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MARKETING—INDIVIDUAL AND CO-OPERATIVE

THE problems of economical buying and profitable selling are problems of vital importance to the farmer, and problems to which he has just begun to give attention. The buying problem is probably of less importance than that of selling, since the farmer should be a seller rather than a buyer. Indeed, so great is his loss from wrong methods of marketing his products and so tremendous the possible profits from better methods and a better system of distribution, that many farmers, surprised at the great possibilities along this line, are saying that this is now the greatest of all the farmer's problems.

It needs but a little thought to convince one that this statement is incorrect—that the maintenance of soil fertility, which is the very basis of his ability to produce at all, must continue to be the most important subject the farmer has to deal with; but this does not alter the fact that the farmers must learn to market to better advantage before they can secure a just reward for their labors.

This issue is offered with the hope that the suggestions and experiences presented in it may be of some service to the progressive farmers of the South. We do not attempt to solve the problem, nor does anyone of our correspondents. Outside of a few special articles from men who have given the subject special study, the issue is made up chiefly of actual experiences from farm folks who have learned how to sell or to buy to better advantage.

It will be noticed at once that the two features most stressed in these experience letters are, (1) the necessity for raising the quality of product to be sold, and (2) direct marketing of this product to the consumer, or as close approximation to this direct marketing as is practical. A third feature might also be noted: Practically all of these little success stories are of the marketing of what we regard as minor products. They tell how to handle butter and eggs and vegetables so as to get more than average prices; but they do not tell how to sell cotton, or corn, or other staple products to better advantage.

The reason for this is plain enough. The producer cannot carry his cotton, or his tobacco, or his peanuts direct to the consumer, and



GOOD ROADS HELP YOU TO SELL.

They help you both because the cost of transportation is small and because the market can be reached when you wish.

so eliminate the middleman or get the rewards of extra quality. This does not mean however that the farmer is helpless in the marketing of these crops. Individually he may be, but there is no reason why he should act individually. The advantages of joining his strength with that of his fellow farmers so as to be better able to hold his own when selling and buying have been long neglected, but that is no reason for continuing to neglect them. Co-operation, based on sound business principles and not on unsound sentiment, will enable the farmer to go into the world's marts, not as a man with a few bales of cotton or hogsheads of

A PROFIT-REDUCING ROAD.

If it costs a dollar a bale more than it should to get your cotton to town, isn't the loss as great to you as if the price went down that much?

tobacco to dispose of, but as one of the men who have for sale the year's crop of cotton or tobacco.

Not until they learn this lesson of united effort need the farmers expect to sell to the greatest profit; and they will learn it, not by beginning at the back of the book of experience with big National organizations, but by beginning with the first page—friendly co-operation with their nearest neighbors.



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