

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

"You can tell by a man's farm whether he reads it or not."

The Progressive Farmer Company  
(Incorporated under the laws of North Carolina.)  
119 W. Hargett St., Raleigh, N. C.

CLARENCE POE, . . . . .	President and Editor
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HERE'S a good suggestion from a Virginia reader: "Why not suggest through your paper that R. E. D. carriers be made notaries public with a fee of 25 cents for acknowledgments? This occurred to me when I had to take a horse from the plow, interrupt my wife's housekeeping, and take her with me five miles to a notary."

A READER asks, "What is necessary to make dairying profitable in the South?" The answer is, home-grown feeds, good dairy cows, and good dairymen. The first is easy, the second may be had at no great cost, and the third come only through study of what other dairymen have learned and considerable experience and much work.

APRIL is frequently a month of heavy, beating rains that pack the ground and aid in forming crusts that the little plants find it difficult to break through. Crusts seldom form on mellow, humus-filled soils, but the trouble is that we have too few soils of this kind, and, pending the time when we shall all have them, the harrow must be used liberally in breaking the tight crusts that follow the dashing rains and drying winds.

MY BOYS have recently been making a pond for summer boating, bathing and fishing," said a subscriber to us the other day, "and I consider it a mighty good investment. Too many farmers fail to sympathize with their boys' desire for recreation and then wonder why they do not like farm work." Another farmer sometime ago gave us this experience: "I give my boys Saturday afternoons off for baseball and they work 33 1/3 per cent better."

THE Waxhaw Enterprise after investigating the subject has decided that farmers have about the same attitude toward reducing cotton acreage that the man in the story had toward reducing the size of his meals. His doctor had advised him to eat less, so he went to his wife and said: "The doctor says that I mustn't eat so much. So instead of cooking me twenty biscuits in the morning don't make me but nineteen; but make them just a little bit bigger."

THE subject of Land Segregation Between the Races is evidently making a great impression on the young people of the South, interested as they are in bettering rural conditions and rural social life. Hardly a day passes now that we do not get one or more requests for literature from young men or women who wish to write essays on this topic, debate on it, or declaim something already written on the subject. We are glad to comply with all these requests.

NEXT week in our "Diversification and Independence" articles and farmers' experience meeting we're going to talk about saving money by growing more forage crops, which of these crops are best, and how to plant and cultivate them. Of course if you're immovably "set" in the belief that you can get rich growing cheap cotton to buy dear feed, you needn't come; but if you believe your cotton money should go into your own pocket rather than that of the Iowa corn and hay grower, we'd certainly be glad for you to join us in this meeting.

AS SPRING opens and the speculative bulls boost the price of cotton, all our brave resolutions to hold down the acreage appear to be forgotten. A few months ago people were talking a 50 per cent reduction; later this was scaled down to 33 1/3 per cent, to be followed by estimates of 15 and 20 per cent, and reports are now coming in that certain sections will increase rather than decrease the acreage. It may well be doubted whether the great mass of cotton growers will ever change in any short period, and it seems that it will only be the thinking, progressive individuals here and there who will blaze the way to freedom from the one-

crop system. Such men are surely increasing, and the prosperity that comes to them as a result of their diversified farming and live-at-home methods will set an example that will aid in gradually leavening the whole lump.

## Are You Getting Your Share of This?

SCIENTISTS tell us that above every acre of land there is, reckoned at present prices, \$11,000,000 worth of atmospheric nitrogen. At this rate the man with a hundred-acre farm has \$1,100,000,000 worth, or enough to build two Panama Canals and have enough left to build a dozen modern battleships; enough to supply every man, woman and child in the United States with \$11 each; or enough to a little more than half pay for our annual whiskey and tobacco bill.

Are you using this wealth? Are you changing it from an inert, unused possibility into a liquid asset? Are you turning into real money a goodly share of these potential millions?

Both foreign and American manufacturers are now, by the use of powerful electric currents, combining this free atmospheric nitrogen with certain materials and thus rendering it available as a plant food. This is a great discovery; but for plain Farmer Jones we don't see anything as yet to compare with Nature's way, which is through the bacteria that live in the little knots or nodules on the roots of peas, beans and the various clovers.

From September to April is a period when our lands are usually idle; moreover, it is a period when they are too often washing away. But these busy little bacteria, working on the roots of bur and crimson clover and the vetches, are putting a new face on the soil fertility problem. No longer have we any business buying nitrogen in bags, when we can get it free with a lot of humus to boot.

If you doubt this, turn under a crop of clover or vetch this spring and follow it with corn. If we're not mistaken you'll be surprised at the yield that corn will make, and the way it will stand drouth will bring joy to your heart in these days of high-priced feed.

