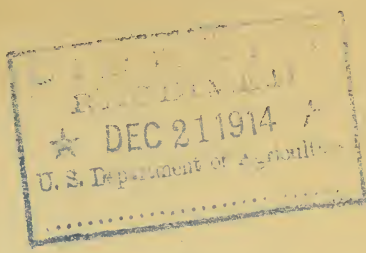


863
D
Reserve



SPECIAL.

Issued December 18, 1914.

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.**

ADVANTAGES OF DAIRYING IN THE SOUTH.

Prepared in the Dairy Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

In many sections of the South a one-crop cotton-growing system prevails. Certain evils produced by this system are very forcibly demonstrated on many farms, among which are (1) a cash income but once a year, (2) an unequal distribution of labor throughout the year, and (3) impoverishment of the soil.

DAIRYING PROVIDES A STEADY CASH INCOME.

A one-crop cotton-growing system forces a great many farmers either to borrow money with which to make the crop or to buy supplies on a time basis. High rates of interest must be paid. The merchant who furnishes the supplies also frequently does business on borrowed capital. What the South needs is not the abandonment of cotton growing, but the weaving into the farming system of something that will in itself be profitable and also furnish ready cash throughout the year. Dairying meets these requirements. It is adaptable to the conditions of the large and the small farmer, whether he owns or rents the land.

Dairying, properly conducted, is a profitable business and a safe and steady line of farming affected less by uncertainties of weather extremes or late seasons than many cropping systems. It is a cash business, furnishing a sure and reliable income, puts the farm on a cash basis, and thus saves the high rates of interest paid for money on short loans and the high prices charged for supplies bought on credit. On a large proportion of the farms in the South small herds of good dairy cows will furnish enough ready cash to finance the making of the cotton crop and at the end of the year leave the money

NOTE.—Intended for farmers in the cotton belt who desire to diversify their farming because of the economic crisis which adversely affects the cotton crop at this time.
72187°—14

received from the cotton as a clear cash profit. Such a plan, more than anything else, will eliminate the old lien system, which keeps many farmers one year behind.

DAIRYING EQUALIZES THE DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Dairying furnishes profitable employment for labor and equalizes the distribution of labor throughout the year. The gathering of bedding, hauling of manure, repairing of fences, etc., furnish paying work for the farm hands at seasons when, on account of wet weather, help is not needed in the cotton fields or when steady work is scarce or lacking altogether. With cash coming in every week or month a better class of labor can be employed.

On farms where there are children of 8 years and older dairying furnishes them with profitable employment which does not interfere with their attendance at school. They can assist in milking and other work before and after school and in this way contribute materially to the income of the farm.

DAIRYING IMPROVES THE SOIL.

Dairying furnishes large quantities of manure for the cotton fields and thereby returns to the land about 75 per cent of the fertilizing value of the crops which the cows have consumed. Likewise the cottonseed meal, so largely used as a nitrogenous fertilizer, is one of the best milk-producing feeds and loses only a small percentage of its fertilizing value when fed to cows. Every garden spot in the South is a monument to the value of manure.

A good system of dairy farming rests upon crop rotation, which in itself restores fertility to the land, for the raising of feed is necessary to the profitable keeping of cows, and the best feeds for them are the leguminous crops, such as soy beans, vetches, lespedeza and other clovers, velvet beans, alfalfa, etc. These crops are preeminently soil builders, since they gather nitrogen from the air. Nitrogen is the most expensive element of fertilizers, and it is a valuable part of a ration for dairy cows. The rotation of crops and the manure from the cows continually going to the land will soon double the production of cotton per acre and at the same time decrease the fertilizer bills. This increased production will enable the farmer to raise on a smaller area of land as much cotton as, or more than, he does at present.

DAIRYING PROVIDES A MARKET FOR FEED CROPS.

Dairying furnishes a good home market for all the feed crops which can be grown on the farm. In rural districts and small towns the local markets for most of these crops are very limited, and often-

times the comparatively small amounts possessed by the farmer make it unprofitable to transport them to the larger markets. This is especially true if the roads are bad. In such cases dairy cows furnish the means for converting these crops into finished products which are easily transported and which bring good prices.

Dairying also enables the farmer to utilize for feed and bedding large quantities of roughage, such as straw, corn stover, shucks, and coarse and weedy hay, which can not ordinarily be sold in the market.

Often two crops can be grown on the same land in one season. By growing such crops as corn, sorghum, pea vines, etc., after the wheat, oat, or rye crop has been cleared off, excellent feed crops can be provided at minimum cost of growing, because of the small amount of cultivation necessary. These crops can be preserved in the silo, and thus the cows are provided with good succulent feeds for winter feeding and when pasturage is short. With roots, leguminous hay, silage, stover, straw, and the cottonseed meal obtained by exchanging cotton seed, all the feed for the cows is raised on the farm.

OTHER ADVANTAGES.

Climatic conditions in the South are favorable for dairying. Less expensive buildings for the protection of cattle are required than in colder climates. This reduces the expense for care and housing. The long grazing season and the many excellent grasses which grow luxuriantly make it possible to produce milk, butter, and cream at a low cost for a large part of the year.

The scarcity and high price of good dairy cattle are other attractive considerations, for after a farmer has become established in the business the sale of surplus cattle can be made a source of considerable income and profit.

The skim milk obtained from a herd of cows is one of the best supplementary feeds for hogs and poultry. These two lines of live stock furnish profitable cash side lines and naturally go hand in hand with dairy farming.

Large quantities of condensed milk, butter, cream, and cheese must now be purchased in other sections. The South can produce these at home. If the supply is constant and the quality good, southern dairy products will find a ready market at profitable prices.

Dairying, properly conducted, will restore fertility to the southern farm and equalize the distribution of labor throughout the year. It will put the southern farm on a cash basis, so that the cotton crop, free from all liens, can then be sold for cash whenever it will bring the highest market price.

The following publications giving further information may be obtained free on application to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

- Farmers' Bulletin 55. The Dairy Herd: Its Formation and Management.
- Farmers' Bulletin 349. The Dairy Industry in the South.
- Farmers' Bulletin 509. Forage Crops for the Cotton Region.
- Farmers' Bulletin 541. Farm Buttermaking.
- Farmers' Bulletin 578. The Making and Feeding of Silage.
- Farmers' Bulletin 589. Homemade Silos.
- Farmers' Bulletin 602. Production of Clean Milk.