

More Money From Tobacco and Peanuts

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This Year on "More Money From Farming in 1922"

How to Make Money Growing Tobacco

"HOW can I make more money out of my tobacco crop in 1922?"

This question was asked a group of farmers a few days ago, who were standing on a street corner discussing the ups and downs of the tobacco farmer and the great possibilities of cooperative marketing.



MR. MOSS

After the inquiry had gone the rounds of the little group, and all except one man had offered suggestions, and good ones at that, they turned to a prosperous, keen-eyed, middle-aged farmer. For this farmer they all had the utmost confidence and respect because he regarded his neighbor as his friend and wanted him to have his share of the good things in life; also because he had made money every year growing tobacco except one, a year when the hail destroyed his crop. So they asked him to tell them how he did it.

I.—A Successful Tobacco Farmer's Policy

"WELL," he said, without any appearance of egotism, "in the first place, I never plant more than I can personally supervise. I go in for quality first and then get as many pounds per acre as I can. In addition to this, if one of my neighbors or my experiment station or anybody else has found a better way than mine of doing certain things—say, by saving labor, better methods of fertilizing, harvesting or curing, etc.—then I study their method, and if I can use it, I do so at once. If I can't use it all, I adopt whatever part will suit my conditions."

By this time this little group had increased to about 20 farmers and two or three bankers and business men. All were interested in what Mr. H. had to say. They realized at once that he knew what he was talking about.

Then he was asked: "If you always get good prices for your tobacco and have made money every year growing it, why did you sign the cooperative marketing contract and why have you been such an enthusiastic worker for it?" His eyes sparkled at once, and he replied: "Suppose all of us who grow tobacco organize into one compact business organization and merchandise instead of dump our crop. Suppose all of us make an effort to produce a better quality and deliver our tobacco in January, February, and March when we can't do outside farm work, being assured of receiving the same price per grade as we would have gotten had it been delivered in October and November, when we should be looking after our cover crops, clovers, ditches, etc. With this policy, I would get more for my tobacco and all my neighbors would be prosperous instead of just two or three in a neighborhood as is now the case." This reply closed the argument as every one went away with something to think about.

II.—100 Pounds at 75 Cents Beats 1,000 at 7½ Cents

I OVERHEARD the conversation and it seemed to me this man had struck the keynote both as to production and selling.

In the first place, "How can we produce better quality?" As Mr. H. says, "Never plant more than you can personally supervise." It is not quantity that counts when we begin selling tobacco, but quality. One hundred pounds of tobacco at 75 cents a pound will bring as much money as 1,000 pounds at 7½ cents—and infinitely more profit to the man who produces it. I know that we can't produce all 75-cent tobacco, there must be some "off"

grades. But we can undoubtedly produce a larger percentage of the better grades than we do if we will only follow our better judgment and plant what we can look after. Never be influenced or persuaded to put in one, two, or five acres more just because your neighbor or your county is planting only a normal crop and trying to grow a more uniformly high quality. If you do, nine times out of ten, you may be sorry.

III.—Good Plants, Good Cultivation, and Good Curing Are Necessary

HERE are the practical suggestions on which I would lay especial emphasis:

First, to begin with, good plants, fairly early, are essential. It is seldom that a good tobacco crop is made from sorry plants, transplanted late. To insure strong plants of uniform size, sow good clean seed, on a well-prepared, highly fertilized seed bed, not too early but early enough to have sufficient size and root system in time for transplanting. If possible, have your seed re-cleaned. By this means you eliminate all the small, immature seed.

Secondly, better preparation of the land and better fertilizing. Comparatively few farmers appreciate the real importance of better preparation. Although this has been discussed for years, yet it is just as essential as the first day it was suggested—and especially true with tobacco. Better and more economical fertilizing is also essential; also the utilization of barnyard manures.

Thirdly, more intensive cultivation followed by more care in harvesting and curing. Remember, not everybody who grows tobacco makes money out of it. It is a specialized crop, and the amateur had better go slow, while as for the "hit and miss" farmer, he had better stay out of the game. He may grow what he calls tobacco and it will take the place of some grade of tobacco, but the man who produces it may find that he has worked a year without any profit. For the man who is in the game, make your plans now to cultivate your tobacco rapidly and thoroughly and then watch it grow. Tobacco will not stand the hardship or neglect of a great many other plants. When harvest-time comes, the tobacco must be saved and harvested with care. *Almost anybody can grow tobacco, but surprisingly few know how to harvest and cure it out to get the best results.* Still, most of the experienced growers if they would realize the importance of careful handling and curing, would no doubt increase their profits materially.

IV.—Summing Up in Seven Sentences

TO SUM up, we might make seven suggestions as follows:

1. Never overplant—as quality counts more than pounds.
2. Better plants—by planting clean, well-selected seed.
3. Better preparation of the land.
4. Better and more economical fer-

tilizing—use homemade manure as a supplement to commercial fertilizers.

5. More intensive cultivation.
6. More care in harvesting and curing.
7. A more economical system of marketing and distribution.

Oxford, N. C.

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Seven Ways to Increase Profits on Peanuts

I.—Select Good Planting Seed

REMEMBER one of my neighbors, Mr. G. M. Blow, used to always get from one-half cent to a cent a pound more for his crop of peanuts than anyone else in the neighborhood. Why?



