Welcome to FARMVILLE The Busiest Town in U. S. A.

THE FARMVILLE ENTERPRISE

Section One

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SOME FACTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY FARMERS BEFORE SIGNING CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING PLAN

As Seen by the Editor of the Southern Tobacco Journal and Published in Its Issue of January 17, 1622. Published in "The Enterprise" by Request.

The Southern Tobacco Journal offers no apology for the position it is taking in the matter of the Co-operative Market, as applied to leaf tobacco. We believe that we are doing the tobacco farmer a favor in warning him against a proposed plan that we honestly believe will if put into operation work to his disadvantage. Not only this, but if the proposed plan should be put into operation, the entire business interest of the tobacco centers of this country would be embarrassed. It is a matter of surprise to us that bankers and other business concerns do not realize the seriousness of the proposed proposition. Since announcing our position in this matter, and stating our objections to the plan as affecting the tobacco interest, we have received many letters of endorsement of our position and hundreds of tobacco farmers have talked the matter over with us. We find also that bankers and others who are interested are they can get. In our issue of week before last, we endeavored to present facts in connection with the proposition. Our editorials were extensively copied and we were forced to issue several hundred copies extra, which were promptly taken by those seeking information. We have recently come into contact with hundreds of tobacco farmers who are anxious to know what all this thing of tobacco Co-operative Marketing Plan means. We believe that we are stating the truth when we say that not more than 10 per cent of those with whom we have come in contact are in favor of the plan. In fact many with whom we have talked, who have signed the five year contract, are anxious to be released from the obligation.

We want to say again, and we want to say it with all the emphasis at our command, that, we are not influenced in our position on account of any personal interest. Those who know us best know that we have nothing to gain. Now let us address a few remarks to our farmer friends as well as others who should be interested in their welfare.

You are called upon, gentlemen, to enter into an agreement with some one (God knows who). This agreement is supposed to bind you for 5 years. In this agreement you agree to pool your tobacco. That is you place your tobacco in classes with hundreds of others. This tobacco is then prepared for market, re-dried, etc. It is then stored and buyers invited to inspect, etc. Then you deliver your tobacco to be classed. You are told that you are to receive 60 per cent of the value of your tobacco, not the remainder, or what is left, after it is sold, and delivered. Of course you know that out of the tobacco that is sold you are to pay your proportion of the cost of grading, storage, etc. This all you will investigate thoroughly, and when you do, you will find "the nigger in the woodpile."

Do you believe that a man will come from his home in California, leave his tobacco farmer unless he can make big pay? Do you believe men who are active in business are working for you? You are not fools and you know better.

We are frank to say that we believe the Co-operative Marketing Plan as applied to other products is a good thing. We believe that the plan is a good one when applied to such products as farmers' produce, for home and direct consumption, but when it comes to leaf tobacco all fair minded men will admit that Auction System of selling leaf tobacco is the best.

The fact is gentlemen, that your friend the tobacco farmer has been the Warehouseman. The tobacco warehouseman stands between the buyer and the seller, and as he gets his pay from the farmer, it is his duty to see that his patrons receive the market price. The farmer makes his crop, puts it in good shape, takes it to the market, places it on the warehouse floor, where all buyers can see it and when he is informed he can receive the highest market price. The farmer gets the market price for his tobacco for which he receives cash on the spot. This system is all that can be desired and the very best and most of selling leaf tobacco. Those who enter into the five year agreement will regret their action and those who refuse to be led into a departure from the old way of selling tobacco will certainly be glad of their action.

To the business men of the tobacco centers of the tobacco producing section we suggest that they look into the proposition which is pending. A few men are putting forth every effort to destroy a system of selling leaf tobacco which would if successful work a serious injury to some of the most progressive towns and cities of the country, and at the same time would hurt the farmer, who wants all he can get for his tobacco, and who needs it when his crop is cured.

In conclusion gentlemen, what is all of this thing about any way? Here comes a man from California—crossing the continent 3,000 miles, and as he comes he could find in some sections thousands of acres tobacco land. Suppose he should find in some section that land is cheap, that labor is cheap, that fuel is cheap, that he can make a crop of tobacco for less than it costs you to make your crop, that he can place his tobacco on the market and have it sold and the money in his pocket in less than it takes you to get your tobacco to market, that he can do all this and still have a profit on his investment, what chance would you have to compete with him? Suppose he should come to your section and find a section where several hundred farmers pool their tobacco to be classed. Now gentlemen, honestly, do you for a moment believe that there are a set of men on earth that can classify tobacco to the satisfaction of all concerned.

These are only a few of the difficulties, but there are others. Farmers as a class are no different from others in that they need their money when they earn it. It will be a sad day for many poor farmers who work hard all the year, who goes in debt for his fertilizers and other supplies, when he is forced to wait indefinitely for a big part of his tobacco money.

Now come on, gentlemen, and think of this matter seriously. Did it ever occur to you that it would have been fairer to the farmer if this contract had been for one year instead of five. Why is this five year business? Think for one minute that banks or the Government will loan money to pay for tobacco on a valuation that would in all probability be out of reason. And then again it is going to take millions of dollars to pay other expenses. We will leave it to you to tell us where it is coming from. Another thing gentlemen, and that is, if this great scheme should be put into operation—those who are stock holders (and every man who stores tobacco is a stock holder) become speculators or dealers in leaf tobacco. Suppose the concern has several million pounds on hand to be sold. There are only a few buyers who cut a big figure. The tobacco that is for sale is of course put up in hogsheads, redried etc. One of these big concerns wants the tobacco handled and re dried in its own way—and so do the others—and the result is that in all probability none of the tobacco is handled to the satisfaction of a possible purchaser.

Going back to the grading proposition