

FURROW SLICES

NOTES FROM SUNNY HOME FARM

It Pays to Plan Ahead—Harvesting the Oat Crop—Inoculating for Soy Beans Frequently Pays

WITH any sort of work we have before us the necessity is upon us to make some sort of preparation for that particular job. And it is quite generally the case that the way we accomplish our task is indicative of the thought that we bring to bear upon the preparation for the work. Some sorts of farm work are accompanied with greater hazard than others; that is, unless the work be done in a careful manner, the cost may be greater for doing the work, and, too, loss in other ways may make one's carelessness very expensive.



MR. FRENCH

The work of harvesting hay, in my opinion—after some 32 years of directing such work—presents the greatest hazard of any of our ordinary farm crops.

I have known men who would harvest hay at a cost of around \$1 per ton and save every particle of a large crop in splendid condition, while the same work would cost a neighbor \$3 to \$5 per ton, and the fields when the work was finished, show tons of hay damaged so as to be of practically no value.

Of course the judgment of the two men was what caused the difference, and the judgment of the lucky (?) one was displayed, long before time to begin, by having every tool, wagon or machine that was to come into use during the haying in first-class condition, and having on hand plenty of the most commonly needed repairs, to insure keeping the machine in the best working order.

No general on the field of battle ever had a more trying task than has the boss on a farm when a large crop of hay is being harvested economically during "catchy" weather. Executive ability of the highest order is needed, and this must be backed by good previous preparation.

As usual at this season of the year, many are asking whether they had best utilize the oats crop as hay or harvest for the grain and straw. In my opinion the answer to this question depends very much upon conditions. When the season is such that the oats head low and there is a large amount of grain in proportion to the straw, it is generally advisable to cut the crop and thresh. Especially is this true if the crop is to be marketed, for the grain will generally bring more than would the entire plant if harvested sooner and made into hay. And, too, under ordinary conditions I would prefer to sell grain rather than hay; as in that case a larger proportion of the organic matter the plant contains would be left on the farm.

But leaving out of the question the matter of fertility, there are many times in our country when the entire oat plant harvested as hay will bring far more on the market than would the grain from the same crop, after deducting the cost of threshing.

And, too, if the crop is to be fed on the farm, a tall, thick growth of oat plants cut and well cured when the grains are just leaving the milk stage will usually furnish more digestible feed units than would the harvested grain and straw. So I would say as a general proposition that if the oats head low and one is in shape to harvest the crop as grain with machinery, or if there is to be an abundance of other classes of hay on the farm, better cut with a binder and thresh. But if the crop grows very tall and thick

the chances are that for market or home use either the making of hay of the product will be advisable.

In any case a strenuous effort should be made to utilize profitably the entire oat plant. Good bright oat straw is a feed for cattle that is not at all appreciated anywhere in the United States. An abundance of good oat straw, corn stover, and two pounds per day of cottonseed meal will bring dry cows through the winter in the South in far better condition than many of them were brought through during 1914-15.

If no trial has been made on your farm of the inoculation of the seeds of cowpeas and soy beans try inoculating an acre or two, anyway. You may have a surprise awaiting you. I have known the inoculating of the land or seed for soy beans to increase the growth of the plants 25 per cent. If you cannot do better get 500 pounds of the top soil from a field where the soy beans that grew in the land during 1914 had their roots well covered with nodules; spread this on one acre of land during cloudy weather or just before night, and disk it in at once and plant the seeds. In case your state department of agriculture is sending out the cultures at 50 cents per acre, as our North Carolina Department is doing, it will, of course, be less expensive to order the material and probably insure more certain results. Directions should, of course, be carefully followed.

A. L. FRENCH.

VARIETIES OF COWPEAS FOR HAY AND FOR SEED

Bunch Varieties Are Generally the Heaviest Seed Yielders, While Running Varieties Are Best for Soil Improvement

OFTEN the question arises as to what kind or variety of cowpeas is best for hay and for seed. The description given here may help some farmer to settle this question. However, the farmer often settles it by planting whatever variety he has on hand or whatever kind he can buy in the market.

Some varieties are decidedly better adapted to seed production than others. The bunch and semi-bunch varieties usually yield more seed than the trailing kinds, and from these kinds the seed are more easily harvested. If the bunch varieties like New Era or Groit are planted in drill and cultivated level, the harvesting may be done with a self-rake reaper or mower with a bunching attachment, and thereby avoid the expensive method of harvesting by hand-picking. The vine varieties cannot be harvested with machinery economically.

For hay production the vine or semi-vine varieties yield the largest tonnage per acre. But where there is much vine entanglement, the difficulty of handling the mower and in curing and housing the hay greatly increases the expense of its production. Semi-vine varieties, like Iron and Brabham, while they do not yield quite the tonnage of the full vine varieties, are more easily mowed and cured and housed.

The New Era variety, as reported by several Southern experiment stations, has led in seed production, yielding from 12 to 40 bushels per acre. It is bushy in habit, small and prolific. Among the common varieties it is the earliest, ripening in about 80 days from time of planting. At the Alabama Experiment Station, seed of the New Era variety was gathered from an early planting and planted as a second crop, which fully matured its seed before frost. The seeds are small and thickly sprinkled with tiny blue specks.

