

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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

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FARM AFFAIRS.

THE PLANTERS' RESOLUTIONS.

FUNCTION OF LEAVES.

GRASS CULTURE.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

Standing on the pinnacle of the nineteenth century and looking backward, we see the toiling masses struggling against the consequences of many errors. Mired by the "Ignis Fatuus" of the all cotton craze, they have hewn down the forests, scratched their soil, misguided the rain water, and wrought general devastation. Heaven's great blessing perverted, became man's great curse. With incredible swiftness they changed a glorious heritage into a wide spread scene of washed and gullied hillsides, and naked barren fields. Having spent our manhood's prime in killing grass, we now look with dismay upon the wreck and ruin our hands and plans have wrought. A sad and sickening sight it is.

But with our mistakes have come lessons of experience, and the light of science. "A change is coming over the spirit of our dreams." Looking around us to-day we catch the gleam of hope and see that advanced men are planning better and wiser things. The horizon of the future glitters with radiant stars of hopeful inspiration.

INSTEAD OF KILLING, LET US GROW GRASS

In our deadly foe of the past, we may find our best friend of the future. "All flesh is grass," and from grass all flesh is fed. Hence in killing grass we have been destroying the very foundation of permanent prosperity. We can never become permanently prosperous with naked hills and gullied fields. They must be clothed with the carpet of verdure which nature intended them to wear and fitted them to bear. This is the unanimous voice of historic teachings. Our wonderfully varied resources have led us into a line of policy, tempting in the beginning, ruinous in the ending.

In cattle growing we may find the road to prosperity. But cattle must have food. The more abundant the food supply, the greater profit; there will be in cattle raising. But the food must not only be abundant, it must be cheap. Hence in the production of cheap food lies the ultimate key to the whole situation. Can we find and use this key and not only permitting grass to grow, but helping it to grow. How shall we do this? In several ways.

First, by removing all the stumps, stones, briars, bushes and noxious weeds from our pastures and hay fields. Then run a subsoil plow, every twelve inches, deep down into the clay. Spread manure of any kind you have, and supplement this with acid phosphate and kainit, spread freely broadcast, not in drills. If you have no manure, use more phosphate and kainit. Run over with a light smoothing harrow and follow with heavy roller.

Old Bermuda fields and other waste lands treated this way will respond marvellously.

ANOTHER WAY IS THIS

Select any suitable field and break the subsoil in the fall. In April, harrow repeatedly until smooth. Crab grass will come without seeding. But while harrowing, work in a liberal supply of acid and potash, with or without homemade manures. Another way is to follow your grain crops as soon as cut with a good seeding of peas and sorghum mixed. Fertilize as above. When the peas are in pod, cut and cure.

Thousands of acres now waste and worn would soon be yielding a handsome income if treated in this way. The cost would be very little, the profit very great. We know that it sounds strange to many if you talk about manuring grass, but it will pay better than manuring cotton.

Old habits are hard to break. You have so long been accustomed to killing yourselves all summer killing grass to grow clean crops to sell at less than cost to get a little money to buy some dead grass, that it has become second nature. But all the time you have been crossing the order of nature. This is by nature a grass producing land. And a grass producing land should be a cattle growing land.

Then there are a score of cultivated varieties of grass that will grow readily, and pay well for the growing: Orchard grass, timothy, the Fescues, Herd's grass, Johnson grass, and on and on. Let me say to every Progressive Farmer reader: turn your thoughts to grass, and grass will turn your labor to money.

JAS. B. HUNNICUTT.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

The Cotton Growers' meeting held in Raleigh, Oct. 18th, appointed a committee of one from each Congressional district to form plans of organization, etc.

The committee met and elected Maj. W. A. Graham President and adopted as title of the organization "The North Carolina Branch of the Cotton Planters' Association of the South."

