

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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

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Agriculture.

HARRY FARMER'S TALKS.

XXXVIII.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.
"What soil shall I select when looking around for a piece of land on which to make a farm?"

Before trying to answer this question, we say that farms are made in North Carolina. You might find a very small place on some Western prairie where the farm is not to be made, but even there some drainage or other work may be needed in order to get the best results from the soil. Some time ago we asked a man who has been fairly successful in farming, yet he has rented or leased land nearly all his life, what kind of soil was best for a farmer to buy? He said in part: "If you want to make a farm that will last and give the least trouble, take moderate level land with a clay subsoil. This soil can be enriched and made very productive if well drained. Rolling sandy soil cannot be made permanently rich. It will be necessary to manure or fertilize land of this kind every year. Putting manure on level clay land is like banking money. It increases every year. If I were going to buy a farm, I would take the clay land although the sandy soil is easier worked."

The most of our own farming has been on the level pine lands found all over the eastern part of North Carolina. If you want to grow early truck for Northern markets the sandy soil is best, because it is much warmer than the clay soils. Melons, cucumbers, squashes, tomatoes and peanuts all seem to do best on sandy soils. Such crops as corn, cow peas, cotton and sweet potatoes do best on clay soils. Cabbage and a few other plants are almost a failure on sandy land. We mentioned these things for it is something that will interest every person who contemplates farming for a business. The best thing for a young farmer to do is to decide what he wants to grow and then buy the land best suited for his crop. Many farmers are failures because they have a piece of land given them by their fathers and think they are compelled to keep it and try to raise crops not suited to the soil.

Fathers often make mistakes this way. You will find farmers scattered all over the country who are tied (?) to some place on which they spend their whole life trying to make a living and end their life poorer than when they commenced. If a son wishes to go into the mercantile business, he does not try to take a place that does not suit him, but goes away from home to a place that gives promise of success. Then why not let the farmer's son have the same privilege?

HARRY FARMER.

Columbus Co., N. C.

HOME FERTILIZERS AND FERTILITY.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The main thing in farming is keeping up the fertility of the soil while annually gathering crops from it. If the soil degenerates just a little each year it must be only a short time before bankruptcy must stare the farmer in the face unless he makes sufficient profits from his crops to lay aside something. But even this is a poor policy. That effort should be made to maintain the fertility of the soil up to a high standard. This is just as important as it is for a business man to keep a good stock of goods on hand, and not let his business run down through lack of a good plant.

Soil fertility is a question intimately connected with the question of home fertilizers. The farmer cannot depend upon commercial fertilizers to supply his plants with food. They may help at certain times, and add to the land certain particular ingredients that are lacking, but they can never take the place of home fertilizers. Barnyard manure and green fertilizers must always be the chief dependence of the farmer for enriching his soil. Contained in these are all the elements needed to make plants thrive. They vary in different foods, and their proportions

are some times not all that we need. One soil may become deficient in nitrogen, phosphoric acid or potash, and sufficient of the proper element cannot be supplied with the natural manures. It is then that an application of the right commercial manure comes in to make matters right. But no application of artificial fertilizers will ever keep a soil up to the proper standard. We may stimulate the plants for a few seasons, and think that we are performing wonders, but we are doing it all at the cost of soil fertility. Sooner or later we will discover that the soil has become thin and worthless, with hardly sufficient strength to grow a blade of grass, and then we may realize that we have been raising crops on stimulants. We may as well attempt to fatten and strengthen a man on alcoholic drinks, which do for a time stimulate the body and muscles to unusual performances. The backbone of our farming is barnyard manure and green fertilizers. Plow them under every year in sufficient quantities, and the heaviest crops can be raised without injuring the land. Then, when needed, dress the land with artificial fertilizers to add nitrogen, potash or phosphoric acid, as the case may need. Some crops absorb more of one of these elements than others, and it is essential to know which is being used up in excess of others. C. L. MASON.

THE COST OF QUALITY.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

Quality is always an important factor in disposing of farm products, but in many cases its cost to the farmer is practically nothing. In the matter of butter making it costs absolutely no more to make a high grade quality than inferior butter. Even the cost of extra labor in keeping things clean and sweet about the dairy cannot be counted, for it really does not take more work to keep things clean than to let them go dirty. It is merely a question of method and system. If one adopts a system in handling everything about the dairy he will find that time and labor are actually saved, while the results are more than doubled. The slovenly man or woman only adds to his or her labor. It is carelessness that produces accidents and misfortunes.

