

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

## AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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## ECONOMICAL HARVESTING OF THE CORN CROP

THAT we do not grow corn for the grain or ears alone is evidenced by the Southern system of fodder-pulling and the practice, gradually becoming more common, of cutting and shocking the entire plant. The chemists have told us that there is about the same feed nutrients in the stalks and leaves as in the grain, and the livestock testify that these stalks and leaves are of value in practical feeding. Unless the stalks and leaves are put in the silo and preserved in succulent condition, the value which a chemical analysis gives the different parts of the corn plant is not realized by the livestock. Perhaps under the best methods of dry-curing of the stover and shredding or cutting the stalks and leaves to reduce the waste to a minimum not over half as much feed value is obtained from the stalks and leaves as from the ears, of an average crop.

Where rough feed is abundant and cheap there may be some doubt as to its paying to cut and shock the corn crop, but wherever rough forage is scarce or high-priced, as is the case in the South almost every year, there can be no doubt that it pays to harvest the entire crop for feed.

The crop is now harvested in one of four different ways:

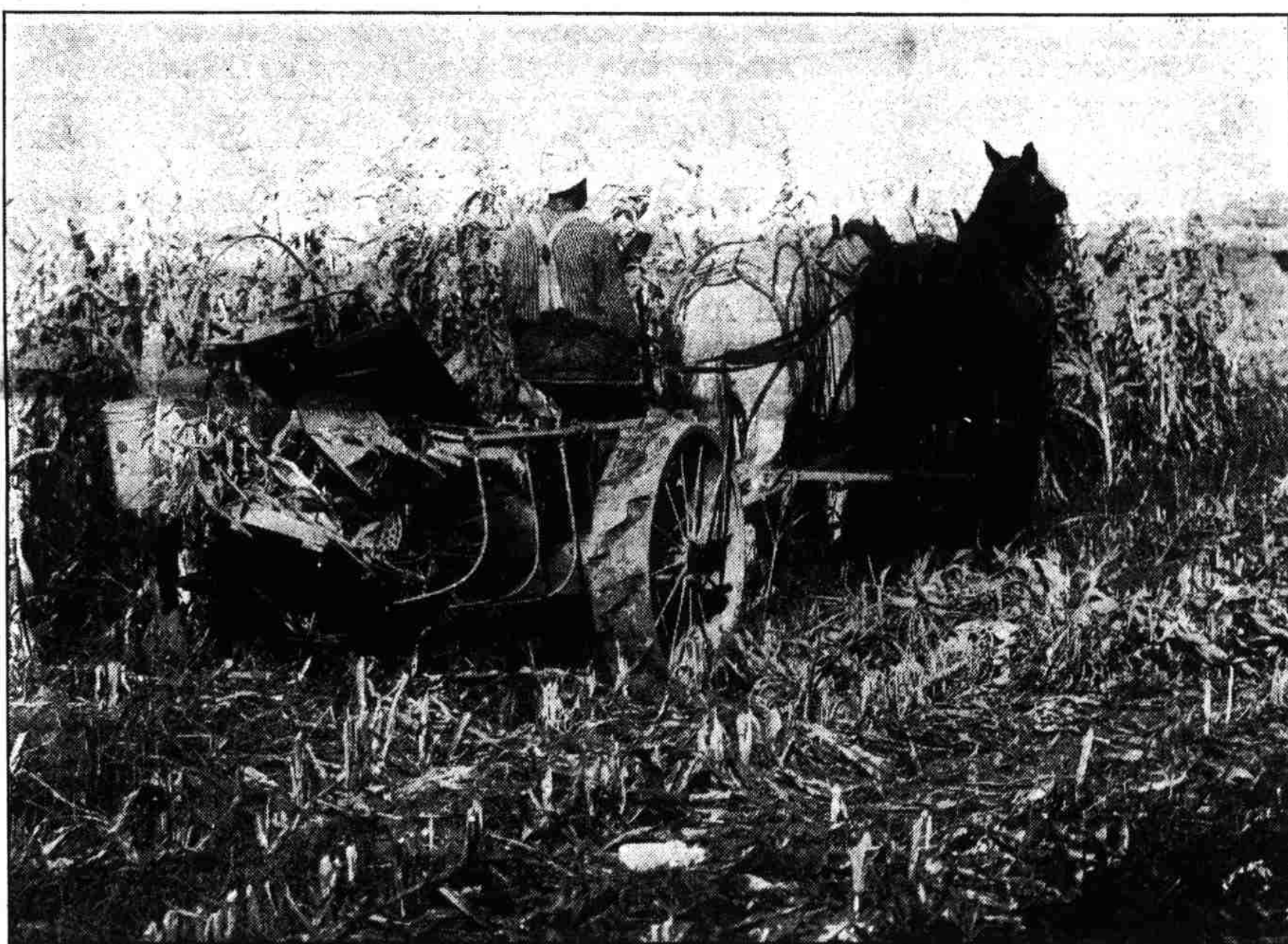
1. Either the leaves or tops, or both, are pulled or cut while the plant is green.
2. The ears only are removed after the plant is fully matured and dry.
3. The plant is cut when the corn is hard but before the stalk and leaves become fully dry and shocked, later being shucked by hand or by husker and shredder.
4. The entire plant when mature, but not fully dry, is cut and put in a silo.

The cutting of the tops or pulling the leaves lessens the yield of corn if done at the usual time. The work required is about as great and costs about as much as to harvest the entire crop, and a considerable part of the feed value of the plant is lost.

Method No. 2 is advisable only when rough forage is abundant and cheap. By harvesting in this way at least one-third the feed value of the crop is left in the field to weather and waste. Even when livestock are allowed to run in the stalk fields the feed value of the stalks and leaves has been largely lost by weathering, and in wet weather many soils are injured by the tramping of the livestock.

When feed is needed, and the crop can be harvested by machinery, the best method of harvesting the corn crop is to cut and shock the entire plant and utilize all for forage. The chief objections to this method are that it is heavy work and that there is difficulty sometimes in curing the stover. It is heavy work to cut and shock corn, but it is no more disagreeable work than pulling fodder, and when done by machinery is the easiest method of harvesting the full crop. The difficulty experienced in curing the stover in the shocks is chiefly due to cutting the corn too green and failure to shock and tie properly. To shock properly and tie one band tight enough and high enough, requires some care and practice, but it is entirely practicable to do this.

When dry hard grain is not demanded, there is no way of harvesting the corn crop that at all compares with putting it into a silo.



A CORN HARVESTER AT WORK—COURTESY INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER COMPANY.

In short, all that part of the corn crop not put in the silo should be cut and shocked and the entire plant—stover and grain—used for feed. Feed is always scarce, or we buy it and it is high-priced. Therefore, it will pay to save all forage grown.

The question is simply whether or not there will be sufficient gain of feed in harvesting the whole crop to pay for the extra expense over methods Nos. 1 and 2. We maintain that the extra amount of feed obtained in this way will be worth from \$5 to \$10 more per acre at ruling market prices than that obtained in pulling fodder, or topping the plants, or by pulling the ears and grazing the stalk fields, and the extra cost need not exceed \$1 to \$3 an acre.

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