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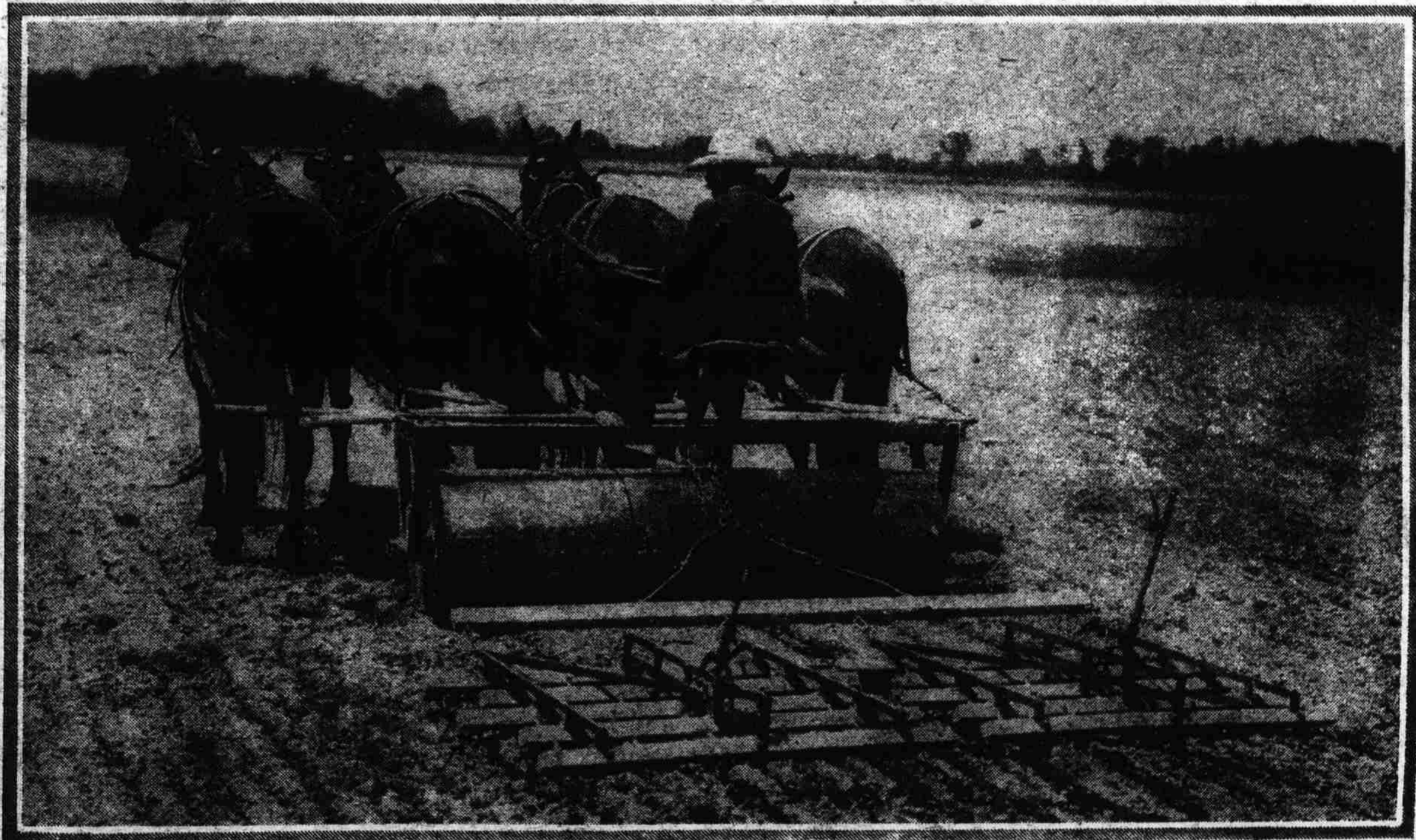
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Cultivation Should Begin With a Good Seed Bed

CULTIVATION has as its purpose the destruction of weeds and the conservation of soil moisture, and any treatment that accomplishes these two purposes must be regarded as cultivation, whether it be given in preparing the seed bed or working the soil after the crop is up to a stand. It therefore

where the use of the turning plow in burying grass is the result of inefficient cultivation before the crop was planted.

Where the land has been prepared by good plowing and the repeated use of the disk and section harrows, grass can usually be subdued by shallow cultivation.



A STEP TOWARD GOOD CULTIVATION

follows that the making of a well pulverized seed bed is one of the essential phases of good cultivation.

On too many of our Southern farms cultivation begins only after the crop is up to a stand. It is true the land is plowed, and sometimes disked and harrowed; but with many farmers the preparation of a seed bed is merely a question of making a resting place for the seed, and the value of this early cultivation in destroying the weed crop in its infancy and pulverizing the soil so that a shallow but effective dust mulch may be easily made is largely lost sight of. Of course it is impossible to make a suitable resting place for the seed and at the same time fail to destroy weed seed and conserve moisture, but if all the advantages of good early preparation were kept in mind there would be fewer poorly prepared seed beds.

While we do admit that times may occur during periods of excessive rain when the accepted methods of cultivation must be cast to the winds and heroic treatment applied in the form of the turning plow, there are too many cases

tion after the crop is up to a stand. It is also true that with a well pulverized soil a shallow cultivation of not over three inches on sandy soils and two inches on clay soils is sufficient to provide a mulch of fine dirt that will practically stop the evaporation of water from the soil surface. On the other hand, it is necessary to run the cultivator three, four and sometimes five inches deep to obtain an effective mulch on a cloddy field, and when we go to such a depth, after the crop has become well established, the roots are pruned with subsequent reduction in the crop yield. In fact a two-inch mulch of well pulverized soil is more effective in preventing the evaporation of soil water than a four-inch mulch of clods.

There is nothing to be gained by planting on an ill prepared seed bed, for what little time is gained in getting the crop off to an early start is more than counteracted by the greater expenditure of labor necessary in later cultivations. A very practical way of saving labor expenses and thus reducing the cost of producing the crop is to thoroughly prepare the land before planting, for the cheapest and most effective cultivation is that given before the seed are put in the ground.