The new bunch variety called Groit is meeting with much favor. It is a cross between the New Era and Whippoorwill, and its seeds show the coloration of both parents. It is larger and more prolific than the New Era and also well adapted to forage purposes.

For both hay and seed production the old well known variety called Whippoorwill, Shiny or Speckled is grown more extensively than any other variety. Its seeds are distinguished by their shape and brown color with buff specks. If the first ripe pods are picked, a second crop will form when the vines are healthy. It stands among the best varieties in the production of hay and seed at the Southern experiment stations.

The Iron variety is comparatively new. In habit it is half-bushy and easy to mow. Its seeds are hard, angular and buff in color. Its pods withstand bad weather and disease and permit delayed harvest. It ranks high in hay production, but not in seed. The Iron variety is valuable on account of its immunity to nematode injury and pea wilt.

The Brabham variety is a cross between the Iron and Whippoorwill. Its seeds resemble the Whippoorwill and its vines, the Iron. It too like the Iron possesses immunity to root-knot and wilt and produces well on land infected with these diseases.

For hay and soil improvement the Red Ripper stands among the best in tests at many experiment stations. It is difficult to harvest for hay because its long vines lie close to the surface and interlap with each other. Its seeds are maroon in color and larger than any of the above named varieties.

The Clay variety is well known. It has long vines and buff colored seeds. It requires about three months to mature its pods. There are some other strains of it that require a longer time for maturity.

The California Blackeye makes much vine and seed, is early and prolific, and probably is the best of the blackeyed variety for general farm purposes. It is not desirable for hay, but it is grown extensively for human use.

E. F. CAUTHEN.

Auburn, Ala.

EXPERIMENTS WITH SWEET POTATOES

Dates of Planting—Vines Versus Slips—Effects of Premature Digging—Variety Tests

AT THIS season when the sweet potato patch demands attention, the results of experiments by H. P. Stuckey, published by the Georgia Experiment Station last spring should be of general interest.

In experiments continued through three years to determine the best date for putting out slips, it was found that on the average the latter half of May was the planting season that resulted in the largest yield of potatoes of the Pumpkin Yam variety. It should be noted that these tests were made at a point almost half way between the extreme northern and southern parts of the state. In one year the largest yield resulted from planting as early as May 16, and in another year from setting made as late as June 11. Planting made after July 1 afforded light yields.

The crop was much larger from vines than from slips when both were set, as late as July 28. However, the plants from which vines were cut made a much smaller yield than those which had never been pruned.

The reduction in yield by digging before the crop is nearly mature is

shown by the following figures, obtained with plants set in April.

	Aug	Sept. 11	Nov 11
Golden Beauty, bushels per acre	45	84	84
Enormous, bushels per acre	177	259	259

Yet if the latter variety could have been sold in September at \$1.25 per bushel and in November at 75 cents, the earlier harvesting would have been profitable. Not so with the first variety.

In a test of 17 varieties, Triumph led in yield, following by Golden Beauty. The author names as large yielders of good quality, Golden Beauty, Myers' Early, Nancy Hall, and Providence.

When sweet potatoes were fertilized with excessive amounts of a single fertilizer, for example, 1,500 pounds nitrate of soda per acre, or 24 tons of stable manure, the weights of fresh vines produced was about twice the weight of the potatoes when nitrate of soda or manure was used, in contrast with practically equal weights of vine and roots when only acid phosphate or only sulphate of potash was used. Stable manure and nitrate of soda, each used alone, produced potatoes of a lighter color of flesh and poorer flavor than did the other fertilizers.

This bulletin contains a plan and bill of materials for a storage house for sweet potatoes.


J. F. DUGGAR.

THE COTTON MARKET SITUATION

THE week has brought no improvement in the general market situation. Political uncertainties have not cleared up, and the world war is only increasing in extent and ferocity. There is some decline in the Savannah quotations, but not much business has been done at the lower basis. No weakening has been noted on the part of those who have held their cotton through the season; such little as comes out appearing to be lots in second hands, carried more or less on speculation. Despite the adverse influences, exports have kept up fairly well, and are now around 7,000,000 bales for the season so far.

A favorable change in weather conditions resulted in improved crop accounts, and planting operations have been rapidly pushed forward. At the present moment, however, a return of colder and unsettled conditions threaten the western section of the belt. But a relatively late start does not necessarily mean a small yield. On the whole, the start this year promises to be earlier and more promising than last year was, so that farmers must not be misled into putting in a little extra land on that account. The outlook for prices next fall is extremely uncertain at best, and if even a moderate production is added to the overplus from the old crop, the uncertainty will tend to change to discouragement. If we can hold the next crop down to not over 12,000,000 bales, the country will probably be safe, whatever happens. Even such a production would still no doubt leave quite a respectable surplus above the year's requirements, but presumably we would be able to take care of that much, and on a reasonable price basis. To do this, the crop must be reduced by about 20 per cent from last year.

W. T. WILLIAMS, Savannah, Ga.



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