

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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

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Agriculture.

NEWS OF THE FARMING WORLD.

Washington Correspondent Reports Several Matters of Importance.

Director of The Progressive Farmer.

Dr. A. C. True, the Director of the Office of Experiment Stations of the Department of Agriculture, points out in the forthcoming Yearbook of the Department, "Some Problems of the Rural Common School," and he shows several features of the new movement for their improvement.

"Without doubt," says Dr. True, the character of our agriculture is rapidly changing. It is becoming more highly diversified, its operations are becoming more complicated, the use of intricate machinery is becoming more common and necessary, and, in general, successful farming now requires a wider knowledge and greater skill. The discoveries of our agricultural experiment stations and the broader technical training of the leaders of agricultural progress in our colleges are producing profound effects on our agricultural practice, the final results of which are but dimly appreciated by the masses of our farmers, but which will surely make the lot of the rightly educated farmer of the future more fortunate and the lot of the ignorant farmer relatively more deplorable. It is very important, therefore, that our agricultural people should study the problems of the public schools and should become alive to the relation of these schools to the progress of their art."

PROBLEMS OF RURAL EDUCATION

In the discussion of the subject, Dr. True states as the important problems to be worked out as follows:

(1) To provide for all the children and to bring all the children into school.

(2) To make the annual school term throughout the United States long enough to give the children thorough instruction in the fundamentals of common knowledge during the period of their school life.

(3) To directly relate the instruction of the school to the practical business of the farm through the employment of teachers in sympathy with farm life and the enrichment of the school course by the introduction of agricultural subjects.

(4) The improvement of the material equipment and environment of the school by the consolidation of small schools, the improvement of school buildings and grounds, and the establishment of school libraries and collections of materials for illustration.

(5) The making of the schools more thoroughly the centers for the intellectual life of the community by the co-operation of the farmer and his family with the teacher through associations like those now existing in Michigan, or through other agencies.

EVADING THE OLEO LAW

According to information received at the Department of Agriculture there is a notice of the possible action of oleomargarine makers whereby they may try to evade the law. Press dispatches state that the oleo makers will pay high prices for pure country butter—higher prices than the dairymen themselves could get in the city markets. This butter will be mixed with the oleomargarine so that the natural color will thereby be imparted without in any way causing a construction of the law that it is colored, paying therefore only 1/4 of a cent a pound, instead of 10 cents as required for colored oleomargarine. In fact that tax of 1/4 of a cent is less than they have been paying for oleo.

Inquiry at the Department of Agriculture shows that the officials are inclined to scoff at such action, for while they admit that the law might be possibly evaded by this action, still they think the question is one of mere arithmetic rather than one of law. They state that if the oleo makers can make money by selling butter as oleomargarine then they should go ahead. It is believed, however, that such a trial will show a loss instead of profit to those who will carry on this practice.

THE IRRIGATION BILL.

The irrigation bill which passed the House by the vote of 146 to 56, it is confidently predicted, will in its operation, show itself a better measure than some of the Eastern farm papers believe. It amounts to nothing more than an extension of the homestead act; it makes homesteads which are dry and uninhabitable, fertile and productive, but the cost of this improvement has to be borne by the homesteader—the government simply advanced the money, and gives him 10 years in which to pay it back. Again, it is shown that while it is hoped to ultimately reclaim a great tract of Western land, the process must, under the most favorable conditions to the West, be very slow. If two million acres a year should be reclaimed, and this is four times the amount estimated under the bill just passed, it would take 50 years to reclaim that part of the West which can be irrigated. This would not be a sufficient addition of land to nearly keep pace with our increase of population.

This would be taking half a century to open up for instance, an area equal to the single State of Colorado. Such slow development it is claimed will never be felt by the Eastern farmer.

Again, it is shown that the surplus product of irrigation will go in the future as they do now, to the Orient instead of coming East to compete with Eastern farmers.

GUY E. MITCHELL.

Washington, D. C.

FARMERS' BULLETIN NO. 155.

A new bulletin issued by the United States Department of Agriculture has just been received. "How Insects Affect Health in Rural Districts" is its title, and it is written by Prof. L. O. Howard, the celebrated entomologist, whose investigation of the life and habits of the mosquito have made both famous. This little pamphlet will tell you more about mosquitoes than you ever knew before. Our readers should not forget that these bulletins are issued free by the Department of Agriculture on request. They contain the latest knowledge of subjects relating to all phases of farm life and constitute a liberal education without cost. Every farmer who can read should avail himself of this free "correspondence school of agriculture."—Rural World.

