

The Folly Of Farming With Fire

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From time to time, for the past several weeks, I have been trying to co-ordinate my thoughts and prepare an article on "The Folly of Farming With Fire." Much to my delight, the March issue of Progressive Farmer and Southern Ruralist, an unusually attractive number, by the way, came to hand containing an editorial entitled "Fires Hinder the Almighty's Plans." I had just decided to show my appreciation of this splendid and timely editorial, by using it, when I received Extension Division for March, a publication issued by the Extension Division, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, with an article in the Agronomy section under this caption "The Folly of Promiscuous Burning."

The editorial and article are so superior to what I had in mind that I am using them, although a little late, hoping that I may be helpful in bringing this valuable material to the attention of land-owners and farmers who might not otherwise be reached. Fires hinder the Almighty's Plan "We have said it before, but we say it again: When foolish man lets land become impoverished and infertile, the Almighty Himself comes in and tries to rebuild it. He tries to restore the fertility man has robbed it of.

Maybe there are other plans He might use, but as a matter of fact, He uses just one—cover crops and humus. For first aid, He sets out broomsedge whose thick root masses help soil stop washing. Then He adds numerous weeds and grasses. He scatters pine seed in generous profusion and later brings in young deciduous trees. If we but gave the Almighty time to work out His own plans, a great part of our so-called "worn-out land" would soon provide either profitable timber growth or become fit for producing other timber crops. And if we should but cooperate with Him in His efforts to check washing and to provide humus, grass, and trees, recovery would be rapid indeed.

"But do we cooperate with Him? Not at all. At least not most of us. Most of us burn off grass and broomsedge. Many of us are unconcerned when fires kill young deciduous trees and stunt the growth of all pines they touch. We burn up countless thousands of dollars worth of nitrogen and humus in the form of broomsedge, dry grass, pine straw and forest leaves, and thereby invite three disasters: (1) Deprived of the humus over the Almighty has developed, the land starts washing again. (2) Deprived of the nitrogen which goes up in smoke, the soil becomes as poor as it was when the Almighty's own process of soil-restoration began. (3) We are forced to buy high priced commercial nitrogen to take the place of that we have let burn up.

"The land is mine," said Jehovah of old. And still when foolish man impoverishes it, He seeks its restoration. Shall we cooperate with Him or hinder Him? Every fire that sweeps over our fields or forests this spring constitute our answer to this question."

The Folly of Promiscuous Burning
At this season of the year the fields in some country sections of Virginia are clouded with a smoky haze not unlike a premature Indian summer. The smell of smoke is in the air and, if one would post himself upon any eminence, he could see smoke rising from fields and valleys in almost every direction. No, this is not smoke from secluded stills nor is it caused by moonshiners' signal fires. The fires which cause the smoke to which we refer were openly and deliberately started by farmers. A strange and anomalous fact, since they are destroying the thing that is most needed for improving Virginia soils, that is, organic matter which is the source of soil humus. Ask the farmer why the fires were started and his reply is: "I am burning the broomsedge so that the cattle can get the early grass" or "I am burning off a field so that it will be easy to plow." Either of these replies would have been perfectly plausible one hundred years ago and the reasoning behind them would have been good. At this time our soils were relatively rich in organic matter and our forefathers were engaged in subduing a wilderness and building a republic destined to be a Nation hitherto unsurpassed in wealth and contributions to art, science and invention.

Fertile soils were everywhere and, as they were worn out in the east, one had only to move west to find land rich in humus and fertility. This is no longer true. The once fertile soils of the west are already beginning to show the results of exploitive farming; and there are no more virgin soils left to which we can move. It, therefore, becomes increasingly important that farmers, particularly in the east where lands have been found longest, conserve their soil resources.

Organic matter is the only thing that distinguishes soils from mere rock fragments. It increases the water holding capacity of soils, thereby reducing losses in times of drought.

the soil and the bacteria in their time make plant food available. In fact a soil devoid or low in organic matter is almost invariably poor and unproductive. Plants which grow on the soil are the principal sources of organic matter and for this reason should be efficiently utilized.

"A good rule to follow is to burn nothing on the farm that will decay. The practice of green manuring is based on the knowledge that organic matter improves soil. This is well understood by most farmers. Yet it is a not an uncommon sight to see a farmer burning off fields on one part of his farm while on another part he is growing crops like cowpeas and soybeans for turning under. The writer has actually seen weeds burned off and the land then prepared and seeded to a crop for turning under for soil improvement. Of course, this is not sound farming; for a crop of weeds is just as valuable for soil improvement as the same quantity of rye, buckwheat or other non-legumes turned under, and is almost as valuable as the same quantity of cowpeas or soybeans. It is not necessary to burn off weeds to make land plow well, as a colter on the plow beam or a chain attached to the beam and double-tree will drag them down, making them easy to cover.

