

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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

Vol. 15.

Raleigh, N. C., July 24, 1900.

No. 24

Agriculture.

RURAL FREE DELIVERY OF MAILS.

We promised in last week's Progressive Farmer to publish in part this week the article on Rural Free Delivery contributed by Perry S. Heath, of the U. S. Postoffice Department, to the Saturday Evening Post of July 14th. The selections follow:

Among the agencies which are changing the habits and broadening the horizon of the American people the extension of the free delivery of mails to rural communities is most prominent. The far-reaching effects of this great change in postal administration as an aid to the moral, intellectual and material advancement of those brought within its influences are not yet fully appreciated, though with every extension of the system its benefits become more clearly demonstrated. It is obvious, at a glance, that there must be something behind a movement which has caused Congress without solicitation from the Postoffice Department, to increase the appropriation for its development, within four years, from \$50,000, in 1897, to \$150,000 in 1898, then to \$450,000 in 1899, and now to \$1,750,000 for the fiscal year 1900-1901. Yet outside of the rural neighborhoods where the service has been put into effect—that is to say, in the large cities, where the free delivery of mails, now ranging from three and four to as many as seven deliveries a day, has been accepted for twenty years or more as a matter of course, without any one giving thought to the question whether all the other people in our part of the Western hemisphere were similarly favored—there are probably few who clearly understand what Rural Free Delivery is, and what it means to the country farmer, who has it now for the first time, and who, after six months' trial, would be willing almost to mortgage house and lands to secure its continuance, should such an extreme course be necessary.

At the risk, perhaps, of repeating facts which have become matters of official record, but which necessarily have been presented heretofore in a somewhat disjointed form, I will endeavor to explain what Rural Free Delivery is.

THE PRINCIPLES OF FREE RURAL DELIVERY.

Rural Free Delivery, established on the basic principles which led to its successful test, is a service which starts from a small postoffice in the heart of a district devoted exclusively to agricultural pursuits—where wheat, corn, cotton and sugar are grown, where cattle are raised and creameries flourish, where fruits and vegetables are cultivated to supply the needs of the larger towns, and where the people live miles from a railroad or a postoffice, and labor from dawn to dusk, with little opportunity for social intercourse or amusement, with no magazines or other current literature to break the monotony of the long winter evenings, and no chance to keep track of the stirring events of their own and other countries by perusal of the daily newspaper.

The rural carrier is chiefly sent into communities where no visible representative of the Government of the United States has heretofore been known. To the average farmer the army and navy of the United States are almost names only; he has never seen them or any part of them. He has no direct dealings with officers of customs or internal revenue, and does not want to have any. The courts of the United States are held in the big cities, and he never voluntarily attends them. Hence the daily visit of the rural carrier is to him a revelation of a new order of things. It brings him into actual touch with the government, and causes him to feel that he is getting something back for the taxes he has so long and so willingly paid.

WHAT RURAL DELIVERY SAVES THE PEOPLE.

Before the establishment of Rural Free Delivery the residents of these isolated farm houses had to go or send for their mails to the nearest

village postoffice, perhaps six miles or more away. In the busy season this cost loss of time and labor; in the inclement winter weather the journey was always inconvenient and sometimes impracticable. Consequently, they sent for their mails only at infrequent intervals, neglected their correspondence, became estranged from relatives and friends at a distance, subscribed to no daily newspapers and lost interest in the doings of the outside world. Rural Free Delivery has given them a new interest in life.

The rural carrier provides his own vehicle—usually a buggy or light wagon—and has his horse or horses (two horses to be used alternate days are often necessary), and drives, on an average, from twenty to twenty-five miles a day, over a circuitous route, so arranged that he does not traverse the same road twice on the same day. He leaves the distributing office immediately after the arrival of the principal mail the day, returning in time to turn in his collections for dispatch by the evening trains. He prepares a list of the heads of families on the line of his delivery. Each of these is required to put up a box by the roadside, mounted on a post, at such convenient height that the carrier can reach it to deposit his mail without alighting. The carrier does not leave the main road nor enter dooryards to hand in his mails. The country for a mile or so on each side of his route is tributary to him. People living quite a distance back from the road which the carrier traverses find it much more convenient to come or send to meet him (knowing the time at which he passes daily), and thus to collect their mail, than to drive several miles to the village postoffice on the off chance that there might be some mail there for them. If, taking advantage of the facilities which rural delivery affords, they subscribe for a daily newspaper and a weekly or monthly magazine, they know that there is something always awaiting them, and that each trip to the family letter box at the crossroads corner will result in something of interest.

