

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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The Industrial and Educational Interests of our People Paramount to all other considerations of State Policy...

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

A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

A fundamental mistake is to call vehemence and rigidity strength. A man is not strong who takes convulsion fits...

The State press has of late given considerable attention to the statement in Lawson's History that there was a volcanic explosion in the Gordon's Mountain region in Anson County 109 years ago.

The action of Governor Aycock in the Salisbury lynching matter has directed attention to the anti-lynching law of this State. Many of our most intelligent citizens were not before aware of the existence of such a law.

So instructive to many of our readers and so remarkably interesting to all are the articles on "Old Times in the South" now appearing in our columns that with the hope of inducing others to contribute...

The competition will remain open at least until August 1st, until later unless seven or more letters are received in July.

In addition to the copy of "The Old Plantation," heretofore offered as a prize, a copy of "Sketches of Old Virginia," by A. G. Bradley, is now also offered.

Slavery days, Civil War times, the Reconstruction period—write us your memories of any of these, and enter the competition.

A DECADE OF FARMING PROGRESS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

At least once every ten years the farmers of the State should take their bearings and endeavor to learn in what direction they are going and with what speed they are traveling.

A GOOD SHOWING MADE

The number of farms in this State, according to the bulletin, is 224,637, with an average value of \$866.54, the total value being \$194,655,920.

FARMS GETTING SMALLER.

The number of farms now, as we have said, is 224,637—25 per cent more than ten years ago and almost exactly four times as many as fifty years ago.

PERCENTAGE OF TENANT FARMERS INCREASING

The number of farms operated by owners has increased during the last decade, but the relative increase in number of farms operated by tenants has been so great that while the number of land owning farmers has grown from 117,469 to 131,629...

THREE WHITE FARMERS TO ONE COLORED

The bulletin gives the number of white farmers as 169,773, negro 53,996, Indian 868. In this connection, the following paragraph from the bulletin is of interest: "Of the farmers of the State, 75.6 per cent are operated by white farmers and 24.4 per cent by colored farmers."

VALUE OF DIFFERENT CROPS.

Perhaps it will surprise some to learn that our corn crop is more valuable than our cotton crop, but such is the case. In 1899, we produced, in round numbers, \$17,000,000 worth of corn, and \$15,500,000 worth of cotton.

less than half as large, the average being 53.6 acres.

The acreage of farms is as follows: 2303 farms of less than 3 acres; 11,323 farms of from 3 to 9 acres; 20,659 from 10 to 19 acres; 59,913 from 20 to 49 acres; 55,028 from 50 to 99; 44,052 from 100 to 174; 17,012 from 175 to 259; 11,224 from 260 to 499; 3,275 from 500 to 999; 949 of 1000 acres and over, these averaging 1888 acres.

ACREAGE OF VARIOUS CROPS.

The Census Office reports "hay and grain" as the principal source of income of 44,648 farms (we expect the hay member of the partnership is here given a little more prominence than it deserves); live stock as the chief source of income of 23,607 farms; tobacco of 22,626; cotton, 48,896.

This paragraph giving a summary of live stock conditions we take from the bulletin: "The total value of all live stock on farms, June 1, 1900, was \$30,106,173, of which amount 29.2 per cent represents the value of horses; 28.8 per cent, that of mules; 14.7 per cent, that of dairy cows; 10.8 per cent, that of other neat cattle; 8.3 per cent, that of swine; 4.8 per cent, that of poultry; and 3.4 per cent, that of all other live stock."

FARMING LOSSES IN THE CIVIL WAR

Very interesting is the table showing the number of domestic animals for each decade since 1850. The terrible devastation of the Civil War is pictured here in the marked decrease in the number of cattle, horses, sheep and swine in the decade between 1860 and 1870—an all round decrease of more than one-third, we believe.

LIVE STOCK STATISTICS

But let us get back to stock conditions. This table is hardly less painful to consider than that showing the ruin wrought by war. For though the State is admirably adapted to stock-raising, from 1890 to 1900 we made practically no progress in this branch of farming. True the number of dairy cows increased from 223,000 to 233,000 (it was 232,000 in 1890), but the number of other neat cattle shows a decrease from 407,000 in 1890 to 391,000 in 1900.

It is noteworthy that the negroes use more mules than horses, the whites more horses than mules. On cotton farms the number of mules exceeds that of horses; of all other kinds of farms, the reverse is true.

A comparison with the census of 1850 shows that we have five times as many mules and asses; less than 10 per cent more horses; about 5 per cent more dairy cattle; and one-sixth less of other neat cattle; only about one-third as many sheep, and about two-thirds as many swine.

POULTRY RAISING AND DAIRYING

The stock table, however, is not wholly discouraging. The poultry and dairy exhibits are the brightest features. We produced in 1899 62 per cent more milk (gain, 34,275,084 gallons) than in 1889. We made 28.8 per cent more butter. As the increase in number of dairy cattle was not nearly so large, these figures indicate that the grade of cattle was very considerably improved.

There are 50,000 North Carolina tobacco farmers, and 200,000 acres planted to the weed. In 1899 these produced 127,500,000 pounds, averaging 6.3 cents in value, or a total value of \$8,038,691. Tobacco farming made giant strides in the decade between 1890 and 1900.

The average yield per acre in 1899 was 628 pounds, against 375 pounds in 1889, and 472 pounds in 1879. Of the 86 counties reporting the cultivation of tobacco in 1899, the county having the largest acreage was Rockingham, with 16,882 acres.

Of the total value of crops in 1899, cotton, including seed, constituted 26.2 per cent; corn, 25.2 per cent; other cereals, including rice, 7.0 per cent; vegetables, including potatoes, sweet potatoes and onions, 8.9 per cent; forest products, 7.2 per cent; fruits and nuts, 3.0 per cent; hay and forage, 6.2 per cent; and all other products, 16.3 per cent.