GOOD FARMING PAYS.

We clip this suggestive item from the Roanoke-Chowan Times: In the Spring of 1901, Mr. R. C. Benthall and brother of Menola, Hertford County, bought a Roanoke farm situated about five miles from Rich Square, paying \$9,500 for it. Many predicted that the Benthalls would lose money on the farm, but those who knew them well said "wait and see." Their farm manager told us a few days ago that an accurate account of expenses were kept and that they cleared over and above expenses, \$3,200 on that one farm last year, notwithstanding the unfavorable seasons. There are hundreds of instances of successful farming in this section. We ask our correspondents to occasionally relate some of these that our young men may learn that there is money in farming.

The following Chicago dispatch should be of interest to Southern farmers: Plans that were first taken into consideration about a year ago have been developed in the last few days to the point where some of the great packing establishments in Chicago have begun experiments on what may prove a revolution of the cattle industry of the country," says the Inter-Ocean. "The project involves the settlement of several hundred thousand acres of what is at present valueless land in northern Florida and southern Alabama, the cultivation on a large scale of the cassava root and its use in feeding cattle and hogs. If this plan fully develops the Southern States will become the centre of the cattle-raising industry."

HARRY FARMER'S TALKS.

IXXIX.

Cor. of The Progressive Farmer.

We next find a copy of the Farmer with these words stamped in red letters "Sample Copy," and we follow it. After travelling a whole day on a star route we come to a little post-office and the postmaster calls out, "Here is a sample paper for Jack Johnson."

AN IGNORANT FARMER.

Now Jack does not get mail often and the postmaster tells him there is a paper in the office for him. He gets the paper and goes home. Jack can read a little, but he does not send his children to school or believe in education. He regards it as something ornamental or useful for merchants, business men or any one following a profession, but for a common laborer it is a hindrance, so he does not encourage his children to study. They know nothing except a few bear and ghost stories. They think it nice to use snuff and tobacco, both boys and girls. Jack thinks it mighty funny to see his boys drink so they can cut the fool. His house is no better than it was when he moved into it over twenty years ago. He makes a little crop, but not enough to last him through the year. Really, his conditions is far worse than when he commenced keeping house. His garden is not half tilled; consequently he has but few vegetables to supply his family and does without a large part of the year. Jack bitterly opposes any thing progressive; he has opinions of his own.

HIS SUPERSTITION.

His ideas are certainly amusing. When a cow gives bad milk, the remedy is to put some old silver in the bottom of the milk pail just before milking and leave it there until the milk is strained. In order to keep the hawks from catching the chickens a small rock must be kept in the fire and as long as it is warm the chickens are safe. He believes that snow birds turn to toads in the Spring and that toads turn to snow birds in the Fall. He will not plant or sow any seed when the wind is from the east. Nothing must be planted except from new to the full of the moon.

OLD FASHIONED METHODS

The corn must be plowed so many times and in certain ways. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather all plowed their crops that way and lived till they died. Jack thinks he can do it, too. His fields have some old stumps in them that have been worked around enough to have paid for taking them out many times, but Jack did not put them there and is not going to take them out.

HIS POOR WIFE.

Jack's wife does not use any cook stove. Jack doesn't like food cooked on a stove. He says it is not so good as that cooked in the old pots, ovens and spider. (Harry Farmer agrees with Jack to a certain extent along this line.) She has no sewing machine. It takes too much sewing thread. Poor woman! She has a hard time of it, but quietly goes along with her work.

HER CHICKENS

But we must mention her chickens. They are the same kind that she commenced keeping house with. She gets eggs from February till July and the balance of the year the hens do not lay. She would not have any of the "new fangled" kind. They eat too much, and some of them are not healthy. They have such long legs that they are hard to run down. The most of her's are little duck legged kinds. Well, we can find but little here to make us happy so we must go away with a sad heart.

A NEW CROP OF JACK JOHNSON'S GROWING UP.

And we are sorry to know there are more homes over the country where the children are so treated that there will be another crop of Jack Johnsons, for many children are kept at home in ignorance which is the ground log of all the trouble.

HARRY FARMER.

Columbus Co., N. C.

TO BANISH DRUDGERY FROM THE FARM.

