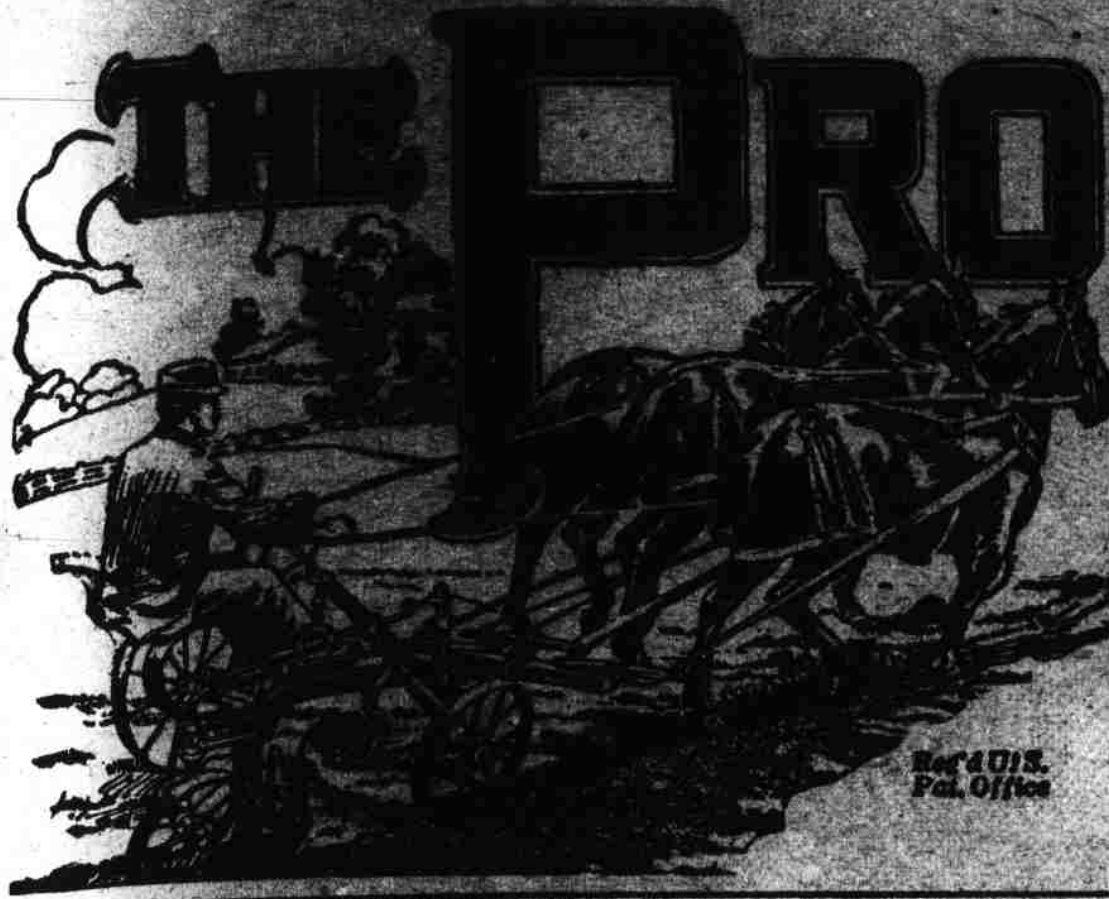


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The Southern Farmer Is Improving His Cropping System



RICKING ALFALFA HAY ON CHERRY FARMS, ROCK HILL, S. C.—SEE PAGE 6

THE progress of crop diversification in the South is encouraging. It has been gradual, but along the right lines, and each year's crop acreage figures show that we are slowly but surely adopting a cropping system that is better balanced and one that is bound to prove very profitable when judged by results obtained over a period of years.

For several decades the Southern farmer increased his cotton acreage on an average of 3 to 4 per cent each year, or doubled it every twenty-five years. But ten years ago the tide began to flow the other way, and now a very substantial gain for diversification is recorded each year.

In the ten Southern states that produced 95 per cent of the cotton crop, which are North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, only 36.4 per cent of the total reported crop acreage was in cotton last year. From 1910 to 1914, the cotton crop comprised 44.5 per cent of our total acreage. During the period from 1915 to 1919, the reduction in the cotton acreage continued, and the average for this period was 38.5 per cent.

While reviewing the trend of the cotton acreage during the past ten years, it is interesting to note that the corn acreage has remained fairly

constant in its relation to the total acreage. For the five-year period from 1910 to 1914, corn utilized 40.9 per cent of the total acreage, while during the past five years, 39.1 per cent of our acreage was planted to corn. Last year corn used 38 per cent of the total acreage.

Diversification has been made possible by reducing the cotton acreage and planting a larger acreage in such crops as soy beans, sweet potatoes, small grain, tobacco, etc. During the period from 1910 to 1914, these miscellaneous crops comprised only 14.6 per cent of our total acreage. But during the last five years, they increased to 22.4 per cent, while last year 25.6 per cent of our total acreage was planted to crops other than corn and cotton.

These figures show that the South is gradually working toward a cropping system that will give approximately one-third the acreage to cotton, another third to corn and the remaining third to miscellaneous crops. Over the South as a whole, this cropping arrangement will give very satisfactory results. We are still planting too many acres to cotton and not using enough legume crops such as soy beans or velvet beans for the best results from the soil fertility standpoint; but, as the above figures indicate, we are gradually adjusting our cropping system to remedy this defect in our agriculture.