

Do You Know the Cost of Your Crop?

To Fix the Price of Our Crops we Must Know the Cost of Production---Few Farmers Keep Books---A Lead Pencil a Valuable Farm Implement.

Nearly every one who undertakes to talk on the subject of controlling the price of cotton emphasizes with more or less strength the fact that the cotton farmer is about the only man in the world who, when he has something to sell, asks the buyer "what he will give for it," instead of having the buyer ask "what he will take" for it. To a large extent this is lamentably true and should by all means be corrected. There is no doubt that one of the chief reasons why this is true is the fact that nearly all, or the largest part of the cotton that is raised, is raised upon the credit system and so really does not belong to the farmer, but is owned by the man who advanced the money with which to raise it.

The true way for the farmer to be able to fix the price of his cotton is for him to so manage as to be able to raise that crop without having to secure it for his advances; in other words to go upon the cash basis, especially as far as cotton is concerned. The farmer is told that he can do this by diversifying his crops, by first raising all he needs for himself and family at home and by making his cotton a surplus crop—all of which is true. Then there is no doubt much can be done towards improving the price of cotton by the adoption of more economical methods of marketing and by the working out of some scheme by which the producer can borrow a portion of the value of his product, at a reasonable cost to himself, and at the same time giving the lender ample security for the loan. It is along these or some such lines that the large fluctuations in the price of cotton will eventually at least to some extent be obviated. It is really these great fluctuations and the uncertainty that they produce as to what we will get for our labor that causes the trouble in cotton raising more than cheap cotton. If we knew that we were sure to get eight or ten or twelve cents for our crop at the time that we planted it, we would cut our cloth according to our pattern. But even if this millennium should ever come, how many of our farmers would be able to fix the price at which they could sell their product and make a reasonable profit thereon. Before this can be done we must know what the cotton cost us, and except in a very general and hazy way, we venture the assertion that there are very few of our readers who can give an intelligent reply to the question of cost of their crop. Yet farming is as distinctly a business as any other occupation and the merchant, the factory or the railroad that does not keep a close record of the cost of each operation and all raw material would last but a very short while. While the keeping of a set of books upon the farm need not be anything like as complicated as is necessary for any of the above, yet one will be astonished at the many facts that even the simplest form of books would soon disclose. Any one can keep a simple memorandum. If you pay out any money, put it down on one side of the page. When money is received, put it down on the other side of the page. Now when putting it down it is very easy to say what the money was spent for or from what source it was derived. When starting put down also the amount of money you have on hand and the value of all property. Then

at the end of the year add up the two columns. The difference will tell you at least whether you have made or lost money and if cotton is all you have sold it will tell you how much it has cost you to produce that cotton. On the other hand, it will be very simple to amplify this system. If you are raising some livestock, open a livestock account. Charge this account with all the livestock you have at the beginning of the year, as well as with every expense directly connected with them during the year's operations. Included in this will, of course, be a record of the value of what feed they eat and a fair charge for pasturage. Then when you derive any revenue from this livestock, credit this account and at the end of the year credit this account with the value of the livestock on hand. So an account can be kept with each department of the farm. If the farm is any size it is a most excellent idea to divide it up into fields and keep an account, as it were, against the soil of each field. By so doing we will soon learn that a certain field or type of soil produces paying crops of one kind, while if another crop is planted the net result will be a loss. Thus we learn, as it were, to adopt our plans to the soil and to plant certain crops on certain types or fields. There is no question that there is many a good acre on the average farm of the south that has the double duty of not only paying or its own use, but also of making up the loss caused by planting other land in crops to which they were not so well adapted. In other words, the unproductive acre that is causing a loss in a certain crop might yield a handsome profit if planted to some other. You can tell by the yield whether it pays to plant a certain crop on a certain field; sometimes, yes but very often this is not possible. That land may give you a good crop but it may have cost more in work and time and fertilizer to produce that yield than did the other land that maybe did not yield quite so much, and after all it is difference between cost and production that governs our profit not the big crop. We believe that the most profitable implement on the average farm of the south is really a lead pencil if properly used.

Try it in a small way this year, and see what good interest it will pay you.—Texas Farmer.

FARM SANITATION.

Disease germs thrive in the filth of dark, damp places. Sanitary surroundings must therefore be clean, well-lighted and dry. Such surroundings tend not only to prevent the spread of disease, but also aid greatly in recovery from diseases when once contracted.

Lime is used for many purposes on the farm. It is the cheapest of all the disinfectants, and is very useful when applied as white wash for the disinfection and sweetening of cellars, privies, barns, stables, poultry houses and other buildings. Unless it can be kept from the air, lime wash should be made up fresh before using. Air-slaked lime is of no value as a disinfectant.—Exchange.

Carry a lead-pencil in your pocket, and date the eggs as you gather them each day.

NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS' UNION PLEDGE

.....Local Union No, County of, N. C.

We hereby pledge ourselves to plant, or have planted, on all lands owned by us, or under our charge during the year 1912, at least one acre of cultivated or hoed crops for each and every acre planted to cotton or tobacco.

We further agree, as far as possible, to use only FERTILIZER MATERIALS and do HOME MIXING, instead of buying ready mixed guanos, and in order that we may be able to greatly reduce the amount of fertilizer necessary, we also agree to adopt a more economical system of farming, to do more deep plowing, sow more legumes and to adopt some system of crop rotation.

We further agree, as far as possible, to run our business on a cash basis during the year 1912, and if compelled to assume obligations for future payment, we will endeavor to have amounts mature on two dates, viz.: one-half in December and the other half in May.

Signed in my presence, this theday of..... 1912.

....., Secretary.
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