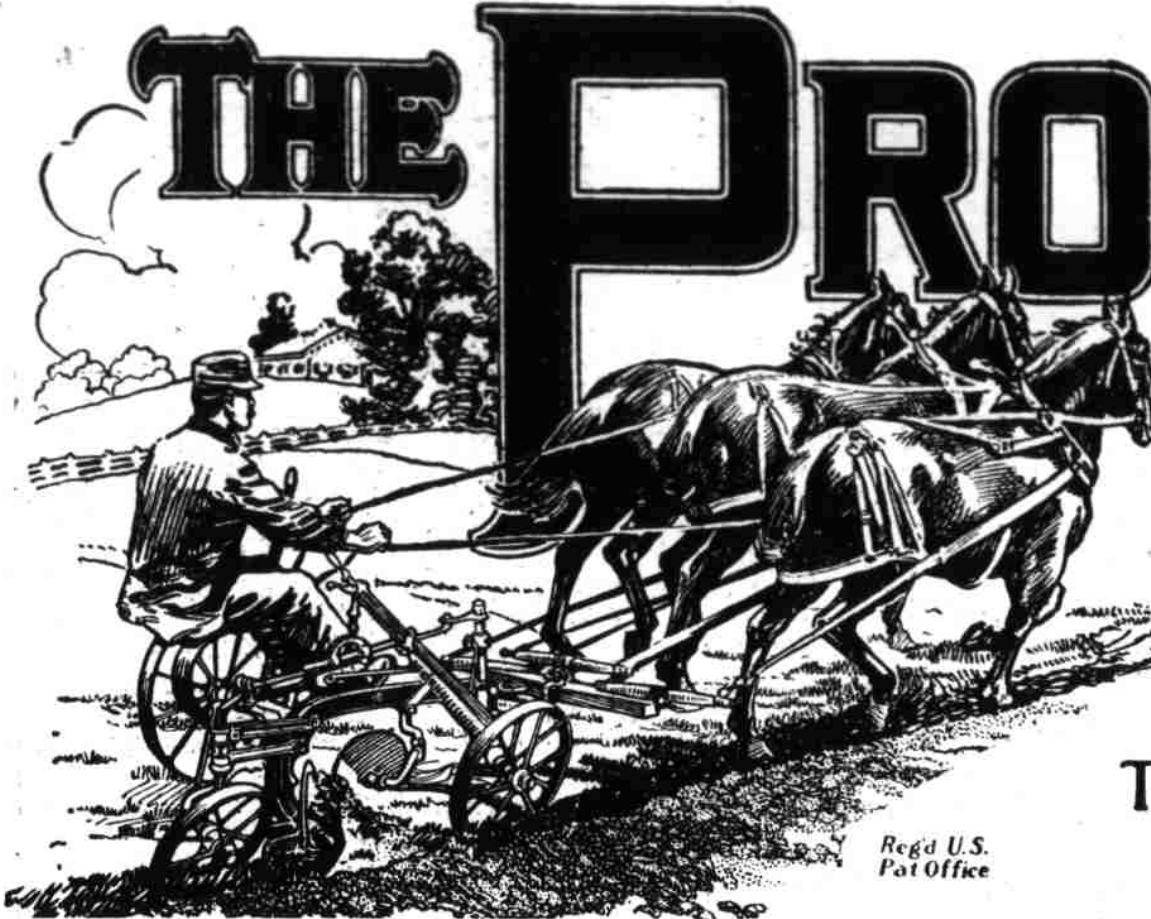


THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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THE NEXT STEP IN SOIL IMPROVEMENT.

FROM what we have been able to learn from correspondents, from the newspapers, from reports of demonstration agents, and from other sources, we are sure that there has been a larger acreage of winter cover crops planted in the South this year than ever before.

This is unquestionable evidence of better farming. The loss of plant foods, of humus, of the very soil itself, by exposure during the winter months accounts in large part for the poverty of Southern soils. The general growing of winter cover crops for feed and green manuring is one of the surest and cheapest methods of increasing the average acre yield of the staple field crops of the South. Indeed, until the growing of such crops becomes general, it is going to be almost impossible to increase the fertility of Southern soils at anything like a reasonable expense of time and money.

The Progressive Farmer is proud of the fact that it has been one of the most persistent and insistent advocates of winter cover crops and that, year in and year out, it has urged their planting with all the emphasis at its command. Gratified, therefore, as we are at this evidence of progress, we wish to urge just now that another step along the same part of better farming be taken and that every reader who has clay soils, or soils of any kind underlaid with a hard, tight subsoil do more winter plowing and deeper winter plowing this year than he has ever done before.

Over most of our territory we feel sure that the very best thing is to have a winter cover crop on the land. If this has not been secured, however, let the land be broken as deeply as possible at any time during the winter when the soil is in proper condition. It will almost surely mean easier work in the spring and better crops next year.

We know that sometimes early winter plowing is feared on account of the washing of the land; and there are farms and fields on which great care is necessary to prevent this. On the average farm, however, there will be much less loss from washing if the corn and cotton fields are broken to a good depth—ten inches or more—and left rough as they come from the plow, than if they are permitted to remain as they

are, bare and with tiny gullies carrying away their fertility after every hard rain. Deep plowing in fall or early winter when properly done will be a preventive of washing on most lands. In cases where the risk is increased—and there are such cases, of course—it should not be done.



IT WOULD TAKE A HEAVY RAIN TO WASH EVEN A STEEP HILLSIDE PLOWED THIS WAY.

We believe on deep plowing—in getting down and turning up a little of the soil that has never before been broken, in subsoiling that tears up the hardpan and lets the water down where it will be held, as in a reservoir, for the crops of the next summer. Shallow plowing, the mere scratching of the fields, has helped make many a poor farm and many a poor farmer. The average farm needs greater depth and must get it by deeper plowing.

Let no reader think, however, that deeper plowing will alone do

the work. "Plow ten inches instead of five," we often hear "and double the size of your farm." If it were only that easy! But the mere breaking up of the subsoil does not make soil of it, and merely to plow deeper will add but little to the real volume of soil from which the plants may secure food. Deep plowing is most worth while—we are almost tempted to say is only worth while—when it puts vegetable matter down deeper into the ground and thus really adds to the depth of the soil and to the real area of the farm.

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