than last. He is well pleased, so the writer says, with the condition of the crop.

A writer in an exchange truthfully says that a farm paper must "champion the farmers' rights"; to do this it cannot ignore the discussion of economic conditions and sociological questions, no difference if the political parties are involved. There are rascals in every political party and in all organizations, and if these rascals defraud the people, and especially if they shut their eyes to the farmers' interests, it is the duty of the farm press to expose them. If I were to see an editorial in a farm paper severely roasting a particular friend of mine for his misdeeds and dishonest acts, I certainly would not refuse, as many would, to take the paper from the office again. That is good doctrine. Let it spread.

Feeding corn for hogs is unprofitable according to Prof. Cottrell, of the Wisconsin Experiment Station. Prof. Cottrell made careful trials of steam cooking corn at this station with the result that he found it required 75 pounds of corn, steamed, to make 1 pound of pork and only 63 raw, dry corn to make 1 pound gain with pigs. The average gain per pig of the lot fed steamed corn was 104 pounds and of the lot fed dry, raw corn 151 pounds. In Iowa 1 bushel corn fed dry made 13 pounds pork; 1 bushel corn steamed made only 10.8 pounds pork. The Maine Experiment Station made a test for nine years of cooked and raw corn

meal and in every case the raw meal gave best results. Wisconsin Experiment Station found that raw feed gave best results in every case in ten trials. Soaking corn seems beneficial when the weather is warm enough so that the feed does not chill or freeze. In cold weather it is decidedly injurious. It is questionable which is the better, whole corn or corn meal for fattening pigs. Many tests show slightly in favor of the meal, but not enough to justify much expense in grinding. "I would recommend soaking corn 48 hours unless the weather is so warm that it sours," says Prof. Cottrell.

The subject of frost as it relates to the agricultural products of the country is one of great importance to farmers, fruit growers, and gardeners. As a means of furnishing in popular form the necessary information in relation to methods of protecting crops from frost, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has had prepared and will soon issue Farmers' Bulletin No. 104, entitled "Notes on Frost."

This bulletin was prepared by E. B. Garriott, Professor of Meteorology at the Weather Bureau, and defines frost and the conditions which favor its formation and states the methods of protection which have been found practicable by actual experiments. It describes how frost is formed, the seasons of frost, tells when to expect it, discusses methods of protection, and describes devices for preventing rapid radiation of heat, for charging the air with moisture, and for adding moisture to the air.

Some facts regarding freezes, which are destructive alike to tender vegetation and to plants of hardier growth, are also given.

The bulletin says that experiments and observation seem to establish the following facts: The danger of damage from frost can be materially lessened by placing early and tender plants on high grounds and crests, and hardier plants in low grounds and hollows. When ground can be selected in the lee, or to the south and east of considerable bodies of water, the danger will be further lessened.

In the dry climate of the citrus fruit region of California and in the promising fruit districts of Arizona small and numerous fires, preferably of coal burned in iron baskets, have been found to be the most effective device used for protection against frost; second in point of utility may be placed irrigation; and the practicable process which affords the least protection in that respect appears to be smudge fires.

In the orange growing districts of the South irrigation affords the most effective protection against frost, while in sections where this process cannot be employed damp smudge fires properly handled are best adapted to general use.

FARM AFFAIRS.

SEASONABLE FARMING NOTES.

Bro. Cutchin, a Stanly County Farmer, Writes—As Usual—An Entertaining and Thoughtful Letter.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

We are busy pulling fodder. We all do that in the face of all the experiment station advice to the contrary. These experiment farmers don't seem to be able to prove to us that we can do better. Some are picking cotton and giving 30 cents cwt. for picking. That is about all they can afford to pay. Yet they say in South Dakota hands are scarce and hard to get at \$1.50 per day. The cotton crop is short here—about two thirds of a crop. Report says it is short throughout the world; yet it is bringing 5 1/2 cents on the market here to day. One-half a bale per acre is as good as any large tract will average.

It cost to break 2 acres.....	\$2 00
To list and manure (cheapest).....	3 00
" plow five times.....	3 00
" chop three times.....	1 50
" gather.....	5 00
" market.....	50
(It's worth the seed to haul and gin.)	
Seed to plant 2 acres.....	50
Interest on 2 acres at \$15.....	1 80
Tax on same.....	20
A total expense (very lowest).....	\$17 50
One bale cotton at 5 1/2.....	27 50

A profit of.....\$10.00
What! Ten dollars profit on a bale of cotton! Whew! The farmers are getting rich! Anybody would get rich with such a profit!
Yes, but you may count all this

reasonable and possible, and yet no farmer can make any surplus money at it. For your own time must be given to see to this, or it will not be done and then with the means you can command and all your time given, you may count on 20 bales; and ten times 20 is \$200. This for your salary and to keep your wife and little ones. Yes, truly you look a millionaire, don't you? You can't figure percentages on a farm like money. No man will secure your farm as he will money. It's only safe by your constant and perpetual attention. No farmer can live and give his family and himself the privileges and blessings other professions enjoy at present prices.

