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THIS IS THE SEASON FOR DEEP PLOWING

FALL plowing should, as a rule, be deep plowing. By this we mean that in practically all cases where the turning plow is used between now and next spring it should be put in just a little deeper than the land has usually been plowed before. Where subsoiling is done, this is the time to do it.

We believe in deep plowing and have scant sympathy with the advocates of three- or four-inch breaking, but "deep" plowing is a very elastic term, and the depth that is sufficient on one soil may be sadly insufficient on another. Take the red-clay hill lands of the South, for example. Passing through these regions one will see slope after slope gullied or galled, long lines or glaring splotches of absolutely barren soil, the results of a system of soil scratching and humus depletion. These lands need deeper plowing. Instead of three or four inches, seven or eight should be the usual depth for the turning plow to run; and if when the subsoil is dry, a subsoil plow can follow the turning plow, so much the better. By such plowing, the growing of cover crops in winter and the filling of the soil with vegetable matter, the necessity for terracing these lands can be greatly reduced, and washing largely prevented.

On a level sandy soil, on the other hand, a man with a subsoil plow would be entirely out of place. If the soil is very sandy, five or six inches is probably deep enough for any breaking. On the clay hillside there is a hard layer which should be broken up so that the water may soak down through it instead of rushing off and carrying the top soil with it; many of the sandy lands would be better if there was a compact stratum at the depth of a few inches. Thus it will be seen that the need for deep plowing may vary greatly with differing conditions.

As a general rule, however, our soils are not broken deeply enough. We need deeper seed beds, and a larger water-holding capacity in our soils. The little one-horse plows, scratching two or three inches deep, have helped to impoverish thousands of acres of land and to keep poor thousands of farmers. We need to double the depth of our plowing, on the average, and to get rid of the little makeshift plows and teams that are incapable of doing really good plowing. Of course, most farmers can't throw away their plows or let their work stock go and get others all at once; neither can they double the depth of their cultivated soils all at once. They can, however, gradually get better implements



and better teams, and they can, when they go to break their land this fall or winter, put their plows down an inch or so deeper than they have been running, and next year, and the next, do the same until they get a loose, friable soil eight or ten inches deep. When they get such a depth of soil there will be less washing, less damage from drouth, less drowning out, and larger crops.

There is one thing to remember always, however: Deeper plowing alone may give better crops for a year or two, but it cannot permanently improve the land. In fact, it is doubtful, ordinarily, whether deep plowing alone will add enough to the crops to pay for the extra expense. But when the soil is gradually deepened and at the same time gradually filled with vegetable matter, and thus made porous, retentive of moisture and rife with bacterial activity, there will inevitably be a decided increase in the crops it produces, and the profits it yields.

So we would urge every reader who expects to break any land between now and next spring to do deeper plowing than has been his custom, to get down and work a little on "the farm that lies below the one he has been working;" but we would also ask him to remember that if he would get the most from this deeper plowing, he must see to it that as he makes his soil deeper he also makes it better by the addition to it of larger quantities of vegetable matter. Deeper plowing is in most cases a necessity in soil improvement, but more humus is equally necessary, often more so.

FEATURES OF THIS ISSUE.

AMONG THE SUGAR PLANTERS OF HAWAII	11
BREEDS OF CATTLE—I.....	12
CRIMSON CLOVER AND VETCH	4
FARM AND GARDEN WORK FOR OCTOBER	2
HOW ABOUT YOUR WELL?	18
INDEX FOR LAST QUARTER	19
MORE GOOD ROADS TALK	5
OCTOBER POULTRY WORK	16
PREPARATION FOR THE WINTER GARDEN	8
STORING VEGETABLES FOR WINTER	17
THE GOLDEN HOOF	18
THE SURE WAY OF INCREASING SOIL FERTILITY....	8
TEN THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH	8
WHAT A FAIR SHOULD BE	10

