

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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PLANT COWPEAS AND SOY BEANS



A FRUITFUL PLANT.

IT may seem to readers a little early for us to be stressing this matter as we are this week; but we do not think so. Indeed, we feel that the planning and the preparation for these crops should have gone on right along with the preparation and the planning for the corn, the cotton and other crops. For cowpeas and soy beans are not mere "filler" crops, to be used on lands otherwise idle, or to fill in gaps between other crops, or to plant where other crops will not pay. They are good for all these purposes, but they also have a rightful place in the farm rotation. The summer legume crop, for hay and pasture and soil improvement, should be regarded as an essential part of the rotation just as much as is the corn or cotton crop. Properly handled, it will pay just as well for the time and labor spent on it as will either of the other crops; and, more than that, it will enable the other crops to yield much larger profits than they otherwise would.

If it be true that a good system of rotation is a necessary part of good farming, it is equally true that provision for plenty of legumes in the rotation is necessary to the making of a good rotation. Much is said sometimes about how crop rotation helps build up the soil, but it must be remembered that only such rotations as include plenty leguminous crops will improve the soil at all. It may be less wearing on the land to grow

corn and oats and cotton in a rotation than it would be to grow any of them year after year; but in either case there is a constant drain upon the soil and no return to it except from outside sources.

When a crop of cowpeas or soy beans or any other legume is grown there is a return. These crops will take from the air the nitrogen needed for their growth and part of this will be left in the soil in the roots and stubble of the crop. This is why we must make the legumes a regular part of our rotation, grow them just as regularly and treat them just as well as we do any other crop—this and the other fact that they give us, when used for feed, the element our livestock usually needs most that is, protein.

Plenty of legumes means good feed, good animals and good land; and among all the legumes we can grow there is none more valuable than these two. It is not one bit too early to begin preparing the land

for them, getting the seed ready, and otherwise arranging to give them an opportunity to show just what their value is. Indeed, in most seasons it would now be time to have some of them planted for summer grazing for the pigs.

Time again it has been demonstrated that pork can be made more cheaply from these crops than is possible with concentrate feeds alone, or with corn and grass. Then, there is the hay crop which in the South is always short. Yet the cowpea is almost an ideal hay crop—even if it is a little hard for some folks to cure—and it can be grown so easily that farmers in other sections cannot understand why the South should buy their inferior grass hays. Indeed, it is rather hard for the Southern farmer to tell why he does not grow enough hay to supply his own needs; and the fact that he does not is not to his credit.

So, once again, this year get ready and "plant cowpeas and soy beans" liberally and persistently.



COWPEAS AT TENNESSEE EXPERIMENT STATION FARM.

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