

## POINTS TO CONSIDER IN BUYING FARM IMPLEMENTS

Kind of Farming Done a Factor—Necessity for Adequate Power—Coöperative Ownership Best With Expensive Machinery—Tools Must Be Properly Cared For

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TO DO work properly, to do it on time, and to do it cheaply, the proper implements are necessary. This is the age of implements. In a dairy country the first question often asked an applicant for work is, "Can you milk?" And now the first question most any place is likely to be, "What is your knowledge of machinery? Can you operate and adjust gasoline engines, drills, binders, separators and so on?" Implements having been made to do certain kinds of work formerly done by hand, the farmer, to be prosperous, must employ such implements, unless he is able, without them, to produce as cheaply as does his neighbor who uses them.

Where labor is cheap, farmers will always be slower to begin the use of machinery; in the West where labor has always been higher than in the South, the use of machinery has become much more general.

The type of farming largely determines, too, what implements it is necessary to use. On a cotton farm, for example, the main implements in use are for tilling the soil and planting the crop—no harvesting implement having yet been devised that is satisfactory and cheap. On a diversified farm, in addition to those needed on the cotton farm, would be required implements for handling hay, small grains, corn, potatoes and such other crops as were grown. One reason why cotton has so long been "king" in the South is because of the fact that no great outlay for implements to work the crop was needed; millions of bales have been made in the past with no other implements than a Georgia stock, with its several attachments, and a hoe. Diversified farming calls for a more varied line of implements and for a much greater outlay for the same.

#### Best Results in Large, Open Fields

ASIDE from the type of farming and the cheapness of labor, other factors determining or limiting the use of implements are the size and shape of the fields, whether rocky, swampy or stumpy, and the steepness. Machinery finds its best use on large fields, regular in shape, level or gently rolling, well drained, and free of rocks and stumps.

Given the proper implement for doing a certain piece of work and granted that it is in correct adjustment, well sharpened and so on, the next factor determining whether or not one can use it economically is the question of adequate power. If you will observe your neighbors, you will find that those who have good teams as well as implements are the ones who get their work done properly and on time. When the Georgia stock was the sole implement, the "cotton" mule or even a "mine" mule might be all right; but with the employment of the more varied and heavier implements necessary on a diversified farm the use of mules of a heavier type becomes imperative. A noted agricultural writer and teacher, Professor Roberts, in one of his books, has criticised the foolishness of having "to sit on the plow handles and wait until the team accumulates enough energy to go another round." As to the use of gas or oil tractors as sources of power on the farm, it is quite likely that these will prove economical only on the larger farms and on those having fairly level fields.

In diversified farming there are many expensive implements which will be useful only for a few days of the year and which the small farmer finds himself hardly able to purchase. Plows, harrows and cultivators, even mowers and rakes, are used for longer periods and must be privately owned;

grain drills, binders, threshers, corn harvesters, silage cutters, potato planters and diggers, spraying outfits, and all the varied line of implements used for special crops which one individual would use but a few days annually could be owned coöperatively with advantage to all concerned.

In lieu of the coöperative, or possibly corporation ownership, it often happens that one man of a neighborhood may own an outfit for doing certain work and he does this work for a score or more of his neighbors at a certain figure per acre, per bushel, or by the job. This is especially true of the ownership of such implements as have large capacities and require high power, such as cotton gins, grain threshers, silage cutters, and corn shellers. It requires some calculation on the part of the farmer to determine whether it is more profitable to own certain implements or to hire them—to estimate the expense of interest, housing, insurance, wear, and deterioration, as compared with the expense of hiring the implement outright if it is possible to do so, for the few days he is likely to need it. The liability of the crop to damage—unless the implement can be hired exactly when wanted—is a factor not to be overlooked in these calculations.

To do our work quickly, to do it well, is not enough; the implement must also do it cheaply and the cost of the machine per acre fluctuates according to the greater or lesser number of acres over which it is used. Many farmers ignore this point and greatly increase their cost of production by not giving the proper care to their implements. The life of an implement depends on the care which it receives. If the life of a binder receiving good care is 1,000 to 1,200 acres over a period of 10 to 12 years, bad care, such as lack of oil or proper tightening of the parts or lack of shelter, may shorten its life to 600 or 800 acres in a period of six to eight years, and the cost per acre will thereby be greatly increased—and this same truth applies in greater or less degree to the use and care of all implements.

Books could be written on this subject alone. Many implements rust out rather than wear out. To get the greatest wear possible out of an implement it is necessary to house it when not in use, to keep woodwork, and if possible the iron parts, well painted, to coat bearing surfaces (as moldboards) with a paint composed of Venetian red and machine or crude oil, to keep all parts adjusted, properly tightened and oiled when in use, so that there will be as little friction as possible, and to move the implement or run it at such speed as common sense and the manufacturers indicate, and to have our seed beds so well prepared that a complicated harvester will not be shaken to pieces in going over the fields.

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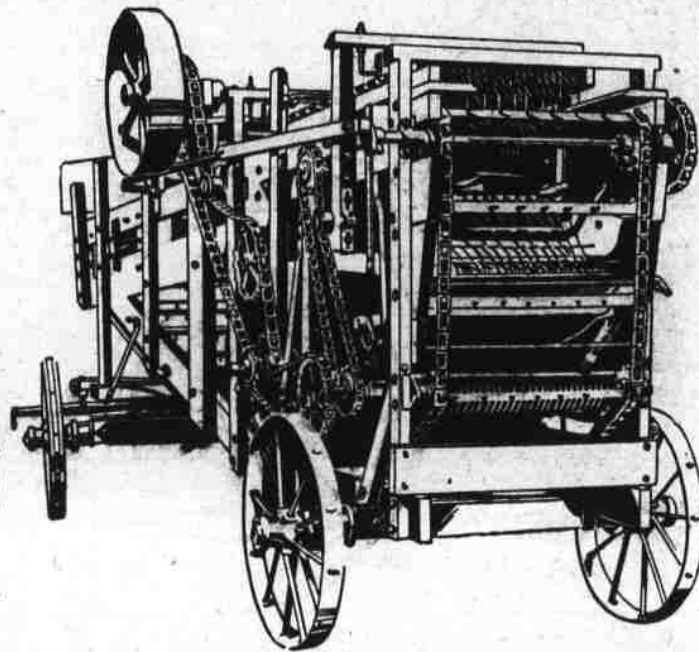
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