

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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A Good Rotation Essential to Good Farming.

MOST of the letters received from our readers for this issue give considerable attention to the reasons for crop rotation. The writers seem to think it necessary to explain why a rotation of crops is a good thing. The reasons given are good as a rule, and, therefore, we are quite content to leave to our contributors the explanation of why a rotation of crops is a wise thing for the farmer. We might advance other reasons than those they have given, but it seems to us that it should be unnecessary. It is enough for us to know that no one-crop system of farming, or no haphazard, unsystematic planting of different crops, has yet made a fertile soil or a rich community of farmers. It may be that here and there are little patches of land on which, by reason of their peculiar conditions, the same crop can be grown year after year with profit to the farmer and without injury to the soil; but the area of such lands is so small as to merit little consideration in a broad view of the subject. Taking any considerable area, or any section as a whole, the rule holds good that a one-crop system of farming is not profitable—or at least is less profitable than farming in a good rotation.

Nor does it state the whole truth to say that farming in a rotation is better than a single-crop system. There is between the two plans the difference between success and failure. One system is wrong, the other is right. A properly planned rotation, adapted to the farmer's individual needs and conditions and to the land he tends, will almost surely result in a farm constantly getting richer and in permanent and increasing prosperity for the farmer. The single-crop system will inevitably result in poorer soils, and poorer soils have never yet made richer farmers.

It is just as well for you, Mr. Farmer, if you have not planned your rotation and thus put your farming on a business basis, to do so right now at this beginning of a new year. We cannot tell you what rotation you should follow. In this issue will be found a number, one or more of which will almost certainly be suited to your conditions. The main thing is for you to get down and figure the thing out as a plain business proposition—for that is what it is. Decide what crop you wish to make your main money crop. Decide, next, what other crops you wish to grow to supplement this main crop. In the third place, find out just how many soil-improving crops you can grow in connection with these sale crops, and finally, arrange the whole list in such order as will enable you best to care for each crop in its turn and to give yourself, your hired help and your work stock the most constant and profitable employment throughout the year. Not until you have done this can you claim to have placed your farm work on a business basis.

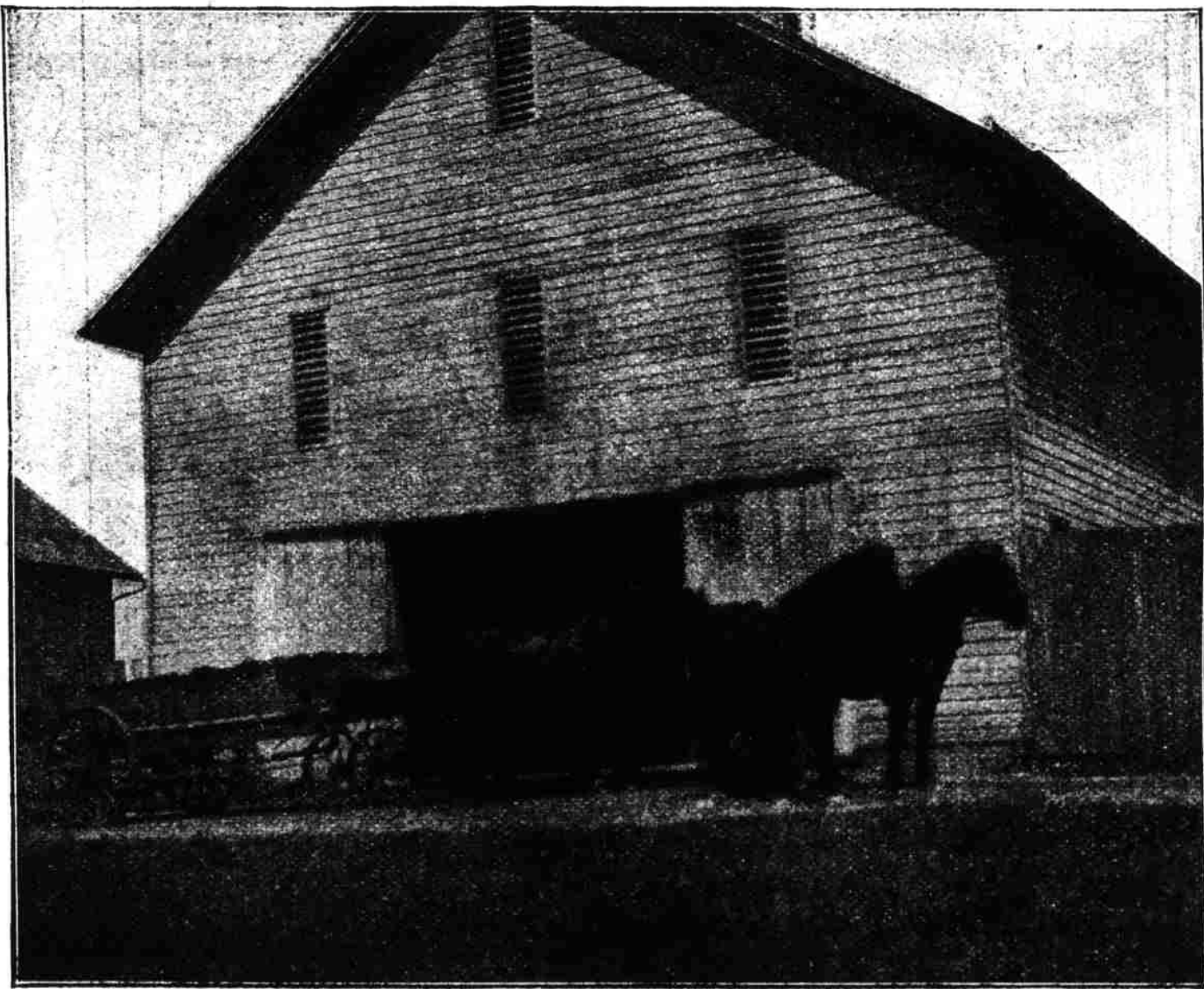
If you have been devoting too much attention to cotton, or tobacco, or corn, or any other crop, right now is the time to quit this bad habit and to prepare to do the right sort of farming. It is not the right sort of farming, either, to try to change over in a single year from one crop to another or to cut out a crop just because it has been unprofit-

able for a year or two. This kind of farming does not make prosperous farmers or rich land. Plan your rotation and then stick to it. Of course, minor changes will be necessary almost every year and you may find after awhile that it will pay you to change gradually from a three-year rotation to a four-year rotation, or vice versa, or that you can substitute some other crop for the one which you have made your chief reliance, but in all such cases the change wants to be made gradually and as a result of a thorough study of the whole business.

In short, a rotation means a succession of crops planned to run for a certain number of years, and a good rotation means such a succession of crops as will enable the farmer to get a profit on all, or nearly all, of them and at the same time to increase the productive capacity of his land and to utilize all his resources in the way of land, labor and executive ability. And remember that it is not a mere matter of choice whether you rotate your crops or not; but that a well planned rotation is one of the first essentials of good farming—the basis upon which any enduring structure of agricultural prosperity must be built.

Surely no cotton farmer will this year be guilty of the folly of trusting for everything to a single crop, and it is just as unwise for a

tobacco or a grain farmer to do this as it is for a cotton farmer.



SUCH BARN AND WORK STOCK ARE FOUND ONLY WHERE PLENTY OF FEED CROPS ARE GROWN.

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