John P. Allison was appointed to draft resolutions, which are as follows:

"Resolved, That the time has come for the planters of the South to organize for the better protection of their interests, and we, the cotton planters of North Carolina, looking forward to the organization of planters throughout the South, do hereby organize under the name of the North Carolina Branch of the Cotton Planters' Association of the South. And whereas the drift of the discussion in meeting was, that individual effort counted for very little in battling against the combines in other industries, and pledges to curtail average, or holding back the crop on plans heretofore adopted, have failed; therefore be it further

"Resolved, That, considering the many varieties of soil and the lavish hand of nature in behalf of our section of the Union, our people should show appreciation by a greater development of their possibilities. The one crop idea has been our bane. The world needs all the cotton we can raise, yet when we make only this one crop we are forced to sell, to buy things we should raise.

"The South cannot longer afford to confine her money crop to one product alone, and there can be no reason why other staple crops should not be grown as money crops, and thereby bring into existence many profitable interests, not only in agriculture, but in all departments of industrial life. We might safely enumerate the following industries, which can be developed to a highly profitable basis by the introduction of correct methods by the farmers in such parts of the South as is best suited to their growth: Wheat, oats, peas, sugar, syrup, molasses, broom corn, tobacco, strawberries, general trucking, hay, corn, fruits, stock of all kinds, dairying, and factories of various kinds.

"We have here presented a large diversity of food crops, which are in daily demand in all parts of the world. A diversified farm rightly managed has the chances of success. The farmer who relies upon the production of cotton alone as his money crop must arrange to produce it on a surplus basis. He must raise all of the needed food supplies at home, institute a regular system of crop rotation, carefully preserve his barn yard manures, and by living strictly at home hold his cotton field free and independent of mortgage, and thereby become enabled to sell it when he can secure a price representing its true value and a profit on his labor. But we must prepare our selves for these changes in our farming methods by becoming more fully educated in the business which we are to pursue. We can accomplish this by cooperation, and by supplying our selves with the best literature pertaining to the principal crops we propose to engage in. Repunitive prices for cotton make it impossible to raise other industries in our land, without detriment to any, and enables the planter to school his children and make his home attractive. The present price of cotton is some compensation for our labor, yet is not sufficient to meet the deficiency caused by the short crop, and we must not think it will remain, and return to the old method. While the price is up let us hold it there, and not allow the dealers to commence hammering the price as soon as our crop is planted.

"We further recommend to the favorable consideration of the cotton growers the proposition of some of the leading bankers of our State to build warehouses for storing cotton, and making advances at a low rate of interest, enabling the planter to meet his money obligations and make necessary cash purchases and hold his cotton off of the market during the fall months."

The Roanoke Times says that a seed farm on a small scale is operated by Mr. Geo. H. Barnes at Roxobel, Bertie county, and that Mr. Barnes has built up a good trade and reputation for his garden and flower seeds.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

The leaves of our forest trees appear in the spring of the year, and in the course of thirty days have attained their full growth, and in our field crops we see them form and, before they are fully grown, younger ones appear.

What function do the leaves perform? And why is it that many of our trees will die during the summer if the leaves are stripped off and kept so?

Careful analysis of wood shows it to be largely composed of starch, the greater portion of which is carbon. Scientists teach us that the function of the leaves and the unripe fruit is to gather carbon from the atmosphere, in the form of carbonic acid gas, and store it in the bodies of the trees for the purpose of furnishing the next year's growth of leaves, wood and fruit; that this starch by the presence of diastase is converted into sugar, then into gum, and then into lignin or wood, and that any excess remaining after the leaves and growing fruit have been thus supplied is discharged through the leaves and petals of the blossoms or blooms, in the form of honey dew.

The leaves of all our trees are discharged on the approach of frost, and in warmer climates the leaves are discharged, as the trees are supplied with starch. This starch is one of the most abundant elements in vegetable life, and furnishes the first food to all young plants and animals in form of sugar, having undergone the change by the presence of diastase. The first food of the newborn babe and the infant corn or wheat plant is the same (sugar of milk).

But as soon as the plant sends out a root, it then begins to imbibe the earthy matter from the soil, and as the leaves are put forth, they begin to feed on carbon from the atmosphere. The structure of the leaf furnishes an interesting field for instruction, its many wards, cells, pumps, and starch repositories are all so adjusted as to show the highest order of intelligence in its mechanical structure.

