

\$500 More a Year Farming: How to Make It.

X.—By Making More Money Out of the Cotton Crop.

F O THE AVERAGE farmer the selling of the lint for a higher price, through some sort of control of the market, is a much more attractive means of "Getting More Profit From the Cotton Crop," than that of increasing his profit by reducing the cost of production or by utilizing the by-product, cottonseed, to better advantage. While believing that cotton is worth more than .10 cents a pound to the consuming world, and that it should always sell above that figure, and while believing that very much may be done to increase the profits by better marketing, we are most thoroughly convinced, beyond a shadow of doubt, that very much more can be done by the farmers, individually or collectively, in increasing their profits from their cotton crop by reducing the cost of producing a pound of cotton and by properly utilizing the by-product, cottonseed, than by any influence which it is possible for them to exert towards controlling the price of the staple. Not only are we sure that more can be done in this way than by efforts to control the price, but we are equally certain that it can be done much more easily.

By these statements we do not wish to convey the idea that combinations of speculators, and many other unjust influences, have not deprived the farmer of a fair price for his products, nor that these evils should not be corrected, but the individual farmer acting alone, or without the help or co-operation of others, can very materially reduce the cost of production, whereas the market can only be controlled by the united efforts of a very large proportion of the cotton growers of the whole country. Moreover, concerted action, especially the holding of cotton to control the market, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, so long as a large proportion of the growers are not independent, but wholly dependent on others, whose interests may be different, for the financial support necessary to continue their farming operations.

Reduce the Price of Production.

F EELING that it is easier to point out how our "\$500 More a Year Farming" can be made through reducing the cost of production and through a better handling of the cottonseed, the remainder of this article will be devoted to these phases of the question. The cost of production may be reduced in two ways: First, by cultivating a given area for less, and, second, by making that area yield more. The chief defects in our methods of cultivation which have increased the cost of production have been insufficient preparation of the land which has made cultivation of the crop difficult and expensive—too great cost in making beds, putting in fertilizers and planting,—and the failure to use such methods and tools in cultivating the crop as would permit the substitution of horse for man labor.

For instance, the writer is acquainted with two good cotton growers. One of them describes his preparation of the land as follows:

"The land having been previously prepared by plowing flush, furrows are made from three to four feet apart with a wide shovel (plow) as the foundation of the beds on which the seed are to be planted and the plants are to stand. The fertilizer is then applied in these open furrows and well mixed with the soil by running once or twice with a coultter or long scooter. Then list with two furrows of a turn plow."

The other, who is a very successful cotton grow-

er and has made considerable money farming, says:

"I use a rotation of crops that makes my cotton follow peas that have been sown after small grain. I cut the peas for hay, except on the poor spots, and after frost turn under any stubble grass, etc., which may be on the land, with a reversible disc plow. I use the reversible disc plow because with it one man and three mules can do more work than one man can do with any other plow I ever used. I follow the plow with a seeding of one-half bushel of rye per acre and harrow in. Next spring, when the land is dry enough to work and before the rye begins to head, I take a disc harrow and sharpen each disc well, then set the discs to run about three inches deep and run it over the rye. This cuts it up and

This Week's Guide Post to \$500 More a Year.

F OUR territory 23-5 acres are required to produce a bale of cotton. One bale per acre is an agricultural proposition which any man of average intelligence and with average land can solve. One-third of the land in cotton can, in five years, be economically made to produce as much as all of it now produces.

While we believe that cotton is worth more than 10 cents, and that much may be done to increase the profits of cotton growing by better marketing, we are convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt much more can be done by reducing the cost of producing a pound of cotton and by properly utilizing the cottonseed.

The chief defects in our methods of cultivation have been insufficient preparation of the land, which has made cultivation of the crop difficult and expensive, and the failure to use such methods and tools as would permit the substitution of horse for man labor.

We know two cotton growers. One goes once or twice across the field to mix the fertilizer with the soil and then twice more to form the bed; the other, a more successful farmer, goes only once to do what the first takes three or four trips to accomplish.

The time to lay by depends on the stage of growth and weather conditions, not on the day of the month.

works it into the land. In about one week I run the harrow in the opposite direction, setting the discs to run about five inches deep. In many instances two harrowings will do, but sometimes, and on some lands, it takes three. This is all the work that is necessary before putting in the fertilizer, when I open a furrow put in the fertilizer and cover with disc harrow, throwing all the dirt to the center. This at one trip makes the bed upon which the cotton is to be planted."