Each rural postman carries with him for sale a supply of stamps, stamped envelopes and postal cards. He is authorized to receipt for money orders and to deliver registered letters, proper forms of receipt being provided. He is practically a traveling postoffice, and is under bond to the government for the faithful performance of his duties.

STRAIGHTENING OUT THE TANGLE OF THE SERVICE.

The methods of installation of the service have been simplified and systematized as the service has increased. When experimental rural free delivery was started on October 1, 1896, the Postoffice Department arbitrarily selected the localities where it should be applied, and in some instances imposed it upon communities which did not need it and did not desire it. It is now made a prerequisite that those who wish the service shall petition for it, presenting their petitions through their Representatives in Congress, and with their favorable indorsement. Each rural route, before it is ordered established, is carefully investigated by a special agent of Rural Free Delivery. He drives over the ground, prepares a map on which he carefully notes the number of residences which can be served (which must never be less than one hundred to each carrier), and distinctly outlines the route the carrier is to follow. A copy of this map is left with the postmaster, so that there shall be no excuse for applications, after service has been ordered, for trivial changes in the direction of the route to accommodate particular persons.

I think the future of rural free delivery is bright with promise, not only for the farmers whom it directly benefits, but for the country at large. Wherever it has gone it has brought good roads. These, in fact, are made a prerequisite of the establishment of the service. It is causing a revolution almost as marked in its influence on the people as that of the establishment of the great trunk

railroads across the continent. It is welding city and country together, and will in time turn the tide of emigration, which now sets in from the country into the cities, back from the overcrowded purlieus of the cities into the free air and wholesome vocation of the country.

With well-built agricultural roads traversing every part of this great country, and the free delivery of the mails brought to nearly every farmer's home, I confidently believe that a social revolution will be effected the benefits of which will be felt for generations to come.

FROM STANLY.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Please answer in next week's Progressive Farmer: Of whom can we get seed for second crop of Irish potatoes, and cost of same?

A fine crop of wheat has been harvested in this county. Threshing has begun. We had a dry and cool May, hence corn and cotton late and small. Some fields have a poor stand. July so far very dry. Crops suffering for rain. Success to The Progressive Farmer. J. A. C. Stanly Co., N. C.

Our correspondent should study our advertising columns more closely. We try to make it a general business directory for the farmer. Messrs. T. W. Wood & Sons, Richmond, Va., have been advertising seed for second crop potatoes in our columns, and seed may be ordered from them. We appreciate the notes.—Ed.

I send you a new subscriber and would like to have a copy of Gleason's Horse Book, but I feel that I am getting more than the worth of my money out of The Progressive Farmer.—S. M. Brothers, Pasquotank Co., N. C.

VALUE OF RAPE.

We quote the following from the report of an experiment made at the Wisconsin Station:

"The results of our experiments in fattening lambs on rape, show that the average amount gained per head weekly has been 2½ pounds. About one pound of grain per head daily has been the average amount fed with the rape. Using our results in a conservative way, it may be said that if 40 lambs are fed off an acre of rape and given some pasture and an average of one pound of grain per head daily, they will produce at least 400 pounds of mutton from the acre in one month. Two tests were made at the same station in feeding rape to pigs. The first trial was made with two lots of ten pigs each. One lot was fed in a pen, a grain ration of corn and bran 2 to 1. The corn was soaked and mixed with the bran in a slop. The lot received a less amount of the same grain ration, and, in addition, were allowed the run of a 32-100 acre field of rape. In 76 days the ten pigs on rape consumed 1,386 pounds of corn and 690 pounds of bran, and gained 853 pounds. The lot fed in a pen consumed 2,096 pounds of corn and 1,042 pounds of bran and gained 857 pounds. The gains were practically the same in each case. In other words the rape grown on 32% of one acre was equivalent to 1,062 pounds of grain. In the second experiment the gains of the two lots were practically the same. Taking the average of the two trials, one acre of rape was equivalent to 2,767 pounds of grain fed. The report adds: It (rape) gives every promise of proving an excellent crop for pasturing brood sows and young pigs."

Siler City has become quite a market for onions. In one day last week two merchants shipped eighty bushels. Some of the farmers near there make more money raising onions than on any other crop.—Chatham Record.

Where conditions are favorable, Angoras are more profitable than sheep, but in many instances both should be kept to turn the land to its best use. Sheep will do well in high locations, but Angoras will not do well on lowlands.—G. A. Hoerle, New Jersey.