But clovers and vetches are not the only plants whose roots furnish homes for our bacterial benefactors. Cowpeas, peanuts, soy beans, velvet beans and lespedeza likewise are nitrogen gatherers, and no Southern farm that this summer does not utilize these to the utmost will be living up to its opportunities.

## The Case Against Half-and-Half Cotton

RECENTLY the United States Department of Agriculture issued to cotton growers a warning that Half-and-Half cotton, because of its very short staple, is not desired by the spinners and that it will consequently be unsafe to plant this variety this year. This warning has been taken up very generally by the press, and in at least one instance by a state department of agriculture.

Because of these widespread warnings against this cotton, farmers who have been growing it, and of these there seems to be no inconsiderable number, have become alarmed, many of them having asked for our opinion as to the best course to follow. We of course have no desire to be other than entirely fair, and it would seem well to examine the evidence that we have so far received.

Against Half-and-Half cotton we have first of all the testimony of the United States Department of Agriculture that the staple is so short that the loss in spinning is excessive, making it necessary to pay lower prices for this cotton than for the average short staples. We do not know to what extent the mills have complained of its poor spinning qualities, but presume that it was their complaint that first brought the matter to the attention of the Department of Agriculture. More recently cotton buyers quite generally have warned growers against planting the Half-and-Half, and to these warnings the local press has given wide publicity. So far as we know, this about sums up the evidence for the indictment.

In defence of Half-and-Half cotton, at the Ala-

bama Experiment Station in 1914 it led all varieties in total yield of lint per acre and cash value per acre. The same year at the Holly Springs, Mississippi, Experiment Station it yielded at the rate of 1,018 pounds of lint per acre, with a total value of \$78.40. Among the varieties less than one inch in length of staple grown at this station, Half-and-Half was surpassed by only one variety, this being a strain of Cook, which yielded at the rate of 1,024 pounds of lint per acre, worth \$80.95. Cotton classifiers at Greenville, Miss., classify the Half-and-Half cotton as three-quarter-inch staple, this being the same length given Cook, one of the most widely known and popular short staple varieties.

In view of the conflicting opinions, we cannot, without more evidence, concur in the recommendations that this cotton, where the farmer is already growing it and has found it a good yielder and salable at prices equal to other short varieties, be discarded. Particularly do we believe this the sensible course in hill sections where only short cottons are grown and where buyers are seldom willing to pay a premium for better staples.

In the meantime here's a pretty job for our experiment stations and the United States Department of Agriculture. For the grower's protection it is the duty of these agencies to make careful tests and comparisons and accurately ascertain to what extent Half-and-Half is really the "black sheep" among cottons, or is merely being made the "goat."

## The Week on the Farm

WE PUT that baby and fly picture on our Woman's Page this week, but it's for you, too, Mr. Farmer. We figure that after all the finest farm crop there is is the baby crop, and for the babies to eat with flies and sleep exposed to the bites of malaria-bearing mosquitoes doesn't exactly look like giving them a square deal. This is your business, too, just as much as it is Mother's. There's not a minute to lose if you're going to thoroughly screen the house before fly and mosquito time.

Don't fail to read our dairy letters and articles in this issue. To us, memories and anticipations of rich milk and cream, such as are easy to have on every farm, are pleasant indeed, and doubly so when we remember that a really good cow cuts the grocery bill very materially. "Milk and butter every day in every year" is a splendid idea to fit in our live-at-home plan, and if you're not putting the idea into practice, try it and see what you've been missing.

And while we're talking cows, what sort of pasture have yours? Pine saplings and broomsedge are mighty hard for cows to turn into milk and butter,—certainly harder than knee-deep Bermuda grass and clover. Still it seems that a lot of us expect high-class dairy cow performances on a scrub ration. It can't be done.

## A Thought for the Week

I AM in better health and more able to do my work at seventy-seven than I was at forty-seven. \* \* \* Old age is not such a bugaboo after all. He is, in many ways, better to live with than youth, because he leaves you more at your ease; you are in the calmer waters; the fret and fever of life have greatly abated. Old Age brings the philosophical mind; he brings a deeper, wider outlook upon life; he brings more tolerance and charity and good will. I seem to be no nearer the bitter dregs that are supposed to be at the bottom of the cup of life at seventy-seven than I was at thirty-seven. I am thinking there are no bitter dregs there. But I have never abused the gift of life. I have instinctively guarded it as a precious heritage. I did not squander my youth in excesses or in any form of intemperate living, and hence I am not bankrupt in my old age. I use no stimulant of any sort—no coffee, tea, or alcoholic beverages, and no tobacco.—John Burroughs, in Ladies' Home Journal.

When you're through sizing up the other fellow, it's a good thing to step back from yourself and see how you look. Then add 50 per cent to your estimate of your neighbor for virtues that you don't see, and subtract 50 per cent from yourself for faults that you've missed in your inventory, and you'll have a pretty accurate result.—Old Gorgon Graham.