Note the difference. Here is one man who goes once or twice across the field to mix the fertilizer with the soil and then twice more to form the bed; whereas the other, goes only once across the field to do what the first makes three or four trips to accomplish.

Different methods will, and should, be used under different conditions, but one thing is certain, that right here is one place at which the cost of production can be very materially reduced on the average farm.

The Preparation of the Seed Bed.

A S STATED, the land is not usually sufficiently well prepared before planting to make the use of labor-saving tools practicable in the cultivation of the crop, and hoeing and man labor, the most expensive factors in the production of a cotton crop, cannot be reduced to a minimum, which should always be the aim.

As an illustration of how one very successful

cotton grower, Dr. W. J. McLendon, of Anson Co., N. C., cultivates his crop with a minimum of man labor, and consequently with a minimum of expense, we quote the following description of his methods. He first states that he uses an abundance of seed—on light lands from one to one and a half bushels per acre, and on stiff lands, two bushels, and then says:

"When you see the ground begin to crack along the rows, then commence the cultivation. Do not wait for the cotton to come up. Where you have a crust formed by rains, run across the rows with a light iron-tooth smoothing harrow with teeth set so they will not drag up the cotton. In four to six days run diagonally across the rows again, and repeat in a few days, going in opposite directions; now take the weeder and run it straight across the rows, then diagonally in both ways, going over once a week until the cotton is four or five inches high. If this work is well done, it needs no hoeing up to this time. Now, go over with hoes, thinning to stand and clearing all grass left by harrow and weeder. On light lands and where there is no crust, use the weeder from the start. After hoeing, if your land is such that cultivators can be used, by all means use them; cultivators that will work a row at one trip; use these as long as you can straddle the cotton, then finish with the open and shut kind; they will plow a middle at one trip. All cultivation should be shallow, deeper when the cotton is small, using great care not to break the small feeding roots as they extend through the land. They are doing the work for you, searching for plant food in every square inch of soil, so break as few of them as possible. Keep the middles clear of grass at all times."

When To Lay By.

T HE absurd practice, so common all over the Cotton Belt, of stopping cultivation on a certain date instead of basing the length of time the crop should be cultivated on the stage of its growth and the weather conditions, is partially responsible for our small average yield. In many cases the yield can be much increased or the crop saved from great injury, by breaking the crust and preventing the evaporation of the water; that is, by saving it for the roots of the plants instead of permitting it to go off into the air.

Of course, suggestions can be offered or plans made only for normal conditions, and if from any cause the grass and weeds get a start, the weeder and the harrow will have to be laid aside and other tools used, but the methods of cultivation best suited to economical cultivation—that is, the use of the weeder and harrow—are also the best tools for preventing the grass getting a start either in wet or dry weather.

How We Waste Our Cotton Seed.

F OUR discussion of the better utilization of the cottonseed we shall indicate how much more stable manure can be obtained; and in our previous article on fertilizers the lines along which a more intelligent fertilization are to come were pointed out. In our article on "Better Seed" we called attention to the increased yields of certain varieties over the average varieties planted, but we cannot refrain from again calling attention to the great importance of every grower obtaining the best varieties for his section, and then improving their yield by proper selection. The tests of varieties made by the Experiment Stations are the most extensive and most carefully conducted and are therefore the most trustworthy, and we insist that any man who is in real earnest in his effort to get "\$500 More a Year" from his farming cannot afford to neglect to get the two leading varieties in the tests made by his Experiment Station and test them in comparison with the variety he is now planting. By this means alone a good share of that "\$500 More a Year" may be obtained.

According to the last census each farmer in the NORTH Atlantic States earned \$984 a year, and each farmer in the SOUTH Atlantic States only \$484—or exactly \$500 a year less for the average farmer in The Progressive Farmer's territory than for his brother farmer just north of him. The object of these articles is to set forth the plans by which we may bring up our Southern farming to Northern profits, the next four articles in this series being as follows:

Mar. 18.—By Better Care and Feeding of the Farm Work Stock.
Mar. 25.—By Making More Pork at Less Cost.
Apr. 1.—By Starting the Crops Right.
Apr. 8.—By Making Hay a Money as well as a Feed Crop.