There is a good deal of hard, back-aching work and absolute drudgery on the farm unless the farmer can in some way transform this drudgery into something in which he takes a genuine pleasure. There is a great deal of drudgery as bad or even worse, in any other profession or business. There is a whole lot of really hard work to be done in this world by the men who make a success of life. In fact, there is no way that we ever heard of making a success except by real, downright, hard, honest work. Genius is simply the power of doing hard work intelligently and right along all the time and taking delight in it.

Work on the farm, however hard, need not be mere drudgery. It will inevitably be drudgery, however, unless the farmer takes delight in it, sees the reason for doing it, and studies how to do it in the easiest way. It is exceedingly hard work to dig ditches. We did a good deal of that in our early days, but a study of how water rose in the ditch, how far the ditch would draw, how deep it ought to be, and the best way to level the bottom of the ditch and uniform a grade used to relieve it of the drudgery, and make it, while not an unalloyed pleasure, yet endurable.

Drudgery is simply work in which the body is solely engaged. Get the mind onto any subject, become thoroughly interested in it, interested sufficiently to study how to do it in the easiest possible way, and it ceases to be drudgery. Nothing, for example, could possibly induce us to engage in a game of football. As played, it seems to us to be far harder and more dangerous than any farm operation, more dangerous than feeding corn fodder to a shredder, and yet we notice that the boys absolutely delight in this rough and tumble, rib-breaking work because they are intensely interested in it. We remember when a boy on the farm that we worked at play about as hard as we ever worked shaking straw from an old man-killing thrashing machine, because we delighted in it. To play was anything but drudgery although involving harder work than tramping on the straw stacks. Doctors perform the most disagreeable surgical operations and yet delight in it because it calls into play their best knowledge and skill. The dentist will pull teeth and fill them while gusts from the bad lands are blowing in his face, what would seem to us the worst kind of drudgery, and yet his mind is so intensely occupied that it is simply skilled labor. Any kind of work that we do not like is drudgery; any kind of work which does not employ the intellect and for which there is not a good motive is drudgery. We can transform drudgery into pleasant, healthful toil by becoming interested in it and doing it, not as time service, but as a duty to be performed conscientiously.

Drudgery kills men. Honest work performed with brains and skill actually lengthens life. Whether work is drudgery or whether it is a pleasure depends altogether on the spirit with which we perform it.—Wallace's Farmer.

Pender Chronicle: The bean crop, which has just been marketed, was very satisfactory in this section. The crop, however, was considerably shortened by lack of moisture during the latter part of the season. The continued dry weather is reported as having had a very harmful effect upon the potato crop. The crop is shortened by more than one half. In addition to this, the potatoes produced are, it is said, of a very inferior quality.

Goldsboro Argus: The farmers of this section have been engaged in housing their grain crops, which have been cut very short by the exceeding dry weather of May, when their crops most needed rain for filling out and maturing. However, owing to the unusually large acreage planted, an average crop in the aggregate will be housed.

THE VALUE OF BIRDS TO NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURE.

Importance as Insect Destroyers—Three Hundred Species Not Protected by Law—Reckless Destruction of our Feathered Friends.

To those who have thought but little concerning the practical value of birds to man, it may be a new idea that their usefulness is a very pronounced reality; this usefulness lies chiefly in the service they render as destroyers of insects which are injurious to vegetation, as consumers of small rodents, as destroyers of large quantities of seeds of noxious plants, and as scavengers. Birds constitute the chief force in keeping down the surplus number of insects which otherwise would be far more destructive to the agricultural products of the country. As matters now exist, one-tenth of the entire agricultural product of the United States each year is a total loss through the inroads of insects, and we are told that owing to the decreasing number of birds, this percentage is annually increasing. The work which birds do simply as preventives is enormous.

The young of some species eat more than their own weight of insect food daily. The adult birds of many kinds subsist chiefly on an insect diet, and two-thirds of the varieties found in North Carolina are almost wholly insectivorous. Birds digest their food so rapidly that it is difficult to estimate the real amount which they consume. It is known, however, that a swallow will eat six or seven hundred flies in a day. The stomach of a cuckoo shot at six o'clock in the morning, contained twenty-three tent-caterpillars partly digested; how many would have been destroyed by evening cannot well be estimated. The stomachs of chickadees not infrequently have been found to contain over two hundred eggs of the canker worm, and as many as twenty-five of the female moths, each holding over one hundred eggs. It has been estimated that during the one month that these insects infest the trees, each chickadee would destroy over 130,000 eggs. A pewee, which I once watched, captured sixteen insects during a period of ten minutes. The bird would dart out a few yards, seize a passing insect and return at once to her lookout perch. When some hours later I again saw the bird, she was still busy at her work.

