

What a Farmer Should Know and Do.

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The importance of the farming industry can hardly be overestimated. Without it no other could exist. In just so far as the industry is important those engaged in it are of importance. Of course natural fruits and wild animals exist in sufficient abundance to support a small population. But dependence on these sources alone for food and raiment makes progress impossible.

On the products of the soil is founded the material wealth of a nation. Nowhere has this been more true than in the United States. Since farming is indispensable it follows that the farmer should be one, so far as the power to promote welfare goes, having no superior in the land. He must study and grow in usefulness. His vocation is such that it must be kept to the front. The coming farmer must ^{look} ahead, move forward, and not linger along behind the rest of the world.

Vigilance and farsightedness are the elements of success.

There is no occupation requiring more varied information, a sounder judgment, and more common sense than that of raising stock and grain. The thus engaged must both know and do. He must be practical, that is daily apply his learning and test its efficiency. Agriculture probably covers a wider field in science than any other art or profession. Nearly every science is laid under tribute directly or indirectly. The physiology and pathology of animal life; the laws governing the growth of plants; the influence of light and heat on vegetable growth; the preservation of fruits and grains; the Chemistry of different soils, and some knowledge of meteorology go to make up a part of what the tiller of the soil must know of the sciences. Further a degree of skill in mechanics and an

acquaintance with the workings of machinery are absolutely essential to a successful husbandman of today. Also a clear understanding of the wants of his own and of other countries with a knowledge of the laws of trade contribute much to the prosperity of the farmer.

The American agriculturist must keep abreast with the times. As fast as new and better methods of farming are made known he must adopt them. Improved machinery must be used and old ways of planting and harvesting discarded. How is the farmer going to do this? It is claimed that there is not sufficient time to investigate in order to determine what is the best. To this I will say that it will undoubtedly be cheaper in the long run to keep acquainted with improvements made, and the time

expended in learning new tricks of the trade will be more than compensated for by the increased production that will result. Several great aids to keeping well informed may be profitably mentioned; and these are agricultural exhibitions, agricultural associations, and agricultural literature. Agricultural exhibitions are yearly held in different localities and may be attended by anyone feeling so disposed. Stock, grain, and machinery are put on exhibition to be looked at and examined. Here one sees good stock and good grain; knows that both will grow and can purchase some of either for his own use. A more important source from which to obtain good reliable information on the questions of the day is agricultural associations. Clubs, state boards, and farmers' institutes come in under this head. The

knowledge which these associations are capable of imparting can be obtained in two ways, - either by being present and hearing the discussions, which is the better way, or by reading full and correct reports. Another aid in the same direction is agricultural literature. Of all the writings on the subject which have been given to the public, I wish especially to call attention to the farmer's paper. Good journals give practical hints on various points and contain the results of scientific investigation. The true mission of the paper is to help the reader; it often contains matter of incalculable benefit and is undoubtedly the best implement that can be bought for the money: it pays the highest interest and declares the largest dividend.

There are yet within the borders of the United States a few farmers

who neither attend associations nor read books or papers and what is still worse content and pretend, that reading in the line of their chosen occupation is entirely useless. These men however are not the most successful as all experience shows. While the improvements and accumulations made by those who do read - and think; who rely on papers, books, and associations for information attests the value of those instruments. We are rapidly outgrowing the belief that the farmer needs no education in his particular line of work. The favorite expression, "Book Farmer" is no more given the significance that was attached to it in the early part of this century, but in some circles it is still used as a seemingly desirable question-begging epithet.

Progress in agriculture is due to the intelligent work of educa-

ted farmers. A farmer must be educated for he is compelled to perform operative, executive, and speculative labor. Upon his executive and speculative ability depends his advancement. Show me a country where the rural population are universally ignorant and I will show you a country not on the upward march. Take an example of the work of unintelligent delvers in the soil I will mention India. Prosperity does not attend the efforts of her farming population. The good old methods of culture are strictly adhered to. The son copies the ways of the father and is content to stay in the same rut from one age to another.

Other knowledge beside that relating strictly to farming should be the wealth of America's husbandman. The farmer of this

Country is a citizen of the United States and usually a voter and as such has duties to perform bearing on the welfare of both state and nation. Not only this but the laws made and executed directly affect him more or less.

A good common school education with ^{the} addition of a few years special training in some college should be taken advantage of by every farmer. Yes thoroughly educate the farmer in early manhood, and he will be foremost in every good work. Gray hairs and tottering footsteps will find him strong for truth and strong in his God. Let the farmer qualify himself to do all his country requires to be done and he will be called for when needed. Intelligence and morals should by no means be lacking in any farmer. With moral power no one will be led astray by the corrupt and designing; he will take an

interest in public affairs and will not be found sitting still when duty demands action.

Lastly I would say in whatever way a farmer obtains his education he should endeavor to become familiar with his avocation and gain besides, an intelligent perception of the structure and powers of government in which everyone should bear his share; and finally the graces of general culture and manly courtesies which covers all else with a mantle of beauty.

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