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AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT REPORT.

July 1, 1919 to December 31, 1919.

The Agronomy Department is directing its attention toward the raising of the average production of general farm crops in Virginia, which at the present time is low, far below the possible average.

An increase in yields per acre is the aim rather than an increase in acreage.

Differences in soil type and climatic conditions give Virginia an opportunity to grow many kinds of crops. These soil types are grouped into three geological divisions. (1) The coastal plain, where we find the trucking, cotton and peanut soils; (2) The piedmont section, where we find good general farm crop soils, tobacco soils, and excellent fruit soils; (3) The appalachian section, where live stock, general farming and fruit growing are the main sources of income.

SCOPE OF WORK.

Crop Production, Soil Management, and Farm Management are the main projects in which the Agronomy Department is interested.

Field demonstrations, personal visits to county agents, and individual farmers, public meetings at which lecture charts and lantern slides are used, personal letters and press articles, also bulletins and mimeographed summaries have been the methods used in conducting the work in this department.

PERSONNEL.

The work in the Agronomy Department is under the direction of F. R. Hodgeon, M. S.

DEMONSTRATIONS.

Demonstrations in crops, soil management, fertilizers and lime were already being conducted by the county agents before an Agronomy Specialist was appointed. These demonstrations, though of an annual nature, have been continued, the Agronomy Specialist acting in an advisory capacity.

In addition to the above demonstrations, new demonstrations have been started in Farm Management and Improved Corn communities, also Corn and Soy Bean variety demonstrations.

Farm Management Demonstrations consist of farm records, kept by the farm operator, under the supervision of the Agronomy Department with the assistance of the county agents.

When a farmer indicates that he would like to keep a better record the county agent presents him with a record book and instructs him how to take an inventory and make the entries of expenses and receipts. Frequent visits are made during the year to inspect the book. At the end of the year another inventory is taken and the book is closed. The inventory at the end of the year serves as succeeding the inventory for the beginning of the year and the new book is opened. A close study of the final summaries will indicate to the operator his weak points and his strong points. The farmer is informed, however, that final conclusions should not be deducted from one year's record.

The number of demonstrations has increased and new books have been placed in new counties.

Records kept 1919 - 125

Records started 1920 - 180

Pure bred corn community demonstrations. - The seed corn used by Virginia farmers is of no standard variety and of poor quality. In order to establish communities in which pure bred seed corn would be the rule and not the exception, the Agronomy Specialist in company with the county agent visited communities and individual farmers, held meetings and urged the growing of a standard variety of corn. This is a project that will require several years to develop.

Corn and soy bean variety demonstrations. - Corn and soy bean demonstrations are being conducted in a few counties in Southwest Virginia. The object of the demonstration is to show to the farmers the difference in the yielding powers of

different varieties of the same crop for the purpose of selecting a variety well suited for the county. One year's results have been recorded.

SEED CORN.

Seed corn selection from the field received attention this past fall. Several press articles were prepared, farmers' meetings held, and personal visits to farmers made to awaken them to the importance of selecting their seed corn from the standing stalk in the field.

WHEAT SEEDING.

An unusual drought prevailed in Virginia about corn harvest and wheat seeding time and there was a great tendency for farmers to wait for the drought to break before they started preparing the wheat seed bed. Several farmers' meetings were held and press articles written urging farmers to seed early though the seed bed was in some instances very dry and dusty. The old adage, "Sow in dust reap you must" was quoted several times to encourage farmers not to wait on ideal weather and soil conditions.

FAIRS.

The Agronomy Department prepared an exhibit for the State Fair which occupied a space of 10 feet by 30 feet. Farm management, crop rotations, seed testing of corn, wheat and grasses, and soil management displays were made.

This same exhibit was put on at the Harrisonburg Fair. Several hundred bulletins were distributed at these fairs and new names of farmers secured for the mailing list of the Extension Division.

CORN SHOWS.

Many county agents have held corn shows this fall with great success. In most instances these shows were held for the first time and though there was great interest shown by the farmers, the quality of the exhibits as a whole showed lack of experience in selecting good corn.

The Agronomy Specialist put on a state-wide show in Roanoke December 2nd and 3rd at which several hundred exhibits were made of ten ear samples and single

cars. The State was divided into three sections, Northern, Southeastern and Southwestern. The sweepstakes ten cars went to Panquier County in the Northern District, while the sweepstakes single car went to Bedford County in the Southeastern District.

This show was held jointly with the annual fruit show of the State Horticultural Society. It is estimated that between 500 and 600 people were present.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF WORK DONE.

July 1, 1919 to Dec. 31, 1919.

Miles traveled	5,950
Meetings attended and addresses made	24
Number people addressed	2,148
Visits to county agents	26
Miscellaneous visits to farmers and others	53
Letters written	260
Official judge at corn shows and fairs	11
Conferences other than with county agents	12
Press articles	10