Quality is worth a good deal in the market. Whether it is butter, fruits or vegetables or animals that one is selling, the determining factor is the quality of the goods. The extra payment received for good quality most generally represents the difference between profit and loss. The farmers who find that no branch of farming pays are usually those who pay little regard to the quality of their goods.

In some lines of work on the farm quality does cost. It may in some cases cost more to raise fine fruits than poor ones. To begin with, fine seeds or trees usually sell for a trifle more than ordinary ones. This initial cost is further added to by the extra labor of cultivation, spraying, packing and marketing. It is hardly true to say that it costs as much to raise inferior fruits, which will take care of themselves, as it does to produce fancy grade. There is always extra cultivation, which must be paid for in labor or money, and extra care in protecting the fruits from insects and blights.

But the difference is not so great as it may seem to some. This is due to organization and system. If one orders his work after some good plan which will save time and worry the difference will hardly be noticed. Some times the difference is summed up in the working capacity of the individuals. One prefers to idle most of the time, and let things on the farm drift. Another seems born for work, and finds his greatest enjoyment in cultivating and improving his crops. If we are not willing to give our time and labor to the cultivation of the crops in the best possible manner we have no business calling ourselves farmers. We are on the farm to plant, cultivate and harvest. All this takes labor, brains and constant strivings. The man who is not willing to pay the price must fail. The secret of good farming is quality, and that can be obtained by careful planning and intelligent work.

W. E. EDWARDS.

TURNIPS.

Mr. Merriam Discusses the Best Methods of Growing Them.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

There is nothing on the farm which comes in more handy through the fall than a good patch of turnips. Even through the greater part of the winter they will stand in the field here at the South, and continue to grow during every warm spell. We have them on our table nearly all winter, and I believe there is no vegetable which we enjoy for a longer space of time during the year.

There are a great many more turnips used at the South than at the North, and they always meet with a ready sale in our Southern markets. Turnips and turnip greens are in as great demand as cabbages by the trade and form one of the principal crops of the gardeners in the vicinity of the cities.

In order to have good turnips, it is necessary to exercise more judgment than you would at first suppose with so simple a crop. A number of bad failures were made in our vicinity last fall; the turnips were rough and scabby with a tendency to rot at the center. The result was, that they were tough, bitter, and unsalable, entailing considerable loss to the unfortunate grower.

I shall have to admit that we had one acre of turnips in this condition ourselves, which were almost an entire failure. But we were not the only ones, and I trust we have learned wisdom by the experience.

The diseased condition, while partly caused by hot weather, was principally due to the use of stable manure. Now this may sound strange, but it was a fact, nevertheless. The land where these turnips were planted was already quite rich. The manure which was applied in the drill during the hot weather of August when nitrification is very active, undoubtedly supplied an excess of ammonia. This forced too luxuriant a growth of tops, making the plants weak and more liable to the attack of insect enemies. It is all right to talk about insecticides and fungicides, but it is better to fertilize a crop in such a manner as to promote a healthy and vigorous growth that will withstand the attack of its enemies. We have made fine turnips with stable manure, but it was on land which had not been made so rich beforehand, and where manure had not been used for several years.

On another piece of land which was equally as rich, made so by former dressings of manure, we grew as fine turnips last fall as you could wish to see. But these turnips were fertilized with commercial fertilizer. We used a fertilizer which analyzed about 9 per cent. phosphoric acid, 2 per cent. nitrogen, and 5 per cent. potash, and applied it at the rate of 600 pounds to the acre. We made this fertilizer by thoroughly mixing together with a shovel on a tight floor until it was of an even color, the following ingredients: 1300 pounds acid phosphate, 500 pounds cotton seed meal, and 200 pounds muriate of potash, to make a ton. This patch was prepared and the guano applied in the drill several weeks before the seed were sown. We planted it as soon after a rain as possible and obtained a perfect stand. It was a success from the start.

The foregoing shows that when we fertilize a crop we must not forget to take into consideration the former treatment of the land and its present condition, as well as the needs of the crop we wish to grow.

Where turnips are not planted until October there will be very little or no trouble with scab or rotting, even if stable manure is used in large quantities. Nitrification goes on slower after cool weather sets in and insect life is less active. If you plant during hot weather, however, it is well to be careful how you apply manure or fertilizer of a highly nitrogenous character. And be sure that there is an abundant supply of potash in the fertilizer to make the plants strong and healthy so they will resist disease.

F. J. MERRIAM.

Fulton Co., Ga.

THE CORN CROP.

