

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

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WHAT ABOUT YOUR CROP ROTATION THIS YEAR?

What kind of a rotation should you adopt? That will depend on each man's conditions. In many cases in the South the one crop system has largely grown up out of the diversity of conditions on the farm. A man has good upland suited to cotton, and fertile lowlands that makes good corn, and he does not see how he can make a rotation that will suit both. In fact, in many cases this is impracticable, and it would be wise to adopt a rotation especially for the upland, arranged to develop it in the production of cotton.

"But," says one, "it takes all my uplands to make the cotton I want." But if by a rotation of crops and better farming you can get as much cotton from one-fourth of the land as you do from the whole, and can be at the same time getting valuable crops from the remainder, and have it all increasing in productiveness, with less expense in the purchase of fertilizers, would it not be wise to do so? The change from an area of land making 100 pounds of lint per acre to one making from 500 to 1,000 cannot be made all at once, but it can be done with nearly all the upland cotton soils of the South.

Try an extra preparation of half the land you commonly have been putting in cotton after cotton, and put peas on the remainder and mow them for hay to feed to stock. Sow crimson clover on the pea stubble and turn it in the spring for cotton, and put the piece in cotton this year in peas and clover, and even with this alternation in crops you will soon see a great increase and you can make the cotton with only acid phosphate and potash—using no nitrogen, for the peas and clover will furnish that.

Then after you get as much cotton from half the land as you did from all of it, divide it into thirds and introduce a winter grain crop, either oats or wheat and follow these with clover to turn for cotton, and make a three-year rotation of (first year) cotton, with (second year) oats following the cotton, and peas following the oats and cut for hay, then the barn-yard manure spread broadcast on the stubble during the winter and (third year) put in corn, among which peas are sown and the peas left on the ground, with crimson clover sown among them to be turned for cotton in the spring, and with acid phosphate and potash applied to the cotton.

It would not be long till the third makes as much cotton as the whole, and the corn and small grain will be thrown in.

Then on the low-land where you



[Courtesy Bateman Mfg. Co.]

HOW ONE IMPROVED MACHINE HELPS THE FARMER.

Marking the next row, opening the furrow, distributing the fertilizer, mixing it with the soil, sowing pea seed, and covering—all in one operation.

have been planting corn continuously and getting smaller crops than the land should bring, breed the corn to a more compact stature, and plant it closer. Sow alsike clover in the corn and the next season mow it once and the following year turn the sod for corn, using a different corn for the low-ground from what you plant on the upland, for the prolific dent varieties that suit the upland are not so well suited to the low-land. Grow there rather a large-eared corn like the Horse Tooth or Holt's Strawberry, and select seed from the ears nearest the ground, and try to get more stalks on the ground than you have been growing, for you cannot make a big crop without plants enough to make it. Your lowland will stand this sort of a rotation and will rapidly improve in production, and finally, with the corn of upland and lowland you will have corn not only for feeding and fattening hogs, but will have corn to sell to your neighbors who do not farm in a rotation.

But where the farmer has land of uniform character and all suited to cotton and small grains he could make, as his land improves, a longer rotation for the whole by sowing crimson clover in his cotton, and on this clover spreading during the winter all his manure broadcast, and plant to corn. Follow the corn with

wheat after cutting and shocking it, and after the corn is shucked and the stover hauled off, the shock rows can be put in oats. Follow oats and wheat with peas for hay, and disc the stubble fine for wheat again, using acid phosphate and potash on the wheat. Follow this wheat again with peas, and sow crimson clover on the pea stubble and turn this for cotton in the spring.

One farmer in South Carolina wrote me some years ago that one crop of crimson clover turned down for cotton made him 1,100 pounds, while the old stalk land alongside where there was no clover, made 500 pounds of seed cotton with a complete fertilizer.

Of course these are merely suggestions, for, as I have heretofore said, no one can lay down hard and fast rules by which every man shall manage his land. But what I wish especially to impress is the importance of producing forage for domestic animals and the raising of manure through the peas and clover, and the increase of the humus in your land through a rotation in which the legume crops come frequently on the land. Variations can of course be made as every thoughtful farmer studies his soil, gradually working into the rotation that in his particular case seems to give the best results. Then, after

getting one-third or one-fourth of your land into a condition to make as much cotton as all of it makes now, do not be tempted to run it down again by planting a greater area in cotton because you imagine that there is money in doing so, but year after year stick to the regular course, and you will not only grow your own supplies, but supplies for other people who imagine that they cannot afford to grow anything but cotton.

But the man up outside the Cotton Belt may say: "I cannot improve my land with peas and clover and make good tobacco." Well, if it is true that you cannot (and I do not believe that it is), why keep your land and yourself poor trying to grow tobacco for the trust? The upper section of the Piedmont country of North Carolina will make as heavy crops of wheat as any land in the country if properly farmed, and I had rather make big crops of wheat and corn and feed fat cattle than bother with a crop like tobacco if it will not allow me to grow these in perfection. There are hundreds of tobacco farmers who are losing more in the other crops than the tobacco makes up for them, and a three-year rotation of corn, wheat and clover would enrich their land and themselves better than the tobacco and with far less labor.

Think over these things.

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