

THE 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.

CXVI.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

"I wonder if the land is too wet to plow?"

This question is often asked in wet springs such as this has been so far. It may be that the field is some distance from the house and we are so anxious to get all the work done that we hate to lose so much time running to the field to examine it. Now how are we to tell what to do?

Well, here is the way we decide the matter. We have a ram gauge made out of a common tin can that salmon, oysters or other goods were preserved in—or a glass jar that has a mouth the same size of the bottom will do. Now place this in an open place so that it will catch all the rain that falls. It will require some practice to be accurate, but the following rules hold good on our soil: From March 10th to June 10th, one-half inch a good season when no rain has fallen in 10 to 12 days, one inch makes it quite wet for 24 hours unless rain comes in very large drops; one and a half inches causes ditches to run; two inches produces a freshet if it comes within the time mentioned above. From June 10th till September 10th, it requires double the quantity of rain to affect the soil that it does in the spring.

The soil in early spring has been kept moist by frequent snows and rains in the winter, but when the days get long and hot the evaporation is quite rapid so that it requires more rain to produce the same effect. Hilly lands which have natural drainage or lands with a sandy subsoil will not get too wet to plow like level lands with a hardpan or clay subsoil. Rains that fall in large drops, which we call a downpour, generally run off quickly and do not wet the ground like a slow rain.

As to telling when the land is likely to be injured by plowing too wet, if it crumbles there is no damage done.

Land that has not been plowed late in the winter or early spring can be plowed quite wet without injury. But never under any circumstances throw wet soil up around any plant whether it be corn, cotton, potatoes or any other crop. Corn will fire and make stalks with no ears, cotton will shed off the forms and leaves, and potatoes will turn yellow

and not bear; if plowed while wet if the dirt is thrown to the plant.

We have plowed very shallow near the plants when our team could not stand up and thus killed some of the grass and let the soil dry off but we always throw the dirt from the plant.

Suppose there is a bottom or low place that is too wet while the balance is in the right condition to plow? Well, we just go right on and let the low land alone or just drag the plow over it. If you think the bottom land will make more than the up-land, then let it stand till the bottom is just right.

We have always found it much easier to farm dry years than wet ones. We can stir the soil and make a fair crop, but when the rain comes every day and the grass grows and the crop turns yellow from excess of moisture, we are at a loss to know what to do. But one extreme is followed by others. When it is wet in the spring, look for dry weather in the summer.

It is sometimes very hard to drain land so that it will not suffer in very wet seasons. But all lands should be well drained. Level lands well drained are the best for ordinary crops.

HARRY FARMER.

The value of shelter and comfort for cattle is demonstrated in an experiment made by the Arizona station. A herd of milch cows were exposed for three days to a cold rain, at the end of which time the flow of milk had decreased just one-half, notwithstanding that the cattle were properly fed. It was a month before the cows gave as much milk as before the exposure.

By cutting back the limbs of old peach trees so that the tree resembles a stump, more than anything else, new and vigorous fruit bearing shoots will be put out and several good annual crops produced, while the young trees are coming into bearing. Unlike apple tree suckers these shoots will bear fruit the second year.

Coal ashes constitute a splendid grit for hens. Have you never seen a hen gobble down half a dozen chunks of cinders as large as the end of your little finger, as though they were choice bits of meat? Fowls will do this if they are in want of grit to operate their digestive apparatus.

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS.

Mr. Taylor Argues That the Farmer Should Take His Sons in Partnership With Him.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

A favorite theme of a good many writers upon agricultural subjects seems to be, why so many country youths leave the farm. These writers nearly all bewail this practice and preach against it. Some of them seem to think that the country boy is jealous of the "easy life" of the city youth, and thinks that he, too, if he goes to town to work as a salesman or bookkeeper, or some other easy (?) job, may soon get rid of his sunburnt skin and horny hands, don the genteel (?) manners and put on the citified airs of his city cousins, and altogether be "in the swim" of an easy and luxurious existence. I think the writers who jump to such conclusions as this are entirely mistaken as to why so many country boys leave the farm to go to the city.

The true reason why they do so, in my opinion,—and I suppose I ought to know, being one of them myself, and I am personally acquainted with half a hundred or more others who have taken the step,—is not because the country boy is afraid of, or has a dislike for the hard work of the farm; nor is it because he is jealous of the soft hands and creased clothes of the city chap.

On the contrary, work, hard work, is what he likes, what he goes to the city to do, and what he does after he is there. That is why the country boy is the one who "gets there." That he does "get there" is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that so many—a majority, I believe—of the State and Nation's most successful business and professional men were "raised on the farm."

The idea that the country boy is jealous of the city dude is one of the most absurd conclusions imaginable. He is not jealous; he has an unbounded contempt for such beings, and has sense enough to know that it is because of the existence of more fine clothes and dudish manners in the city than brains and desire for work that it is possible for him to win success in the city himself.

But none of this explains the why and wherefore of his going there. To succeed is his aim and it is natural for him to go where the best inducements, the most encouragement and help are held out to him.

Now, in the great majority of cases, the farmer doesn't give the farmer boy a chance. He doesn't praise and encourage him enough; doesn't try to give him as good an education as he is able to give him, and as the boy is justly and morally entitled to be given; doesn't help him to start as a farmer to as great an extent as he might do with profit both to himself and the boy. On the contrary, he finds too much fault; thinks the boy doesn't work enough, doesn't study when he sends him to school, and wants to drive all the horses on the place to death.

To illustrate, there is Sam Brown's farm over there. Sam Brown is reckoned as a good farmer. Anyhow he has a fine farm, fine stock, and has made and is making a good deal of money; or rather his boys and a few hired hands have made and are making it for him. He has half a dozen or more boys, most of them are grown. But where are they now? Oh! the old, old story. Some gone to Georgia, some to Texas, one or two to the devil, perhaps. The others are still at home "working for Dad" and waiting for freedom, when they'll go too. And why this? Simply because Brown has not been broadminded and liberal enough—not had horse sense enough—to take his own boys into his confidence and partnership, and thus keep them at home, enlarge operations to suit the new conditions and, at the same time, better his own pocket and that of his sons.

Now in the city there is merchant Jones. He makes money too—much more of it now than farmer Brown; but the reason is because his sons are helping him to do it, instead of being in Texas or Georgia, or in the devil's company of recruits. He, like Brown, has several boys. But he has given each of them a good education, taught them a business, and, when they become of age, has taken them into partnership, and the firm name is "Jones & Sons." And that's why his boys are not where Brown's are.

Among all my acquaintances I know of but one farmer who has taken his own boys into partnership—share and share alike. He and they are prospering now.

I know hundreds of merchants and professional men who have taken their sons into their business or profession, and I think but few have ever found cause to regret doing so. I see no reason why our farmers should not follow the same plan.

ROBT. L. TAYLOR.

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