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POSSIBILITIES OF

Southern Maryland in Growing Live Stock.

A Letter from one of the Institute Lecturers.

The heavy rainstorm prevailing and the condition of the roads making it probable that only a few of the farmers of St. Mary's will be enabled to attend the Institute, Mr. Amoss being desirous of making his visit to the county as helpful to its citizens as possible, has suggested that I prepare a letter for the county press on the above topic.

I have now been well over Southern Maryland, in fact well over the State, and have studied the conditions from the point of view of a stock grower; but of that of a farmer rather than that of a ranchman.

The ranchman thinks of land as valuable only for the grass that it will grow, but the farmer realizes that the cultivated grains and grasses and legumes are much more valuable than the native grasses.

We are just now at the turning point in the livestock history of this country. The range men have had their day. The number of cattle being grown upon the range is constantly decreasing. The cultivated areas of the country henceforth must grow the meat products. Wherever corn or clover or other legume, as cow peas, will grow, there cattle can be profitably grown. Some of the most successful beef producers do not depend upon pasture at all. Soiling crops are relied upon during the Summer and the silo during the Winter, and 1000 pound steer made in half the time that is necessary under grazing methods.

The more rapid the gain and the earlier in life it is made the less the cost per pound. Another point of vital importance in growing beef is that animals must be protected from extreme cold in Winter and the torment of flies in Summer. The farm [illegible] range. We have found on Ohio farms that cattle allowed to run in the pastures during the Summer, suffering the torment of flies and depending upon the dry grass for feed make very little gain, and some years none. The tendency even on good blue grass farms is rapidly growing toward Summer feeding upon soiling crops or silage, during the extremely hot months.

Much labor may be avoided however, by allowing the animals to graze off the cultivated crops by turning upon them for a short time morning and evening. Rye, Winter oats, crimson clover, cowpeas and even corn may all be fed off in this way by hogs, sheep or cattle, thus reducing the labor involved to the minimum.

The great obstacle in the way of increased live stock production seems to be the thought of the great expense of wintering them. Modern methods of meat production very largely remove this objection. The animals are grown and marketed almost entirely between the winter seasons, leaving nothing but the breeding stock to be wintered, and the silo has come in greatly to simplify and cheapen this part of the work. An acre planted to corn and cow peas and the product preserved in silo will winter two head of cattle, and if the land were sowed to crimson clover at the last cultivation of the crop and covered lightly with manure during the winter from stable fed cattle, the same land would produce the crop for the silo [illegible] after year and in increasing amount, as the land would constantly increase in fertility under that management.

An acre of land should easily produce 500 pounds of beef by this plan each year, and beef that would bring as high price as any beef in the Mississippi Valley, if it was made upon the right kind of animals. That simply means a well bred and quick maturing animal, such as the Polled Angus, Hereford or Short Horn. These are the only three breeds that it would be at all profitable to keep for beef purposes in this latitude.

I am forced to recognize that there are now no cattle in the county or adjoining ones that it would be wise to employ for foundation stock. It would be far better business policy to go upon the Baltimore market or into the cattle breeding sections of Virginia and buy heifers or cows of one of the breeds mentioned and a bull of the same breed, as it will be worth much to have every animal in a car load just like every other one. The Angus and Hereford are preferable for this reason.

The only variance from this rule that would be wise, would be the use of an Angus bull upon Short Horn cows. That would give a uniformly black and polled lot of calves.

In localities where transportation to great market centers is slow and uncertain, cattle should be kept for beef alone, letting each cow raise her calf, as this plan involves the least labor. A calf grown in this way will make 1000 pounds in 12 to 15 months. If born in the fall, his mother will support him largely the first winter. In the spring, rye and crimson clover should be ready for him, and oats, cow peas and corn follow these, so that he shall have his fill of something nutritious every day. The dry cows may be forced to hunt for their feed, but never let the calf get hungry. This is the secret of profitable beef production, and the keeping of live stock is the foundation of profitable agriculture. With the revival of the live stock industry in England the yield of wheat has doubled.

The old adage that "the hoof of the sheep is golden" is based on the fact that the productivity of the land has increased with the increase of live stock.

