

**Plow Handle Talks.**

**Is It Better to Cut Tobacco Stalks or Not?**

Messrs. Editors: The farmers in this section strip their tobacco from the stalk in the field and leave the stalk standing. What I want to know is this: What benefit are the stalks to the land? Some people say, they would not have them cut if anybody would cut them for nothing. I ask them what profit are they to the land, and I have not found anybody that could give me a reasonable answer. I know one thing: they will produce a quantity of suckers to raise a good supply of worms for the next crop.

What would you do if you were farming down here—cut now or let them stand? I know up the country they cut and cure on the stalk. We cannot do that here as it does not ripen uniformly.

LEVI J. H. MEWBORN.  
Pitt Co., N. C.

Messrs. Editors: Will you please tell me if tobacco stalks ought to be cut down as soon as all the tobacco is all off or ought they to stand till they die? Some people say that it will injure land to cut them when green, that the sap in them should go back in the land?

Nash Co., N. C.  
J. W. COLSTON.

(Answer by Prof. W. F. Massey.)

It will do no injury to the soil to cut the stalks down green, but you will get more organic matter to turn under to let the stalks stand till dead. There is only the drying out of water, but no return of sap to the soil. It is thought by some that much of the potash returns to the roots as the crop matures, but analysis always finds a large amount of potash in tobacco stems and stalks. And what returns does not leak out of the roots, but can only be returned to the soil through the decay of the plant. No sap goes back to the land in any plant. There evaporation of water is through the top and leaves and not through the roots. Whatever the plant gets it holds on to except water, and that escapes through the leaves. Only in the general decay is the plant food contained in the plant set free in the soil.

**When to Cut Alfalfa.**

Messrs. Editors: I have been experimenting with a small patch of alfalfa; and while I have not been able to keep the crab grass out. I think there is one point that needs emphasis. That is the time of cutting alfalfa. Mr. Jos. E. Wing is the only writer on alfalfa who has put any stress on this point, to the best of my knowledge. He says the only proper time to cut alfalfa is when the buds at the crown of the plant are about one inch long, and it should be cut high enough not to injure buds. The state of blossoming should not be used as a guide for the time of cutting, although, as a rule, with most varieties of alfalfa the new buds at the base will be found to have started when the alfalfa is from one-tenth to one-fourth inch in blossom.

I have found that the alfalfa cut at any other time than as above indicated is slow to put out new growth, and the crab grass comes in more abundantly. I think, however, in our sandy lands that it will be necessary to disc the alfalfa in the fall and add more seed.

W. C. V.

**Cotton Planters Should Urge the Use of Cotton Bagging.**

Messrs. Editors: It is evident, the fight is now on to depress the cotton markets on the beginning of the new crop. The writer is in full sympathy with the planters and always has been, to get full market value for their crops. They keep the Government going and should have equal, if not some slight advantage over some others, to get business. At present there is some talk about having the fertilizer manufacturers to bag all fertilizer for next and future crops in cotton bags. This will consume considerable of our cotton, and thereby cause better prices to the planter. Will you not in your next issue call the planters' attention to this item and urge them to organize themselves and ask the merchants to ask this of the manufacturers—that they use cotton bags? Get this question at once agitated throughout the cotton belt, and you will see prices of cotton advance.

D. D. GIBSON.

Robeson Co., N. C.

**To Gather Chufas.**

In answer to a recent inquiry, a correspondent writes that chufas may be rapidly separated from the root-bunches by whipping them against a bench made of 2x4 scantling. By the use of a coarse sieve the dirt may be sifted out. This is a very good way when only a few bushels are to be sold; but for a large crop of fifty or a hundred bushels or more a better plan is needed. Can some one give it?

**MR. HOLDEN'S COTTON AGAIN.**

**An Interesting Letter About a Cotton That Was a Prize Winner in 1880 and Attracts Attention Now by Its Earliness.**

Messrs. Editors: On the 4th of July I wrote concerning the cotton of T. B. Holden. I saw it again last Saturday, and it was then well filled with grown bolls, and a day or two of sunshine will start his pickers. This is due in large measure to the variety of cotton he plants. I have known of this cotton for twenty-five years but have been too busy with other things to do more than to merely hear of it.

It is evidently a sport from the old Sugar Loaf, and originated in this way. Thirty years ago or more the late Capt. J. S. Joyner planted a field in cotton on the roadside near the town of Franklinton. Early in the season, Capt. Craven Williams who now lives in Forestville, N. C., was driving by this field and observing a fine stalk of cotton all open standing conspicuous among its more backward neighbors, he stopped his horse, handed the reins to his wife and over her protest climbed the fence and pulled up the stalk and carried it home with him. He picked out the seed and planted them and carefully saved them again until he had enough to spare. He gave some handfuls of them to the members of Perry's Chapel Church in Franklin County, to plant cotton to make money for "Missionary cotton."

