SUPPLEMENTING THE DIMINISHING MANURE SUPPLY
WITH REFERENCE TO THE MARKET GARDENING
INDUSTRY IN MASSACHUSETTS

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(Abstract)

The situation was surveyed with reference to (1) the diminishing supply of manure, (2) its cost, and (3) the importance of manure in market gardening. Due to the displacement of horses by motor vehicles in urban commercial centers, the supply of manure is annually decreasing. The complete disappearance of horse manure in quantity is inevitable. The middleman has entered the business of supplying manure to the farmer. At present, in the vicinity of Boston, city manure purchased through a middleman costs the farmer $5.00 per ton on the land, without considering a 25% shrinkage.

The author stated: “There is a universal agreement that the all-important factor in growing vegetables is humus.” Quality depends upon vigorous uninterrupted growth; the soil must be quick. “Organic matter is essential for this condition... The vegetable grower knows that in no better way can he improve and maintain the proper soil texture than by heavy applications of manure.”

Market gardeners were classified into two groups in their relation to the manure supply. First, there is the suburban market gardener who farms on very high-priced land with high-priced labor. He has ready access to such city supplies of manure as are available. In his case there is not the present necessity for growing manure substitutes that prevails with the second type of gardener, as his land and labor are too costly to be utilized for growing green manure crops. He should know, however, how much manure he actually needs to maintain the supply of organic matter and what proportion of the fertility could be supplied in chemicals.

The second type, the rural market gardener, does not crop his land so intensively, his production costs are not so high, and consequently he has more opportunity to grow green manure crops.

Both types of market gardeners are supplementing the manure with chemical fertilizers. It may be only nitrate of soda or sulfate of ammonia as a side dressing in certain cases; but the majority are

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