"Where clover or other vegetable matter is dragged into bunches in plowing, the trouble can be obviated by running a disk over the land ahead of the plow. Time so utilized is not lost; the disk helps to pulverize the soil and aids in mixing the vegetable matter with it. It should be borne in mind that not only is valuable organic matter lost when weeds are burned, but the plant food that these weeds took from the land is largely lost. Weeds in their growth use the same plant nutrients as do cultivated crops, and, when they are burned, the light ash blows away and practically everything the weeds took out of the soil is lost.

It is true that burning over pastures kills some briars and brush, but it does not make pastures earlier as is generally assumed. Actual tests show that grass gets high enough to graze where it is protected by old grass sooner than it does where it is burned off. Briars and small undergrowth can be easily mowed at any time and it is usually much less than the fertilizing value of the organic matter destroyed by burning off the area.

"In parts of the State where corn is not followed by winter small grains, the stalks are left standing in the field and only the ears are harvested. It is a common practice in some sections to burn the stalks left in the field. At the present price of fertilizers, the plant food in the corn stalks on an acre is worth from five to ten dollars and this does not include the value of the organic matter which, in some cases, is worth as much as the plant food. Of course, these stalks should be turned under. If chopped with a stalk cutter, they are easily turned under and decay readily.

"Gardners should also conserve all organic matter possible instead of burning it. In cleaning off the garden for spring planting, all weeds, stalks and other rubbish which cannot be easily plowed under should be piled in some convenient place for a compost heap. To this may be added leaves from the yard and all waste from vegetables during the summer. If one hundred pounds of ground limestone and seventy-five pounds of superphosphate is added to the heap for every ton of litter and the pile left to decay until next spring, a nice lot of compost which is good for all vegetables and flowers will be the result.

This question of adding humus to the soil becomes more and more important each year. In the older countries of the world everything on the farm that will decay readily is carefully preserved and returned to the soil. In this country our motto seems to be "If it is in the way, burn it." Such a policy, if persisted in, will eventually lead to poor land or small profits for not much profit is left from farming if all of the organic matter needed by the soil has to be purchased or furnished by crops sown for this purpose.

OVERPAY



"Pa, what is a bookworm?"
"A man who loves books," my son said.
"That is a man who loves his a book."

Insect Damage Is Fought in Winter

Stored Seed Grain Should Be Protected From All Bugs; Treat in Bins.

By G. H. Brannon, Extension Entomologist, North Carolina State College.—WNU Service. Carbon disulphide or carbon tetrachloride may be used effectively to kill insects in stored grain this winter. A barrel or other container which can be made air tight will be suitable, then fasten two thicknesses of heavy wrapping paper on the barrel top. If the seed is heavily infested, a full cup of the disulphide or tetrachloride may be used.

After two or three days, examine the seed. If any insects are still alive, repeat the process. The seed should be kept in air tight containers until ready to plant, or insects will reinfest it. When ready to plant, spread out on the floor and the gas will evaporate in a short time.

Storage bins may be used to treat seed in large quantities if the bins are fairly air tight. Twenty pounds of the disulphide will be enough for each 1,000 cubic feet of space in the bin. After pouring it on the seed, cover with sacks to help hold in the gas. The treatment should be applied in the middle of the day when the temperature is warmest.

Air slaked lime may also be used in treat grains for insects. In treating quantities of seed, equal parts of lime and seed may be used. For small amounts, the ratio of lime should be larger than that of the seed.

Droth Corn Not Likely to Hurt Farm Live Stock

There is little danger of poisoning live stock by feeding droth-damaged cornstalks if samples tested at the college of agriculture, University of Illinois, are typical of corn throughout the country, says Dr. Robert Graham, chief in animal pathology and hygiene. Innumerable flytraps have been received by the University of Illinois pathology laboratory relative to the possible poisonous properties of droth corn, as well as sudan grass, and apparently many stockmen are afraid to feed either of these roughages.

Of the many samples of suspicious droth corn that have been tested in the laboratory, not a single specimen has proved to be poisonous, Doctor Graham said. Although it is known that sorghum plants can develop fatal amounts of hydrocyanic acid under arrested growth, the danger in the case of corn seems to be rather doubtful.