The hay crop is good this year. Every farmer should have plenty of hay. See that you have enough and to spare. If you have no natural meadows, then make them. Plant clover or peas or rye. You are not a wise man if you fail to raise enough hay for your own use. The cotton farmer has hurt him self as badly in failing to raise plenty of hay as in failing to raise his pork.

We are beginning to turn land for wheat. The crop this year was about as last year. This crop needs a good preparation of the soil. The land should be thoroughly broken and then rolled and harrowed several times. Then drill in the wheat, three pecks to the acre with not less than 300 pounds per acre of superphosphate Pea stubble and cotton land are about equal in producing a wheat crop.

Now is the time to make those pigs grow—not less than a pound a day.

All your winter wood should be up, ready cut, and piled in the dry. Don't impose unnecessary burdens on the women. Give them a good range, a good wash house, well equipped. See that your well is deep enough to give water the driest summer.

Have a garden chicken pen. Keep it filled with growing vegetables the year round. Look after the grape vines and fig bushes. Let every farmer raise his own fruit and nearly every kind. When the winter comes be prepared. Then enjoy yourself and feast upon the fruit of your labors.

Yours truly,
W. T. CUTCHEIN
Stanly county, N. C.

Winston Times: Such a week of tobacco, Wilson has never had. Nearly 2,000,000 pounds of the yellow leaf has been sold by the farmers of Eastern Carolina on the Wilson floors, and that means that about \$140,000 was turned loose here in Wilson to pay debts with. Think of it!

TREE MURDER IN AMERICA.

At a recent public banquet one of the officers of one of our largest States slighted the efforts that have been made for the preservation of our woods by placing as first in importance the development of wood pulp and other industries in the threatened districts, writes Chas. M. Finner, in a recent issue of the Saturday Evening Post. To give a passing wage to a passing population he would destroy forests that, intelligently protected, would furnish work and wages for centuries.

Americans are the most wasteful of people. They have a big and fertile country, and they act as though it were impossible to exhaust its resources. But the immense increase in its growth, the constant enlargement of industries that require the destruction of natural material, must bring us to a pause. Natural gas was burned without stint just after its discovery, with the result that only enough remains for three years. We are told that the anthracite supply in this country cannot last much more than a hundred years longer. Already some of the prairie lands that were believed to be inexhaustible, requiring but one plowing a year to keep them fertile, are tired out, and demand to be fed. And most astonishing of our wastes is that of our woods, in which rests one of our best sources of wealth and on which we rely for water. Whether we use timber for houses and ships or not, we must drink, and in chopping off our forests we are reducing our springs; ergo, our brooks, rivers and ponds; ergo, the fertility of the land; ergo, the population thereof.

It has been explained again and again, yet seems ever to require new emphasis, that the trees act as umbrellas to protect the fallen rains from quick evaporation and give time to them to soak into the soil; also, that they create, with their fallen leaves

and decayed branches, the vegetable mould in which succeeding forms of plant life find their nutriment. Strip a hill of its timber, and the rain runs swiftly down, causing a freshet in the river at its foot, because there is nothing to stay it. Worse still, it carries more or less soil with it, so that in a little time the hill is bared of its rocky frame. The mischief is that it requires years and years to repair a damage that a party of woodmen can inflict in a day.

The domes of granite one sees in the Adirondacks and on Mount Desert show how difficult it is to persuade vegetation back again when rocks are bare of mould for root hold. In other places that have been reforested, through a natural increase in the woods and consideration on the part of the lumbermen, the water has not come back with the trees. The mould that held the springs has been dried and washed away, and centuries must pass before a new sponge is created by the slow deposit of aged trunks and fallen leaves.

This cutting is deplorable. It implies not merely the destruction of beauty, which is cause enough for lamentation, but hardship, especially in the country districts; it implies a lessening number of birds, our bright, tuneful, useful little friends, because they cannot secure nesting places; it implies a check on the fertility of the surrounding country; it implies disastrous floods in spring, when the snows melt, there being no soil to hold the moisture and no screen of limbs or leaves to shadow the drifts from the noxious sun; it implies a lessening rainfall, with increasing drought; it implies the ultimate conversion of deforested tracts into desert.

