

Crops, Soils and Fertilizers

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Inquiries of Progressive Farmer readers cheerfully answered.

THOUGHTS FOR FARMERS.

I.—The Apple Crop.

Messrs. Editors: A. G. McMurray, Dimsdale, Polk County, N. C., about forty miles north of Spartanburg, is meeting with deserved success in raising apples. Last year he sold to one firm here about \$500 worth, and he will sell more this year. Of course that does not include all his crop. He plants his trees in a cove and they are well protected. He buys young nursery trees and does not do his own budding and grafting. He considers the Winesap the best apple for his farm. The tree is hardy, a free bearer and the fruit keeps well. The Starke is a fine apple, but not a long keeper. The Northern Spy is also good. He is increasing the number of trees every year. He now has about 600. He is also trying peaches and has about 600 bearing trees of select nursery fruit. But the peaches are not as safe as the apples, for they will keep only a short time. He generally markets them in Saluda. There are five or six counties in sight of Black Mountain that are capable of raising cabbage, potatoes and apples enough for the two Carolinas.

II.—Work in Hand.

Down in this State our farmers have bent all their energies to get the cotton out of the fields. They have succeeded. There is little left now. The fields are as barren as they generally are the first week in December. Most of it has been ginned. At last, after ten weeks of weather nearly rainless, the ground is wet again. The sowing of small grain has been put off until this date. It better to prepare ten acres well and fertilize liberally, rather than to sow double that much land in a careless way. Clay lands should be broken, subsoiled and well harrowed. Oats should be put in with a one-horse drill. The Gantt is the popular drill in this State and Georgia. It is said that a good drill is made in Charlotte. The drill opens the furrow, distributes the fertilizer, plants the oats and covers them, leaving high, sharp ridges between the rows which are 12 to 16 inches wide, according to the plow used for opening the furrow. A 5-inch shovel will make 14-inch rows. Care must be used so that one furrow will not be filled by the succeeding one. A lively hand will plant one and a half to two acres a day in this way. It makes the oat crop a certainty. Freezes will not kill them and they will stand a dry spring and make a good yield. The writer sowed the Appler oats on thin land with a light application of manure last November. They did not come up for two months. Although the spring was so dry that they did not grow more than 24 to 26 inches high, they made 15 bushels to the acre, the oats weighing 35 pounds to the bushel as they came from the thrasher. The same careful preparation should be made for wheat. Two acres well prepared will make more than six scratched in carelessly.

III.—General News.

Two or three South Carolina counties have held fairs. One township in Spartanburg County prepared for a large exhibit this week, but the managers found it necessary to put it off yesterday. The farmers and stockraisers of the section, Woodruff, are enterprising and thrifty. The State Fair was a great success. One fault of our farmers is that they do not advertise things they have for sale. It is usual to see men at this time of the year hunting seed wheat and oats. Many of them do not read advertisements when they are issued. Our State is now better off financially than it has been for years. Merchants will have to carry few accounts over. Many farmers have surplus money.

CHARLES PETTY.

Spartanburg Co., S. C.

Suggestions and Inquiries About Corn Fodder and Sweet Potatoes.

Messrs. Editors: As there are yet quite a number of farmers who follow the old custom of "stripping fodder" allow an old farmer to give an experiment made with a few rows of corn.

The fodder was pulled and weighed when dry from a select plat, and the same sized plat left till corn was dry; the corn from each plat was gathered and weighed separately, and the corn from the plat not stripped, weighed as much as the corn and fodder both from the plat that was stripped. Now as a pound of corn is worth more than a pound of fodder we can see readily that the labor of stripping fodder is lost, and it is surely not such fun as to do it merely for the fun of it. Of course if the fodder stays on the stalks till about dry, there would be no such loss of the corn, but the fodder would then not be worth the pulling. So we may safely conclude that as long as cowpeas and crabgrass will grow on our soils the time used in "pulling fodder" is entirely lost.

Us down-easters here have generally housed our sweet potatoes, and we have fair crops. I would like to know from some more experienced potato raiser (I've been at it fifty years) why we sometimes find such changes in contiguous hills of potatoes. Last week we took out half an acre of Patasaw yams, getting one hundred bushels of good potatoes. I noticed one hill with eight potatoes that averaged a pound each, while the next hill had only four potatoes averaging about a pound each, and the next hill had only one potato and it was barely a pound in weight. I put out the fertilizer in person and know it was evenly distributed. Now what I wish to know is, How to get the other hills up to that eight pound hill? As my rows were three feet apart, and hills one and a half feet apart, a little calculation will show us that distance gives us 9,680 hills on an acre, and with eight pounds to the hill we would get 77,440 pounds, or more than 1,200 bushels to the acre. Now, I think the average potato crop is about one hundred bushels to the acre around here, and although mine doubled that average, yet it was only one-sixth of what might be made on an acre, if we only knew how to make all the hills grow eight pounds to the hill. There is more for some of us to learn than we have learned. My hogs have been on sweet potatoes since the middle of August, and on cowpeas one month of this time, as well as on potatoes, so a few weeks feeding of corn will make twelve porkers greasy enough for a family of eight persons for one year, and perhaps a little extra.