The poisonous properties of sudan grass have also been recognized during certain stages of growth, but here again bona fide evidence of injury when fed to live stock was not obtained in one instance. An experimental horse was fed the grass for a period of three weeks without showing any ill effects.

Illness which may be mistaken for food poisoning is sometimes caused by too sudden change in rations, Doctor Graham points out.

Huge Wheat Crop in Canada

The 1934 wheat crop of Canada is officially estimated at 277,304,000 bushels. This is an increase of about 7,000,000 bushels over the unrevised estimate for 1933, but is considerably lower than the average for recent years. Previous to 1933 the smallest Canadian wheat crop in the last ten years was 204,520,000 bushels in 1929; the highest was over 500,000,000 in 1928. The low 1934 production is due mainly to unfavorable climatic conditions in large areas of the western provinces where most of Canada's wheat is grown. The average wheat yield an acre for all Canada in 1934 is placed at 11.6 bushels, compared with a long-time average of 17.1. The estimated production of other principal grains in Canada shows an increase over the previous year. Oats are up about 87,000,000 bushels, barley up about 5,440,000 bushels, rye up about 2,300,000 bushels, and flaxseed up about 460,000 bushels.

Save Soy Beans and Straw

Soy beans are likely to be a very good cash crop this year and next, and for this reason an effort should be made to thresh as many of the beans as possible. Although the acreage grown this year was about 50 per cent larger than was grown last year, the chances are that, on account of the droth, more was cut for hay than was the intention at the time the seed was planted. In this connection, do not overlook the fact that soy bean straw is a comparatively nutritious forage—worth enough to make it profitable to save as much as possible. That there will be an exceedingly strong demand for soy bean seed next spring cannot be doubted, first for the reason that it is a most excellent crop to grow on land contracted to the government, and second, that it is one of the very best crops to grow in chinch bug infested areas.—Wallace' Farmer.

Damage by Meadow Mice

The common meadow mouse is a harmless looking little chap, but he is bad medicine for the farmer. A meadow mouse eats about 80 grams, or a little over an ounce of green food every day. That runs up to 29 pounds in a year. A hundred mice will steal away over a ton of green grass or clover in a twelvemonth. A hundred mice to an acre is not an unusual number in meadows favorable to their habits, while in "mouse years" the number has been estimated at thousands.

MAKES U. N. C. HONOR ROLL

Herman Ward, who returned to the University of North Carolina this week to resume his studies after spending the spring holidays with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ward, made the honor roll at the University during the last quarter. Herman is a freshman.

Legal Notices

State of North Carolina
County of Perquimans

Henry L. Perry
vs.
Mary Perry

The Defendant being named will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Perquimans County; that said action is for absolute divorce on the grounds of two years separation; And the said Defendant will further take notice that she is required to appear before the Clerk of the Superior Court of Perquimans County at his office in the town of Hertford on or before the 23rd day of April, 1935, and answer or demur to the complaint of the Plaintiff now on file in the office of the said Clerk of the Superior Court of said County in term time for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This the 23 day of March, 1935.
W. H. PITT,
Clerk of the Superior Court.
Mar.29, Apr.5, 12, 19

NOTICE

Sale Of Valuable Property
By virtue of a deed of trust executed to me by Margaret W. Cohoon and husband, Walter L. Cohoon, for certain purposes therein mentioned, which said deed of trust bears date January 20th, 1930, and is registered in the office of the Register of Deeds of Perquimans County, N. C., in Book 16 page 540, I shall at 12 o'clock Noon on MONDAY, APRIL 15th, 1935, offer for sale at the Court House door in the said County, at public auction, for cash, the property conveyed to me in said deed of trust, to wit:

The following described property, situate in New Hope Township, Perquimans County, North Carolina, to wit:

1st Tract. Bounded on the North by Tom Simons and Wilson heirs, on the East by Ferry Road, on the South by Ben Grey and on the West by the Public Road from Woodville to New Hope, containing 180 acres more or less, and being the lands where C. E. Layden, deceased, lived as his home.

2nd Tract Bounded on the North and East by C. E. Layden, South by Ford Canal, and West by road leading from New Hope to Woodville, containing 1 acre, more or less, and known as Hickory Grove school house lot.

Both tracts being parts of the Columbus Layden Lands.

And being the same property conveyed by Silas M. Wheebec, Commissioner, to Margaret Cohoon by deed dated January 6, 1930.