With this seed, about 1880, the late T. H. Conyers, of Franklin County, made three bales of cotton on one acre, and won a premium of \$100 offered by the manufacturers of Pocomoke Guano for the largest

yield of cotton produced with their fertilizer. I have forgotten the exact weight of the seed cotton and of the lint. It yields a large per cent of lint.

Mr. Holden is the son-in-law of Mr. Conyers, and has kept this cotton all these years, being fully convinced of its value. I have heard him talk about it many times, but I attached no importance to it. This season I have passed his place once a week or oftener, and have watched his fields carefully and observed how it surpassed mine till I am convinced of the earliness of his variety. The only consolation I can give myself is that if we do not have frost before Christmas I may get even with him. When I passed him last Saturday he was lamenting that he had misplaced a letter from some one asking something about it and could not reply to it.

A word about topping cotton. I know a small lot of cotton planted on land that has been in cultivation for only two years and the stalks are very uniform, about three feet high, with not very much breadth, and the bolls are few and far between. On the same farm but a few yards away the same kind of cotton shows a different growth and fruitage. The difference is in the soil. It would have helped this fresh land cotton if it had been topped at about two feet high. It pays to top that kind of cotton.

N. Y. GULLEY.  
Wake Co., N. C.

**Too Modest.**

Messrs. Editors: I notice you aim at securing 100,000 subscribers to your paper. Pardon me, but I think you are far too modest in your aspirations. The *Progressive Farmer* is par excellence the paper for the Southern farm home; its equal I have not seen.

JOHN P. BOWIE.

Beaufort Co., N. C.

**Obliged His Friends and the Paper, Too.**

Messrs. Editors: A few days ago I handed a copy of *The Progressive Farmer* to a friend in Farmville and he handed it to another friend, and the result is I have to write this letter and enclose their subscriptions.

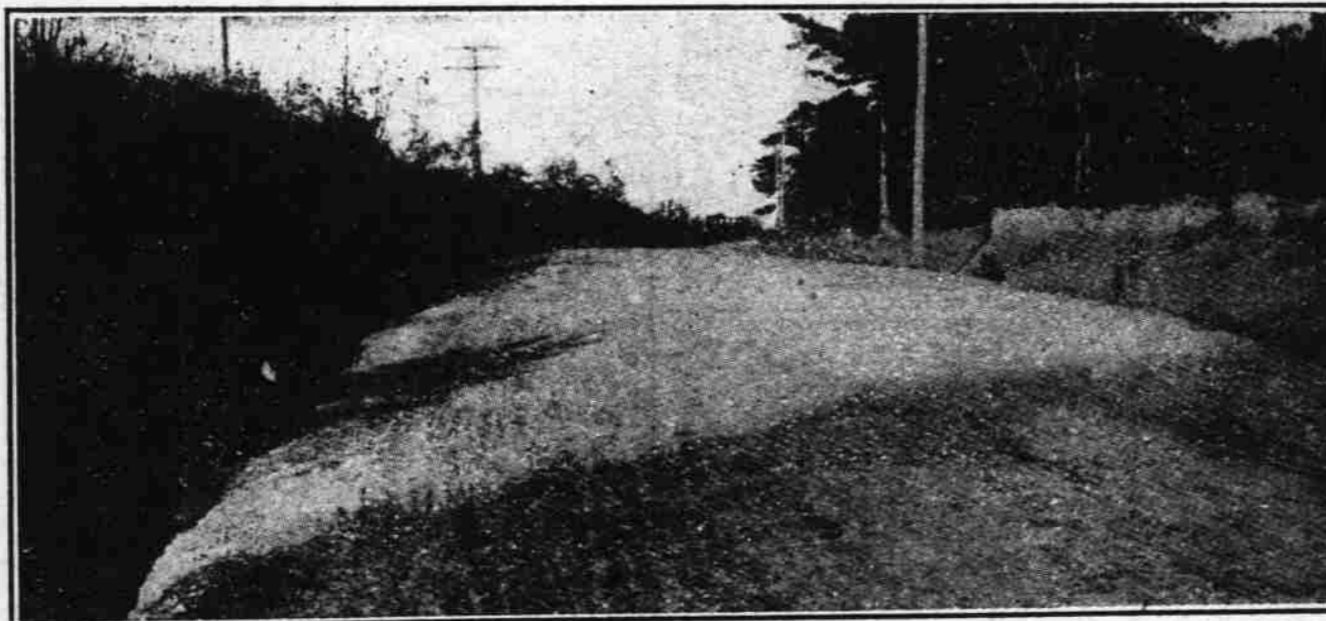
W. R. HORNE.

Pitt Co., N. C.

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Danbury Reporter.



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