The cotton crop is doing fairly well here in Craven, and, with a few exceptions, the picking is well up, for the weather has been very favorable.

Our hay is the finest for years in quality, and up in quantity.

We would like to live constantly in a state of thanksgiving, and the man whose very soul does not go up in thankfulness of another bountiful crop, and such fine weather to save it, might as well quit farming in this beautiful Southland and go to Manila, or some other foreign port. A few frosts and a little ice have checked vegetation, and nature is robed in her most gorgeous autumnal apparel.

D. LANE.

Craven Co., N. C.

TWO IREDELL FARMERS.

How Farming Pays When the Business is Attended to.

Now there's Raney Williamson, who lives down on Marshal Rankin's place, worked some corn and ten acres of cotton. He will make eight bales. He did this with a little rabbit-eared donkey and the official statistics pointing to half a crop. Now supposing these statistics had indicated a full crop, and supposing he had worked two donkeys?

And there's Farmer Caldwell, who will make

fifteen bales on his little farm. Half of this will pay expenses and the other half will be to the good. Farmer Caldwell is a little, sawed-off Dutch fellow, who came here ten years ago and bought a small piece of land overgrown with briars and pine bushes, and didn't really make enough to pay the taxes. He built a little home, then burnt a brush pile and sowed cabbage seed, then planted some hard cider apple trees. With these essentials attended to, he then began digging up pine bushes, shoveling out ditches and filling gullies. He planted more orchards and some grape vines and strawberries. A little at a time, mind you, but he kept hammering and fertilizing and cultivating until now the one-time worn-out strip of land is a snug little farm with broad fertile, well drained, productive fields, and the barns and cribs full and the old leather pocketbook bulging with crisp ten-dollar bills.

Now do you know what this old fellow does with his money? Well, he keeps back enough to run him next year and a nest egg for a possible contingency, and then he dresses up his wife real nice and they ride around on the train and go to places and visit friends and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Not one man and woman out of a thousand could have eked out a bare subsistence on that farm. But with these people it was different. This success came to them not by chance, bless your hearts, but by hard cider, saur kraut and perseverance.

Farming pays, and it pays handsomely. Every day hayseed is rising and these fifteen-cent, shallow-brained folks around towns and cities who are wont to poke fun at the "Rubes," are beginning to scratch their heads on the other side and wish that they, too, were out on the farm, eating strawberry shortcake and pumpkin custard.—Troutman Cor. Statesville Landmark.

Name Your Farm.

A late issue of the St. Louis Mirror contains a suggestion that we have sometimes made in this paper, and now more than ever before, think should be heeded. That is, that farmers should all name their homes. It has been the common practice in Virginia, and to some extent in the other older States since they were settled, to give each farm home a name. Many of them have become historic. For many reasons it is a commendable practice. In the first place, it seems to endear the home to its owners in a way that is never possible with a mere nameless farm. Then it seems to add to its importance in the community so as to really make it worth more in dollars and cents. Moreover, when it happens, as it often does, that there are in the same neighborhood several families of the same name, the naming of the farm enables one to differentiate one family from the other in the shortest and most direct way. Thus, it is easier and explains better to say the Venables of Longwood, and the Venables of Scotgreen, or the Watkinses of Poplar Hill and the Watkinses of Sunnyside, than to have to refer to one as the family of Mr. W. E. Venable and the family of Mr. Thomas Venable. But in addition to this, when rural mail delivery becomes general, as it will be sure to do, it will be a great convenience to the carriers to have all the roads named, and the farms both named and numbered. Whenever this comes to be done, it will always be easy to direct a stranger to any part of the country and to any farm.—Journal of Agriculture.

The Law as to Barbed Wire Fences.

The general public may not remember that the acts of the North Carolina Legislature of 1895 make it a misdemeanor for any one to erect a barbed wire fence along a public highway without placing a 3-inch slat at the top as a warning to stock, but such is a fact. In Stanly County a few days ago a citizen whose mule had been seriously injured by running against a barbed wire fence, said fence having been erected in violation of the statute made and provided, brought suit against the owner of the fence and the defendant was bound to court. People who erect barbed wire fences along the highway might save trouble by taking warning.