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AGRICULTURE

HARRY FARMER'S TALKS.

CXXVII.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

The South is the best place to make money truck farming. As shipping facilities are improved some every year, the chances to make money become greater.

It would surprise some of our farmers to see the stuff sold on the Washington (D. C.) market. The cantaloupes, for instance. They are pulled green, but nicely crated, and sell for paying prices. We were pleased to find a lot with a nice card on the end of crate raised by a Duplin County farmer. He has learned to sell his truck to Yankees. If we knew that he was a subscriber, we would give his name.

We also found a lot of corn from a point near Elizabeth City that was selling at the rate of $6.75 per bushel for dry corn. The commission merchant said that it would not keep long. Where any one is so situated as to be able to get the corn to market in twenty-four to thirty-six hours from the field, it would pay well to plant it. Green corn will not stand to be packed in bulk, unless you have cold storage. It will heat in a few hours when packed in a tight barrel or box.

Our farmers must learn to have a late spring crop of Irish potatoes. There has been a good demand both in Northern and Southern markets for them for several years. It is more costly to raise them later, but it would pay. Nearly all the Southern crop is sold by the 20th of June, and the Northern potatoes do not come on the market before the first of August. Even the Wilmington (N. C.) market is bare of good potatoes.

Nearly all the potatoes raised in the middle States from North Carolina to Pennsylvania, excepting near the coast, are not ready for market in time to fill the gap. The main cause for this is the dry springs. Irish potatoes need considerable moisture to do well. Every farmer knows that a long dry spell from the 20th of April to the 20th of May is sure to make a light crop unless the land is stirred. Well, potatoes planted late enough to catch the first summer rains can not mature before the 20th of July or later, and that accounts for the gap. Now if we raise a crop to fill this gap it will pay well. We must learn to grow the late maturing kinds. The extra early potatoes are only grown in the extreme North and in the South. We might plant Northern slopes a little late and after they mature cover the potatoes by splitting the middles with a turn plow, thus making a good furrow to carry off the water. This would help to keep the potatoes cool.

HARRY FARMER.

BUILDING UP WORN OUT CLAY LANDS.

Paper Read Before A. & M. College Farmers' Convention, Raleigh, July 21, 1903, by R. W. Scott, Esq., of Alamance County, N. C.

Mr. President and Members of the Convention:

The subject assigned to me, "The Building up of Worn-out Clay Lands in Middle North Carolina," as I understand it, refers especially to the red soils to be found in portions of Alamance, Chatham, Granville, Guilford, Orange and adjoining counties. I want to show that these lands can be improved and that it is being done.

The people in Alamance know that Mr. L. Banks Holt bought one of the poorest farms in the county, and today it is producing fine crops—and is paying him. Mr. Jno. Trolinger, of Haw River, bought a worn out tract of land, and is now producing crops that are a surprise to his neighbors. We see what has been done by General Carr at Occoneechee, and Mr. Duke at University Station. It may be argued that these gentlemen, on account of their wealth, are able to improve their farms, when an ordinary farmer could not. It is my purpose to show how the same results can be had, except that it may take a longer time. Any young man of energy can take a worn out farm, and if he lives his alotted time, he can see it in as high state of cultivation as either of these farms.

I speak very decidedly about this, for I speak from experience. I believe I can best illustrate my point by telling you what I have done and expect to do at Melville Farm. I trust that no one will think me egotistical, or that I have carried out my ideas entirely or that my farm is in a perfect state of cultivation, because that would be misleading. But I do say that the plan I am pursuing, if carried on, will result in changing what was once a very poor farm to one in as high state of cultivation as any I have mentioned. It just takes longer. I rejoice to see that the leaders of thought in our State are realizing the fact that it is as necessary for a boy who expects to be a farmer to have an agricultural training as it is for any other profession to have professional training, and for a farmer to successfully improve his soil, his crops and stock, he must have thorough knowledge and training, such as is being given by this College, and other institutions of its kind in the United States. I know that I have wasted time and money on account of the lack of such training. Knowing what a drawback it has been to me, I would therefore urge every young man who expects to be a farmer to get an agricultural education.

Twenty-five years ago I left school to take charge of the farm where I was raised. I thought there was no place like it in all the world. My sisters and brothers, knowing my love for the farm, and desiring that the old home should be kept together, willingly sold their interest in the farm to me. I only had enough money to pay for a half interest in this farm. It contained 600 acres—one-half in timber, and the other in a rundown condition, having been worked by negro tenants. It was badly washed; galled places were in every field, and were getting larger. Fields were full of stones and irregular in shape. A few more years of such cultivation and it would have been worthless, because you could get nothing from it.

There was upon this farm at that time about 50 acres of land that were producing an average of 10 bushels of wheat or 20 of corn per acre. As near as I can recollect, the year I took charge of the farm the crop was one hundred bushels of wheat, seventy-five of oats, two hundred and fifty of corn and a little hay. The work stock consisted of five horses, a few sheep, ten head of cattle, and some hogs. The year 1901 this same farm produced eight hundred bushels of wheat, fourteen hundred bushels of oats, from one thousand to fifteen hundred bushels of corn, besides nearly twenty-five tons of clover hay and some peavine hay.

The farm is now carrying about fifty head of cattle, forty sheep, thirty hogs, eight work horses, and a few colts every year to supply work stock for the farm.

I wish now to tell how this has been done, and I believe the way I have done it is the best way to improve these lands. I took fifty acres of land as a nucleus to build on. I would find a few acres of good land in nearly every field. I began by sowing peas, and clover, keeping stock to consume the food raised, and with the moderate use of fertilizers, I have gradually increased the productiveness of the farm. I have made it a rule to apply all manure direct from the stable to the galled spots in the field, rather than (as was the custom of many) to apply it to corn in the hill. By this application of manure I would at once stop these places from washing, and get them in condition to grow clover and peas. Having pursued this plan for this number of years, you can now hardly detect any of these spots. I extended this plan until I am now making my best crops on land that had gullies ten feet deep. I have made it a rule every year to get as many stumps and rocks off of the land as possible, to get the fields in better shape, to make them larger, to clean out all little thickets and briar patches, and to leave the field in better shape than when I began it.

I have now adopted this rotation. I do not say that it is the best, but it is what I am doing. For the first year wheat, second corn (and subsoil if possible); third, oats and clover sown together in the spring; fourth clover to be mown for hay; fifth year, peas, to be mown or picked for seed, and sown to wheat in the fall.

I adopt this rotation because it gives good results, and uniform work for the team throughout the year. You will see I take off the land three grain crops, and raise two ammonia growing crops. These two crops of clover and peas make a splendid preparation for the grain crops to follow.

My corn is cut in the fall, about September, with a corn harvester, and set up in shocks where it remains until after I finish sowing wheat. I then shred this corn with a McCormick shredder. This leaves the land clear, so that I can at once start the plows to break the land for spring oats, and clover. By breaking in the fall, this red land becomes thoroughly pulverized and in fine condition to receive the oats and clover. The advantage of breaking in the fall is that I can get the oats in early, about February. Some may ask: "Why have a pea crop follow a clover crop; would you not make just as good a wheat crop after the clover?" The difficulty has always been that if I depended on a wheat crop after clover, I would take a big risk, and often lose a wheat crop on account of not being able to break the land soon enough on account of dry weather. I begin in the spring when land is too wet to cultivate crops, to break the land that was in clover the year before, and sow it in peas. If we should have a dry sum-

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