The case of Spain is a familiar one. It was once well wooded and was capable of sustaining a large agricultural population. Its trees were relentlessly hewn down by greedy spoilers, with the result that, in time, districts once fertile became rainless and dusty, the vegetable mould disappeared, the streams dwindled, and the population was driven from the soil into the cities, where many became beggars, adventurers, or laborers at uncongenial tasks for wretched wages. To this day the arid districts remain as Nature's protest against man's destructiveness and selfishness.

There is a remedy for this and it is time it was applied. It consists in scientific forestry. It is not necessary to restrict the cutting of timber to a great extent. It needs only a little intelligence and a little after work in planting. A hill should never be deforested. The largest and oldest trees should be chosen for cutting. In place of every one cut down a sapling should be planted. In many of the tracts devastated within recent years thousands and hundreds of thousands of trees have been destroyed and not a single one set out to replace them. Yet we have officials who can defend such proceedings! It is appalling.

In the parts of the Old world that claim to be enlightened the authorities have been compelled to institute reforms, for there was a general alarm over the drying of the springs and the failure of the rivers. The Rhine, the Rhone, the Elbe, the Danube—in fact, most of the important rivers of Europe have subsided by several feet, and not only the navigation, but the health, convenience and industries of the people have been correspondingly affected. To stay this devastation, to restore, if possible, fitness to the soil and depth to the streams, boards have been created to guard the forests, prevent needless destruction by chopping and by fire—our own forests have suffered much from the carelessness of hunters and miners in leaving fires burning in the woods—to study the effects of soil, climate and locality, and to plant liberally. Through the beneficent operations of the forestry boards districts have been redeemed, industries have been preserved and restored, and the beauty and prosperity of several lands favorably affected. We, who have more natural advantages, must be less wasteful or we shall not have them.

Says the Durham correspondent Raleigh Post: From the present outlook Durham will sell more leaf tobacco this year than ever before in her history. Already the warehousemen are handling a quantity of the weed, and several of the old leaf dealers have told me that fourteen or fifteen million pounds will be sold here this tobacco year, unless all signs fail.

BROAD GAUGE REMEDIES SUGGESTED FOR BROAD GAUGE EVILS.

The Southern farmer is not happy. I do not propose to consider all the causes of this, but I am impressed with four features of the situation as deserving of more than a passing thought. These are:

- (1). Credit farming.
- (2). A lazy man's market.
- (3). The plow and the loom too far apart.
- (4). Bad transportation.

CREDIT FARMING.

"Credit farming is the result of being compelled to farm without capital." This fallacy looks to be a plain truth; it is a plain absurdity.

Farming is not speculation. It is not play. It is not idle dreaming. It is business, and business is not done in this year of grace without capital—money capital, brain capital, energy capital. The farmer who has these three forms of capital uses them in his business. The farmer who lacks one or all of them hires what he has not.

When you hire a workman you become a master, he a servant. When you hire capital you acquire a master and become a slave. A slave may make a profit out of the business of being a slave, and in time may buy his freedom. Not many crop lien slaves, however, ever realize this possibility. Most of those who do are those who hire only money capital. Those to whom the merchant must also "furnish" brains and energy eventually realize the boast of one of them who said: "When I can't make a living working six months in the year I will quit." He clearly meant he would quit farming, as he had not made a living in years.

The great barrier to the crop-lien slave's emancipation, however, is the fact that, in his case, the furnishing merchant is the real farmer. He does not plant according to his judgment, but according to his orders. He cultivates also by order, gathers his crop by order, markets it by order, and by orders from the same source arranges his plans for another crop. This man will never do his best farming till he can get the merchant out of the position of boss, and the merchant will be boss till the slave is able to "furnish" himself.

A LAZY MAN'S MARKET.

Said a successful farmer to me recently: "The average farmer is body diligent but brain lazy. He is willing to work with his hands, but not with his head. What crops he can make only by hard study and real thinking he will not plant." Cotton is a brain-lazy crop. Brain lazy to plant, make, gather and sell.

The merchant also is brain lazy. He is the farmer's middleman. He brings the farmer and his market together. Many times, most times, the farmer has neither time, money, information, experience, confidence, nor, possibly, ability to hunt a market. He must plant for the merchant's market—for a lazy man's market. Cotton sells itself—or money or a debt receipt. No other possible Southern farm crop does. Hence the more laziness the more cotton.

FLOW AND LOOM TOO FAR APART.