THE RUTABAGA OR SWEDISH TURNIP.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The rutabaga is supposed to have originated by long cultivation of the wild *brassica rapa*, a native of Great Britain and other parts of Europe. It was in use as a vegetable before the Christian era, but we have no account of its being cultivated to any extent as a field crop previous to 1600.

At the present day, every country adapted to its growth has its own ways of planting. A deep, well-drained soil deeply plowed is undoubtedly best for rutabagas. Drought, I think, is one of the greatest enemies of the crop, and unless your ground is in a fine mealy condition, your seed is better in the bag.

I grow them entirely as a second crop following early potatoes, peas, &c. The ground being manured the previous fall, requires nothing more in the way of fertilizer to make the crop, as too much manure has a tendency to force the crop too heavy for market garden purposes.

Seed should be sown at the rate of 1½ ounces to 250 feet of drill, or 2 pounds to the acre. To insure a good stand, one ought to be careful to put plenty of seed in the ground.

I sow them with the seed drill 24 inches between the rows, and single them out to 8 inches in the row. The cultivating starts as soon as the young plants start their rough leaf. If the soil is packed by singling out and rain, I cultivate as soon as possible and then in three or four days follow with the horse weeder. This keeps the ground in a perfectly level state of cultivation, so as it will hold moisture. If your ground forms a crust and gets hard, it then has capillary tubes well established and the evaporation from this unbroken surface is great. The moisture accumulated in the subsoil works up towards the surface by what we call capillary attraction, the same as oil rises in your lamp wick. In this way a crop may use considerable moisture over and above what comes from the clouds during the season.

The loose broken surface acts as a mulch. The water works up through the firmer soil below and supplies your crop, but is prevented from reaching the surface (where the sun and wind would drink it up) by your mulch of loose earth. In storing away the roots for the winter, I find it best done by pitting them in long narrow pits on a dry piece of ground and covering them with straw to the depth of six inches, and when cold weather sets in bank them with soil deep enough to keep frost out. In this way I kept them last year till the first of April and they came out perfectly sound. G. S. ARTHUR, Market Garden Department, Biltmore Farms. Buncombe Co., N. C.

SHORT OF HAY.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

All indications are that the hay crop will be none too large this season to supply the demand, especially in view of the increased trade in hay with Cuba and Porto Rico. For the past year good hay has sold at prices sufficiently high to make the work of raising it satisfactory, and now the crop in several States threatens to be poor and small. Hay will consequently be high-priced feeding material for farm animals next winter, and a little saving of the material from now on will make quite a difference in the final profit. Like everything else it is the better class of hay that pays the best, while even in a good market the poor grades are low-priced, and as it costs as much per ton to ship this to the city we might make surer returns by feeding it to cattle and shipping only the best. This principle, if observed closely, will save many a disappointment.

It is not too late to make some amends for the hay crop failure, and by seeding immediately we can raise enough home hay to carry the cattle through the fall and early winter. This will give us the opportunity to sell all of the choicest grades for top market prices. In places where the grass stand is poor it will pay to cut it off short, and then plow up that portion of the

field and sow new seed. In this way we may secure even as late as mid-summer a pretty fair second crop. The grass cut from the first crop will cure well enough for early winter feeding. Get good seed and sow carefully, and make the seed bed compact and mellow. The Hungarian is a good seed for this late sowing, as it will stand a good deal of heat and dryness, and it makes excellent food for sheep and milch cows. A second crop of Hungarian planted in July has given an average crop of hay, which without it would have proved only half an ordinary yield. The Hungarian should be cut early and before it comes into full head, and if sown carefully it will yield a heavy crop. Millet and sorghum are even better than Hungarian for coarse fodder, as they produce much heavier crops. It might be a good plan to try all three grasses and find out which one is best suited to the soil. A good deal also depends upon what kind of cattle are to be fed. Fine, high-bred dairy cows that produce milk and cream for the fancy trade would hardly find in sorghum the ideal food for their best development, but sheep and coarse cattle would thrive all right on millet, sorghum or Hungarian. S. W. CHAMBERS.

We have had no rain in 23 days, hence very dry. Gardens suffering badly. Corn looks fairly well. Farm work is about all done and wheat threshing is in progress. The wheat crop was very good.—R. C. Whitener, Burke Co., N. C.

