

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

and The Cotton Plant.

PROGRESSIVE FARMER—VOL. XX. NO. 17.
THE COTTON PLANT—VOL. XXII. NO. 18.

RALEIGH, N. C., JUNE 6, 1905.

Weekly—\$1 a Year.

The Progressive Farmer

AND THE COTTON PLANT.
(Consolidated September 27, 1904.)

Entered at Raleigh, N. C., as second class mail matter.

CLARENCE H. POE, Editor and Manager.
B. W. KILGORE, } Agricultural Editors.
C. W. BURKETT, }

A LITTLE LETTER TO THE SAMPLE COPY READER.

My Dear Sir:—This number of The Progressive Farmer and Cotton Plant has come to you marked "Sample Copy." That means that you are one of a number of wide-awake farmers and truckers in the Carolinas and Virginia who ought to read The Progressive Farmer, but don't.

It's not fashionable nor profitable to try to farm here without The Progressive Farmer.

And it's not fashionable because it doesn't pay.

Every week the most successful and enterprising farmers and truckers of our territory write our paper of methods and ideas which help them make money—and which will help you make money.

There are some papers you can't afford to take, and there are some you can't afford not to take. The Progressive Farmer is one you can't afford not to take.

It is not an expenditure, but an investment, and pays for itself every issue.

"Most money pays only 6 per cent a year," says Mr. Asheley Horne, "but the money I pay for The Progressive Farmer pays me 6 per cent a week."

"The Progressive Farmer," says Mr. J. M. Paris, "has given me \$100 profit in improved land, crops, and stock for every one dollar I have paid for it."

But there's no use to argue. Here's the paper to speak for itself—and here we are making the biggest offer in the history of the paper:

To any man who has never taken The Progressive Farmer we will send our paper and the Minneapolis Home Magazine from now till January 1, 1906, for only 50 cents!

You know The Progressive Farmer is worth while, and we assure you that the Home Magazine is also worth while. It is a large 24-page illustrated monthly, one of the best of the women's magazine, the regular subscription rate being 25 cents a year. It is filled with strong editorials on women's affairs; interesting romance; travel and descriptive articles; fancy work and fashion articles, and departments of housekeeping and floriculture.

The regular subscription price of The Progressive Farmer alone from now till January 1st is 65 cents, and in addition to this we offer a first-class monthly magazine for the women readers of your family—all for only 50 cents!

This is unquestionably the biggest offer ever made by The Progressive Farmer management—a special cut price open only to those not now subscribers—no profit in it for us—and made only to insure 1,000 new readers before July.

We count on you as one of the lucky thousand. And the quicker you respond, the more you get for your money.

Order to-day.

EXPERIMENTING WITH ALFALFA.

Farmers Should Not Become Discouraged if Complete Success is Not Attained the First Year—More About Inoculation.

Messrs. Editors:—Some of the reports that are coming to me about alfalfa seeded this spring indicate a failure on the part of the plants to make the growth expected, while other reports are very encouraging. It will not be at all surprising if many are disappointed and some make complete failures with alfalfa this season for the reason that it is an experimental crop with most of our farmers, and they do not know the peculiarities and requirements of the plant, nor do they know that the land upon which they planted it is in right condition to grow alfalfa successfully. There is a great deal about the crop yet to be learned, and we need not expect to learn it all in one or two seasons.

Some of the reports coming in state that the plants are small and yellow-looking, and the writers want to know what is the trouble, and also what they shall do to make the alfalfa grow and have the rich green color indicative of thriftiness.

The small growth and yellow looks indicate the lack of bacteria on the roots. I have some on my own farm near Goldsboro that does not show proper inoculation notwithstanding the seed were treated with inoculating material. The lack of proper inoculation is, I presume, because either the land or condition of weather is against the development of the bacteria. It is not enough that the seed or soil shall be inoculated, but conditions must be right for the development of the bacteria in the soil or we need not expect satisfactory results. In my case I think there has been too much rain and that has prevented the development of the bacteria. The land, though ranging from sand to a stiff loam, is retentive of water and probably has acidity in it; though it was heavily limed in the early spring. However, let the cause be whatever it may, the alfalfa is not doing like I would be glad to have it do. I have advised Mr. Davis, who is on the place, to clip it with the mower some three inches above the ground and allow the clippings to lie on the ground as a mulch. I shall advise this clipping process every two or three weeks until the plants begin to show improvement, which I am expecting to follow. The clipping will cause the plants to branch and become more stocky, and give to them a stronger root growth.

