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\$500 MORE A YEAR FARMING.

HOW MAY I, AN AVERAGE FARMER, GET THIS ADDED YEARLY VALUE I LAND AND PRODUCTS?

I.—By Better Handling of the Soil.

How to increase the income on an average Southern farm this coming year—this is a most practical subject and one that concerns each and every reader. It has been said that we stop growing as soon as we become content with our accomplishments. The farmer is like any other business man. He should not be content with ordinary accomplishments: it is his purpose, his aim, his demand, to do better each year, and for the average farmer this subject I am discussing is timely and important. Will you not agree with me then in the outset that there is an abundance of opportunities for improvement, both in way of better perfecting the plant and also in increasing the annual income from the capital and products?

The Soil is Our Bank.

My conception of the first step in reaching the increased earning power for the coming year lies along the line of a better handling of the soil, more than perhaps all other things combined. We should remember that the soil is our bank. If the officers of a bank let the capital contained in the bank lie idle, or if they waste it in any wise, we would not call that good banking. Good farming means good control and wise management of land.

I have frequently discussed with my readers the necessity of physical improvement of the land as the first means of increasing the productive power of the farm. There is a wealth of material lying idle in the soil. At least, it is lying in a way and in a form that plants cannot use. This plant food lies in the soil like money in the bank. It draws neither interest nor has it circulation, and so long as we practice shallow plowing and indifferent cultivation, just so long will this plant food remain unavailable for the world's work.

Twenty-Five Acres Properly Handled Better Than Fifty as Now Tilled.

I am confident that twenty-five acres plowed with a two-horse plow during this winter season, and then re-plowed again in the spring crosswise and then thoroughly prepared for the crop, will produce more corn or cotton than forty or fifty acres tilled according to the ordinary practice. I believe that one-fifth of this total increased income we have set about to attain will be realized if we simply plan to thoroughly stir, pulverize and till the land. It is not only the first step that we must take, but it is the most important,

and it will prove so at harvest time. Of course, I do not mean that all lands are to be plowed deep; that all lands are to be plowed in the winter; but I do mean that hard, stiff, old lands that are being used for ordinary crops year after year, should be cultivated in this way.

Legumes Will Add \$50 a Year in Soil Improvement.

How much further shall we go in the way of better handling of the soil? Shall we not grow legumes? You have no idea how quickly they add nitrogen to the soil; how much they increase the yields of other crops because legumes have been grown. Do you cultivate one hundred acres for the growing of various farm crops on your farm? A crop of legumes will add fifty dollars as an increased income to your farming in the way of soil improvement alone. Suppose you sell hay! There is steady market for cowpea hay and clover hay for \$10 per ton and up. Here is an opportunity to put a small amount toward that increased profit this coming year. A saving of purchased food is money made, and so long as the Middle South purchases feeding stuffs in the quantities it does, there is money in raising feed at present prices.

Importance of Crop Rotation.

And then, why not diversify our crops and so rotate them that we may receive the full advantages that come from a rotation? Corn or cotton after peas or clover means a good deal better harvest for either or both crops. Then we can get a winter crop growing that will prevent all of this washing and leaching that takes place during the winter months. You will be surprised how much the heeding of this detail will contribute toward that five hundred dollars we are after. It will not only help in this way but its beneficent help is accumulated and grows with each succeeding year, and we want to get after a similar sum of money next year. We want an increase not only for this year, but for all other years, and we had better plan for it right now. Hence, crop rotation will be the third step in this journey we are making.

Terracing and Tile Draining Make Land More Productive.

Terracing is of primary importance in handling the soil so as to increase the yield of crops. The terrace has been proved, its worth has been made manifest, for it not only saves the washing of the crop, but it prevents the land itself from washing away. Whether we shall practice terracing as a constant method of handling this water is a question for each of us to settle. With deep tillage, winter crops, and crop rotation there will be little need for terracing, but until we have become convinced of the merits of these we can terrace to advantage, and will make by saving what we possess.

I feel that nearly all of us must plan to do a little tile draining from year to year. I have said nearly all of us, because tile drainage is needed nearly everywhere. It drains the soil where wet and increases the water-holding ability of the soil so that the soil is moist in dry weather. Strange as this statement may seem, it

COTTON CROP 10,167,818 BALES.

Price Advances Three-Eighths of a Cent.

Washington, Dec. 4.—(Telegram to Raleigh Times.)—The Cotton Crop Bulletin issued at 2 p. m. to day by the Department of Agriculture estimates the total yield of the crop of 1904-'05 at 10,167,818 bales of 500 pounds gross weight, not including linters.

The area picked and to be picked is estimated at 26,117,153 acres, a reduction of 882,399 acres, 3.3 per cent reduction from the acreage estimated as planted.

The price immediately advanced nervously 40 to 50 points, March reaching 12.25, closing at a net gain of 3/4 of a cent.

is proved conclusively that soils that are well drained will carry crops through a season of drought better than the same soil would do if it were undrained and filled with water during winter and spring. It may be that a few rods of tile will serve the purpose. Some of our farms need miles of tile drainage, and these tile drains will be put there some of these years, and they will be a profit-bearing investment to the man who does it.

Physical Improvement of the Soil the First Essential.

This all shows that the best way to increase the annual income of the farm is to promote a physical improvement of the soil through an addition of humus and vegetable matter. Sometimes I feel that it is not the soil at all that is the important factor in crop-growing; that the greater factor is the plant itself. The soil is simply an incident in crop-growing. The farmer manipulates it through tillage and cultivation in order to favorably affect moisture, heat and plant food. In other words, our effort in soil manipulation should be to provide a comfortable home for the plant. It must have water to drink, food to eat and proper warmth and comfort. The most satisfactory way to supply these wants of the plant is through physical improvement, either in the form of crops plowed under or stable manure, or leaves, or anything, in fact, that adds humus to the soil.

In Conclusion.

It will pay you well, then, to look after the capital in your farming bank. Increase the quality and keep it circulating. Stand by good investments, lend to worthy enterprises, like the old faithful crops; pin your faith in constant tillage, and the kind that more deeply stirs the soil each year; invest in cowpeas and other legumes—the principal is safe and will return a sure and regular rate of interest; rotate your crops—keep the capital circulating that all of it may bear a profitable rate of interest, for other crops will gladly use what corn or cotton reject, or leave something that these may use in return; add humus to keep life in the soil; practice new methods when proved, and study your business. Know your soil—confide in it, and increased profits will come.

C. W. BURKETT.

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