

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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1912 For Better Farming and Greater Progress!

WE have thought and talked so much about the low price of cotton that there is danger that some of us may have concluded that the year 1912 finds Southern farmers in bad shape and that it will be necessary to wait another year for many of the things we had planned to get and do. Really, there is no good reason for any such idea as this. It is hard, of course, that the big cotton crop of 1911 should bring more than \$100,000,000 less than the much smaller-crop of 1910—both hard and unfair, for the drop in price has been out of all proportion to the increase in the size of the crop; but still it is well to remember that excepting the wonderfully profitable crop of 1910, only one or two cotton crops in all our history have brought as much money as will this crop of 1911. This is true even if prices continue as they are. If we farmers of the South had farmed as we should last year; if we had raised our own corn and meat and hay and mules; if we had produced the poultry and truck and dairy products to supply our home towns, even though the cotton



RAISE BETTER LIVESTOCK THIS YEAR.

crop had been as large as it was, prices would never have gone so low. We had—or thought we had—to sell at unreasonably low prices simply because we needed the cotton money to pay for things we should have produced at home.

Just about the best thing we can do at this beginning of the new year is to fix clearly in our mind the facts as they are, and then prepare to act upon them. We made a big cotton crop and have sold much of it for less than it was worth, and naturally this does not make us feel as well as we might, but there is no use for us to conclude that we are "all down and out," that "hard times" are due, or anything of that sort. The facts and figures are against any such conclusions. The South is still in fairly good shape, and we are still able to go right ahead on the paths of progress.

Still less is there any reason for us to conclude that this is not the year to prepare for and to do better farming. No more baseless conclusion could be arrived at, for it is the simple truth to say that last year's work proved disappointing simply because we refused to improve our methods. We knew that a big cotton crop raised at the expense of other crops, would not mean the greatest prosperity, but we went right ahead and sacrificed other crops and other lines of farm work to the cotton crop. In short, we took the wrong track, and not a moment too soon can we change our paths and try the way of better farming.

We may have less money to spend, but we have even greater reasons to do better farming. That the past season has been less profitable because of the low price of cotton is an additional reason for the use of more and better work stock and the use of more and better labor-saving implements. This is no time, of all times, to slacken our efforts to do better farming. Our needs for progress are now greater than ever and instead of "quitting" we must take hold with increased determination and energy. In fact, the very loss from the low price of cotton makes it more necessary that we strengthen ourselves in other lines. This is the best of all times for greater efforts to secure the better livestock, seeds and implements needed to produce the best crops at the least expense, and the worst of all times for in any way relaxing our efforts for putting our farming on an economical and business-like basis. If we must do without some things, let it be the things not necessary to our success.

do without these things means to bring on again, sooner or later, another year like the one just passed; while to put our farming on a solid basis, by a rational system of diversification and general farming, means to make ourselves so thoroughly independent that we shall never again have to place our dependence in a single crop and never again be unable to fight effectively in the markets of the world for a fair price for the fruit of our labors.

This, then, is the first message which The Progressive Farmer would bring to the cotton growers in this good year 1912: Things are not just as we would like them, but they are by no means as bad as some of us have led ourselves to believe, and it is our duty to prevent any repetition of the past year's experience. It is our duty because we can do it; but we can do it only by good farming—by the raising of livestock and the growing of food and feed crops, by due attention to the fertility of our soil, by a study of more economical crop production, by more labor-saving machinery and more horse-power, by more reading and thought about our work. We have made a mistake, but having made it we should be wiser and know enough not to make it again. And it will be the same mistake for any man to conclude that he can afford to read less, study his work less carefully or to work with less effective tools, because of the low price of cotton. In fact, while it may be necessary to restrict his expenditures in some ways, no reader can afford to lessen his expenditures for those things which help him to increase his earning capacity.



PREPARE FOR A GOOD CORN CROP.

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