

\$500 More a Year Farming: How to Get It

BY USING THE RIGHT IMPLEMENTS IN CULTIVATING THE CROPS.

By Tait Butler.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, in a short article of this sort, to mention more than a few of the implements which we regard as most needful on Southern farms. There are a number of these which are essential to good cultivation, and which are not generally found on the small farms of the South. It is of some of these that we wish to write in this article.

At a meeting of farmers in Alabama recently, the writer asked what proportion of the farms of that State had a smoothing harrow, or any sort of a harrow used for pulverizing the soil, and was assured that not over one in ten, if that many, had such an implement. Professor Duggar, the Director of the Alabama Experiment Station, and our special correspondent in that State, regards the smoothing harrow as the one implement now most needed on the farms of the South.

The Harrow as Necessary as the Plow

The writer believes every farm should have a good smoothing harrow, for he regards it as necessary to good cultivation as the plow. In fact, it is inconceivable how anyone can, or is willing to attempt to do farming without a first-class modern smoothing harrow. After the land is once well broken two horses and one man, with a good smoothing harrow, can do more good work in preparing the land for seeding and in cultivating the crops than four men and four horses now do with the little one-horse plows and cultivators in general use by the small farmers of the South.

We are frequently asked what make of harrow is best, but such a question cannot be answered, and no fair-minded man will attempt to do so. The Implement Blue Book lists something over 200 different sorts of harrows, not counting the numerous disk harrows on the market. Any one of the leading manufacturers of agricultural implements has satisfactory smoothing harrows on the market, and it is simply a choice between good implements.

Davidson and Chase, in their book on Farm Machinery, classify smoothing harrows as follows:

Kinds of teeth—Straight, fixed teeth. Square and round teeth. Cultivator teeth.

Kind of frame—Wood frame. Pipe frame. Channel or U-bar frame.

Adjustment of teeth—Fixed teeth. Adjustable teeth. Lever harrows.

It must be remembered that this does not include the weeders or spring-tooth harrows, the knife-tooth harrows or pulverizers, nor the various sorts of disk harrows.

The Kind of Harrow to Get.

The size of the smoothing harrow, or the number of sections to be used, will depend on the freedom of the fields from stumps, open ditches and other obstructions and the amount of team power available. The larger the smoothing harrow; that is, the greater number of sections used, the better work it will do, because the weight and spread of harrow keeps it to the ground better. For this reason a smoothing harrow is not generally used with less than two horses; they are better with a larger harrow, and in the Northwest they use a spread of 30 to 40 feet of harrow with eight horses to form the

team, all driven by one man on horseback.

In selecting a harrow, the following points are to be considered: The connections between sections of the evener should be reinforced or they may wear out quickly. The tooth should have a head so it will not drop out and be lost if the fastener becomes loose. Square teeth are preferable and their number and size should be determined by the conditions under which the harrow is to be used. Iron frames are best, and the set of the teeth should be under the control of a lever.

In this connection we are disposed to pass over the weeder and the curved knife-tooth harrows or pulverizers, because of the frequent reference which has already been made to their use in this series of articles, and devote just a few words to insisting on the use of the disk harrow on every farm where the horse power is available to pull it. And right here let us again insist on the one-horse farmer becoming a two-horse farmer. No one can help the one-horse farmer to do the best farming until he helps himself to another horse or two.

The Disk Harrow's Special Place.

The disk harrow has a work to do—and does it admirably,—which cannot be done so well or so economically by the plow or the smoothing harrow. If only one disk harrow can be afforded, we advise the full-bladed reversible harrow, with 16- to 20-inch disks, preferably the latter. The penetration of the disk blades into the soil and consequently, in a measure, the draft, depends on the following conditions: The angle of the gangs; the curvature of the disks; the weight of the harrow; the sharpness of the blades, and the condition of the soil. Disk harrows pull hard because they do a lot of work.

The disk harrow will pulverize land which it would take much more work to pulverize with the smoothing harrow; especially cloddy land or that with large numbers of grass root tufts or sods. It is also of great value when run over land before plowing, in cases where the land is so hard that it will break up in large clods when plowed without disking. The disking of such land one way and then at right angles to the direction of the first disking, will reduce, very greatly, the size of the clods, which other wise result from plowing land when dry and hard.

The chief use of the disk harrow is in pulverizing the land after plowing preparatory to seeding, and right here is probably the weakest point in our present cultural system. The running of a disk harrow, and that to be followed by a smoothing harrow, after the land is broken and before planting, will do more to economize the labor of after cultivation and to increase the yield of the crops than anything else we can suggest. The reversible disk harrow will also save much time and money in the making of the beds to which our planters are so thoroughly wedded. If the beds must be made, why not make them with one trip across the field instead of with four?

Of course, there are cutaway-disk harrows and spading-disk harrows, which are excellent tools, but as stated, if only one disk harrow is to be used on the farm, we prefer the full-bladed disk harrow.

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