In order to have good crops, we must see to the health and food of our plants so that they may have plenty of large healthy leaves. It is the leaves that feed the tubers in the soil, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, beets, etc. Now if our plants are weak and sickly they may make a fair crop, but it will require much more time, so that good strong seed, next to the land, is of paramount importance. It will prove to our children as well as many adults a source of much pleasure and interest to dissect a leaf by cutting it apart and viewing the various parts through a microscope and to see how the Creator has furnished it with the laboratory to carry on its work. It is a very common sight to behold our fields and cloths in verdure, but how little do many of us know why so many leaves and so many shapes are necessary? Yet every shape, and every leaf has a function to perform. The hickory tree has a long leaf, the cell construction of the wood is long rendering it tough and durable. The sweet gum leaf is short lobed, its wood cells warped and twisted, rendering it brittle; so with all growing plants, a beautiful analogy exists between the wood or tuber and the leaves. "Nothing but leaves." Yet how little would we have if we had no leaves. Wake C., N. C.

A PEANUT FACTORY, IF --

The Progressive Association has taken the correct and initial step to get a peanut factory. The following: John L. Bridgers, C. W. Jeffreys, W. H. Powell Jr., B. B. Howell, James T. Howard and W. E. Fountain, were appointed a committee to investigate and if a factory, as a paying concern is practicable, to solicit stock in the same and report plan of organization, etc. So far as stock in this is concerned, it can be had with little effort, provided the farmers back the enterprise.

The farmers are not expected to invest largely, but they must so back the enterprise so as to insure its success. As has already been stated, in these columns, the difference between the peanut as it comes from the farm and after it is cleaned, is from 20 to 40 cents a bushel. Of course, this is not all profit, the dirt, the labor, etc., must be deducted, but still the margin of profit is large. The peanut trust knows this and it will not brook a competitor.

If the farmers will take up the factory, they will then be in a position to

share in the benefits whether the trust makes a fight or not. If no fight would be made, private capital would like nothing better than an investment in a factory. If it does fight, then private capital is timid, because without most abundant means the trust will make operations unprofitable. The trust can make the price of peanuts so high as they come from the farm, that the mill cannot handle them at a profit.

If the farmer is backing the enterprise he can, when the trust tries this game, sell to the trust; and let the local mill remain idle. The loss on the investment will be small while the gain otherwise will be great.

A few thousands of dollars will build and equip the factory. The expense connected with one is the capital needed to buy the peanuts, the amount required running up it to six figures or thereabouts.

Some towns have invested in a steamboat and tied it to the wharf, simply as a lever to reduce freights. On this theory the peanut factory can be made a success.

If the trust is willing that normal prices shall rule, the factory will pay and that handsomely, but if it tries to run the projectors out of business by putting up the price, then the factory can remain idle and the farmer sell at the enhanced price.

It is plain and simple. The matter rests with the farmers. The committee should ascertain what the farmers will do; then, if they will do their part, the peanut factory can be had without trouble or delay.—Tarboro Southerner.

THE COMPOST HEAP.

A few years ago a great deal was said and written about the compost heap. It was considered the essential element of success upon every farm. Its praises were upon every tongue. Too much was claimed for it; many were disappointed; hence there came a reaction. The commercial fertilizer dealers did much to hasten this reaction and to make it extreme. Like all reactions, it has gone too far, says J. B. Hunnicutt in a recent issue of the Southern Cultivator.

There is great good in the compost heap. Sensibly used, it is the right hand of success upon the farm. Without it, much that is valuable will go to waste upon every farm. It is not practicable to carry all the waste from the yards and lots and stalls directly to the fields; often it is not economical or desirable to do so.

Every farm should have a convenient compost heap. Upon this all refuse should be daily thrown. This heap should be carefully covered and looked after. Enough moisture should be always present to assist decomposition. Dry matter does not decay. Moisture is necessary to make this proceed. If it can be done, the liquid voidings of all animals should be utilized in keeping the compost heap moist.

In doing this a twofold good is accomplished. The plant food elements of the liquids are caught and preserved by the solids in the heap. At the same time the solid matter is hastened in decaying and thus yielding up its plant food ready for use.

PLANT FOOD.

Remember that you are after the greatest possible quantity of soluble plant food. This is, and this alone, that increases your crop and your profit. You buy chemical manures simply that you may feed more soluble plant food to your growing crops.

