

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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## The Most Important Thing on the Farm Just Now.

**T**HERE are countless details in farm work to which attention must be given if the farmer would get the greatest returns from his labor and his investment; but there are also a few fundamental operations which are absolutely necessary to success, and the neglect or misdoing of which means failure.

One of these, which is of special importance just now, is the cultivation of the crops; and by cultivation we mean that done before as well as that done after the crops are planted. Last week we took occasion to give a little warning to the effect that poor work in planting the crops would necessarily mean decreased yields next fall; and we wish to repeat and emphasize that statement this week. It is a thing you must not forget.

Cultivation for the purpose of conserving moisture and keeping down grass and weeds should begin with the breaking of the land—unless that has been done in the fall or winter—and should continue until the crop approaches maturity. Right here, too, it is worth while to remember that if the first object mentioned—the conservation of moisture—is attained, there will ordinarily be little trouble with weeds and grass.

All of us who have farmed know that there are times when it is impossible to prevent the grass from getting a start and making much hard work; but such seasons are the exception, not the rule. If a man starts in time and uses the proper implements, he can, in any ordinary season, KEEP his crops clean, so that it will not be necessary for him to PLOW OUT the grass. To do this requires frequent and shallow stirring of the soil, and to be able to stir the soil frequently in our uncertain seasons means that the farmer must have tools that will enable him to get over the land quickly. He can not hope, if the season is showery, to keep his crop clean if he must go four or five times to the row with a single plow; but if he can cover six to twelve feet at a time with a harrow before the crop is planted, take a row at a time with a weeder while it is young, and with a cultivator when it gets older, he can keep his crop clean in a wet season, or save the moisture for the use of his crops in a dry season.

Improved tools cost money; but they are far cheaper than is cultivation with the single shovel or the turning plow. This is why, in season and out of season, we have urged the purchase of better tools and the use of more horse-power as a necessity in the production of cheaper crops and the attainment of a larger prosperity.

Two-horse cultivators are not within the reach of all our readers this year. Some of them do not cultivate enough land to justify their purchase; some of them work land too stumpy or rocky, or too much cut up by ditches and banks to make their use profitable; some of them have not two horses to pull them. But mark this: A larger per cent. will be using them next

year, and the next, and the next; because the land is going to be put into better shape, more work stock are going to be obtained, and a truer appreciation of their value is going to make itself felt.

Because a man can not have such an outfit as the one here shown, however, is no reason why he should work his crops with a turning plow. The one-horse farmer remains a one-horse farmer in too many



[By Courtesy Bateman Manufacturing Co.]

cases simply because he has the idea that he must continue to use the same old tools and methods. He is the very man who most needs to make each day's work count for more, and just so long as he continues to devote two days' time to doing one day's work he will fail to get ahead. If a man has only one horse, he can use a harrow and a weeder with success, and he can make both of them pay for themselves the first season.

Therefore, let us say it again: Right now is the time to begin the cultivation of all your crops—even of those not planted. Use modern labor-saving tools, so you can get over a whole lot of ground in a day. See that the soil is in good condition before you plant, and when the crop is planted keep right on with the cultivation. It is not necessary to wait for the corn and the cotton—and the grass and weeds—to get up and get a start. Get your start first; get the soil in good condition, and keep your cultivation a little ahead of the crop, and your work will be easy and your reward great.