In addition to the clipping I shall endeavor to inoculate part of the plot with soil from my alfalfa field at Hillsboro, and if nodules do not form on the roots of the remaining plants, will apply nitro-culture on that so as to see if there is any difference between soil inoculation and that from nitro-culture. By carefully lifting the small plants with a paddle, or anything that will take up the soil with the plant, and gently shaking the soil off, it will be an easy matter to tell if the plants are inoculated. If they are not inoculated, the roots will be free from the little nodules; while if they are inoculated, there will be on the roots from one to a dozen small nodules, from the size of a pin head up to the size of a grain of wheat, according to the quantity of inoculation in the soil. I shall be glad to have reports from those who are experimenting as to what extent they find these small nodules on the roots of their alfalfa.

I do not want any reader of The Progressive Farmer to think for a moment this letter is written with blue ink, or with any idea of discouraging any one in regard to alfalfa: but on the contrary it is written to prevent any one from becoming

discouraged and giving up the fight for alfalfa. I regard the crop as one of too much promise to be abandoned on account of failures for one or two years even. The excessive rains this season are more favorable to weeds than to alfalfa; therefore we will have to help the alfalfa in its battle against the weeds. The mower is the most effective weapon I know for this purpose. The frequent use of it will be death to the weeds and life to the alfalfa.

I can bear testimony to the advice of Dr. Freeman to those who are contemplating planting alfalfa to begin now to prepare the land, and the best way is to sow the land in peas. I believe it will grow better after a crop of peas or some legume than it will after a hoed crop. Such a crop may assist in inoculating the soil which is so necessary for the successful growth of alfalfa or any leguminous crop.

T. B. PARKER.

In connection with what Mr. Parker has written here, we direct attention to a new Department of Agriculture Bulletin just issued on "Inoculation of Soil by Nitrogen-Fixing Bacteria." From this we quote the following:

When Failure is to Be Expected.

Inoculation will fail where other conditions (aside from the need of bacteria) are not taken into account, as the following:

(1) In soil that is acid and in need of lime. Liming to correct acidity is as important for the proper activity of the bacteria as for the growth of the plants.

(2) In soil that responds in a marked way to fertilizers, such as potash, phosphoric acid, or lime.

The activity of the bacteria in securing nitrogen from the air and rendering it available to the legumes does not do away with the need for such fertilizing elements as potash and phosphorus.

(3) It must also be remembered that inoculation does not "act like magic;" it will not overcome results due to bad seed, improper preparation and cultivation of ground, and decidedly adverse conditions of weather or climate.

In the use of cultures, also, failure is almost certain where the directions are not carefully studied and intelligently followed.

(4) As the physics, the chemistry, and the biology of soils are studied in the laboratory and by means of actual field-plot trials to determine yield and quality of crops and the effect of one crop on the following crops, the very great complexity of soil and farm management becomes more manifest.

The value of pure-bred bacteria, whether associated with the crop or existing independently in the soil, as is true of fertilizers, can not be predicted with certainty on any soil without trial. Success on similar near-by lands may be taken as good evidence. But, unlike fertilizers, bacteria should in time be so inexpensive that each farmer can afford to try them for each leguminous crop on each field or soil type on his farm. The methods of distributing in dried form and the easy methods of multiplying on the farm in sufficient quantities to inoculate fields will make it possible to have all fields inoculated at all times.

Life is a business we are all apt to mismanage; either living recklessly from day to day, or suffering ourselves to be gulled out of our moments by the inanities of custom. We should despise a man who gave as little activity and forethought to the conduct of any other business. . . . We cannot see the forest for the trees. . . . And it is only on rare provocation that we can rise to take an outlook beyond daily concerns.—R. L. Stevenson.