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Great Activity of Associations

Render Some Essential Service Connected With Farmers' Enterprises.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

There are now more than 12,000 active farmers' business organizations in the United States, the Department of Agriculture estimates on the basis of a recent survey. This number is more than twice that in 1915, when the first nation-wide survey of co-operative associations was made by the department.

Included in Associations.

The associations include those selling farm products, buying farm supplies, operating creameries, cheese factories, canning plants, grain elevators, stockyards, warehouses, or rendering some one or more of the essential services connected with the conduct of farmers' enterprises. The figures do not include farmers' co-operative banks, credit associations, nor insurance companies.

Fifty-four of the associations listed are federations with local units, 49 are sales agencies operating in central markets, 35 are bargaining associations, and 98 are large-scale organizations of the centralized type. Of the total number of associations listed by the department, 3,325 are primarily engaged in marketing grain, 2,197 handle dairy products, 1,770 ship live stock, 1,250 market fruits and vegetables; 121 perform various functions in the marketing of cotton, 91 in marketing wool, 71 in marketing poultry or poultry products, and 24 in marketing tobacco.

In North Central States.

More than 70 per cent of all the associations are in the 12 North Central states. Approximately 6 per cent are in the three Pacific Coast states, and less than 3 per cent in the six New England states. The largest number of associations reporting from any one state is 1,383 from Minnesota. Iowa is credited with 1,094 associations, Wisconsin 1,092, and Illinois 822. Missouri has 537 associations; Nebraska, 488; Kansas, 466; California, 350, and New York, 286.

The grain marketing associations are largely in the 12 North Central states, as are also the greater number of the live-stock shipping associations. The organizations engaged in marketing dairy products are scattered through the country with a fair percentage of the total number in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Plans to Increase Soil Productivity

Crop Rotation as Good as Manure and Fertilizers.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

In the practice of crop rotation a farmer has at his command a means whereby he can materially reduce acre costs or increase the output of his land, says W. W. Weir, associate soil technologist of the United States Department of Agriculture. Perhaps that fact is not news to many farmers who have been using rotation in their crop system; they know it is a beneficial practice.

They may be surprised, however, says Mr. Weir, to learn that crop rotation is nearly as effective in increasing soil productivity as the use of manure and commercial fertilizers. Furthermore, crop rotation can be practiced usually with no outlay of money, whereas the use of commercial fertilizers requires an expenditure of money.

A study of the long-continued soil fertility experiments of this country and of England, made by the Department of Agriculture, has brought out some important facts about crop rotation in its relation to soil productivity. In general, says Mr. Weir, they show that rotation without the use of manure or commercial fertilizers is nearly as efficient in effecting crop increases as the use of fertilizers without rotation. The beneficial effects of crop rotation are different from the benefits derived from the use of fertilizers; so that when these two farm practices are combined the one practice adds to the benefits of the other, making the resultant increase almost twice that secured by either practice used alone.

On soils long under cultivation highest yields are possible only when rotation and the use of fertilizers are practiced together.

Dairy Cow Has Financed Farmers When Needed

Farmers realized nearly as much from dairy cows during 1925 as from their corn and wheat crops combined, according to figures issued by the National Dairy Council.

According to careful estimates based on investigation, the farm value of all dairy products for the year 1925, is \$2,700,000,000. This is only about \$200,000,000 less than the total farm value of wheat and corn, the government estimate of the combined farm value of the latter being \$2,904,200,000.

"But the important fact," states M. D. Munn, president of the National Dairy Council, "is that American farmers have marketed their dairy products day by day throughout the year without any accumulated surplus on their hands and have thereby received funds with which they have been able to live and help finance their other farm operations, while they still have much of their corn and wheat on hand.

"This vast sum of nearly two and three-fourths billions has financed diversified farming in this country and relieved agriculture from what would otherwise have been insurmountable difficulties, especially in view of the accumulated surplus of grains to gather with the low prices that now prevail. In addition to the cash return to the farmer through the dairy cow he has also been supplied with dairy products for his own family use, which have materially assisted in reducing living expenses."

Sweet Clover Requires Firm, Moist Seed Bed

Sweet clover seed, being very small, should be planted shallow. In order that it may grow when planted shallow, the soil must be quite firm and full of moisture. Perhaps most of the failures with sweet clover are due to plowing, or otherwise loosening up the seed bed before planting the crop in the spring. Early spring plowing loosens and permits the top soil to dry out and so prevent a good stand of sweet clover.

Land to be planted to this crop should be fall plowed, or even better, summer fallowed the year preceding. Where such land is not available, corn-stalk land, millet or cane land is suitable, giving it only a light disking as preparation before seeding sweet clover. As much of the stubble as possible should be left standing to catch snow and prevent soil blowing.

Sweet clover should be planted as early in the spring as possible. Use eight to ten pounds of clean, scarified seed per acre. Where possible, drill in the seed, planting at the depth of one inch. Where one cannot drill so shallow, he should broadcast and harrow in the seed. No nurse crop should be used.—Waldo Kidder, Extension Agronomist, Colorado College of Agriculture.

Hens Used for Hatching Purposes Need Dusting

All hens used for egg-hatching purposes should be dusted with a good loose powder when they are placed on the eggs. The only preparation known to kill lice with one application is sodium fluoride. Put a piece of sod in the bottom of the nest to prevent excessive evaporation. Set two hens at a time so that the chicks may be given to one hen later. Feed cracked or whole grains to the hiddies, being careful to avoid feeds that stimulate egg production or cause digestive disorders, say poultry extension specialists of the Pennsylvania State college.

Possibilities Open for Farm Storage of Grain

The farmer has the choice of three places for storing his grain in order to hold it for a favorable market, it is explained by L. F. Riecke, grain marketing specialist of the college of agriculture, University of Illinois. These three places are: (1) in cribs or granaries on his own farm, (2) elevators or cribs at his shipping point, or (3) at the terminal elevators. In order to hold his grain, it is often necessary for the farmer to borrow money upon it as collateral.

When it is in public elevators at the terminal markets he can readily borrow on the warehouse certificates, but the cost of such storage is rather high. Storage in the local elevator has advantages, but these houses are not large enough to actually store very much grain and many elevators refuse this class of business or limit the time of storage to a comparatively short period.

Farm cattle and granaries offer the cheapest storage for grain crops and this method has several other apparent advantages. However, no one would care to loan money on grain so located. Iowa has solved this part of the problem by its unbonded agricultural warehouse law. Under its provisions cribs or granaries are officially sealed and storage certificates issued which are acceptable to local bankers as collateral for loans. The grain thereby finances its holding for a favorable market.

FARM FACTS

Clean out the cistern and catch cool spring rains.

Look into bee hives and see how colonies have stood the winter.

Little potatoes make good seed only when they come from high yielding and disease-free hills.

Dry skim milk, as 40 per cent of the mash mixture, is one of the best ways to check coccidiosis of chickens.

Get early vegetables started. Onions, radishes, lettuce, peas and beets flourish in the cool damp weather of early spring.

Plow up the sod-bound orchard, and cultivate it. This loosens the soil, kills weeds and makes re-seeding more valuable.

A balance sheet is really a systematized inventory of everything a business owns and owes, and shows the health of the whole enterprise.

How many farmers know whether they lost or made money last year? And how many know on what crop or kind of live stock they lost or made the most? Farm account books come a handy for just such information.



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