

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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## Attendance at the Farmers' Institutes as a Guide Post to "\$500 More a Year."

**T**HERE IS SO MUCH to learn about farming—so much that must be learned if one would get the most money and the greatest satisfaction out of his work—that no one of us can afford to neglect any of the means which bring this needed knowledge to us. The farm paper, the agricultural school, the experiment station, the demonstration work, the farmers' institute, all have their particular place in the broad course of education along farming lines—the course which it should be the aim of every farmer to take. The farmers' institute is only a one-day, or a two-day, school of farming; but lessons may be learned in this one day which will be of practical value to the student every day in the year. The men who talk at these institutes—the teachers—are men chosen, as a rule, because of their accurate knowledge of some branch or branches of agricultural science, or because of their own successful work as practical farmers. The man who sneers at institute workers as "theorists" merely displays his own ignorance of agricultural progress. Now and then, as in everything else, a man gets into the work who is not qualified for it, but such cases are so rare that they only serve to emphasize the real practicability of the general run of institute work.

In addition to these regular members of the institute "force," there is another class of teachers that may give instruction of equal value. This class is made up of the plain, every-day farmers, the men who go primarily to listen, but who are not afraid to ask questions about the things they wish to know, or to give their experiences along the lines of work with which they are familiar. Emerson said that every man he met taught him something; and sometimes one is surprised at the amount of useful information he can acquire from his neighbor. And if our neighbor has this information, why should we not acquire it from him? If he is only a poor, one-horse farmer who has learned how to grow turnips better than we can, it is worth our while to find out just how he handles his turnip patch.

So let us, by all means, attend the institutes this season. If we only go with the desire to learn, we need have no fears that we shall not find out something of value; and the social intercourse, the meeting with other farmers and interchanging opinions and experiences, will be of almost, or quite, equal value to us. It is a good thing to get out and rub around against other folks occasionally. It broadens one's views, and gives him a new outlook on the world and a fresh appreciation of his work.

The man who attends the farmers' institutes with a real desire to find out something helpful to him in his work is not going to be disappointed; the man who stays away from them through obstinacy or indifference, is going to miss a great deal which it would be to his interest to get.



FARMERS MEETING AN INSTITUTE TRAIN AT GREENSBORO, GA.

### Correct Ideals as to Seed Corn.

**A**GRICULTURAL WRITERS and farmers' institute lecturers in advising the corn grower to select his seed corn carefully and to make his first selection in the field, usually state that he should have an ideal and select stalks and ears as near to that ideal as possible.

That is good, but unless his ideal be correct his selection may still be bad. For instance, the ideal ear of the average Southern farmer is a very large ear; so large, in fact, that not more than one will be found on a stalk, and yet the tests of practically all Southern Experiment Stations show that varieties which produce the largest per cent of stalks that bear two or more ears, almost invariably produce more corn per acre.

Again, the ideal of the corn grower may also be wrong, according to the accepted best opinion, as to the shape of the ear or the kind of kernel. It is, therefore, necessary that definite information be given regarding the highest or correct ideal, as to stalk, ear and kernel. This is too frequently not done, and consequently many of

those who are taking the pains to make a more or less careful selection of their seed corn are not securing as good results as they might if more accurately informed regarding the characters which constitute the ideal corn plant.

Unquestionably more attention is being given each year by an increasing number of farmers to the selection of seed corn, but thus far most of this attention has been given to the selection of the individual ears, without regard to the character of stalks they grew upon. The real object or basis for this selection is to increase the yield of shelled corn per acre, and this depends as much on the character, growth and productiveness of the individual stalks as upon the size and shape of the individual ears and kernels. In fact, it is quite likely that more progress can be made in the improvement of the corn yield, by planting corn from the best stalks, than by planting the best individual ears. Finally, then, the interest we are taking in selecting better ears is a distinct gain, but we need to go a step farther and select in the field, having the well-defined object of getting the best ears from the best individual stalks.

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