

How to Double Your Corn Yields.

I.—CAN THE SOUTH COMPETE WITH THE WEST?

An Examination Shows That the South Has the Advantage in Every Condition But One, and Humus Will Equalize This—With Proper Farming Methods, the World Would Long Ago Have Recognized That the South is the Real "Corn Belt."

By Tait Butler.

ABOUT TWO-THIRDS of all the corn grown in the United States is grown in the seven States, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska. These are collectively spoken of as the "Corn Belt."

The best authorities, when attempting to assign the reason of the adaptability of these States to the growing of corn, state that the controlling factors are suitable temperature, sunshine, rainfall, and soil, and only when all these are combined is corn-growing commercially profitable.

Temperature South vs. West.

1. The first three of these factors, or conditions, are peculiarly characteristic of the South. Our period of warm weather is of good length, giving a long growing season, which always tends to large yields. This warm weather is not too hot. We are never troubled with the hot, killing winds of the western part of the so-called Corn Belt.

In short, the temperature of the South is ideal for corn, because corn is a warm weather plant, as shown in tests at the New York Experiment Station extending over several years. In these tests the year of the highest maximum soil temperature gave the highest yields, and the yields were also largest when the average soil temperature was highest throughout the corn growing season.

Advantage of Southern Sunshine.

2. The proverbial abounding sunshine of the "Sunny South" leaves nothing to be desired in this essential factor of successful corn production. But in more than abundant sunshine is our climate adapted to the needs of the corn plant. Until the nights become warm corn never makes its best growth, and the absence of cold nights throughout the corn-growing season adds to the suitability of the Southern climate for corn growing.

In Rainfall South is Ahead.

3. The corn plant is a user of large quantities of water, and cannot withstand an insufficient supply for any considerable period without serious injury. The rainfall of the South is large and equitably distributed. Except in certain restricted areas and occasional years, it is not too large on land suitably drained.

The temperature, sunshine and rainfall of the larger part of the South is ideal for supplying the needs of the corn plant and if we are not naturally in the Corn Belt the reason must be in the fourth and last of the controlling factors of successful corn production—the soil.

Lack of Humus Our One Limiting Factor.

4. Our soils do not, on an average, produce as largely as those of the Northern States named above. Why is this? It is not, as we have seen, because of lack of a suitable temperature and abundant sunshine and moisture; therefore, our soils must have in them some defect which limits our production.

What is this limiting factor in our soils? This question has been answered time and again in a manner which admits of no doubt. The sole limiting factor of our Southern soils for corn growing is lack of humus.

and organic nitrogen. That there is nothing in our climate or soils antagonistic to the most successful corn production has been shown by hundreds of extremely large yields, in every State in the South; the best of which far exceed the largest yields ever produced in the so-called Corn Belt.

We Can Beat the West Whenever We Set Out To Do It.

The Western season is simply too cold, too short and too dry for maximum corn yields. In fact, whenever a Southern farmer, who knows modern corn growing, sets about the task of producing the largest yield of corn per acre, the results are such as to astonish the corn growers of the corn selling States. In these trials stable manure, humus, nitrogen, are added liberally and with these our ideal climatic conditions bring forth such tremendous yields as to arouse the incredulity of those accustomed to the narrow limits of production in the North Central States. Yields ranging from 125 to 254 bushels per acre have become so common that they are positively bewildering.

Even school boys, in nearly every county in the South where corn clubs have been organized, are producing from 100 bushels to 150 bushels per acre.

Nearly All Southern Soils Good for Corn.

Unquestionably the red clay soils and the black soils of our rich creek and river bottoms are best suited to corn, but even the gray soils, with yellow clay subsoils, and the sandy soils underlaid with clay, produce abundant crops of corn when properly treated for a term of years.

In short, there are no soil limitations on corn production in the South, except lack of humus and organic nitrogen. Fill any of our soils with humus that will supply sufficient nitrogen, so that they will hold the needed water supply, and large corn yields are assured, with modern methods of cultivation, any average year.

In most instances larger yields may be obtained by the addition of phosphoric acid, and in some sections by the addition of potash and phosphoric acid; but as a general rule a sufficient quantity of nitrogen, supplied through the decay of organic matter, such as legume plants or stable manure, will solve all the climatic and soil problems for the growing of corn with which the Southern farmer need concern himself.

These facts, actual demonstrations, prove beyond doubt that the South is naturally, strictly within the Corn Belt, and but for defective farming and faulty cultural methods, the world would have recognized this truth years ago.

In this series of articles we shall discuss how our corn yields may be doubled. They can be tripled and quadrupled nearly as easily, but this increased production will be more largely controlled by the amount of humus introduced into our soils than by all other factors combined.

First, Last and All the Time—More Humus.

Success can only come through humus.

Still greater success will come through more humus.

And the greatest yields will come from the greatest amount of humus. Please don't forget this. It is Lesson No. 1. You can't grow large yields of corn in the South without humus; you can grow the largest yields grown anywhere in America with humus.

This idea that there is something mysteriously different about agriculture from other studies has worked harm in making our teachers timid about introducing it.—W. C. Welborn.

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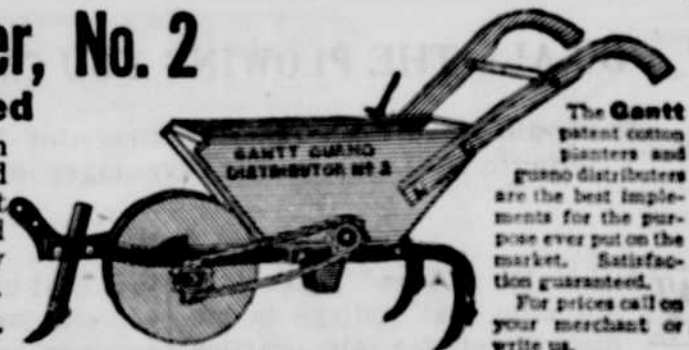
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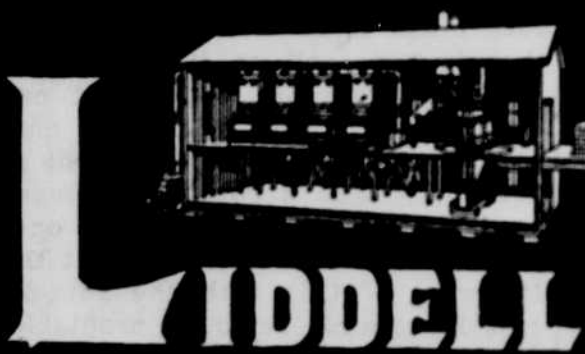
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