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Timely Farm Suggestions

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IT IS now too late to make further efforts to produce rough forage for livestock this winter, but it is not too late to make every effort to save everything growing on the farm that will serve as roughage. There is usually enough corn stover, grass and other roughage allowed to waste on Southern farms to feed our livestock and wipe out one of our largest items of expense—our large hay bills.

Every Effort Should Be Made to Save More Forage

IF THERE ever was a time when the South should make every effort possible to save hay and other rough forage it is this season of 1920. The corn crop will almost certainly be short over a considerable portion of the South, which makes it doubly important that more hay be produced. More hay will reduce the grain required to winter the stock and make next year's crops, and certainly it will also be more economical to buy one product, corn, than to buy both hay and corn. It is now too late to grow forage this year, but there is an opportunity to save more of the forage grown than is generally done. Every year, corn stover and other plants that might be cut and cured for feeding are allowed to waste throughout the whole South. By all means wherever a ton of roughage can be saved, even though not of the highest quality, every effort should be made to save it. Every ton of forage saved will save \$20 to \$40 next spring. Surely this is of the greatest importance.

Essentials of Pasture Making

WHILE grass grows abundantly in the South, because of our warm, moist climate, and the varieties of grasses, and clovers and other legumes are almost unlimited, it is a mistake to assume that good permanent pastures are too easily secured. The ideas that any sort of land will make a good pasture and that no care is necessary to obtain and maintain pastures have been largely responsible for our failure to generally have good pastures.

The waste lands, those too poor to be profitably cultivated, or that are too rough or wash too readily to be suitable for cultivation, should be made into pastures, but they will not make good, reliable pastures without some expense and considerable attention.

There are a few essentials to successful pasture making in the South which cannot be neglected without paying the penalty. Among these the following may be named:

1. It is essential to prevent the washing or erosion of the land by terracing or otherwise until the plants can cover the soil and prevent this washing. Any piece of land in the South, except possibly the coarser sand, will cover itself with vegetation in a few years if the soil is prevented from washing away.

2. Owing to our sunshine and heavy rainfall weeds, brush, briars and other non-pasture plants grow very rapidly, more rapidly than the pasture plants. It is therefore necessary that the non-pasture plants be kept down for a few years until the pasture plants get full possession of the land. Wash-

ing away of the soil and the more rapid growth of non-pasture plants are the only reasons why our roadsides and vacant or uncultivated areas are not covered with grazing plants throughout the South, as in other more northerly sections. If one is doubtful of this he has only to prevent washing of the soil and keep down the non-pasture plants to be convinced.

3. Only such plants should be selected as the basis of the pasture as have demonstrated their ability to take the land and hold it against all obstacles. Where Bermuda grass and lespedeza naturally thrive or hold the land against all other plants they should form the basis of the permanent pasture. This will be the greater part of the northern two-thirds of the Cotton Belt. Where carpet grass does best, as is often the case in the Southern Coastal Plain sandy regions, it should be used until other better plants can be gradually introduced.

Bur clover and white clover will do well and add to the value of the pasture over a large part of the South, but too great expense should not be incurred to obtain these at first, or on too large areas. The seeding is expensive and often the results are very uncertain at first. Dallis grass or Paspalum dilatatum shows a disposition to thrive over large areas in the South and should be encouraged as it is a good pasture plant.

The cultivated grasses and clovers may be used in temporary pastures in a rotation, especially when the soil is fairly fertile and lime is used, but much money has been wasted by the sowing of such seeds and no satisfactory results obtained.

Any man can tell for himself the plants which should form the basis for his permanent pasture, by simply looking about him. The plants which, when given a chance, take the land and hold it and which the livestock eat and thrive on are the plants he should use.

4. Close grazing is not necessarily an evil on well established pastures made up of plants like Bermuda, bluegrass, white clover, etc., but too close grazing is destructive until the pasture plants have fully established themselves on the land. Too close grazing may be injurious even on old pastures, especially since the livestock are likely to suffer for lack of feed, but in establishing pastures too close grazing and tramping in wet weather are fatal to good results.

If these four simple, common sense rules were followed there would be no disappointment in the making of pastures in the South, except that no one should expect land so poor that it will not produce a profitable crop of cotton, to quickly afford much good grazing when put into pasture.

No "Salty" Molasses From Nitrate of Soda in Cane

A READER asks: "Will nitrate of soda when applied to growing Louisiana cane make the molasses taste salty? If not, how much should be applied per acre? Could I use cottonseed meal to advantage?"

We have no personal knowledge and can find no recorded data showing that nitrate of soda causes the molasses to "taste salty" or gives it any other undesirable flavor. On the other hand, Duggar, in his "South-

ern Field Crops", reports results of experiments by the United States Department of Agriculture in Georgia, in which the following statement occurs:

"As a source of nitrogen, nitrate of soda was superior to cottonseed meal; the nitrogen in cottonseed meal was more effective and profitable than an equal weight of nitrogen in the form of cottonseed."

