

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

A Farm and Home Weekly for the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee.

FOUNDED, 1886, AT RALEIGH, N. C.

Vol. XXVII. No. 32.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 1912.

Weekly: \$1 a Year.

SOW RYE!

YES, that's the advice we give—to sow rye and lots of it. It is good advice, too, advice probably that we should have offered with a great deal more insistence and persistence in former years, and advice that we offer with full confidence to readers in every State and section of our territory.

We expect that right here a lot of readers will say to themselves that it is advice they don't care for, that rye is not much of a crop any way, that there are plenty of better things they can grow, and that they are not looking for advice, but information. Other readers may ask why we think they should sow rye, whether for grain, or hay, or pasture, or winter cover.

We are quite willing to concede all that readers of the first class say about rye, and about the need of information rather than of advice; but that does not change our opinion that rye is a good crop for them to grow and that they can profit by the advice we are offering them. To those of the second class we would say that they should plant rye, first, for a cover crop, then for pasture and hay and grain and green manure.

"But are there not better cover crops than rye?" asks someone. Of course there are. Crimson clover is better, and the vetches, and bur clover, and in many cases some of the other winter cereals.

"Why should we sow rye then, why not sow crimson clover, or bur clover, or hairy vetch?" Well, frankly, we don't know why you should not sow one of these crops, but the fact remains that you do not—no, not you, Mr. Up-to-Date Farmer, but a great number of our readers and a great majority of Southern farmers. We have preached crimson clover and vetch and all the other cover crops year after year; have urged that they be planted more liberally, have tried to show how it would pay to plant them, how they would add to the always short supply of feedstuffs, and to the sadly deficient supply of humus, how they would prevent washing and leaching and add nitrogen to the soil, how without them the permanent upbuilding of Southern soils is impossible; yet every winter millions of acres of cotton and corn and other cultivated lands are left stark to the destructive winter rains, inevitably to be poorer when the spring comes than when the last crop was removed.

We do not urge the sowing of rye in the place of the leguminous cover crops, but because the leguminous crops are not sown. We know that many of our readers do sow them, that the practice is increasing, and that nearly every year the demand for seed of all of them exceeds the supply; but after all the progress that has been made, the prevailing color of the Southern landscape in winter is not the bright green of growing crops, but the dull brown or gray or red of bare and wasting soils. You will not sow the other crops—vetch seed cost too much, crimson clover is too likely to fail, and so on through the whole range of excuses,—therefore, sow rye.

Rye is not the best cover crop, it is not the best pasture crop, as a hay and grain crop it does not hold high rank, it is decidedly inferior as a soil-builder to the legumes, but, as Dr. Butler pointed out last week, it has some merits of its own which make it eminently worthy of consideration. It is just the sort of crop most Southern farmers need. It is hardy, it will grow on poor land and on land poorly prepared, it costs little to seed an acre, it can be sown either early or late. It is, in short, a wonderfully useful crop for the man who hasn't learned to grow the more valuable but more particular winter legumes and for the soil that is too poor for these legumes. It is not a supplanter of other crops, but a forerunner. In some respects it is one of the poorest winter cover crops, but it is so much better than no cover crop at all that there is no room for comparison. Besides, we are not sure that it is not, taking the South as a whole and Southern farmers in the mass, the most valuable winter crop of all for the three reasons that it will grow on poor land, that it costs little to sow it, and that a stand and some growth are almost certain.

For these reasons let us again repeat our advice to sow rye. Sow every cultivated field that would otherwise be bare, if it is possible



THE RIGHT WAY TO CUT UP THE FIREWOOD.

These boys are students at the Arkansas Fourth District Agricultural School. They are getting the firewood ready while learning to run the gasoline engine. This is the way to cut up the firewood and stovewood, and this is the time to do it.

for you to do so. At any rate, sow as large an acreage as possible, beginning with the lands most likely to suffer from exposure.

Get your seed and be ready when the time comes to sow it between the cotton rows and in the corn fields and wherever there is a bare spot. Don't neglect the other cover crops. If you have grown them, stick to them and use rye to finish the job; if you have not grown them, try them on a small scale and make rye your main dependence. In any case plant a cover crop. Before Southern farmers can get a fair return for their work, they must have soils that will produce respectable crops, and they will not have such soils so long as the land is left unprotected during the winter.

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