

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

Consolidated, 1904, with The Cotton Plant, Greenville, S. C.

PROGRESSIVE FARMER—VOL. XX. NO. 41.
THE COTTON PLANT—VOL. XXII. NO. 40.

RALEIGH, N. C., NOVEMBER 21, 1905.

Weekly—\$1 a Year.

THE SOUTHERN LETTUCE CROP.

Prof. Massey Submits Some Observations on Varieties and Fertilization—The Story of How the Industry Has Developed in North Carolina.

Messrs. Editors A correspondent in Eastern North Carolina writes: "Will you kindly send me a formula suitable for lettuce? I use some manure also. Please also give me the analysis of the following mixture for a ton: 1,000 pounds of 13 per cent acid phosphate, 600 pounds of cotton seed meal, 100 pounds of nitrate of soda, and 300 pounds of muriate of potash."

The best lettuce growers have found that for the winter crop there is needed an abundance of manure and fertilizer, too. It has been found by experiment at several Stations that manure alone and fertilizer alone will not make the best lettuce, and that both are needed in liberal amount. The mixture you propose would analyze roughly about 3 per cent nitrogen, 7 per cent phosphoric acid, and 7 1-2 per cent of potash.

I have abandoned the use of cotton seed meal in a fertilizer for lettuce, as I have found that it is apt to form a fungus in decaying that causes much rot in the lettuce. Dried blood is richer in nitrogen, and has not this difficulty. Your mixture is not properly balanced for lettuce, and I would suggest the following, to be used at rate of 1,000 to 1,500 pounds per acre: Acid phosphate, 900 pounds; dried blood, 600 pounds; nitrate of soda, 100 pounds; and muriate of potash, 400 pounds.

But when this amount of potash is used, great care is needed to prevent its burning the roots of the plants. Some years ago a lettuce grower in your section sent me some of his young plants recently set, and wanted to know what was the matter with them, as they had stopped growing, and the leaves were turning red. I found no disease, but the roots had apparently been eaten off. I set them in my own frames, and they grew off and made good heads. I found that he had used my formula with 10 per cent potash, and set the plants at once. It would have been better to have applied the fertilizer, and then exposed the frames to the rain for a week or more before setting.

But the best plan is that adopted by the New Bern growers. They have found that lettuce plants, set too deeply, do not head well, and I have found the same to be true. They give their frames a heavy coat of well rotted cow manure, and prepare the soil well. Then they run slight ridges of earth with a hand wheel plow lengthwise the frames the distance apart they want the rows of lettuce.

The plants are set on these little

ridges, and after they have well started to grow, the fertilizer is applied in the furrows between the rows of plants, and the soil is then raked level. This puts the fertilizer where it cannot hurt the roots, and at the same time prevents the too deep setting of the plants. They use as high as 2,000 pounds per acre of a similar mixture to the one I offer, but I think that 1,500 pounds is sufficient and will even carry a succession crop of something else.

Therefore, if you have not time to wait on the fertilizer till it gets well assimilated to the soil, the plan thus described will be well, and in fact is probably the best that can be used, as it is the result of a wide experience in this crop.

* * *

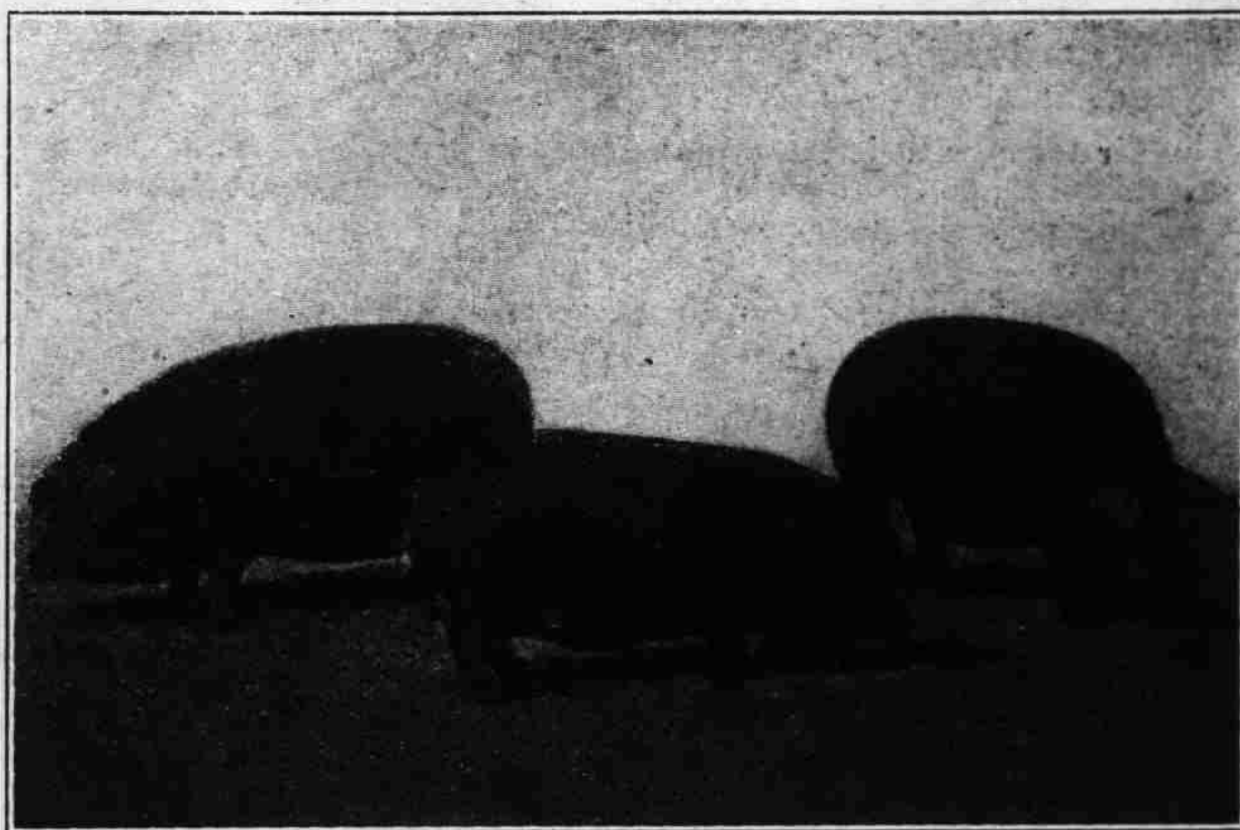
After experimenting with a great many varieties of lettuce, I have found nothing that promises to take the place of the Big Boston so generally grown by our truckers, though the Wonderful is very fine for the last spring crop, as it stands heat better than the Big Boston, but is worthless for winter cutting.

