

Tarheel In Washington

By Lester Baker

A look at farm crops reveals that cotton — one of North Carolina's chief farm products — is being severely challenged by various other fiber products. The competition is so keen, in fact, that many farmers are beginning to wonder whether or not cotton will continue to reign as "King of the Fiber World."

Scientific research in recent years has brought remarkable improvements in rayon, nylon, and other synthetic fibers, thus greatly expanding their markets. Can research do the same for cotton? The answer is "Yes." Experts tell us that continued research, together with more widespread adoption of mechani-

cal methods of cultivation and harvesting will enable cotton to meet the rising challenge to its markets from improved synthetic fibres.

Cotton is by no means ready to abdicate as "King of the Fiber World." The Department of Agriculture in Washington has revealed that laboratory and industrial developments already demonstrate that cotton can be "tailor-made" for special uses through chemistry and modern technology. And the increased mechanization of cotton farming — which may well revolutionize southern agriculture just as drastically as the cotton gin did 150 years ago — promises to lower cotton's production costs substantially below those of rayon and most other competing materials.

North Carolina farmers produced approximately 680,000 bales of cotton in 1948. This is an increase of 228,000 bales over the amount produced in 1947. The State has about 718,000 acres of farm land which is used for cotton farming. Therefore, the average of lint per acre for 1948 was 454 pounds.

The Regional Research Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture in New Orleans, La., has been quite successful in conducting research in cotton. The Laboratory has developed chemical finishing methods to make cotton absorb water more readily for improved towel fabrics, or to make it water repellent.

Other processes enable cotton to resist the effects of light and weather (in awnings and other outdoor fabrics) and give it increased electrical and heat resistance for use in insulating fabrics and such products as covers for mangels and presses used by the laundry industry.

Still another Laboratory process called "partial acetylation", now in limited commercial use, makes cotton fabric virtually rot-proof and water-proof without altering its characteristic feel and appearance.

The future economic condition of the entire South depends heavily upon the cotton industry. For example, the value of the cotton

crop to southern farmers in 1947 amounted to 1 1-2 billion dollars for lint, and on additional quarter billion dollars for cottonseed.

Perhaps no farm products other than cotton has aided to a more remarkable extent to bring a rapid rate of progress and advancement to the South. The up-and-coming farmer is acutely aware, however, that continued research and more widespread adoption of mechanical methods of cultivation and harvesting are necessary, if cotton is to meet the rising challenge to its markets from improved synthetic fibers.

In order to make King Cotton's crown more secure, we must by all means encourage trends in research, mechanization, and industrialization. The advancement of these trends will mean an even greater amount of both rural and urban prosperity.

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We have spoken of family budgets before and you will probably be hearing more and more about them. The family won't mind eating less elaborate meals for a change. In fact this is an ideal time to have some of the old favorites — the simple, down-to-earth dishes that are so nourishing and hearty.

Just by way of an idea or two how long since you've served a meat and vegetable stew for dinner, or spareribs and sauerkraut? Or spaghetti and meat balls? These dishes (and many others just as tasty) make use of the less expensive cuts of meat, so they're good budget standbys. Another thrifty item is pork sausage — than which there is nothing more satisfying on a cold, snappy day. Sausage goes well with so many different foods, too; it makes a heavy team with pancakes or waffles, eggs, potatoes and sweet potatoes, baked beans, fried apples, and a multitude of other foods.

A wise homemaker makes the most of seasonal foods and those which are plentiful — it's a good way to save money and enjoy foods at their best. For example, this is the time of the year when

pork supplies are largest — so it's a fine time to serve this meat with the luscious and satisfying quality. Below you will find a recipe for Pork Steak with Onions which is just a bit different and wonderfully good. It's the kind of dish that will make the men-folks sit up and take notice. Incidentally this can be cooked in the deep well cooker of your range, if you prefer — after the meat has been browned and the liquid added.

Another excellent food to keep in mind right now is Cheese (which is also on the plentiful list). Many delicious and nourishing main dishes made with cheese can take the place of meat occasionally. The Cheese and Vegetable Fondue below is a good example; it also offers a tasty way to use leftover cooked or canned vegetables.

Pork Steak with Onions
2 pounds pork steak, cut 1-inch thick

2 medium-size onions, sliced
1-4 cup flour
2 teaspoons salt
1-8 teaspoon pepper
1 small green pepper, cut in thin strips
3 tablespoons hot water
1- Cut pork steak into individual servings and trim off excess fat. Dredge with mixture of flour, salt and pepper. (Save leftover flour mixture for thickening gravy.)

2- Put pork trimmings in heavy frying pan over Second heat until fat melts out. Pour off all but 2 teaspoons of fat. Add meat and brown on both sides.

3- Lay onion slices and green pepper strips over and around the meat. Add water; cover tightly. Switch to Low and cook until meat and vegetables are tender, about 1 hour.

4- Remove vegetables and meat. Combine remaining flour mixture with 1-2 cup cold water, add to gravy left in pan, stirring constantly until thickened. Serve over meat and vegetables. Serves 6.

Cheese and Vegetable Fondue

1 cup hot milk
1 cup soft bread crumbs
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1-2 pound American cheese, shredded
2 cups cooked, diced vegetables

1 tablespoon chopped onions
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 teaspoon salt
1-8 teaspoon pepper
3 eggs, separated.
1- Combine hot milk, crumbs, butter or margarine, cheese, onion, parsley, salt and pepper in 2-quart saucepan. Place on Warm

heat, and stir until blended.
2- Add beaten egg yolk and well drained vegetables. Cook slightly.

3- Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into 2-quart casserole.

4- Bake in 325 deg. F. oven for 50 minutes or until set. Serves 6.



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