ECONOMICS OF PERMANENT PASTURE IMPROVEMENT

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Lack of knowledge concerning the economic value of highly developed pastures has been responsible for the general belief that the more fertile type of farm land can be utilized to better advantage in a rotation system. Field plat experiments conducted by the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station dealing with the development and maintenance of Kentucky bluegrass pastures on three distinctly different soil types have thrown a new light on this important subject and have led to the conclusion that highly developed Kentucky bluegrass pastures are worthy of a more prominent place in the economic scheme of farm management.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to present in a brief manner the data furnished by these experiments in support of the creation and maintenance of such pastures on land similar to that now occupied by cultivated crops. Details of these three experiments have previously been published in Bulletin 195 of the Pennsylvania Station. This paper, therefore, will deal with such data as seem to bear directly on the economic phases of the subject.

Previous pasture studies as conducted by the agricultural experiment stations northeast of the prairie country have dealt largely with the rejuvenation of old pastures of extensive acreage in an attempt to stimulate the growth of existing grasses which vary in species and nutritive value in accordance with the particular soil conditions. In many such experiments, often called pasture demonstrations, the grasses have not responded to soil amendments, due largely to the poor physical condition of the soil. Such pasture studies are largely responsible for the general belief that liberal application of lime and mineral fertilizers is not an economic practice, especially in regard to the use of mineral nitrogen.

NUTRITIVE VALUE OF KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

The wide range in nutritive value of green immature pasture grasses has not been fully realized by producers of livestock. As a result, their attention has been directed to the development of existing grasses rather than to an attempt to introduce into their pastures more desirable species. A comparison of the nutritive value of immature Kentucky bluegrass with other pasture grasses (Table 1)

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