Some years ago the center of the iron industry of this country was at Pittsburg, Pa. The city was furnace girdled. The smoke of the smelter's fires was a curtain by day and a blanket by night. The town lost its name and was known as the "Snokey City." Whoever would smelt iron built a furnace there because it was orthodox business doctrine that the factory should be neighbor to its competitor. A mixture of iron and rock called ore, lime to flux it, coal to melt it, all were hauled from a dozen to a thousand miles that orthodox might preserve a business "center," and the pick and the furnace dwelt apart.

One day there appeared a heretic. He said the furnace ought to go to the field. He had the assurance to point out that Pittsburg was paying long freights on five and more tons of something for every ton of pig iron made. His heresy was to make a short haul of the ore, flux and fuel and a long haul of the iron—a short haul on the five tons and put the long haul on the one ton. Iron orthodoxy laughed him to scorn.

Capital, however conservative, is not reverent. Business heresy is good doctrine if it can show a profit. Away out near the end of one of Pittsburg's long hauls a furnace was built. The miner's pick was its nearest neighbor.

From within rifle shot of its door came ore from one hand, lime from the other and coal from between the two.

Pittsburg was then putting on the market at Chicago a certain grade of iron at a cost of upwards of \$20 per ton. The heretic's furnace soon sold better iron in Chicago at \$16 and made a good profit. It was his derided short haul on the five tons and long haul on the one ton. He had saved the freight on what the furnaces must handle but could not sell.

To-day Pittsburg sees the sun every day and the stars every night, and the center of the iron industry of America is where Dixie is sung. South Pittsburg, Birmingham, a troop of their nearest of kin are children of the marriage the iron heretic negotiated; of the wedding at which the pick and the furnace exchanged vows while iron orthodoxy forbid the bans. Where the plow and the loom have set up housekeeping they are begetting a like healthy progeny. But many a Southern plow has not yet found—many indeed have not yet sought—a loom affinity.

Southern iron has made heresy orthodox. The factory is seeking the farm. What is the farm doing?

BAD TRANSPORTATION.

The farmer pays a great many taxes. A few of them are levied by the law, some by nature, more by the farmer. Transportation is a tax that all three join in assessing. Nearness to market lessens this tax.

How do you measure nearness, in miles or in dollars? I talked recently with a farmer who estimated that it cost him fifty cents a bale to haul his cotton the forty miles from his farm to the railroad. The next evening another farmer figured out for me that he was paying "six bits," twenty-five cents, to haul his cotton twenty-three miles to the same town. The man who was seven miles farther was twenty-five cents a bale nearer.

It costs \$58 to get a hundred barrels of flour from a certain mill to its market; \$98 to get a hundred barrels from another mill to the same market. The first mill is 27 per cent. nearer in miles and 41 per cent. nearer in dollars. Which measures the business distance, the miles or the dollars?

Forty miles over a dirt road is a long way from market, whichever way it is measured. A large percentage of the crops and live stock of the Southern farmer is produced at some such distance from the railroad, while it is said that it is impossible for a man to get twenty miles, almost impossible to get ten miles, from a railroad town in large areas of the corn and wheat-growing sections of the United States. And when the Southern farmer gets to his railroad town he finds rail rates much higher than does the corn and wheat farmer.—W. A. Parker, in Southern Farm Magazine.

SOME BIRD AND SNAKE NOTES.

An article on this subject by Mr. H. H. Brimley, the efficient curator of the State Museum, recently appeared in the Raleigh Post. It contains information of special interest to farmers.

The science of zoology as applied to economic conditions is yet but in its swaddling clothes, says Mr. Brimley, and until investigators have gone much more fully and deeply into the intricacies of this interesting and economically valuable subject we shall still have to judge our bird and animal neighbors by appearances and surface indications only. Thus, most farmers will say that all hawks, owls, snakes, etc., are his enemies. It is of little use to tell one the big "hen hawk" he shot this morning never killed a chicken in its life, but has destroyed hundreds or even thousands of noxious (or to us noxious seeming) field rats and mice and insects. Or that the large, black eyed "hoot owl" caught in the steel trap set on a pole was not the robber that had been devastating his hen roost for so long, but that it had helped him in his nightly quarterings of his fields after the numerous cotton rats and field mice that infested them.

Let us look a little deeper into this economic business. Here is a great horned owl (Bubo Virginianus), just killed. On dissecting his crop and stomach what do we find? Rabbit, chicken and field rat remains. Of course the chicken was a dead loss to the farmer, but the rabbit had been gnawing the bark off his young fruit trees and the rat had been eating his

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