# INTEREST TO FARMERS

The Agricultural Problems and Possibilities of the State.

## FACTS RELATING TO IRRIGATED LANDS.

**The Difference in the Yield of Farm Mostly Due to the Difference in Labor Expended on the Soil.**

In occasional trips to various parts of the state, I aim to become acquainted by observation and inquiry, with the agricultural problems which present themselves to the farmers of the various localities. As these observations have extended I have become more and more impressed with the very great agricultural possibilities of the state. While the results already accomplished are certainly something to be proud of, yet I believe they are not a fair measure compared to the undeveloped possibilities of the future. The progress of the past has been largely a physical one, and just so soon as the farmer applies more of his intellectual powers to his work, we may look for agricultural development to take a new start forward—a development that will exceed that of the past as the mental force exceeds the muscular force, while the measure of the material force applied will be a measure of the development achieved. I feel there are many who fail to appreciate the advantages to be derived from this application of brains to farm work and particularly is this the case among the young people growing up upon the farm.

It seems to me that the great majority of our farmers have a very indefinite idea of the great possibilities of their situation. Very many because they fail to apply the proper principles to soil cultivation and crop growth do not get the results which the natural fertility of the soil would warrant, and yet others market their produce in the wrong form to receive the largest returns for their labors. Too many are discouraging not husbanding their resources. Too many are selling out their farms for the ton or bushel, making large and constant drafts upon their capital—the plant food of the soil—rather than keeping the same upon the farm in indestructible quantity, so that year by year it may gather an ever increasing interest for its use. As I have said, I believe there are few who realize the great possibilities of the farm under the irrigation system, although this State was a pioneer in this work. I do not think that I am over the mark in saying that fifty acres of land with a good water right, in this state, is equal to from one hundred to one hundred and fifty acres in some of the central and eastern states. I wish to present a few facts to substantiate this statement.

The major portion of the land used for crops prior to the 40's is in the valleys of streams in the foothills of the mountains, or other places, the short hollows and the rolling hills surrounding the valleys. The former is the condition in the larger and lower valleys, the latter is the method followed in the smaller and higher ones. I am not prepared to say that the methods pursued will ever give the best possible results from each field, but I am sure some time that the results are far behind what may be obtained from a pasture of mixed grasses that may be had on any irrigated farm. I am, moreover, fully convinced that that farm pasture will tend to develop and maintain those characteristics which render the cattle more valuable, which is saying much.

On one acre of such a pasture as any farmer may have, the Experiment Station at Logan fed two cows for five months, and obtained milk to the value of $240, when the butter-fat only produced was sold for fifteen cents per pound. It is a sorry fact I know, that such results are unusual, but such were what give a farmer an income of $1,200 a year.

At the institute meeting recently, I stated that potatoes were the best yield of Bingham potatoes for four to thirty months, when the whole area and under the whole irrigation was from three to five times per acre or thirteen fold. The statement of difference was not disputed, but it caused so much furrowed face in Gem.

The difference in the returns at Oneida prices, namely $1 per ton, and $20 per acre, is largely dependent on the distance from market, the farmer by drawing it to Oneida, twelve miles, or to Pocatello, twenty miles, and the producer receiving for feeding upon the soil crops worth from $5 to $6 per ton, or from a gross value of $60 per acre, instead of thirty per day and profit, if there is a profit, of a profit of $1 per ton, or $20 per acre for the land.

With water for at the rate cited per month this acre water costs for the season, or six months, $3 per acre. A good deal is the matter with the land, and that the expense has to be made. The dairy farmer has to pay for his acre of irrigated land, which he values at $100 per acre, or $1,000 in all, and yet he does not use the water furnished free to Oneida.

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