

## Diversified Farming Brings Prosperity to North Dakota Farmers

A New Farming Era is Dawning Over the Prairie State Since the Tillers of the Soil have Learned that the One-Crop Plan, with its Many Risks, Can be Abandoned in Favor of a More Modern System of Farming

Frank Ridgway, in the "Chicago Tribune"

BY BREAKING up the bonanza farms into smaller units and going head over heels into the production of their own bacon, butter, beans and biscuits, North Dakota farmers are recovering from the crash in this state a few years ago. While North Dakota was probably hit the hardest of any state in the country during the period of depression following the war, John Lee Coulter, president of the agricultural college at Fargo, declares that the general adoption of a diversified system of agriculture during the last five years has made it possible for the farmers to go faster and farther toward recovery than any of the other states.

When wheat took a tumble a few years ago, throwing hundreds into bankruptcy, North Dakota farmers came to a sudden realization that their one crop system of farming—growing wheat almost exclusively—had to be changed. At that time they ate out of country stores, depending little upon their farms to produce the family supply of vegetables, fruits, bacon, and dairy products. Surveys, showed that the bill for dry groceries including pepper, salt, sugar tea, and coffee, was insignificant compared with the rest of the supplies that go on the family table, and that the bulk of the load could be produced at home.

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Leaders of the new movement pointed out that farmers could certainly produce most of their own vegetables, eggs, poultry and butter, and a campaign was started to bring this about, so that they could save at least \$300 or \$400 a year and have a living, even if the wheat and flax crops failed.

Drive into almost any section of the state today, and find it a common thing on farms once devoted exclusively to wheat growing for a farmer to have a garden with all the common varieties of vegetables, a flock of chickens, a drove of hogs, a few cows, a flock of sheep, and the necessary field crops—corn, barley, oats, alfalfa, and sweet clover—to feed them. They are rapidly adopting the slogan, "Grow your own."

Today there is a general tendency in North Dakota to cut down on the bread crops and to increase the acreages of barley and oats. Along with this is an enormous increase in the population of sheep, hogs, dairy cattle, and chickens. In this way farmers are helping to bring about a better balance between the production and consumption of wheat. North Dakota growers have done their share in reducing the production of wheat from 76,000,000 acres in 1919 to an estimated acreage this year of less than 54,000,000 in the United States.

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Mr. Coulter, who sponsored the diversification program, says, "Of course, we had to go outside for help, because farmers had no money with which to buy foundation stock. Most of them had to have money not only for dairy cows, hogs, and sheep, but for building and fencing materials, and it all had to come from outside the state. But where were we to get the

money? Banks in this state had failed; the federal reserve banks and the federal farm loan banks officials said they were reducing, not expanding, and the war finance corporation officials said the war was over and they could not help us."

Finally Mr. Coulter appealed to President Coolidge and other officials at Washington, D. C., and with their moral support the agricultural credit corporation, headed by C. T. Jaffrey, with headquarters at Minneapolis, Minn., was launched with \$10,000,000 paid up capital. It was this money shipped to the north-west by eastern and mid-western financial interests that made it possible for North Dakota to get back on its feet. The money was lent to farmers for one, two, and three years on hogs and sheep and for five years on dairy cattle, at 6 per cent interest rate. The farmer's personal note and a mortgage on the live stock was all the collateral required.

With this money, North Dakota farmers brought in more than 35,000 head of breeding ewes last fall, and if orders had been in before the season closed, more than double that number of sheep would have been bought. Practically all of them came from Montana and Idaho ranches at \$11 a head, using about \$400,000. So far the credit corporation has not lost a dollar; the first wool clip was sufficient to meet the

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