MR. BROWNE

Because he carefully sorted his seed peanuts, and planted only the large uniform nuts, with the result that his peanuts were larger and of a more uniform size than those produced by the average farmer. It does not necessarily hold that the kernels must be thoroughly matured, but if only the large, well-developed pods, with two kernels to the hull, are planted, the stock will grade enough higher than the average to pay handsomely for the trouble.

During these winter days when farmers are not too busy, they should open about double the number of sacks required to plant the crop and select from these a sufficient quantity of the best pods to plant the crop. This should be done before shelling time. Then when they are being shelled, all faulty, cracked kernels should be discarded.

II.—Preparing the Land

THERE seems to be a mistaken notion abroad in the land that peanuts do not require the careful preparation of the soil before planting that other crops require. It is a fact that the peanut is a hardy plant and will produce something on a shallow, poorly prepared seed bed, but it is also true that it responds quickly to good treatment.

The soil for peanuts, if it is not in a winter cover crop, should be broken deeply as early as possible and allowed to remain in the rough as left by the plow till the drying March winds appear. The surface should then be harrowed every ten days or two weeks till planting time. This harrowing helps to conserve the moisture and insures a quick germination for the young plants. It also produces a fine seed bed and destroys weed and grass seed as they germinate close to the surface, thus greatly reducing the cost of cultivation. This preparation adds to the chances of getting a good stand from first planting, a thing much to be desired.

THE BUSINESS FARMER'S CALENDAR: THINGS TO DO THIS WEEK AND NEXT

LOOK up fertilizer prices and make arrangements with your neighbors to buy cooperatively in carlots.

2. Get busy on your farm plans for 1922. Getting off with a rush when spring weather opens up will be made possible only by plans well laid now.

3. Gather all of the mummied peaches that are still on and under the trees and burn them. These mummies have the spores of brown rot on them. Their destruction means fewer rotten peaches next season.

4. The load you can carry is determined by the toughest pull you have between your place and town. If the county commissioners can't do it, get your neighbors to help work the worst places in the road.

5. Thoroughly overhaul the spray outfit this winter and be ready for the spring spraying right on the dot. A delay of only a day or two at certain times often means the difference between clean fruit and an infested crop.

6. Get your seed catalogs right away and place orders for the garden and field seeds you will need this year.

III.—Plant Early, But Not Too Early

THE most desirable dates for planting peanuts are from April 25 to May 15, depending upon the locality. In the extreme southern area they can be planted as early as the middle of April, and in the northern section of the peanut belt it is desirable to wait until the soil has warmed up, which is usually about the middle of May. The peanut kernel rots very quickly if allowed to lie in a cold, wet soil. Therefore, the farmer must use his own judgment and not plant until the soil is warm enough for the kernel to germinate quickly after planting.

IV.—How to Cultivate

DURING the early development of the peanut plant, every means of keeping the soil loose should be utilized. However, just as the young plants are coming through the soil, care must be taken to use implements that will not strike the young plants and break them. For that reason, just as the peanuts are coming through, it is desirable to use harrows up and down the row in such a way as not to come in contact with the young plants. However, just as soon as they are up and established, the weeder is one of the very best implements for cultivating the peanut crop. It may be run diagonally across the field at frequent intervals.

V.—Use Peanuts as Aid to Pork Production

WITH the boll weevil on us in North Carolina, it is going to be necessary for cotton farmers to immediately turn their attention to other types of farming. There is no type of farming that can be more quickly and easily entered into by the cotton farmer than hog-raising. The producing of pork cheaply is very closely linked up with peanut growing. As experiments by some of the Southern experiment stations have proved, pork can be produced more cheaply on peanuts than on any other crop. Inasmuch as they are a valuable legume and under ordinary conditions an excellent money crop, the farmers may well make plans for a larger utilization of the peanut. If conditions are not favorable for harvesting them as a commercial product, there is always an excellent opportunity to convert the peanut crop into pork, thus eliminating all costs of harvesting and marketing and at the same time very rapidly improving the soil. Where the porkers are allowed to harvest the peanut crop, the vines, which have a very high fertilizing value, are evenly distributed over the field and the effect readily observed for a number of years in the growth of succeeding crops.

Eastern North Carolina, which is so well adapted to both peanuts and soy beans, should easily become one of the greatest hog-raising sections of the world.

VI.—Stand By the Peanut Exchange

THE peanut growers of Virginia and North Carolina should be proud of the fact that they were the first large group of Eastern farmers to perfect a cooperative marketing organization on the commodity basis. No doubt the organization will pass through the most trying experience in its history during the first season, and after that its ultimate success will be more easily attained. The farmers all over the peanut belt should stand by the association at any sacrifice at this time, because the organized forces that have fattened at the expense of the growers are bending every effort to break it down. Should they succeed, the growers will be at the mercy of the peanut trust for all time.

VII.—Grow Good Quality of Product

THERE are many ways the grower can help the organization in addition to marketing the crop through the Exchange. Through the system of commodity marketing, peanuts will be sold according to grade. In the early days of commercial peanut-growing, the good quality peanuts brought a premium, just as they will under the cooperative system of selling. Farmers can materially add to their income from the crop and aid the exchange by producing only high grade goods and planting only the acreage they can properly care for. T. E. BROWNE.