

THE POOR MAN'S ROAD TO BETTER LAND.

It Lies Along the Lines of Livestock Husbandry and the Growing of Feed Crops—How the Man with Little Capital Can Start at Soil Building.

By A. L. French.

WE have talked much concerning the improving of our soils in The Progressive Farmer territory, but I have thought at times that the remedy, like patent medicines, was most too expensive for the man and woman with a living to make out of the land as it underwent improvement. Any one with ample means may improve land very rapidly in several different ways. They can use big, expensive teams and plows, pour down fertilizer by the ton, even buy stable manure, grow forage crops and plow them in, then lime the soil and the trick is turned. But it will be found upon careful investigation that from \$20 to \$30 per acre has been expended, and practically no increase derived from the land, while it has been undergoing treatment for two or three years. And where would the average farmer's credit be when he has expended \$6,000 for the improvement of his 200-acre farm and another \$1,500 added for living expenses while the improvement was going on?



A. L. FRENCH.

Get the Full Value of Pastures and Legume Crops.

You see, it is an impossible case for the man with no outside means, and this is the reason the writer has urged the average farmer to bring his livestock to his aid in soil building. The turning under of crops before their feed value has been extracted is a wrong economic practice, and the average man's pocket-book will not stand the strain when the practice is carried on in a whole-

sale way. Of course, he can stand the drain of fixing a few acres each year by this expensive and wasteful practice, but so he could stand it if he should throw three or four ten-dollar gold pieces into the pond every year. Still, that would not change the fact that it was a foolish, wasteful practice.

Our friends who are advertising the rebuilding of soils without livestock have apparently lost sight of this fact, that grass and clover sods that remain on the land continuously not only are about our best land improvers, but are our best soil binders as well, enabling the farmer to hold the fertility as he gains it. Only men with livestock can make profitable use of these pasture sods.

It has been a mystery to me why such a large proportion of our farmers fight the livestock idea so strongly. It seems as plain as day to me that if I grow a crop of cow-peas or soy beans and secure the entire feed value and full three-fourths of the manurial and humus value, that I am acting more wisely than if I plowed the crop under direct and thus secured only the plant food and humus value, providing, of course, that the expense of harvesting and feeding the forage would not offset the benefit received. As far as harvesting the crop is concerned, the average cost per ton on our place for the past half-dozen years has been under \$1.50, the manure hauling less than 25 cents per ton, the feeding practically nothing, just simply exercise before breakfast.

Improving the Land While Getting a Living From It.

We should always, I believe, keep the fact in mind that nine out of ten farmers are dependent upon their year's work for their living that year, having no great amount of surplus capital laid aside that can be used for land improvement only; hence to do this majority class any good a system must be presented for their consideration that will build the soil and at the same time furnish means to supply the present family wants. This may sound unbusiness-like to some, but we are obliged to handle the situation in this manner if at all, I honestly believe, and so will do well to give our best thought to solving the problem as it is presented on 90 per cent of the farms of the South.

Yet it is not such a hard problem after all. Thousands of men and women all over the United States—the writer among the lot—have started with little or no capital and on poor soil, by the help of good livestock (bought with borrowed money in some cases), have won out and secured for themselves a fair living and something for a rainy day.

How Pigs and Sheep Will Help.

The farmer who grows a field of corn and a field of peas and soy beans, purchases a good brood sow and feeds the corn and peas to her offspring; then disks the stubble land, sows in rye and crimson clover and feeds that crop to the second litter of pigs, will surely make more clear money in the long run than he who grows a crop and sells it in the raw state, and will have just as fertile a farm at the end of ten years as will the man who turns under for manure half the crops his land produces during the ten years, and I will wager he will have a better credit by far at the bank. Thirty dollars will pay for a brood sow that will produce pigs enough to grow \$150 worth of pork the first year, and not a dollar's worth of feed need

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be purchased, if the land is kept at work as it should be growing feed crops every month of the year. But there will be products from these crops—corn fodder, pea hay, etc.—that the hogs cannot use; there will also be more permanent pasture grass than they will consume, and to prevent the wasting of the feed value of these by-products a small flock of sheep will be needed. These ewes will cost \$4 per head and the lambs will pay the bill the next spring, leaving the sheep and wool to pay for the feed and caring of the flock. Some cattle will be needed also, as there will be much of the coarser parts of the rough feed that the sheep cannot handle to advantage, and to carry out this plan of saving all the feed value of the crops—thus reducing the whole to a minimum—the cattle will do their part.