H. P. MILLER.

THE SOUTHERN COW PEA.

ITS VALUE IN SOUTHERN MD.

All through the older cultivated sections of the country the complaint is common that our lands are deteriorating in productiveness. The soil is harder to cultivate, and bakes harder in summer, and dries out quickly so that crops suffer from drought more than formerly.

The great reason for all this lies in the fact that the humus or vegetable mold, that made the virgin soils fertile and productive, has all been used up. This humus is the most retentive of moisture of anything in the soil, and when it is used up the soil fails to retain the moisture and suffers from drought, and [illegible] not dissolved as they should [illegible] used are hence do not do the amount of good they would otherwise. The problem that confronts the farmers in all old cultivated sections is, how shall we restore this humus and render our soils more productive and more easily worked? When an old field is turned out to grow up in broomsedge and pines, nature does this work. The long tap root of the pine goes down into the unused subsoil and brings up matters that the culture of former days failed to find, and after a time the man who clears off the pines finds a fresh and productive soil because the vegetable mold has been restored to it. But this natural process is too slow. We cannot afford to wait for the broomsedge and the pine to restore the soil for us. Fortunately we can do it in a more rapid manner, while at the same time making the process of restoration profitable.

It has long been known that certain plants like clover, peas and other members of the family of plants known as legumes will in some way increase the productiveness of the soil on which they are grown. In fact they are able to get from the air the nitrogen, which is the most costly part of a commercial fertilizer, and can fix it in the roots of the clover or peas so that through their decay in the soil the following crop will be helped. But in much of our old soil it is very hard to get a growth of clover, especially in the South. Fortunately we have a Southern plant that more than fills the bill. The Cow pea has been grown for many generations in the South, but our people have hardly realized its full value both as a restorer of the humus to the soil and as a forage plant for cattle and horses. In the West the growers seem to be more rapidly coming to a realization of the value of the pea than our own people. The stock feeders in Illinois and Missouri are growing the pea in immense areas as the best hay they can get for stock of all kinds. The Director of the Experiment Station in Missouri urges the farmers there to stop the growing of timothy hay and to grow cow pea hay in preference as being a far better hay than timothy. And yet right here, where the pea will flourish better than in the West, our farmers are buying quantities of the western timothy when they could produce at home a far better hay, and at the same time increase the productiveness of their soils for other crop.

A large stock feeder in Illinois wrote to me that he had discovered that it was hardly worth while to save the hay in his feeding of stock, for having a large field of peas caught by an early frost, he let them die on the land and later he turned a bunch of cattle on the field and to his great surprise they got fat on the dead peas before the snow covered them. If one is growing the peas mainly for the improvement of his soil he can make them useful in a very economical manner by turning hogs on them as soon as ripe. The hogs will fatten rapidly and will need but tittle corn to finish them off, while the hogged down peas will be equal to a heavy coat of manure on the land. But the great value of the Cow pea to Southern Maryland will lie in the fact that they can be used profitably to replace the western hay now so largely imported into this section. One ton of well cured cow pea hay is worth more for feeding than two tons of the dead timothy so largely bought here. Hence the farmers of Southern Maryland could profitably enter into the production of beef cattle. If labor is scarce and hay making too costly then use the pea largely for grazing, for which purpose there is nothing better.

When the farmers of Southern Maryland fully wake up to what the Cow pea will do for them in the feeding of stock, the making of manure and all the while adding fertility to the soil, there will come a change that will cover the hills with flocks and herds that will bring prosperity to the farmers.

There has long been a notion among the growers of tobacco in many sections that the turning under of vegetable matter in the soil is injurious to the tobacco crop, and hence we see all over the country tobacco farmers burning off all vegetation and still further depleting their soil of humus in which it is already deficient. This is an error that is hard to overcome. But in North Carolina the best growers of the Gold leaf tobacco for which the State has become famous, use the cow pea largely for the production [illegible] of the soil. The soil in any section will grow the kind of tobacco that is adapted to it, and if improved in quality and productiveness will simply grow a large crop of the same kind of tobacco.

