

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

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This Week's Features.

HOW I Made My Best Crop This Year" gives the experience of six farmers, telling just how and why their best crop was the best.

"Spraying pays," says a man who increased his apple crop 50 per cent in quantity and much more than that in value. Five men remark especially that it has paid them to have their soils well filled with humus, one of them having changed a field that would not pay for cultivation into one that yields 400 pounds of cotton to the acre by the use of carefully-saved yard manure. Notice also how A. C. F. saved \$3 a ton by mixing his fertilizers at home.

Our Home Circle is practical this week, and that advice about getting a telephone is meant for you and your neighborhood. For why shouldn't you have these advantages as well as farmers in other sections?

Professor Massey's suggestive outline of the farm work for December you cannot afford to overlook, nor the very important paper on page 4, of which we have already made extended editorial mention.

We have tried, in short, to put something worth your while on every page, and to serve it all up in an attractive manner. It is for you to say whether we have done it.

Drain Your Wet Lands.

IF YOU have low-land that needs drainage, now is the time to do the work. Open ditches are better than none, but under-drains are far better. You can make these cheaply with skinned pine poles laid side by side in a ditch with a space between and a larger pole laid on top of this. Then cover with pine straw and fill in with earth. Where a low piece of land has hills around that have springs that keep the low-land wet, cut a drain around the base of the hills first to cut off the springs, and from this take drains to the outlet direct. This may be a stream or a main open ditch. I have drained in this way and grown fine clover on a piece of bottom where the winter before the drainage they cut ice for storage. These pole drains last for many years, for the piece I mention was drained over twenty years ago, and is still drained.

W. F. MASSEY.

A MESSAGE TO SOUTHERN FARMERS

DR. HENRY WALLACE, who is the editor of Wallace's Farmer, from which we have often had occasion to quote, and "the ablest agricultural writer in America" in the opinion of Secretary of Agriculture Wilson, is the senior member of the Country Life Commission which has recently held sessions in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee, and will later visit Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. As a life-long farmer and student of farming conditions, Mr. Wallace has been greatly interested in what he has seen of rural affairs in the South, and by request he gives us herewith a special message for the 25,000 farmers who make up our great Progressive Farmer Family. Dr. Wallace says:

"In reply to your request for a frank, friendly message for the readers of *The Progressive Farmer* based on my limited observation of your Southern conditions, I will say that in my opinion the first and greatest need of Southern farming is—humus.

"Humus is the life of the soil, and watchful as we must be of its preservation in the North and West, you have to be doubly watchful in the South where your open winters greatly facilitate the leaching out of fertility. Contrast this with conditions in Iowa: our land is frozen two feet thick in winter, bacterial action stopped, the fertility locked up, and cover crops kept on the land to save any that would otherwise be lost.

First of All, Get More Humus.

"It seems to me therefore that with conditions as they are, the first and biggest thing for Southern farmers to do is try to get more humus in the land, growing more cowpeas especially, with vetches and clover as cover crops in winter. The saddest thing I have seen in the Cotton Belt is the washing away of so much land, and this is largely due to insufficient humus. Without it the lands cannot hold moisture nor give it out slowly.

"Dairying would be a great help to you, but you need cattle of better type and blood to make it profitable. The best cow in my herd last year gave 11,300 pounds of milk. A rule with us is to keep one head of stock to the acre all summer.

Heavier Horses and More of Them.

"You need better horses, in my judgment, and more of them. A one-horse plow in Iowa is almost a curiosity, and so is a plow horse weighing less than 1,200 pounds. I bought a team last spring weighing 1,600 pounds each. On heavy land we put in three horses.

"Another great need of the South is to break up your ruinous tenant system. You need to pray to be saved from the farm-owner who lives in town and lets tenants butcher his land. The hope of any State is in its prosperous farm-owners, each living under his own vine and fig-tree.

"You need better roads, too, of course, and I would especially commend to you the split-log drag. It has been a great success in the West, the cheapest and most popular good roads-maker we have ever found. It will not do on sandy land, as you know; but on clay and gumbo types it is everything that is claimed for it.

Making Corn in Iowa.

"I am asked about the way we make our bumper corn yields in Iowa, and if there is much hand cultivation. No, there is practically no work by hand from planting to shredding and husking. To begin with, we usually have a clover or bluegrass sod and plow in fall before the ground freezes, in the spring discing thoroughly. We usually plant 3½ feet apart each way—check planting—and harrow before it is up. As soon as up, if land is weedy, we take one-horse or two-horse weeder (with two-horse weeder we can cover thirty acres a day) and kill all small weeds in this way, plowing afterward from three to six times. The corn breeding associations have done much to stimulate interest in improved seed and the need of improved methods generally in Iowa, but it cannot be too often emphasized that the whole stalk, and not the ear alone, must be taken into consideration in judging the value of a plant and its desirability for seed purposes. This is one mistake our corn shows have not yet come to realize.

How the Iowa Farmer Beats Us on Profits.

"The price of farm lands in the South naturally interests me, as prices in Iowa range so much higher—from \$75 to \$150, with \$80 perhaps as an average. As to how we make them pay profits on so much I would answer:—

"(1) We keep them full of humus, growing legumes and applying barnyard manure, so keep them increasing in value while spending practically nothing for commercial fertilizers.

"(2) We grow stock and so make two profits instead of one on what we raise, farming twelve months in the year.

"(3) We practice careful rotation—for instance, corn two years, then wheat, then clover.

"(4) We use improved labor-saving, horse-power implements and machinery, at once cultivating, harvesting, etc., better and at less expense than by hand labor.

(Continued on Page 16.)



DR. HENRY WALLACE.

Editor of Wallace's Farmer, Des Moines, Iowa, and one of the foremost agricultural leaders of America.