A Kansas Farmer Writes of the Great Drought in the West.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

At this writing the hot, dry weather has so severely injured the corn crop in the "corn belt" that it is doubtful if half a crop will be harvested. It is one of the sad sights of Western farming to see one's hopes blasted by adverse weather. Many a farmer's heart has been broken by seeing his year's labors withering up in the pitiless sun and hot, scorching wind. Is there no help for it? Cannot science do something to overcome the fearful effects of the drought? This question is the one that cuts deep into the soul of tens of thousands of corn growers, and if it could be answered in the affirmative it would bring joy and relief to those living in a dozen Western States.

The Western drought is something that is difficult to overcome or control, and yet this season has demonstrated that a good stand of corn, healthy and vigorous, will withstand the dry weather far better than formerly. Better seed and culture have enabled the farmers to fight the drought this season, so that a good part of the crop has been saved. Ten years ago a dry spell such as that experienced this summer would have caused a total failure of the whole corn crop. I have witnessed the complete destruction of crops by dry spells no longer or severer than the one that prevailed this summer. There is consequently some reason to rejoice at this season's experience. It has demonstrated to us that the science of good culture has some practical merits. The better the culture the sturdier and hardier the stand of corn, and this means a more successful resistance to the drought. In Illinois three plowings are now generally given to corn, and in Missouri and some of the other States as high as five and six. This accounts largely for the larger yields and the better stand.

There is one other point that must be considered in the near future, and that is the question of storing water for irrigation. Say what we will, it must come in time, when there will be some comprehensive system of storing water in a series of reservoirs in the corn belt so that the corn crop will not be jeopardized. Just how this will be accomplished I do not pretend to say. Yet in a way the establishment of wind mills in many parts of the fruit growing regions of the West seem to point a way to success. The hot, dry winds that nearly always blow across the corn belt in a drought could be utilized to pump up water to spread over the corn fields. By converting the hot winds—the worst foe to the corn—into an agent of usefulness would be one of the best triumphs of modern agriculture. C. T. WILLIAMS.

Kansas.

It is claimed by some farmers that corn stalks cannot be saved in the Southwest as in the North and West; that they become too dry and woody, and even if shredded will not be eaten by cattle. They tell us that unless the corn stands in the field until the corn is hard that there will be great loss in grain. They have, or at least many of them have, the idea that the corn must be gathered and the stalks cut afterwards, because the universal custom has been to gather the corn from the stalks as they stand in the field. If they will wait until the kernels are well glazed, and then cut and shock the corn closely, the substance remaining in the stalks will be sufficient to mature the corn, and the stalks themselves will not rot out as they would standing in the field. The corn may then be pulled from the stalks and the stalks hauled to the shredder and made into a nutritious hay, or they may be put through a cutter and made into silage, and if mixed with pea vines will make a feed about equal in value to the whole corn silage. It is an enormous waste of feed to let the corn stalks dry up in the field.—Ex.

Live Stock.

SHEEP IN THE SOUTH.

VIII.

Good Shearing—Machine Shearing—Wool Grading—Lapping the Fleece Fully Described—A Speedy Way—Wool Brings Cash Annually—Always Pays Fairly Well—Ship to Commission Agent if Not Close to Market—Have Clip Looking its Best.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

To read the previous description, the work of shearing sheep would seem to be intricate and difficult, but it is not, for the writer of this has frequently shorn a light-wooled sheep completely in five minutes, and could turn off the shearing bench four to the hour all day. Greasy, close woolled and very wrinkly sheep are much harder to shear and require more time to make smooth shearing and avoid cuts, but the same mode of operation will completely adjust itself to the removal of the fleeces from all kinds of sheep.

There is no system or mode that will accomplish the work with more facility and comfort to the operator nor with more ease to the sheep, nor less fuss with it, than this method described.

Shearing sheep with patent machines or clippers has had a long pull of it for popularity and general use. The patent-protected high price heretofore maintained for clippers and machines has been the main factor which hindered more general use. It surely is possible to invent a clipper and machine that will shear a sheep as smoothly and more rapidly than with common shears, but if such monopolistic manufacturing concerns cannot spend a few dollars in The Progressive Farmer for the benefit of Southern wool growers, it certainly is not my business to do it, especially when I know they can profitably shear them the old way.

In writing here I do not claim to be an emperor or king in the business, but only one trying to clearly voice the varied knowledge and experience of hundreds, for the benefit of thousands who have not yet had time to attain so much. My knowledge gleaned from experience and thought in the science and art of sheep shearing is such that I will unhesitatingly say that any machine or clipper that is not or cannot be so arranged as to readily adjust itself to the mode of handling and operation described in the last article is not as perfect nor as practical, economically considered as it will yet be made.