Right here then comes in the great importance of the cow pea in the development of improved farming in a tobacco section. It will enable the farmer to improve his tobacco crop through the improvement of the soil, and will enable him to make this improvement while making a profit out of live stock through the abundant forage the pea will furnish him. With plenty of cow pea hay and corn stover Southern Maryland could become a great stock feeding country, while at the same time there will be a development in the old money crop of tobacco.

The people of Southern Maryland have too long been tobacco *planters*. If they are to restore the prosperity of their section it must be by their becoming tobacco *farmers*. The feeding of live stock lies at the very foundation of successful farming, and the growing of forage for the feeding of live stock is an essential element in their production. The Northern farmer can grow clover, and should grow it, but the farmer of the South can do for his land and stock with the Cow pea in two or three months all that the Northern farmer can do with clover in two seasons. Hence it is evident that the pea is of far more [illegible] than clover, as it will enable us to shorten the rotation of crop, and to get at once on the poorest land the forage needed for the cattle. While the pea will enable us to get the nitrogen from the air, it is at the same time a greedy consumer of the mineral elements of the soil, and the place where we can do most for our land with commercial fertilizers is by using acid phosphate and potash for the improvement of the pea crop and then leaving the pea to do the rest.

As I have said, we must get to farming in a systematic manner and abandon the old ruts of the planting days. The cow peas can be planted among the corn at the last working and can be hogged down after the corn has been cut off as it should be. They can be sown purely for a hog and cattle pasture, or they can be sown after wheat is cut and made into hay later in the summer or early fall. We must remember that the crop is a tender one and the seed should not be sown till the soil is warm. There are numerous varieties of the cow pea. Some will mature their seed in 60 days like Warren's Extra early, others in 70 days like the Whippoorwill and still others in from 75 to 90 days. The latter ones are as a rule the heaviest forage makers. The early Black pea is about the best that could be used in Southern Maryland, but the Clay and the Whippoowill are both good. The late growing sort known as the Wonderful, and formerly called the Unknown in the South is rather too late in maturing for this section. But it is an upright and immense grower and when once it is acclimated would probably succeed as it has in Delaware. The hope of agriculture in Southern Maryland and all of the South lies in the cow pea. The crop that will feed stock and at the same time feed the soil has a combination of qualities that render it capable of bringing prosperity to the farm and the farmer alike. Tobacco growers in Southern Maryland have been practicing the planting idea with tobacco for generations, and have not grown rich at it. Try tobacco farming with peas at the bottom and get rich.

As to the quantity of seed to be sown per acre of the cow pea, if the crop is for hay or the general improvement of the soil by hogging down or plowing under when ripe, one bushel broadcast is about right. If for seed then sow in drills about half a bushel per acre and cultivate like beans. Never plow under the peas when green in warm weather, as there is danger that they will sour the soil to such an extent as to do more damage than good. The most profitable way to use the crop is by making hay of it, feeding to cattle and returning the manure to the land. A good growth of peas should make two tons of hay per acre worth ten dollars per ton for feeding, and by feeding this we can get its feeding value and by saving the manure carefully we can return to the soil seventy five per cent of the manurial value.

Many farmers think that the pea vines are very hard to cure as hay. This is a great error. I have cured [illegible] and never had any trouble whatever. I cut the peas when they are not wet with dew and let them lie till the next day. Then after the dew is dried off I rake them into winrows. The next day when dried off I rake them into shocks, and as soon as I can take a good handful and wring it hard and can see no sap run to the twist, I put the hay, while still limp, into the barn and pack it in as large a heap as possible. Then let it alone, and it will cure nicely. It will get quite hot, and if you get scared and go to stiring it you will let in the germs of mould and will have mouldly hay. But if undisturbed it will cure perfectly bright. Some of our growers in North Carolina pack the limp hay into rail pens and then cap the pens with a stack of straw and it cures perfectly. In fact if put into a heap it will cure anywhere. But it should always be protected from the weather as it will turn very black if stacked out unprotected, though cattle will still eat it readily. With the cow pea and corn fodder the farmers of Southern Maryland will need no pasture except a permanent pasture and there will be no need for the pasturing of their cultivated lands, unless it is found desirable to graze the peas instead of cutting them. Still it will be necessary to cut some for winter use if the cattle feeding is to be made successful. With the valuable food products that can be grown there is no reason why the farmers of Southern Maryland should not supply the Washington market with the best of beef, and compete in a profitable way with the West. It can be done and it should be done.

