

FARMERS NEED ORGANIZATION OF NATION-WIDE CHARACTER

CLOSER AFFILIATION NEEDED AMONG ALL FARMERS' SOCIETIES ON UNIFORM SCHEME.

That the farmers of the country are woefully in need of a nation-wide organization similar in effect to the American Federation of Labor, was brought out recently at a monster farmers' meeting at Modesto, California, at which more than 1,200 farmers of various states were present.

The object of the convention was to secure closer affiliation of existing farm organizations of the United States for the purpose of speaking with authority and power on all questions of legislation, price fixing, marketing, etc., which affect farmers. The need for such a federation was forcefully shown, and the need for a headquarters building in Washington appealed to the audience to the extent of liberal contributions and pledges. A resolution was passed asking the United States Senate to insert into the constitution of the proposed league of nations a provision for an international institute of agriculture.

Pulling in All Directions.

One deficiency has been the weakness of the federation of organizations. It has been the condition which Ben Franklin sought to remedy under peril of British armies when he said "We must all hang together or we will hang separately." Farmers' organizations have been pulling more different directions than a big bunch of mules we recently saw a beastly man trying to hitch up. They got the lines and harness all tangled and cross-hitched so that pretty soon they were milling around disastously and getting nowhere.

What a Federation Might Do.

The problems of the war were stupendous and they required action regardless of cost. The cost has yet to be paid. The method of collecting payment and the persons who will make the payment are still unanswered questions.

Big Business is already on the job

through the United States Chamber of Commerce. Its officers learn how to act on specific questions in two major ways, by the resolutions of business men's conventions and by taking nation-wide mail votes. Big Business is going to take care of itself and let farming care for itself, as witness a resolution passed unanimously at a recent convention of 5,000 of the biggest business men in the country.

The need of someone to speak with authority and power for farmers has long been felt. The machinery is already in existence and needing only co-ordination and ample financing.

"Ascertaining the cost of production on the farm is the foundation which must be laid before even a strong federation of farmers' organizations can build a structure of economic justice to farmers," said one speaker at the California meeting. "When we can show impartial figures on the cost of production, nobody will be foolish enough to ask us to produce for less." Economic justice entitles farmers to salaries which will enable them to support their families on the American standard of living. It entitles them to five per cent interest on the capital they have invested. Most farmers either operate on borrowed capital or as tenants. In either case they are entitled to enough additional to pay the rent. Farmers are entitled to another five per cent as savings with which ultimately to buy a home. But with our present knowledge nobody seems able to prove whether farmers are getting that much or nothing at all for their labor.

IT WILL PAY TO IMPROVE PASTURE

Get Rid of Weeds and Undesirable Plants—Light Manure Dressings Will Help.

Overgrazing during a succession of unfavorable seasons, or sometimes during a single season, is probably the most cause of run down pastures. Weeds will thrive during a season unfavorable for the growth of grass, and when the light pasture is continued weakened and reduced by overgrazing, will establish themselves in the dying sod. On the other hand, when a rank growth of grass stands ungrazed for a long time there is a tendency for the sod to become weakened as the result of a superabundant top growth. Weeds are then able to grow and multiply, but under these conditions they probably never become so numerous and troublesome as under the extreme conditions of overgrazing. While in the ordinary use of pastures undergrazing is not likely to occur, yet it is well to know in advance the result of such practice. Stock will not eat weeds unless forced to do so, but will graze more and more heavily on the diminishing patches of clean grass; consequently the weeds are continually favored in their competition with the grass for soil space, and unless means are taken to check them they may presently overrun and ruin the pasture.

The first step toward improving unproductive pastures should be the destruction of weeds. Where the land is level and open enough to allow the use of a mower all undesirable

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plants should be cut before they make seed. Or the pasture may be fenced off in several areas, taking the weedier ones first, and the stock keep on an area until the weeds are eaten down. In this practice young cattle or sheep should be used.

As the weeds are being destroyed the growth of grass itself should be stimulated; and according to the present knowledge of pastures the application of stable manure seems the only certain economical means of doing this. Wherever manure is available apply it to the pastures in light dressings, covering the first the scantiest patches, but eventually covering the whole pasture if possible. Another excellent practice is to reseed the more unthrifty patches and then graze them sparingly until they are again thickly revegetated.

Culture treatment to improve the growth of pastures, such as disking and harrowing, cannot be recommended for general conditions. Doubtless there are extreme conditions of root-bound sod where cultural treatment would be beneficial in improving the moisture relations of the plant; but these conditions cannot now be clearly defined, and the operation should proceed cautiously, for by tearing the grass roots, more harm than good is liable to result.

Likewise, the application of commercial fertilizer to pastures is an extremely dubious practice. There is, of course, a stimulation of plant growth, but at the present high prices for fertilizer no profitable returns may be expected under average conditions. Should a decided shift in the present relative prices of fertilizer and meat occur, doubtless a moderate application of phosphatic material, say 200 pounds of acid phosphate per acre, would be profitable on most soils.

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CULLING HENS IS IMPORTANT

O. A. C. POULTRY DEPARTMENT GIVES VALUABLE HINTS TO AID PRODUCERS—PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN.

Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis, Sept. 18.—Poultrymen have learned more in the last two years about culling nonproductive poultry than in the previous 50 years, in the opinion of James Dryden, professor of poultry husbandry at the college. If the non-layers are culled out the cost of producing eggs falls materially. Now is a good time to cull.

The following are conditions which indicate non-productiveness: Shrivelled condition of the comb, wattles, and ear lobes; closeness of pelvic bones, and keel bone, contracted or hardened condition of the abdomen; yellow shanks and beak in breeds that naturally have yellow shanks and beak such as the leghorns and plymouth rocks; molting of feathers. The best breeding hens may be selected by noting from October 15

to November 15 the following characteristics:

Incomplete molt, red comb and wattles, and bright eyes; wellspread pelvic bones, good depth from pelvic bones to keel bone and soft abdomen; pale shanks and beak and vent among breeds that have naturally yellow skin and shanks.

TO MOLT OR NOT TO MOLT.

- In exhibiting at the fall fairs a breeder is frequently perplexed as to the advisability of molting his fowls for the fair, or preventing the molt until after the fair. If he decides on the former plan, then the show birds should be placed in a warm, airy pen and protected from the sun.
- Successful fanciers have for their males inexpensive molting pens, consisting of small sheds three feet by four feet, with a wire-covered run 12 feet long in front of each. The top of the run is covered with long straw; this offers sufficient protection from sun and rain and still does not prevent good ventilation.

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