HOW CAN OUR SOIL SURVEYS BE MADE OF GREATER VALUE TO AGRICULTURE?
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At present we know very little technically about Kansas soils. The Government has surveyed a few counties, but the State has done nothing. Only one chemical analysis of Kansas soil has been made and published by the Kansas Experiment Station.

This is certainly a deplorable condition. Without knowing the soil types and the chemical composition of the soil, it is possible to give only very general information and answers to the numerous inquiries regarding crop and soil management which the writer is constantly receiving from Kansas farmers. We contemplate carrying out a Kansas State soil survey in the near future, in co-operation with the United States Department of Agriculture, with the purpose of securing a general soil map of the State.

This may be begging the question, but our soils surveys will only be of great general value when a uniform system of securing and classifying soils is adopted. This is necessary in order that the relation and distribution of soil types may be definitely established.

The mere location of soil type areas may also have little economic value unless the survey is followed by a careful study of each soil type, as to its chemical composition, fertilizer needs, and crop adaptations. This will necessitate sampling the different types for chemical analyses, and after the composition and total amount of plant food are determined for any soil type, culture experiments should be undertaken to determine the availability of the plant-food elements, and the effect of different culture methods should be tested and the fertilizer requirements of the soil determined by actual tests in fertilizing crops grown in the different soil types. Moreover, the plot-culture work should include the testing of different crops and varieties of crops in order to determine which are best adapted to certain soil types and conditions.

The greatest benefit from the soils survey will come only when such practical experiments and demonstrations are co-ordinated with the field survey and when popular bulletins and reports, in language which they can understand, are published and distributed to the farmers.

Again, while there should be a uniform system of studying soils in order to compare the surveyed areas, yet local areas and special conditions may require special investigations and more detailed study in order that the survey may become of great local value to the farmers of a particular district.