

Plow Handle Talks.

Where Deep Plowing is a Necessity.

Messrs. Editors: I was very much struck by an article in your paper from Prof. W. C. Welborn, of the Texas Experiment Station. Some things he wrote were very good, while some struck me as very amusing, such as scrub cattle, etc. Of course, we "book" farmers make mistakes, as few things are perfect in this life. We cannot discard all old things, as a great many of them are good. But really after reading Prof. Welborn's article I meditated for some little time, and had a good many thoughts all at once. I will agree with him as to sub-soiling, as I never thought it paid, but as to shallow plowing I can't agree, as I have seen both tried here for some fifteen years, and the practice of plowing a little deeper each year until some eight or ten inches was ob-

tained makes more cotton and corn than a shallow soil of four inches.

I will admit that cotton starts off sooner on a thin soil than a deep soil, but let a few days of hot dry weather come when the cotton is fruiting, and a blind man can feel the difference. Shallow plowing might do in Texas, but you can never make a highly improved farm here without getting a good soil by plowing a little deeper each year, and after the corn or cotton is planted cultivate shallow, so as to break no roots.

Raise all the barn-yard manure and cowpeas you can, and all the wheat and corn you need, and then what cotton you can, and you are apt to be independent, and have your land improving all the time.

P. H. MANGUM.

Wake Co., N. C.

Against the Williamson Method.

Messrs. Editors: In the corn controversy between Prof. Massey and Mr. Hunnicutt, certainly Prof. Massey has the better of the argument. I have tried the Williamson method with some modifications, and made a net profit of \$20 on one and one-fourth acres; but without the stunting, I am satisfied that it would have made just as much corn, or possibly more. In my humble opinion, however, Prof. Massey is in error about complete fertilizers, as regards the poor sandy soils of South Carolina. The experienced and intelligent farmer will profit by reading all these corn articles from such high authority, but he must know how to sift out the bad and keep the good. On the black lands of Mississippi, no doubt, Prof. Massey is very correct about complete fertilizers. Farmers are rapidly improving their methods of farming all over the Gulf States. I believe that in fifty years more all the level lands in the South will be making from 40 to 125 bushels of corn, or from one to three bales of cotton, per acre.

A. J. L.

Alabama.

Some Things I Have Learned About Alfalfa.

Messrs. Editors: Noting the articles in recent numbers of The Progressive Farmer concerning Alfalfa, I would like to add some of our experiences, hoping thereby to benefit some prospective grower.

This is a hilly section with a deep, fertile soil and an annual rainfall of twenty inches, and that mostly in the winter.

We find that we can get a better stand of alfalfa from spring sowing on fall plowing.

We find that it does not do best to sow in a loose seed bed, because the roots at first do not penetrate deep enough to reach moist soil in dry weather. Spring plowed land, unless it is kept cultivated, dries out quickly as deep as it is plowed. Plow the land deep in the fall. Harrow as early in spring as possible to retain moisture and when danger of frost is over cut the land up with a disc harrow and pulverize with a drag harrow and sow the seed. This fine soil on top acts as a mulch to hold the moisture of the firmer land underneath. The rootlets penetrate this moisture and the plant grows off readily. We prefer not to sow any nurse crop but to mow the first year to keep the weed seeds from maturing.

W. B. HARRIS.

Garfield, Washington.

Does It Pay to Top Cotton?

Messrs. Editors: Is topping cotton on strong land advisable where it grows rank? If so, when should it be topped? C. W. SLOAN.

(Answer by T. B. Parker.)

Topping cotton is a debatable question. If it should be topped at all, I should not top it on your land before it is waist high. I know of no series of tests bearing conclusively on the subject, but it happens to be a matter which every cotton farmer can very easily test for himself with his own variety on his own soil.

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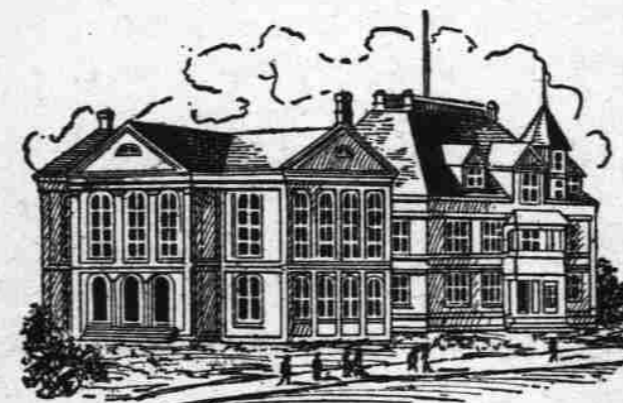
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