You distribute all manures for the same purpose. The value of any manure depends entirely upon the quantity of soluble plant food it contains.

The compost heap is a factory for the manufacture of soluble plant food. Its value depends entirely upon its power to do this. Almost any sort of compost heap will do some of this work, but a well managed one will do so much of it that it pay a large profit upon the cost of making and caring for.

HOW SHALL WE MAKE ONE?

Use all the waste vegetable matter you can get. If it is not convenient to carry your stable manure direct to the field, put it on the compost heap. Pack the heap down often so as to keep the moisture from escaping and thus hasten decay.

If your heap is to remain long before moving to the field, several inches of soil should be thrown upon it occasionally. This will help keep the moisture and at the same time absorb and hold the escaping ammonia and carbonic acid gas.

To make the more sure of this, keep

at hand acid phosphate and kainit and sprinkle them freely over the heap. This will greatly add to the value of your compost. It will then have all the elements of plant food in good quantity and proportion.

Do not let your heap get too hot. Throw on water and pack closer, or haul to the field if possible rather than have too great heat.

By a little care and a few minutes' attention each day an amazing quantity of compost can be made on every farm. In the long run, it will prove to be a savings bank on your farm from which you will draw constant and paying dividends.

If possible, the compost should always be spread upon soil which has been freshly plowed or harrowed.

This will prevent loss from evaporation.

A well kept compost heap adds greatly to the neatness and healthfulness of the farm. Malarial vapors that are so common about badly kept lots and yards will all be destroyed or prevented by the heap.

PROFITABLE TRUCK FARMING.

The following from the Texas Truck Farmer is applicable in large measure to conditions in this and adjoining States:

When you hear a man or a paper trying to prove by facts, figures and other available material constructed for the purpose, that truck farming won't pay, you can safely go him 16 to 1 that he simply don't want it to pay, that he is "agin it" from start to finish, that he worships at the shrine of five-cent cotton and the usual spring crop mortgage. Some of our newspaper friends don't seem to want the truck farmers to succeed. They will walk sixteen miles to get an interview with some sorehead who has raised "too much melon" and allow a profit statement on tomatoes or onions as big as a car door to go unnoticed. This, to us, seems unfair, and while we care but little about it, we merely call the attention of our readers to it to show the thing up in its true light. We say openly that truck farming, as carried on in Texas, is the most profitable farming to day, and can prove it by as responsible a set of men as ever breathed. There were some failures, there will continue to be failures just as long as people continue to work, but, oh but, has there been any failures in the cotton business in the last ten years? Let's see—how many men in Texas in the year of our Lord 1899 will lack from one to one hundred dollars paying their stunted store account with cotton? How many little bare feet will there be in Texas to tell the horrors of too much cotton to a November north? How many little hoods will there be on Christmas morn that will peep out from the cover and find that the chimney has been stopped up with five-cent cotton, preventing Santa Claus from filling their little stockings? How many aching hearts will there be that day, caused from low cotton and low spirits? How many old, half starved, spavined, hide-bound mules and horses are there in Texas today that haven't had half enough to eat in two months because the "user" knew he would have to go in October. Poor things! If they had the "say so" diversification would at least go to the living at home point, whether they raised for shipment or not. How many fortunes have been made this year on cotton? We know a man who had four acres of onions and made nearly \$600 on them. How much per acre will this great king cotton net? We know a man who made over \$300 on one acre of tomatoes. It takes twelve months in the year to make a cotton crop and three to four to raise truck, so you have three to one the advantage in time. You can raise cotton to swap for cash only—you can feed fruit and vegetables to stock, eat them yourselves, or credit your neighbor who raises cotton only, for them. So we have a big advantage in that way, but the greatest is yet to be mentioned—we can't mortgage a truck patch—that is, it can't be mortgaged like the cotton crop, and this gives our truck farmers the happy thought and privilege of paying cash and living at home. Ah, there is a big thing in behind cotton and truck—when a man plants cotton he has to go in debt for supplies, he gives a mortgage and then the man who furnishes the supplies is not afraid of anyone's competition—he's got him.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.]