

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

## AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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### HOW FARMERS CAN INSURE CLEAN FAIRS.

WE are printing this week a letter strongly commending Mr. French's recent plea for cleaner State and county fairs. Mr. French also sends us some letters he has received endorsing his position. We quote from one of them:

"I have not attended our State Fair in several years, from the fact that the last time I was there the indecency and brazen immorality of some of the 'midway' aggregation was sufficient to shock the modesty of decent men, to say nothing of pure womanhood and innocent childhood."

Now, the writer happens to know that what this gentleman says of his State Fair was true a few years ago. It is not so bad now, we are glad to say, thanks to the stand taken by some of the State's best farmers and some members of the Board of Agriculture. It has been only two or three years since The Progressive Farmer reproduced a photograph, taken at another State Fair, which showed boys and girls, in knee pants and short skirts, grouped around a gambling machine. Dozens of country fairs are made the rendezvous of all sorts of fakirs, charlatans and purveyors of filth who would not be allowed to hold forth for an hour in the county towns except at fair or "carnival" times.

Yet these fairs are usually managed by men who regard themselves as "good citizens," and who grant concessions to barefaced rogues and sell to shameless men and women the privilege of flaunting their indecency in the face of the whole community only because they do not know how else to get the money they need.

That these fair managers are justified in admitting indecency and dishonesty to the fair grounds we do not for one minute believe. Still it would not be just for us to place the whole blame on them. Back of them are usually a number of stockholders who insist that the fair must yield a dividend. Still back of the stockholders are the great number of men and women who do not approve of such things but who will go to the fair anyway because everyone else is going. It is a lot easier to grumble about things of this nature than it is to use means to prevent them, and there are few of us who have not at some time been guilty of doing ineffectual grumbling instead of effectual work.

There is not a farming community in the South where a majority of the people will not choose a clean, educational county fair to one that is given over to vulgar shows and doubtful attractions. Nor do we believe that there is a rural county in the South in which a clean, educational fair, of real value to everyone who attends it, cannot be had if the farmers and their families will go about it in the right way.

The first thing to do is to insist that the fair be clean—to put the

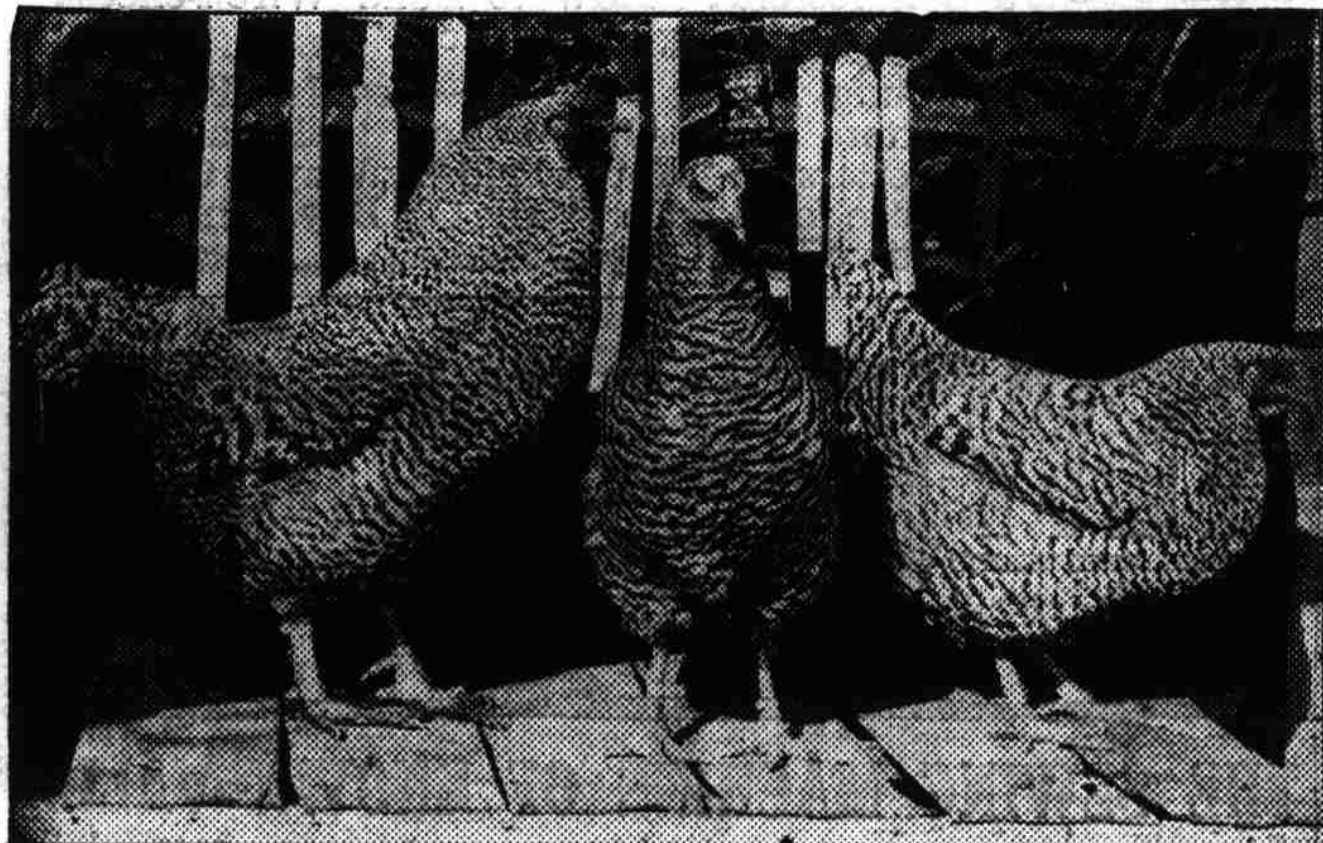
matter squarely up to the managers and let them know what is expected. If there are not some real farmers among the directors and stockholders, the organization is on the wrong basis, and the farmers have failed to do their duty by it. Most fairs are partly controlled by farmers, and surely they can be counted on. The Farmers' Union and farmers' clubs of all kinds can do effective work here.

Having asked for a clean fair, the thing to do if it is not made clean is simply to stay away from it. There are people, of course, to whom gamblers and fakirs and profligates are attractive, who prefer a fair with these things to one without, but these people will not make a fair a paying institution. It takes a different class of people to do that.

If the fair is kept clean, the thing for the people who believe in decency and morality to do is—to make it pay. The objectionable features get in simply because they are supposed to pay. If the good farmers of the county or State take sufficient interest in the clean fair to make it pay and let it be known that their interest will cease when unwhole-

some features are admitted, there will be no trouble on that score. The farmer who attends his fair, who has an exhibit, who co-operates with the directors, who is not afraid to shoulder a little expense or do a little work, is the man who does effective work for clean fairs. The man who only sits back and grumbles does not count.

A fair cannot be run without money—that is certain—and if it is to be regarded as a purely private enterprise, and not, as it should be, as a means of public education—if the county, the town, the farmers themselves leave to the manager the task of "making it go," there may come a time when he will have to raise some money and feel compelled to get it the first place he can.



PRIZE-WINNING PLYMOUTH ROCKS.

A fair is valuable just in proportion to its educational influence. It should be a place of enlightenment, not one of dissipation.

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