ROLLING UP AND MARKETING WOOL.

Some places in grazing regions the wool, especially of lower grade, is tumbled at once from the shearers into shipping bags, without being rolled or tied up in fleeces. Graders at the factories have told me that they preferred to receive all the wool of each fleece, especially of the higher grades, by itself for convenience in sorting. In manufacturing common carpets and some wearing fabrics the wool need not be so carefully sorted, but for the higher grade materials care is necessary, hence the necessity for careful handling of fleeces by the wool grower.

A lapping table about 5x8 and 3 feet high, made of boards dressed on one side and nailed to batons smoothly will answer for two lappers, or for one and leave room for several untied fleeces laid up out of the way of the shearers. Bring the end of the twine from the ball under the table up through a hole at right hand of lapper.

The lapper will toss the fleece lightly on the table shorn side down; remove the belly wool and "tidbits" off to one side. As soon as the position of the fleece is learned, turn the neck end to the left and tail end to the right hand and spread it out to natural shape as much as possible, then clip and cast away all dung balls, straws or other extraneous matter that is not wool. With light movements of the hands, gather the fleece up rather closely together. Lap the far side forward toward the front and the front side over toward the back side of the table so as to leave the fleece about two feet wide. Lap the neck, back to the shoulder part, up and over toward the right

and the tail end up and over toward the left so that the fleece will be about two feet square. Spread the belly wool and all the "bits" allowed, on this square end by slipping the right hand and arm under that side, fold it up onto the left side, pressing it compactly down and keeping the left hand on it about the middle, reach the right hand back and draw the farther end up on top of and squarely forward with the front, holding it down firmly with the left hand and arm; with the right, lift the twine and lap the end around first finger of left; with the right run the twine back over and around under the middle of the fleece, drawing very tightly; then carry the twine up to the left hand, lift the fleece and quickly turn it to the right, bringing the right hand side squarely to the front; cross the twine and carry it back and around under the fleece to the front, draw as tightly as the hands and arms—perhaps assisted by the left knee as a brace to pull against—can draw it, then securely knot and cut off the twine. It is now a four-square block of wool a foot or more in size, and it may be noted that the shoulders, back and sides, best parts of the fleece, are most exposed, with this mode of lapping, which presents a good and workman like appearance. A fleece that has not been much torn and is carefully lapped on this plan may be tossed about considerably without losing any parts.

It is a speedy way when one has acquired a skillful knowledge of all the necessary motions.

If one wishes to use a lapping or folding box he can find such fully described in one or another of the excellent books published on sheep husbandry. Several of such boxes are good and worthy of use. I built one at an expense of about \$2.50 and it worked very satisfactorily.

MARKETING THE WOOL,

and getting the cash for it, is the culmination of a main part of the business. Like cotton, it is always cash on sale. Some times very low and as often very high, but very seldom is it less than fairly remunerative to the wool grower who understands and properly handles his business.

Unless the wool grower lives in a section where there is much wool grown, and that is visited by several wool-buying agents, his best way, perhaps, is to ship to an Eastern wool commission house of good reputation. A fair cash advance can be had on the crop if desired. It may be held and sold under order of the owner or sold at discretion of the agent. I have done both ways with clips ranging from 500 pounds to 18,000 pounds with about equal satisfaction.

The matter of one to three cents per pound on a clip of wool may make considerable difference in the amount of money received for the year's work with sheep, and this difference may some times be made by the manner in which the wool is taken from the sheep, tied up and presented to the buyer in market. The manufacturer who is careful to have his goods present the very best appearance, even though it be with paint and varnish, is sure to get a little the highest price, other things being equal. The wool grower who does not take pride enough in his business, or give it care and work enough to have his wool clip presented to the buyer in its best possible appearance, should take ten or an hundred dollars less for his clip than it is actually worth and not grumble.

Furthermore, he will get another lesson when he drives to town and pays the merchant a few dollars more for the fine fit and beautiful appearance of that new suit of clothes and grand looking clock and then scolds his wife on the way home because she paid so much for the "fuss and feathers" on that new bonnet!

SAMEL ARCHER.

Marion, N. C.

Mr. N. A. Kime, Oakdale, N. C., wishes to know what Progressive Farmer reader has home bred, pure blood White Chester pigs to dispose of. Write him particulars, if you have them.