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REDUCING COTTON ACREAGE.

The "How" of It as Mr. Hoyle Sees It—Money in Sweet Potatoes, Sorghum Hay, Cowpeas, Etc.

Messrs. Editors: I believe the farmers are in earnest when they say they will reduce their acreage in cotton to 75 per cent of the 1904 crop. Occasionally, however, I meet one who says he knows this reduction and a prudent marketing are the only means we can use to put and keep cotton culture on a paying basis; but he says it is "impossible" for him to make that reduction. Let me say to that friend, and to all that think as he does, it is only an imaginary impossibility. We fully appreciate the argument that you have a good force of hands of your own family and must teach them to work; and that much of your land is not well adapted to corn. Suppose that is true: does that condition force you to plant cotton on all your land not good for corn, simply to keep your hands at work?

If you think it does, before you do plant, please stop and consider the possibility and adaptability of your fields, and the home and distant demand for so many things you see growing in your neighbor's fields that give better profits than cotton.

Take Sweet Potatoes for an Example,

and while the labor expended in their culture and care is much less, the profits are greater per acre than that of cotton. But, you say, if we all cultivate the sweets for market the supply will exceed the demand and we cannot sell them. There is truth in this, too; but the hog, the cow, the horse, and every other animal can help you save your potatoes, and there will always be a good demand for good bacon, good beef and good horses. Any land that will grow cotton will grow good potatoes, and with much less cultivation. Put part of your land adapted to cotton in sweet potatoes. Then you have not forgotten that field of your neighbor's that produced

Four or Five Bushels of Good Sorghum Hay Per Acre,

worth more than the cotton grown on twice the area of land; and it grew with one-fourth the labor required to produce the cotton.

Then, again, consider its kindred valuable crop—milo-maize, kaffir corn and the millets, all of which are relished by all farm animals, stand drought well, and produce abundantly. Your argument of over-production will not hold good here.

Put part of your cotton land in sorghum, kaffir corn, millet, etc. No fall passes that does not present to your view fields of cow-peas that almost make your "mouth water," and invariably make you say: "I am going to sow cow-peas next year." You are honest; you think you will, but as the year opens and you remember that cotton is "money," you do not

treat your own judgment honestly, and you think you must put the whole plantation in cotton. While we all recognize cotton as a money crop, and a valuable money crop, we must not forget that it takes more money to make it than any other staple crop.

Don't Forget Melons and Cowpeas.

Put part of that cotton land in cow-peas.

Now, if the 75 per cent cotton, the sweet potato field, the sorghum field and the cow-pea fields, will not keep your force of hands at work, give each of them a good-sized patch for melons, "goobers," chufas, or some other useful vegetable you and they may choose, and teach them to work these; and if you still have some "cotton" land left, and some children not fully employed, let the land grow up in weeds and briars and "rest" as our forefathers taught us, and send the children to school. They need that encouragement; they deserve it, and you owe it to them, and if they fail to get it they will be less adapted for future citizenship than your "cotton land" is for corn.

No, my friends, I don't think it is impossible to reduce the acreage, do you? "Where there is a will there can be a way." If we do reduce acreage, and market sensibly, the farmers will win, and the speculator loose; but if we do not, we give our labor to the speculator who has grown rich on the supposed impossibilities and misguided toil of the farmer.

P. A. HOYLE.

Catawba Co., N. C.

The Old Red Gullies—How to Restore Them to Life and Beauty.

Messrs. Editors: Recently I have seen the advice given in two good agricultural papers, "Increase your acreage by deepening your soil."

Now this is very wise counsel, and easier done than to increase your acreage by filling up the gullies, but it will not improve the appearance of your farm as much as the latter course. During the present winter I have added about one acre to my cultivated land by this means, and can testify that it is cheaper than buying, in our section, at \$30 per acre. I don't mean to insinuate, Mr. Editor, that readers of your up-to-date paper allow gullies to form in their cultivated fields, but I am referring to the old ones with small trees and stumps on either side of them, which causes the plowman turning on both sides instead of plowing straight on.

The first and most difficult job is to dig out the stumps and sprouts and then you are ready for a good two-horse turn plow, a scrape, and a strong, steady pair of mules. I use one man to drive and another to



[Courtesy of S. L. Allen & Co.]

How Progressive Mexicans Cultivate Tobacco.

plow. The stumps can be rolled in the gullies, but the sprouts and limbs should be burned. Sometimes it is necessary to dig off the edges of the gully so that the team can walk along the sides. Commence plowing as near the bottom as you can and plow to the top, and six to two feet on either side. Next use the scrape, pulling dirt from both sides to center of gully.

This work can be done much easier when the soil is soft. It will pay to have one extra man with mattock to dig up roots when scraping. These who have no experience will be surprised how fast these old eye-sores on our farms can be filled and then—the satisfaction of looking on an unbroken field.

JOHN McDOWELL.

Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

VARIETIES OF CORN.

Something About the Kinds Found Most Satisfactory at the Virginia Station.

Messrs. Editors: Twenty varieties of corn were planted on the Station plats April 29, 1905. They matured from September 4th to October 25th. Early Leaming ripened in 128 days. This is a yellow corn which is well adapted to almost any section of the State. Boone County White, an improved strain from Indiana, matured in 132 days; Virginia Golden Dent in 152 days; Hickory King in 156 days; Cocke's Prolific in 175 days. Our experience with Virginia and Western grown seed indicates that the climate has a determining influence on the shape and character of the grain. Our climate does not favor the development of a long deep grain with a rough top so characteristic of the Western corn. This in-

dicates very clearly that Virginia farmers must undertake the selection and improvement of strains of Western corn for themselves and that they cannot use the Western grown product, except possibly for foundation stock. These varieties of corn were planted in checks 39.6 inches apart in each direction, which gave 4,000 hills per acre and 8,000 stalks.

The importance of selecting corn carefully and using standard varieties was shown by the fact that there were only 7.5 per cent of barren stalks in Blount's Prolific as compared with 43.75 per cent in Virginia Ensilage. There was 16.88 per cent of barren stalks in Boone County White and Hickory King; 12.50 per cent in Virginia Golden Dent and 20 per cent in Leaming. Boone County White led in yield with 50.35 bushels; Virginia Golden Dent was second, with 47.50 bushels; Cocke's Prolific third, with 43.92 bushels; Hickory King, fourth, with 42.85 bushels; Blount's Prolific, with 40.35 bushels; Johnson County White sixth, with 37.85 bushels, and Leaming seventh, with 37.31 bushels.

These are some of the best varieties as revealed by one year's investigations, and it is a question of such importance to the majority of our farmers that the work will be pushed vigorously this year. When it is remembered that the yield of these twenty-six varieties grown side by side varied from twenty-five to fifty bushels, the importance of selecting and improving strains of corn adapted to a given locality becomes apparent, and it is with the idea of emphasizing this point that the above suggestions have been made.

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