Except oats and rye, we are raising more of all the cereals than ten years ago. The corn acreage has increased in nearly every county. The Yadkin River Valley grows nearly one-third of our wheat. The acreage in rice nearly doubled between 1890 and 1900.

100,000 COTTON FARMERS

In 1899 we raised 35 per cent more cotton than in 1889, though the increase in acreage was only 12 per cent. Let us hope that this indicates better farming. The bulletin has this to say as to the cotton production:

"In 1899, 105,766 farmers devoted to the cultivation of cotton a total area of 1,007,020 acres, or 12.1 per cent of the total improved farm land, and an average of 9.5 acres per farm reporting. The total production was 216,506,930 pounds, an average of 215 pounds per acre and 114 pounds per capita. The counties reporting the greatest area under cotton are Mecklenburg, Robeson, Wake, Union, Johnston, Anson, Halifax, Wayne, Cleveland and Edgecombe, ranking in the order named, and reporting in the aggregate 42.6 per cent of the total acreage."

WE ARE GROWING MORE FRUIT.

It is encouraging to see that we are planting more fruit trees. We have a time and a half as many apple and cherry trees as ten years ago, a third more peach trees, and three times as many plums, prunes and pears. We have twice as many apple as peach trees.

As to the standing of the counties, the bulletin speaks as follows: "Most of the fruit trees are reported from the western part of the State, Guilford ranking among the leading counties in all varieties. Moore, Burke, and Guilford counties reported about one-eighth of the peach trees, and Wilkes, Buncombe, Surry, Guilford, and Haywood reported about one-sixth of the apple trees."

PEANUT INDUSTRY GROWING.

The peanut industry is getting beyond peanut proportions. In the census decade the acreage increased fourfold and production sevenfold. There are now nearly 20,000 peanut farmers who devote 100,000 acres to the crop. Two-thirds of the acreage is in the counties of Bertie, Halifax, Northampton, Hertford, Martin, and Edgecombe, ranking in the order named.

TOBACCO FARMING MAKES GIANT STRIDES

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FIFTY PER CENT INCREASE IN FERTILIZER CONSUMPTION.

There is a steady increase in quantity of fertilizer used. We now buy a time and a half as much as ten years ago. The Census figures show an 1899 expenditure for this purpose of \$4,479,030, an average of \$20 per farm, ranging from \$80 in Scotland County through an average of \$30 for the central district to an average of only \$1 for some western counties.

CONCLUSIONS.

The figures indicate reasonable agricultural prosperity, though the disparity between increase in total value of farm products and that of farm property is very marked.

The size of the farms is steadily decreasing; the number of the farms is just as steadily increasing.

Stock raising made slow progress during the decade. The sheep statistics are astonishing, the 1899 report showing barely half as many as in 1889. Dairying and poultry raising, however, made encouraging reports.

There are three white farmers to one colored, and the negro's farm is less than half as large as that of the white man.

Less than 1000 farms contain more than 1000 acres. The cotton acreage is almost exactly double that of tobacco, the ratio being 18.7 to 9.4.

The tobacco, fruit, peanut and rice industries made really remarkable growth in the decade covered by the census reports. This, we take it, indicates a tendency toward crop diversification.

All in all, the report is encouraging, but we hope that we shall make a better showing in the live stock column next time.

MEETING OF THE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

The North Carolina Press Association held its thirtieth annual session in Hendersonville last week. The attendance was large. A number of very interesting addresses were delivered, the oration of Mr. Clyde R. Hoey being especially good.

THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS WERE CHOSEN FOR THE ENSUING YEAR:

- President—W. F. Marshall, of the Gastonia Gazette. First Vice-President—M. L. Shipman, of the Hendersonville Hustler. Second Vice-President—J. O. Atkinson, of the Christian Sun. Third Vice-President—J. J. Farris, of the High Point Enterprise. Secretary and Treasurer—J. B. Sherrill, of the Concord Times. Historian—C. H. Poe, of The Progressive Farmer. Orator—Archibald Johnson, of Charity and Children. Poet—J. R. Swann, of the Madison County Record. Executive Committee—H. A. London, Thad R. Manning, J. J. Farris, R. A. Deal, H. B. Varner.

The conferees on the isthmian canal bill last week reached a complete and unanimous agreement this afternoon in favor of accepting the Senate amendment, which contemplates the building of the Panama Canal if the President can secure a clear title to that route. It is believed that both Houses will speedily ratify this action.

A FREE PRESS.

The newspapers, with all their faults, are among the most constant aids to the vigilance which is the price of the liberty that is protected by the courts. Who believes that the police, the prosecuting officers, or the judges would enforce the laws and respect private persons as well as they do now if the eye of the reporter and the pen of the editor were not at the daily service of every voter?

In England, in the reign of James II, there was not a word in the Gazette about the trial and acquittal of the seven bishops who had dared to tell the king that he was not above the constitution. It is better to tolerate the worst newspaper in the United States than to have a censorship of the press.

The more open and fearless way is the better way for trying to give to every human being his share of truth and right, as well as his just portion of punishment. We can not escape suffering of some kind, and we are learning that no tests are too severe for the ages in their development of the highest types of human character.

THE POLITICAL BALANCE-WHEEL.

It is becoming quite common for a certain class of writers to advise farmers to stay at home, attend to their farming and leave politics alone. This agrees so perfectly with the selfish interests of an uncertain class of politicians that the inference is fairly deducible that such advice to farmers is inspired by them. It will be a sad day for this country when farmers cease to take an interest in the political affairs of the State or Nation, and assign politics to the politicians.