

## Professor Massey's Editorial Page.

### Farm Work for February.

**I**F YOU DID not get your oats sown last fall, you can still sow in February. But do not sow the so-called spring oats, but the regular Southern winter oats. They will do better in the South, even in spring, than the spring oats, though they will not make as heavy a crop as though sown in the early fall, since the hot weather catches them.



PROFESSOR MASSEY.

But have plenty of oats to feed. There is too much feeding of horses in the South with corn and corn fodder only. The horses have to eat more than they should in order to get enough protein, and the result is, that they get too fat for work, and can not stand the spring work so well as though they had more protein feed. Of course, if you have plenty of peavine hay, you can balance the corn with that or can even feed a little cottonseed meal with the corn. But for work horses I have never found any grain better than good oats. I have fed them with good results in the sheaf, and the horses will eat all the straw and some corn fodder, too.

Get the spring plowing done as fast as possible, and do not think that you are preparing the land well when you run a single mule to a plow and turn the land three inches deep. The deep plowing and subsoiling is better done in the fall, and clay soil well plowed in the fall can be prepared in spring with the disk harrow if no cover crop is grown. But it is always better to have a cover crop to turn under in the spring, even rye, for the green plants will be catching fertility that would wash away, and turning them under in spring you return to the soil what would otherwise have been lost.

In Florida of course we can do some planting before the end of the month, for I have seen a good stand of corn and Sea Island cotton in northern Florida in March, but in the greater part of the South February is a month of preparation, and little planting should be done till March.

If you have a crop of crimson clover on the land you intend to plant in corn, I would let it grow to maturity. We have plenty of time to make a crop of corn from early May planting, and the mature crop of clover will make a heavier crop than if turned under early.

Then in plowing under clover for corn, do not flop the furrows over and make a layer of vegetable matter to shut out the rise of the capillary moisture, but edge up the furrows even if there is a ragged lot of clover left on top. It will be better for the corn than if turned under flat. And what clover is on top will act as a mulch. This is especially true of sandy soils. You can chop it up enough with the disk harrow and make a fine seed-bed.

If wheat or oats do not seem to thrive as they should, it is a good practice to apply some nitrate of soda. I have used as much as 100 pounds an acre on wheat, always applying when the leaves are dry, to avoid scalding. In one experiment I increased the wheat crop nine bushels an acre on part of the field with an application of 100 pounds of nitrate, this part making 19 bushels where the rest of the field made 10 bushels, the land being in rather a low state of fertility. But I followed that wheat with peas and gathered only the peas, and the next season that land made a fine corn crop. Could have made a heavier one had I followed the peas with crimson clover, but at that time we had not found out the value of this clover.

In spreading manure in spring on sandy soils find that it is best to spread after plowing and then disk it in, for near the surface the manure will retain moisture and will not interfere with the rise of the moisture from below as it will if plowed under.

In fertilizing for cotton or corn, do not confine it to the furrows, but put as much broadcast as in the furrows, for the roots of cotton run all across the rows, and at fruiting time need to find food. So far as the phosphoric acid and potash are concerned, I am sure that it is best to put in at the start all that you intend to use. Any after application can be made with nitrate of soda if

the plants seem to need help. This is the only thing I would apply to cotton during the growth of the crop, for the soil will hold on to the phosphoric acid and potash till plants call for it.

There are flat lands where ridging is desirable to assist in the surface drainage. On such lands I would plant on beds and keep the beds up with shallow cultivation, but never make a ridge after the plants have grown and you are laying the crop by, for then you will invariably injure the roots. But the best thing is to have such lands well under-drained so that level culture can be used.

### In the Garden and Truck Field.

**I**F YOU FAILED to get the early garden peas planted in January, get them in now as soon as possible. The later wrinkled peas are better sown late in February.

Early potatoes are the main crop now demanding attention. Anywhere south of Virginia they should be in the ground before the end of February, though I have never seen much advantage in planting them earlier than February.

After the middle of the month work down the ridges where the cabbage plants were set in the fall. Give the crop a good side-dressing of nitrate of soda and cultivate rapidly. When the crop is pretty well advanced and should be heading, it will hasten the heading to run through the rows with a small plow with moldboard off and prune

### A PRIZE-WINNING WHITE ROCK.



Owned by G. H. Moss, Burke's Garden, Va.

the roots a little, and they will head much more rapidly.

Cabbage plants that have been wintered in frames should be exposed to the outer air as much as practicable so that they can be set out by the last of February.

In the upper South the first sowing of beets in the open ground should be made about the middle of February. Sow some radish seed in the same rows. The radishes will come up quickly and can be pulled out before the beets need all the room.

Beets and radishes in frames under glass will need plenty of air on sunny days, and there, too, a little nitrate of soda, an ounce dissolved to a gallon of water and used with a sprinkling can, will help the crop.