W. F. MASSEY.

MR. HUTCHINS' VIEWS.

What He Saw And What He Thinks

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Most of you know that Mr. Amoss gave a few Southern Maryland farmers a trip in December, and requested that they read a report of what they saw at the Institutes of their respective counties. It would consume a great deal of time to describe all that came under our observation, so I shall only submit a brief review of the last two days of our trip. Two years ago, at one of these meetings, Mr. Powell made the remark that Americans were fast becoming great meat consumers, and to meet the increasing demand, more attention would have to be given to stock-raising. These remarks were well timed, if what we saw at the Union Stock Yards is to be taken as evidence. Baltimore and Washington are logically *our* markets, and the food supplies should naturally come from nearby States. Yet such is not the case. With thousands of hogs, sheep and cattle in the yards, the majority were shipped by rail, from a distance.

The question arises: Do the growers of that stock make a profit? The answer is: They do, with the very same expenses that our Farmers would have to bear; and they, the heavy additional expense of a long haul, for lots of cattle that we saw were brought from Chicago, the other stock also coming from remote points. I would here lay stress on the methods pursued by our people and those who are already extensively in the stock business.

The first thing a wide-awake man does is to get a good stock basis, and then improve it all the time, by every possible means, especially by infusing new blood from best strains. This was very noticeable at the Stock Yards; and we had every means to ascertain every point connected with the business, for Mr. Hahns, the manager of the Union Stock Yards, was our escort, and nothing that we desired to see or know was too much trouble for him. Besides, Mr. Myers, one of the largest cattle dealers, carried us through pen after pen of cattle, explained the merits of different breeds, and we could see for ourselves, by comparison, what care and breeding was doing for the stock-raiser. Only the improved breeds were leaping over market prices, common cattle being neglected.

Improved breeds make quick growth, carry themselves well, lay on flesh rapidly and pay a handsome profit. In regard to our own methods with stock, they are simply crude. We look at the business in but one light, but that should not be so. We should know that stock ore kept to convert the coarse provender on the farm into an element of fertility, that our lands may not grow poor, and also as a money source. When these views of stock-raising become set in the mind details to achieve best [illegible] will [illegible] ing. For anyone who will make a start in stock-raising in connection with our present system of farming, it is my candid opinion that the splendid results will astonish them. Equip yourselves the best you can, under present circumstances, with the fixed purpose of attending to details and improvement, and you will soon be convinced that it was the wisest move of your life. Your farm will grow better crops, you will have money coming at a time that now brings you none, and home will present new attractions.

I must revert to Stock Yards, for they offer many advantages in handling cattle. In the first place, it is where the buyers congregate, for they have the opportunity of getting what they want, and it creates competition, which advances the price, the figures always a shade higher at the yards than on the wharf. The charges for selling are about the same, but your cattle are always fed and watered before they are weighed, which is a big item, when they have been kept from food and water for probably 48 hours. Another thing, these yards adjoin the Union Abattoir, under management of Mr. English, who kindly conducted our party through every part of that remarkable structure, offering as it does many inducements to handlers of stock. The charges for slaughtering and storing in cold storage [illegible] pany buys what is called the fifth quarter of all beeves killed there, and pays between seven and nine dollars for the same. A farmer having a bunch of cattle that are just right, and finds the market down, yet wants to stop feeding them, can simply send them direct to the Abattoir, have them butchered, the meat put in cold storage, and wait for prices to go up, and all for a very small sum, besides without the least trouble to himself, having disposed of all the parts that are usually hard to sell. In that case, you see the shipper can figure for himself exactly what his shipment will bring him.

I will say here, as an inducement to urge our Southern Maryland farmers to turn attention to stock-raising, that the price of cattle is sure to keep up, because, owing to contagious diseases prevailing in many sections of the West and South, Governor Smith, by proclamation, has quarantined against those places, and Maryland's meat inspectors, Dr. Meisner and Mr. Leary, both wide-awake, capable men, are always on the lookout for suspected cattle.

(Continued on Fourth Page.)