This March 13th, 1935.
J. KENYON WILSON,
Mar.22, 29, Apr.5, 12 Trustee.

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Having qualified as Administrator of the estate of Jordan Nixon, deceased, late of Perquimans County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at P. O. Box 59, Elizabeth City, N. C., on or before the 11th day of March, 1936, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

This 11th day of March, 1935.
W. C. JONES,
Administrator of Jordan Nixon
Mar.15,22,29, Apr.5, 12, 19.

NOTICE!

SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE

By virtue of a Mortgage Deed executed to me by Elithus Copeland and wife, Artelia Copeland, on the 29th day of May, 1929, for certain purposes therein expressed, the same being duly recorded in the Registry of Perquimans County in Mortgage Book No. 16, page 513, I shall offer for sale for cash to the highest bidder at the Court House Door in said County at 11 O'clock A. M., on the 8th day of April 1935, the property conveyed to me in said Mortgage, and described substantially as follows:

Beginning at J. E. Lane's line on Poplar Neck Road, thence Northerly along said line to "Ephraim Elliott Road," thence Eastwardly along said line to the Baker Ward tract, Thence Southerly along the Baker Ward line to J. E. Lane's line, Thence Westwardly along the J. E. Lane line to the first station, containing 50 acres more or less and known as the Elithus Copeland home place, being the place where he now lives.

J. E. LANE, Mortgagee.
Dated and posted
February 27th, 1935
Mar.7,14,21,28

SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE

By virtue of a Mortgage Deed executed to me by G. O. Chappell and his wife, Pearl Chappell, on the 6th day of February, 1929, for certain purposes therein expressed, the same being duly

recorded in the Registry of Perquimans County in Mortgage Book 17, page 213, I shall offer for sale for cash to the highest bidder at the Court House door in said County at 11 o'clock A. M., on the 8th day of April, 1935, the property conveyed to me in said Mortgage and described substantially as follows:

First Tract—Bounded by the lands of T. R. Ward, Richard Chappell, Roland Copeland, "Horton Lane Land," and the Run of Buffkin Branch, containing 24 acres more or less.

Second Tract—Bounded by the lands of M. D. Chappell, Isaac Chappell, N. O. Chappell, Albert Weston and the "Pocosin Lane," containing 2 1-2 acres more or less. The above said tract being the same land purchased by G. O. Chappell from M. L. Chappell and wife, Fannie Chappell, by deed dated February 6, 1929.

I will sell on the same date at the Court House door in Chowan County at 12 o'clock M. at public auction for cash by virtue of a certain Mortgage duly registered in the Registry of Chowan County in M. B. 41, page 210, the home place of the said G. O. Chappell, containing 10 acres more or less and bounded by "Sandy Ridge Road" and the lands of M. L. Chappell, L. A. Chappell and the "Berry Lane."

J. S. MCNIDER,
Mortgagee.
Dated and posted this February 27,
1935.
mar8,15,22,29

NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Having qualified as Administratrix of the estate of A. J. Jones, deceased, late of Perquimans County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at Winfall, N. C., on or before the 15th day of February, 1936, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

This 15 day of February, 1935.
MRS. BETTIE A. JONES,
Administratrix of A. J. Jones.
Mar.1,8,15,22,29, Apr.5

NOTICE OF SALE

By virtue of a Mortgage Deed executed to me by W. P. Chappell and wife, Sarah E. Chappell, L. P. Chappell and wife, Ruth Anna Chappell, and H. V. Chappell for certain purposes therein mentioned, which said Mortgage Deed bears date December 28th, 1928, and is registered in the office of the Register of Deeds of Perquimans County, N. C., in Book 17, page 190, I shall on Saturday, March 30th, 1935, at 12 O'clock M., offer for sale at public auction, for

cash, at the Court House Door in Hertford, N. C., the property conveyed to me in said Mortgage Deed, described as follows, to-wit:

A Tract of land in Belvidere Township bounded on the North by J. R. Chappell and Wm. Chappell, on the South by Elbert Chappell and J. R. Chappell, on the East by Elbert Chappell and Jas. O. Chappell, and on the West by the Sandy Ridge Road, containing 50 acres, more or less, and known as the W. P. Chappell home place, where he now lives.

Also one Tract containing 5 acres, more or less, bounded on the North South and West by G. A. Chappell and on the East by J. R. Chappell. This 27th day of February, 1935.

R. S. MONDS, Mortgagee.
Mar.7,14,21,28

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