With all root crops it is best to use a high-grade commercial fertilizer rather than stable manure, as that is apt to make them grow forked. Radishes and beets should be heavily fertilized, for unless they grow quickly they are not so good, and earliness is of the greatest importance.

I sowed seed of the Prizetaker onion in a cold-frame in January and hope to get them in shape for transplanting outside the last of this month. Seed to make ripe onions the same season should be sown as early as the ground can be worked in good order. For this sowing I use seed of the Southport Yellow and White Globe, as they are good keepers.

Onion sets that were planted in the fall for early green onions should now be cultivated well and the soil pulled from them slightly. With these, too, a little nitrate will be a help.

There is a great deal of spinach, I suppose, that is like mine, owing to the dry weather last fall. Mine has wintered pretty well, but will not be ready to cut till the sun gets a little higher. I shall use the nitrate on it to urge it along.

Where I live the grocers are selling curled kale for five cents a pound, while the prices in New York is 60 to 75 cents a barrel. I have plenty for home use, but it seems that there is too wide margin between the wholesale price and

the retail price. Our grocers are selling Norfolk kale, and by another winter I hope to have some to sell.

In the home garden one can now sow some Green Curled Scotch kale and have it in fine shape later if none was sown in the fall. My lettuce plants set outside in fall and winter are doing finely. Now is the time to sow seed for setting for the later heading. I am using the Black-Seed Big Boston, the Improved White-Seed Big Boston, Hittinger's Belmont and the Wonderful. All the fall-sown plants are standing well.

In a frame where I cut out a crop of lettuce I now have beets and radishes growing, and in another frame plenty of lettuce still. Those who have never tried it can hardly understand the value of a few glass sashes.

In the upper South the tomato seed should be sown in frames early in February. I sow the seed rather thickly and transplant to other frames as soon as large enough to handle, and later transplant still further apart, or about four inches each way, and gradually harden them off so that they can be set out as early as the weather will admit. I set out while there is still some risk of frost, and if frost is predicted, I shovel the soil over them till it is past. I use Earliana for the earliest.

Eggplants I sow in frames about the last of the month and set the young plants in pots and keep them under the glass till the weather is warm, for you can not harden off an eggplant as you can a tomato. I turn the balls entire out of the pots in setting them out, and they do not feel the change.

My sweet peas were planted in January, for we must start them early to get good flowers. But they may still be sown. I sow alongside a chicken-wire fence so that they have a place to climb on. My seed of scarlet sage were sown in a box in the conservatory early in January and are now growing and will be set in pots. Then I have 29 different varieties of geraniums that will go out in the beds later, and I have some big banana plants that I grew from seed sent me from wild bananas in the Philippines where the wild plants make seed, for the cultivated ones never do. My conservatory is simply part of my porch glazed in and heated with an oil stove, but it is a nice place to start plants.

### What Farmers Want to Know.

**H**AVE A GLASS frame that I use for bedding sweet potatoes about March 18. My early cabbage crop is largely a failure. Can I grow cauliflower plants in this frame and have them out before the frame is needed for the potatoes? Doubtless you can, if you sow the cauliflower seed at once, for they must be early to head well before the weather gets too hot. Then while you can grow cabbages with fairly good fertilization, you must stuff the soil with manure and fertilizer both to get good cauliflowers and must keep them growing right along, for any stunting will make them "button," or make little heads that are not worth cutting. You can not get the land too rich for cauliflowers, and one or two side dressings of nitrate of soda during growth will help.

**PHOSPHORIC ACID.**—"Which would be the most profitable, 16 per cent acid phosphate, or the Tennessee pulverized rock at \$5 a ton at the mine?" That will depend on how you are farming. If you are feeding legume hay and making manure, it will pay you better to use the Tennessee rock mixed in the manure. If you are simply making crops to sell by the aid of fertilizers, it will be best for you to buy the acid phosphate. If you have plenty of organic decay in the soil, a fresh new soil, it will pay to use the Tennessee rock liberally. The pulverized rock is the thing for good farmers, the acid phosphate for fertilizer gamblers.

**PINE ASHES.**—"Will it pay to haul pine ashes half a mile if they cost only the hauling?" Yes, I think that it will pay to haul them especially on your black soil. They are low in potash as compared with hardwood ashes, but have some lime that will be useful.

**CANADA PEAS.**—"Can I sow Canada peas now and have a growth to turn under for corn?" I have never tried this, but do not see why it should not pay to sow the peas for this purpose, though as a forage crop they are very uncertain in the South. Sown now, they will make a fairly good growth by the first of May and can be turned under and will certainly help the corn crop. It is well worth trying where one has not sown crimson clover, which would be better.