

Business Methods Count in Farming

Also a High School Education, Says the United States Department of Agriculture.

FARMERS with a high school education make nearly double the average income of those with merely a common school education, and those who start earliest make the most profits, according to the Department of Agriculture's investigators. The Department's Office of Farm Management has been conducting a series of investigations in the corn belt which have brought out many details that should be of practical value to all agriculturists. These results have just been published in a new bulletin.

Under average conditions the farm, according to this bulletin, is no place for the weak or for those unable to direct work. The man who intends to spend his working life in the country should start early, for success is not gained in a moment but by many years of persistent effort. It is true that some farmers have made small fortunes in a short time, but this is usually through a phenomenal rise in land values. Few men have become rich from the real profits of the land. Those who have done so usually needed a lifetime in which to work. Through skill in management and by hard labor a comfortable living and moderate profits may be expected. Those persons who are turning to the farm with the idea of reaping large incomes are doomed to severe disappointment.

Those making the poorest incomes were 28 years of age when they started farming and were past 30 when they became owners. On the average the oldest men are making the least profits.

Many farmers with very little schooling succeed, but these same men would do better if they had the opportunity of further training. No one ever hears a farmer regret that he spent a part of his early life in school.

In a list of 273 farms operated by owners and 247 farms operated by tenants there were only eight men, four owners and four tenants, who never had a school training. Of the owners and tenants 77 per cent attended a common or district school. About 18 per cent attended a high school, and one out of every 35 went to college or to some institution of similar grade.

On the whole the tenants had received more education than the owners, 23 per cent of them having more than a district school education, while only 20 per cent of the owners had such training. Those men having the best training made the largest incomes, although they were materially helped in doing this by much larger farms and greater capital.

Profitable Farming Keeps the Boy on the Farm.

Farming is a business the same as any other industry, and until our schools teach some of the fundamental principles governing profitable farming, the farm boy is likely to seek work elsewhere. Considering that the farm boys of today will be the farmers of tomorrow, too little attention is given to their training.

Many boys leave the farm because they see no future in it. Another important reason is the lack of profitable work at home. A moderate sized farm is necessary to give employment to the farmer and his sons. The small farm does not provide work; hence, the boys must find employment elsewhere. Let them fully understand how farm profits and losses are made and there will be an incentive to remain. First make our farms profitable, and the question of keeping the boys there will solve itself.

Successful farming is an individual, economic problem. The farm is a combination of enterprises, and their individual organization will determine, in a large measure, its profitability. Sufficient area and a proper organization of well-selected farm enterprises to permit the maximum use of men, horses and machinery, are the essential characteristics of the most successful farms.

Size of the Farm Business.

No one expects a small grocery store which has only a few customers a day to be a great financial success. The total amount of business is insufficient to earn the operator a substantial income. Exactly the same is true with the small farm. The volume of business is limited by the area in crops

and the capital invested. The small farm furnishes a home as well as much of the produce consumed by the family. If it were not for these factors the men on the small area would hardly be able to live.

Wages are a reward for labor, and if a farm does not provide work the pay must be correspondingly small. The family-size farm, which in the corn belt should be above 100 acres, is unquestionably a more efficient unit than an area of 40 acres or less. Crops can be grown cheaper, labor will be better paid, and the farmer and his family will enjoy more of the benefits of modern civilization.

Quality of the Farm Business.

The farmer may have sufficient area and grow the right kind of crops, yet not be successful, owing to the poor quality of his entire business. Poor crops that do not pay the cost of production, and the feeding of these to unproductive livestock, are common causes of failure. This characteristic of unsuccessful farming attracts much public attention. Such farms are unprofitable largely through ignorance or indifference on the part of the operator. Under good management they can generally be made successful.

Diversity of the farm business—Improper organization of a large farm limits its possibilities, just as area limits the small farm. Single crops or single livestock enterprises seldom utilize farm labor at its maximum. By having several crops there is not only better distribution of labor, but the chances of total loss from crop failures are lessened. Fortunately, corn, oats and wheat utilize the farmer's time pretty thoroughly through the growing season. In some parts of this country certain crops that need labor only a part of the year may be so profitable that the farmer can afford to be idle the rest of the year. However, these are the exceptions. Most crops are not profitable enough to permit any such practice. Idle horses and machinery are nearly as expensive as idle men. If the working equipment can all be kept busy on paying enterprises, success is almost assured.

Adaptability of the Type of Farming.

Equally important in the selection of enterprises to permit the maximum use of labor is the consideration of the profitability of each. Dairy cows and cash crops may utilize all of the farmer's time, but in certain regions, possibly, dairy cattle under the best management could hardly be made to pay a profit. Markets and other conditions have to be carefully considered in choosing the enterprises which are to constitute the main sources of income. Fitting the right crop to the soil and selling it to the proper market or feeding it to the right kind of livestock are important factors. Following such types of farming as are unsuited to the region is often a cause of unprofitable agriculture in some of the older settled states.

The wide fluctuation in prices of certain crops makes it extremely difficult for a farmer to choose a definite rotation. One year they will be such as to give handsome profits on certain crops, and the next year they may be insufficient to pay the cost of production. The question confronting the average farmer is not so much one of production as it is of marketing. Most farmers are able to grow a sufficient quantity of crops to give them a very comfortable living if they are assured of reasonable prices for their products. However, under present conditions the farmer has to take big chances with nearly all of his crops. If he is so unfortunate as to have a combination of crops every one of which is low in price in some particular year, severe losses will be the result. Potatoes, apples, peaches, onions and cabbage are good illustrations of the crops that fluctuate widely in price from year to year.

The essential characteristics of the more successful farms are a sufficient area and a proper organization of well-selected farm enterprises to permit the maximum use of men, horses and machinery.

A little borax, dissolved in warm water, will help to keep the children's teeth clean and sound.

CAUSE OF FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER.

SINCE a four-leaved clover is said to be "lucky," it might be well to know how it happens that while most clover has only three leaves, one is found now and then with four.

According to J. Perriraz, who discusses the question in the Archives-des Sciences Physiques et Naturelles, clovers with more than three leaves are due to two causes—one hereditary, the other nutritive. After a moist season clover plants with four or even five, six or seven leaves are relatively common, and plants with only two leaves are also seen at such times, but these are very rare.

But some are abnormal by heredity and reproduce themselves with the same characteristics in successive years when their environment remains the same, external influences merely modifying the size of the leaves.

COWPEAS AS FOOD FOR MAN.

COWPEAS are particularly well suited for use in localities where they will mature crops, and both their nutritive value and easiness, as well as their good flavor and the numerous ways in which they can be used should recommend them to the housewife. Though favorably known as a staple food in the southern states, the cowpea has not come into general use throughout the United States. It is well worth greatly extended use as it is wholesome, nutritious and possesses a peculiar delicate and pleasing flavor. Cowpeas are used on the table in three forms. In the pod, shelled green and shelled dried. In these three forms they correspond respectively to string beans, shelled green peas and dried navy beans, and call for much the same methods of preparation for the table.

The expense for twine in cutting 10,000 acres in an Eastern state averaged 21 cents per acre or seven-tenths of a cent per bushel.

Women buy from 75 to 90 per cent of the merchandise sold, says a trade journal.

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