

Practical Farm Conservation

Knowing How to Do Things More Efficiently a Real Saving of Human Energy.

BY C. F. HODGE,

Professor of Social Biology University of Oregon.

WE ARE apt to pride ourselves on being a common-sense, practical people. Are we? Take this as an example. We toil for months, plowing, harrowing, sowing, harvesting, threshing and hauling and shipping a million bushels of wheat. We send it over to Italy and Caruso comes and sings to us a few days to pay for it. We adore straight through the whole problem of the beautiful and the inspiring, but our "common-sense, practical" way of getting just a whiff of these higher things now and then is scarcely above the level of the brute beast stupidity. Well, this is better than not getting any whiff of higher things at all, but our agricultural life we have to work so hard, because we do not know any better.

Now, "knowing" is only another word for "science," and the best definition of science I know is one given by Huxley—"Trained and organized common sense." What must ultimately prove a greater loss than the labor comes from the fact that with the million bushels of wheat we have mined out and sent over the ocean \$250,000 worth of soil salts and these may be lacking, when we want to raise another million bushels of wheat to exchange for music, so we still have to go without our music.

The first and greatest need of conservation in our farm life is real saving of human energy by knowing how to do things more efficiently. In fact standards of efficiency are being applied to farm operations and some of the results are shown in the table below:

Standards and percentages of efficiency for farm crops:

	Standard yield per acre	Per cent Average of Efficiency
Potatoes	500 bu	96 19
Wheat	50 bu	14 28
Cotton	1 bale	0.35 35
Corn	100 bu	28 28
Oats	100 bu	32 32

These low percentages are merely expressions in mathematical terms of not knowing how. The standard of 500 bushels of potatoes per acre is really low. With addition of knowing how to breeding and selection of seed, precision of fertilizers and culture methods, we may raise the standard to 1000 bushels. In fact the mere use of immature seed has been proved to more than double the crop over that from dead ripe seed of the same variety. Probably Lord Roseberry holds the world's record for yield of potatoes at 2000 bushels of marketable tubers with 45 bushels of culls per acre. With the standard at 2000 bushels our efficiency falls to 4 3-4 per cent. When we know how, it may be as easy, or even easier, to raise 1000 bushels of potatoes per acre as 100 bushels.

The most laborious and expensive part of raising a field of corn has been "thorough cultivation." After this had, for centuries, been tearing off half the roots of the corn plant and with great labor had been reducing the yield from 20 to 50, or more, bushels per acre, someone hit upon the idea of trying to know something about the growth of the corn plant. It was discovered that the roots spread out close under the surface of the soil for six or seven feet in every direction. Next came the question: did not deep cultivation injure these roots? Recent experiment have proved that by merely shaving off the weeds, without stirring the soil in the least we get yields of corn equal and often better than we obtain with most careful surface cultivation. The amount of human energy conserved along the line of this one bit of knowing how may make the difference on many a farm between life being worth while and not being worth the living.

The largest factor of all in the whole problem is the plant food content of the soil itself and a knowledge as to how this may be utilized. This may mean the difference between raising nothing on a field, after a hard year's work, and raising a crop of 75 bushels of corn to the acre. These are actual figures obtained from Illinois fields. As a result of such experience the state of Illinois has planned a soil survey which

is to cost \$2,000,000, but it may save ten times that amount of futile labor in a single year. We shall soon be buying and selling land on the basis of soil analyses which shall indicate what the land is able to produce.

Stories at Which You Will Smile

"I SHALL refuse to pay for attendance," said the irate tourist who had been staying at an old-fashioned country hotel and who had just been presented with his bill. "Why, the bells in the rooms are a perfect disgrace; not one of them would ring. Everything I wanted I had to fetch myself. I must have spent some hours tugging at those bell-pulls."

"It's true we have charged for attendance," said the smiling proprietor, "but, see, we have charged you nothing for your physical culture course."

"Physical culture course!" exclaimed the tourist in surprise. "I don't know what you mean."

"The daily use of our dumb-bells," was the cool retort.

Cause of Death.

"YOU may say your automobile did not touch this man, and yet he was dead when you picked him up!" shouted the prosecuting attorney.

"That's my claim," coolly retorted the prisoner. "My machine didn't touch him."

"And you saw this man start to cross the street?"

"Yes."

"Did you blow your horn?"

"I did."

"What sort of a horn is it?"

"One of those new-fangled clatter-boxes that create a sound that is a cross between a shriek and a dying wail."

"That explains it. You simply scared the man to death."

A Feminine Realist.

HE WAS enraptured with the scenery. His fair companion at the country resort sat upon the stone wall beside him.

"Behold that exquisite sunset!" he exclaimed. "Note the delicate flesh tints, the cream shades, the long dashes of vermilion, and the almost living fire that leaps up from the sinking sun as from a fountain. Behold the framework of darkening skies and of deep green. Isn't it wonderful?"

His fair companion sighed heavily. "You just bet it is!" she exclaimed. "It looks just like a great big lobster salad!"

Thirteen Trumps—One Trick.

SMITH had invited several of his friends and neighbors to tea the other night, and the conversation veered around to whist.

"I have seen some remarkable whist hands," said one of the guests. "I remember not long ago I saw one man hold all thirteen trumps."

"That's not very unusual," remarked another.

"Not at all; but the curious part of it was that he only took one trick."

"How's that?"

"Why, he trumped his partner's ace first time round, and his partner was so furious that he got up and threw him out of the window."

Too Thin.

"FATHER," said the student, "I want to talk to you about changing my course of study."

"Talk to your mother, son," directed the father, who was reading the sporting page.

"Mother," said the son, "I made a mistake when I selected chemistry. But it is not too late to change even yet. I want to take astronomy instead."

The mother searched the eyes of her son sharply. Then she said: "Nope. You'll have to think up some better excuse for staying out at night!"

A Suspicious Conductor.

GENTLEMEN (in railroad train): How did the accident happen? Conductor: Some one pulled the

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cord and stopped the train, and the fast train ran into us. It will take five hours to clear the line for us to go ahead.

Gentleman: Five hours? Great Scott! I was to be married today. Conductor (a married man, sternly): Look here, are you the chap who stopped the train?

After Effects.

"You say you had a corking good time last night?"

"Yes."

"Judging from the way you look this morning, it must have been an uncorking good time."

On Pay Day.

THE workman was busily employed in excavating operations by the roadside—that is to say, he was digging, digging, digging—and the wayfarer, who happened to be passing, paused to inquire:

"What are you digging for?"

The workman looked up.

"Money," he replied.

"Money? And when do you expect to strike it?"

"On Saturday," replied the other, and resumed operations.

Something Wrong.

"These potatoes taste strongly of gasoline, my dear. What recipe did you use?"

"I must have got my recipes mixed," answered the young wife after some reflection, "and used the one for cleaning velvet."

Why Lightning Strikes Trees.

THAT trees are the objects most frequently struck by lightning is the observation of Mr. F. G. Plummer of the United States forest service. As the roots of a tree extend into the damp ground, a tree is more likely to be struck than any other tall object. A tree's form is almost ideal for conveying electricity from the air to the earth.



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