

A NEW AGRICULTURAL YEAR

EACH spring a new production year begins for the farmer. Whether this new year will be a prosperous one or not depends on many things over which the farmer has no control and on other things which he can control. Plans for a season's work in the fields call for the use of many labor-saving machines, but work plans also urgently call for work to be done with paper and pencil.

In planning a definite action program for the operation of a farm we suggest the use of three sheets of paper. On the first make a list of the projects that were successful the past year and those that failed or were near failures. On the second sheet list the things that should be done on your farm during the new year with a black mark under those that you feel must be done. Then spend some time considering the items on which you need information. It is likely that your neighbors can supply part of that information, but use your third sheet of paper to write to your Experiment Station asking such questions as remain unanswered.

Some of the things that should be considered seriously when we make out our program for the coming year are as follows:

1. **Quality**—There is a demand for quality. By and large, high quality products bring greater profits than low quality products whether they are crops fed to livestock or whether they are finished products such as meat animals, cereals or even flax straw. A glaring example of a poor quality product is the roughage fed to our livestock during the past year. Most of our roughages should be cut relatively early, cured and stored so they will be green when fed. The green color usually indicates good palatability, better than average content of vitamin A and higher content of nutrients, especially protein. We should think in the terms of quality of roughage as well as of tons per acre.

Government reports indicate that the number and value of livestock on our farms this spring are almost the same as when the drouth struck us, so now we should be more concerned about increasing the quality of our livestock and their products than their numbers. Fortunately, the price for cull animals promises to be so high during the coming year that there is no inducement to keep and feed inferior animals.

2. **Production**—Quality may be judged largely by the eye, but determination of production calls for weights, tests and careful calculations. Keeping records calls for a sharp pencil to tell whether the production is economical or not.

We may assume that things are true but records will show whether our assumptions are right or wrong. It was once believed that fattening cattle should be kept under cover, but the records show that they make larger and more economical gains in the cold. We formerly thought that milk cows must be housed in warm barns, but the records show that they will maintain economical production in a cold barn free from draft.

3. **Home and Community**—Many of us believe that farming is an ideal way of living, so in making our plans for the new year we should certainly indicate some of the things that we hope to do for the home we live in and the community of which we are a part.

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