The real value of birds as insect destroyers has not been appreciated generally. One reason for this is that their work is not apparent to the casual observer, who rarely sees a bird except when it is alarmed, and therefore is not feeding. Superficial observation has been a cause for much suffering to birds, and a great pecuniary loss on the part of observers.

We, as a people, have failed to observe carefully the feeding habits of our feathered friends, and thus have not learned their intrinsic value. For the same reason we have not been sufficiently interested in their preservation to enact adequate laws for the protection of non-game birds. There have been recorded in North Carolina 312 species of birds. Three hundred of these species are not protected by the laws of the State except in a few counties. Public sentiment is so lax in many sections that these laws are really little better than no laws at all.

There is scarcely a bird within the limits of our Commonwealth that is not regarded as a legitimate mark for any gun. Numbers of men and boys in almost every section of the country at times shoot non-game birds indiscriminately. Thousands of chimney swifts, swallows, martins, and night-hawks (bullbats) are shot every summer "just to see them fall." The small boy plunders the nests of their eggs for his "collection," and does so unrestrained by parental authority. Our sea birds have been almost exterminated by the plume hunters, who gather the feathers for the great millinery houses. In some sections of the central and eastern portions of the State thousands of young mockingbirds are annually taken from their nests by people who attempt to rear them by hand as singers for the ever-ready northern and western markets. Irresponsible parties wandering about the fields, without the least instincts

of sportsmanship, shoot woodpeckers, redbirds, sparrows and thrushes. Only a short time since I heard a gentleman complaining that he had seen a boy shooting mocking birds in the cemetery of one of our chief cities. The boy said he "was trying to see how many birds he could kill in an hour." This kind of thing has gone on too long. Many observing people will testify that the common birds are not as numerous in their sections as in former years.

The problem with which Nature is confronted, of adjusting the habits of her wild creatures to meet the changing environments occasioned by the advancement of civilization into the wilderness, is a stern one. When, therefore, man adds to her difficulties by causing the wholesale destruction of any particular form of wild life, the rapid falling off in numbers of the persecuted necessarily follows. The alarming decrease of the number of birds in the United States of recent years has been the occasion of much anxiety to the minds of thoughtful persons. Many States have already passed laws for the protection of their birds, and there are those who believe that the people of North Carolina will not longer consent to see their innocent and valuable friends wantonly slaughtered by thoughtless and vicious men and boys.

T. GILBERT PEARSON.
Guilford Co., N. C.

JUNE CROP CONDITIONS.

We received just too late for last week's Progressive Farmer the North Carolina crop report for June, as issued by the Agricultural Department. Special correspondents in every township in every county in the State send their reports in to the Department and from these general averages are made up, 100 being the basis of comparison. The June report follows:

Condition of Irish potatoes, 81.
Present condition of cotton, 89.
Acreage of tobacco compared with last year, 105.
Present condition of tobacco, 86.
Present condition of corn, 97.
Present condition of wheat, 62.
Present condition of oats, 68.
Prospect of apples compared with last year, 79.
Prospect of peaches compared with last year, 78.
Prospect of pears compared with last year, 78.
Prospect of blackberries compared with last year, 93.
General condition of trucking, 84.
Condition of peanuts, 84.

Greensboro Cor. Post: Prospects of the tobacco crop have very greatly improved in this section in the past few days. Mr. J. F. Fulton, proprietor of the Banner Warehouse, who keeps up with such matters closely, says that Guilford crops are now fine and the growers are in high spirits, and that conditions in Stokes County, which were so unsatisfactory two weeks ago have greatly improved. The copious rains, with sunshine following, he says, has caused strong rooting, and disease has disappeared from the plants, which are growing off finely. The average planted in Guilford, Mr. Fulton says, is at least a third greater than last season.

Fayetteville Observer: Major B. R. Huske has received word from the United States Patent Office that he has been granted a patent for his vegetable harvester. It is a simple but ingenious machine, principally for the cutting of lettuce. It is in the shape of a pitchfork, with a blade about two inches above the lines and a guard rail to hold the plant after it is cut. Major Huske has one in use now which he constructed himself out of a pitchfork more than a year ago, and it proved of such value that he decided to patent it.

Rockingham Anglo-Saxon: The cotton crop was never finer at this season of the year, but there is some complaint about corn prospects. It is tasselting out too early, but recent rains will improve it a good deal.