TO FIGHT THE BAGGING TRUST.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

A battle to be refought—the same old battle that Southern farmers fought and won ten years ago is now to fight over again, we are informed. That the American Manufacturing Company of New York controls the cotton bagging of the country, and the American Steel Hoop Company, which is included in the great Federal Steel Trust, controls the tie output. The Ludlows, Boston, Mass., are still in the cotton bagging business, but they are in close alliance with the American Manufacturing Company, of New York, and make exactly the same terms and prices. The result is, for several months the quotations on ties and bagging have remained unchanged, but now an increase of about 2½ cents per yard has been made in the price of bagging, and the trusts have given notice that a further increase in prices may be expected. While nominally the bagging business is being conducted both by the Ludlows and the American Manufacturing Company both send out exactly the same price list and made exactly the same terms. Their terms are spot cash and no credit. In view of these facts be it

Resolved, by Justice Alliance, No. 1,063, that we re-affirm our faithfulness to our Order and affirm that not a yard of said bagging will we use if possible to avoid it, preferring to use any other substitute for a covering.

2. That we hereby denounce all monopolies, combinations, or trusts that are unjustly treating the industries of our country and the farmers with no guarantee of prices as to their output of commodities. We furthermore request our business men with whom we deal to be careful in purchasing bagging and remember the substitutes, as their cooperation will be highly appreciated by us. Be it further requested that we respectfully ask our Sub-Alliances and all who feel an interest in agricultural industries of this our Southland to adopt said or similar resolutions and co-operate with us in battling for the right against those who would put upon us burdens too grievous and heavy to endure, financially.

3. That a copy of these resolutions be placed upon our minutes, and a copy sent to The Progressive Farmer for publication, soliciting the press and public generally to manifest their interest or sympathies in said cause. ROBT. COOPER, JAS. QUALLS, C. T. PERRY, Committee.

Franklin Co., N. C.

The Poultry Yard.

TO MAKE POULTRY PROFITABLE.

Prof. Johnson Makes Some Useful Suggestions as to Paying Methods of Poultry Keeping—Care and Management of Fowls the Year Round.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The farm, even though devoted largely to growing corn, cotton or tobacco, is not complete, is not what a farm should be, is not being utilized up to its full capacity, unless it supports a few cows, a few hogs, and a flock of hens.

There are forms of materials accumulating about every country place which cannot be used to the best advantage when either of the three above classes of stock are not kept. The cow can get most from the odd patches of grasses and from the foddies and other coarse matter with cotton seed and cotton seed meal. The hog will give good returns for waste vegetables and slops along with corn and peas which other animals would not consume so readily. The poultry will convert the table scraps, waste from the barns and out-of-the-way places into articles of food for the family or sources of pin money for the farmer's wife.

The money value of the poultry in the South is far greater than one is prone believe. The income from that source is perhaps in excess of that from any like sum invested in any other legitimate industry. Let this income be as large as it now is, it is capable of being very greatly increased without any perceptible addition to the cash already invested. Expansion in the returns from the poultry business is one form of expansion opposed by no sane mind. We all favor this form of expansion.

The question then becomes how to expand along this line.

It is not generally wise to embark in one branch of the live stock industry to the exclusion of others, even though the returns from the chosen branch promise to come much quicker and be relatively much greater than from others. Neither is it best for the farmer of average means and experience to neglect his staple crop to devote his time and energies entirely to feeding hens, running incubators, tending brooders and marketing broilers. Many, a few of whom succeed while more fail, make just such radical changes.

The most successful poultry keepers have grown into the business. They start with a few ordinary fowls which they study, get acquainted with, then give better treatment than usual, in return for which the fowls give eggs and larger and better bodies for the table. It is then but a short step to dispose of the common fowls and the common method of caring for them to adopt pure-blooded poultry and better ways of caring for them. The various branches of poultry keeping will gradually unfold themselves to the keeper who makes a habit of getting thoroughly acquainted with his fowls, the purposes to which they are best suited, and the best ways of caring for them.

Expand in the poultry business by looking after the little details which are so often allowed to go from time to time without attention. The summer months with their extremely hot days are hard on the chickens. In the absence of shade the chicks are liable to sunstroke, from which the death rate is much greater each year than is usually supposed. While the chicks do not drink very much water at a time, they require it at short intervals.

The drinking water should be fresh and free from disease germs, which live in and multiply very rapidly about neglected feeding and watering places. It is to just such places as these that the poultry man must look to find the source of most of the more destructive diseases to which fowls both old and young are liable. These places then should be inspected frequently and treated with disinfectants even before disease makes its appearance in the flock. Treat the drinking vessels

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.]