W. F. MASSEY.

Prof. Massey's letter reminds us that in the current number of the South Atlantic Quarterly, Rev. Thos. A. Smoot, of Durham, has given a most readable sketch of the development of the lettuce-growing industry in North Carolina—so readable and so instructive that we are going to reprint it in full herewith as a matter of general information:

"The growing of lettuce in this State as an important branch of industry, does not date farther back than the period of 1890-5. During the years previous, one can recall the planting of a row of the vegetable in the garden, to be used for salad, or just to have 'something of everything;' but any idea of marketing it would have been regarded as preposterous. The farmer even looked upon the plant with contempt, as being suggestive of an effeminacy unworthy of commercial tastes and values.

"During the time indicated above, two enterprising truckers from Baltimore, the Fizzle brothers, began the culture of lettuce in the sandy loam about Fayetteville. The people looked on with astonishment, and predicted failure. How could lettuce be grown under cover in dead of winter? And if successfully grown, was it of any commercial value? Time alone was necessary to make answer as to the practicability of the attempt, and to raise up many imitators of the Fizzelles.



REPRESENTATIVE DUROC-JERSEYS.

We failed to print a cut of the Duroc-Jersey hog last week, when it should have appeared in connection with Mr. Whitaker's article in our series, "My Favorite Breed and Why I Prefer It." In the Carolinas the Duroc-Jerseys are often called Red Jerseys or Jersey Reds. The accompanying cut is from Bulletin 48 of the Iowa Experiment Station.

At this writing, perhaps two-thirds of the gardens in and around Fayetteville have from two to six beds of lettuce in them, which the ladies usually claim as theirs; while the truck farmer outside the city is pressing the culture of the crop on a large scale. It is estimated that as much as \$100,000 worth of lettuce is shipped from Fayetteville each year. It can be readily seen that such an amount of money is bound to be a considerable factor in the town's prosperity.

"It requires considerable labor and expense to put the ground in proper condition, and to provide beds for the plants; but when the preparation is complete, the result is lasting for years. Heavy boards are used to wall in the beds, which are usually 11x60 to 100 feet in diameter, lying east and west, and sloping toward the sun. Cotton canvas covers are used to protect the plants from cold. These cause a considerable part of the expense. The ground must have been thoroughly pulverized and made very rich in order to insure quick growth and tender lettuce. For the first year, the expense of preparation and cultivation for an acre of lettuce amounts to \$1,000; after that, it is much less. Generally speaking, the net profit on an acre is from \$800 to \$1,000. One trucker just outside the city limits is accredited with clearing \$2,500 a year on three acres, not to mention the crops of beans and other vegetables grown on the same ground after the lettuce has been taken off.

"The lands lying along the Upper Cape Fear are said to be as finely adapted to the growth of lettuce as any section in America. Best of all, they lie midway between the semi-tropical region in the far South,

(Continued on Page 12.)

FEATURES OF THIS ISSUE.

"SUNNY HOME" STOCK TALKS.—The initial number of a series of practical live stock articles by Mr. A. L. French, one of the best stockmen in the South. Page 3.

LETTUCE GROWING.—A story of how the industry has grown by Rev. T. A. Smoot, with suggestions on fertilization and varieties by Prof. W. F. Massey. Page 1.

YORKSHIRE HOGS.—The case for this breed is ably argued by Mr. A. M. Bowman, of Virginia. Page 4.

HEART-POVERTY.—A delightful bit of character-sketching by John Charles McNeill. Page 6.

SUBSOILING.—A timely subject discussed by the veteran trucker Dr. E. Porter. Page 2.

TOBACCO GROWING.—Mr. A. J. Moye discusses cultivation and prices. Page 2.

FATTENING HOGS AND STEERS.—Reports of practical experiments that will save you money. Page 3.

THE COTTON ASSOCIATION.—An enthusiastic appeal by Mr. C. C. Moore, and some comment on the 15-cent idea.

LINCOLN'S BOYHOOD.—A story of never-failing interest to young people and their parents.

A man can well afford to pay for The Progressive Farmer. It is a better investment than the same amount in United States bonds.—R. L. Wolff.