Then, too, having the different classes of stock, we will avoid the risk that always attends "having all the eggs in one basket," making the business safe for the man who cannot afford to gamble with his family's income. Building his soil gradually and at the same time safeguarding his living, the farmer may plant his small acreage of money crop, knowing that whatever may befall this crop his soil and family income will be safe, and he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he is the master of the situation.

NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS' INSTITUTES.

AT EACH of the following institutes a premium of \$1 will be given for the best five ears of corn exhibited, provided the exhibit has merit and shows points of excellence, otherwise no premium will be given. A premium of \$1 will also be given for the best loaf of bread exhibited by a girl or woman living on the farm, the following conditions to be observed:

Bought or home-made yeast may be used, but bread made by the "salt-rising" process will not be awarded a prize; nor will bread scoring less than 75 points, out of a possible 100 points for a perfect bread, be given a premium. The following score-card, designed by Prof. Isabel Brevier for the Illinois Domestic Science Association, will be observed in the judging of bread: Flavor, 35 points; lightness, 15 points; grain and texture, 20 points; crust—color, depth and texture—20 points; crumb—color, moisture—10 points; shape and size, 10 points; total, 100 points. Morning sessions will begin at 10 o'clock and the afternoon at 1:30.

Northeastern Party.

January—17, Mt. Pleasant; 18,

Rock Ridge; 19, Halifax; 20, Jackson; 22, Gatesville; 23, Winton; 24, Windsor; 25, Ahoskie; 26, Rich Square; 27, Scotland Neck; 29, Speed; 30, Oak City; 31, Grimesland.

February—1, Aurora; 2, Washington; 3, Bethel; 5, Williamston; 6, Plymouth; 7, Pantego; 8, Swan Quarter; 9, Middletown; 10, Fairfield; 12, Sladesville; 13, Mackey's Ferry; 14, Columbia; 15, Creswell; 16, Edenton; 17, Hertford; 19, Currituck Court House; 20, Jarvisburg; 21, Elizabeth City; 22, Salem; 23, Camden Court House.

Central Party.

January—18, Kenly; 19, Pine Level; 20, Clinton; 22, Kenansville; 23, Corinth Church, near Rosehill; 24, Faison; 25, Smith's Chapel; 26, Pikeville; 27, Kinston; 29, Trenton; 30, Richlands; 31, New Bern.

February—1, Jacksonville; 2, Pollockville; 3, Bayboro; 5, Vanceboro; 6, Newport; 7, Nashville; 8, Whitakers; 9, Tarboro; 10, Snow Hill; 12, Ayden; 13, Farmville; 14, Pinetops; 15, Stantonsburg.

Southeastern Party.

January—13, Chalybeate; 17, Parkton; 18, Maxton; 19, Wagram; 20, Laurinburg; 22, Lumberton; 23, Tarheel; 24, St. Paul; 25, Clarkton; 26, Chadbourne; 27, Tabor; 29, Old Dock; 30, Ashe; 31, Cool Springs, near Shallotte.

February—1, Mt. Pisgah, near Shallotte; 2, Bolivia; 3, Funston; 5, Wrightsboro; 6, Burgaw; 7, Atkinson; 8, Garland; 9, Roseboro; 10, Fayetteville; 12, Dunn; 13, Mingo Academy; 14, Four Oaks.

CO-OPERATION: HERE IS A GOOD SUGGESTION.

WHAT you have said along the line of co-operation coincides with my ideas generally. Farmers should, as far as practicable join with each other in the purchasing of such articles as they can conveniently purchase wholesale, and often two or more neighbors can profitably purchase for joint ownership some new agricultural implements, etc. But here is a line of co-operation that strikes me as feasible which you have not mentioned:

If Mr. A buys a McCormick mower and it does the work for that vicinity satisfactorily, then when Mr. B. buys one, he, too, should get the same machine, and all along down the line. The repairs can be obtained easier and more cheaply and then you will be complementing your neighbor. Besides, soon all the neighbors will know all the parts of the machine and know how to repair it, etc.

The same rule will apply to stock (Continued on page 28.)

The Promise Of a Good Breakfast

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