We consequently think it entirely safe to state that nitrate of soda properly applied to the growing cane will not injure the quality or flavor of the molasses.

It is stated, however, that very large quantities of stable manure may give the syrup a dark color and an inferior flavor. Nitrogen in any available form applied too late in the season may prolong the growth and delay ripening of the cane and in this way may reduce the yield of syrup and injure its quality. We think the latter part of May or early in June would have been a better time to apply the nitrate of soda than early July.

The amount which should be applied per acre will depend largely on the soil. On a soil of good fertility or where a legume crop was plowed under before planting the cane, perhaps 100 pounds of nitrate of soda will be sufficient; but on a less fertile soil or one where no legume crop has been turned under, 100 pounds of nitrate of soda should be applied at planting and 100 pounds later, say in late May or early June. Our reader cannot use cottonseed meal to advantage. A pound of nitrogen from cottonseed meal will cost much more than a pound of nitrogen from nitrate of soda and we have experimental evidence that it is not worth as much. In other words, a pound of nitrogen in 15.5 per cent nitrate of soda at \$100 a ton costs the same as a pound of nitrogen in 6.2 per cent (7.5 per cent ammonia) cottonseed meal at \$40 a ton, and the nitrogen from the nitrate of soda is superior, pound for pound.

Work Stock Need Dry Feed

A READER writes: "I have a lot of nice Bermuda grass, but it seems to weaken my horses to graze them on it."

Hard working horses and mules should not be allowed to graze green grass, especially in hot weather. For idle horses, of course, grass is good and it may be used to some extent for horses and mules doing slow work if this work is not too hard and the weather is not too hot. But when a hard working horse or mule is allowed to graze during hot weather the results are nearly always as our reader describes. The bowels are made too loose, the animals sweat too freely and cannot stand the heat and the hard work. In other words, the horses are weakened as stated by our inquirer.

Notwithstanding that the writer is thoroughly convinced that the above is correct, yet there are many who advise the grazing of work stock. For instance, in Farmers' Bulletin 1030, United States Department of Agriculture, the following statement is made regarding pasture for horses: "Pasture is very valuable in the management of work teams; regularly allowing horses the freedom of pasture during the night and on idle days enhances the health of the animals. There will be an increased tendency toward sweating while at work but this is not of great importance when the benefits are considered. A necessary precaution is to avoid a sud-

den change to green feed; where a pasture crop is included in the ration for work horses, the practice should be continuous, not intermittent."

From my experience as a practitioner of veterinary medicine and many years' observation of work stock, I am fully convinced that injury rather than "benefit" results from horses and mules which do hard work in hot weather being allowed "the freedom of pasture during the night and on idle days."

Of course, for the idle horses grass is good, but when the horse is put to hard work on the farm or on the road he is no longer under "natural" conditions and what may be regarded as his natural feed no longer fits his needs.

The only argument in favor of grazing work stock to which we can give any weight is that pasture, when available, may cost less than dry feed. The first cost is less, but if the lessened efficiency of the work stock—the reduced amount of work they are actually able to do—is considered, in the opinion of the writer, green feed costs more in the end, and the greater tendency of the animals to suffer from colic and other digestive troubles certainly does not improve their health or enable them to keep in better condition.

In the opinion of the writer, work stock doing hard work, especially in hot weather, should have no green feed, but a balanced ration of sufficient variety made up entirely of dry feed. And of this not over three-quarters of a pound of hay should be given daily for every 100 pounds of the animal's weight.

Why Hogs Eat Chickens

A READER has a brood sow that kills and eats chickens. He asks, "What can I do for her and what makes her eat chickens?"

Little can be done for such a sow, except to keep her and the chickens separated. There is probably no practicable way of breaking a sow of this bad habit.

The hog eats chickens because of two conditions: First, she is more likely to eat chickens if not fed a balanced ration. If in a dry lot without green feed and without sufficient protein and mineral matter she is much more likely to eat her first chicken if one gets in the trough while she is feeding. Also if a dead chicken is found by a hog or if one is thrown into her lot she is very likely to eat it, especially if she is not getting a full supply of those materials which her body craves and must have to maintain health.

A hog getting green feed and milk or tankage is not likely to begin to attack, kill and eat live chickens, but even a well fed hog is likely to eat a chicken found dead in the lot. But faulty feeding is probably not the only reason why hogs form the habit of eating chickens. They eat chickens because of their natural desire for animal matter and once having tasted chicken flesh they continue to eat it because they like it.

When young chickens are allowed to eat from the same trough with the hogs, some of the hogs are quite likely to form the habit of chicken eating sooner or later.

To prevent the formation of this bad habit, give the hogs green stuff, animal protein and plenty of charcoal and acid phosphate. And keep the hogs and chickens, especially the young chickens and brood sows, separated as far as possible.