

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE.

The Farmers' Voice recently sent out the following list of inquiries to the various experiment stations of the United States:

We are seeking to know the trend of the farmer's thought toward scientific agriculture, and whether the young people of the farm are becoming interested in making themselves capable of attaining the highest results from agriculture. We submit below a few questions to which we desire answers:

Is there a growing interest on the part of farmers in bulletins issued by your experiment station?

Is the number of pupils in the college increasing?

Is the length of time devoted to work in the agricultural department increasing?

There is a marked growth of interest on the part of farmers in the bulletins issued by our experiment station. The call for them is increasing constantly, and I find a very large number of farmers carefully preserving the bulletins.

In our college there is a noticeable increase in the number of students who take agricultural courses, but the number is far below what it should be. Few young men who come to us from the farm have the idea of returning to it at the close of their school course, though many of them do return. There seems to be a very general desire on the part of most of the bright young men on farms to get away from them. A number of things contribute to this. Understanding little of the sciences that underlie agricultural practices, they do not take a keen interest in their work, rather regarding it as drudgery. The spirit of enthusiasm that always characterizes an investigator and student is absent. Taking thus a trifling interest in rural affairs, they are attracted by the glare of city life, by the social advantages enjoyed by those living in the city. When they go to the city they meet men who read the daily papers and are posted on current events. This gives them a kind of feeling that they are in some way inferior to their city cousins.

I believe the remedy for these conditions lies in the thorough education of the farmer boys, education in the sciences of chemistry, physics, botany, zoology and in literature and language. Give them an education in no way inferior to that enjoyed by professional men, one that will arouse their interest in the things of nature, with which they have to deal, adding a full course in the special studies pertaining more directly to agriculture, such as soils and crops, tillage, fertilizers, reeds and breeding, etc.

Another matter of great importance in eradicating the existing distinction between city and country life is the daily delivery of mails in rural districts. How often do we hear it said that "He lives just far enough out to enjoy the advantages of both city and country." He enjoys the independence of country life, and can get the mail daily. His family also can enjoy the social advantages offered by proximity to the city.

If we are to attract bright young men to the farm we must give them the same advantages there that they would have elsewhere. The principal thing is to give them an opportunity to acquire that culture that comes from intellectual and moral development, such as the best institutions of higher learning give. And if we are going to make farmers out of students, agricultural sciences must be made the basis of their education. Next we must put the farmer in the closest possible touch with the outside world by delivering the daily paper at his door.

I wish you success in your efforts to ascertain the attitude of the farmer toward scientific education.

Pullman, Wash. W. J. SPILLMAN.

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