2. INCOME FROM CROP AND PASTURE LAND

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The use of land for crops and pasture has been summarized (1) in the 1923 Yearbook of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The object of this paper is to present some facts regarding the income and outgo connected with pasture and crop land for the purpose of arriving at a clearer understanding as to whether pasture land is receiving the attention that its economic importance deserves.

Three areas have been chosen for an inquiry into costs and incomes from pasture, viz., the northeastern dairy region of the United States as represented by New York conditions, the tame grass pastures of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and England.

COST OF MAINTAINING PASTURE

In 1915, the cost of maintaining 7,928 acres of Broome County, N. Y., pasture was 7.1% of its value of $20.25 per acre. In 1919, the costs for 14,765 acres of Herkimer County pasture was 7.6% of its value of $38.77 an acre. Slightly over 3 acres were pastured per animal unit. For the five-year period, 1923-25, the average cost of maintaining pastures on New York farms keeping careful cost accounts in cooperation with the New York State College of Agriculture was 8.3% of the value of $24.72 an acre. In computing these charges interest was 5% and taxes and other costs 2.1 to 3.3% of the value of the pasture land. Thus interest comprises from two-thirds to three-fourths of the cost of maintaining pasture. The cost account pastures carried an animal unit for each 2.1 acres.

Minnesota reported (2) the cost of maintaining tame-grass pasture in 1907 on 8 farms as $4.063 per acre. One and one-fourth acres were required for the full feed for a 1,000-pound animal. Data on costs of pasture maintenance for other areas are not at hand.

In 1919, in England the cost of grazing 976 acres on 12 farms amounted to $16.78 an acre, or $23.99 per cow per year. The land carried an equivalent of one cow to 1.43 acres, about the same as the Minnesota pasture and twice as many as the New York pastures. The grazing period was 22 weeks. This is $1.09 per cow per week (3), or 15.6 cents per cow per day.

These three sets of data (Table 1) give a range in cost of maintaining pasture per acre of from $1.45 in Broome County, N. Y., to $16.78 per acre in England in 1919 at the height of the post-war period.

INCOME FROM PASTURE LAND

The difference between the cost of feeding animals on pasture and of feeding animals in the barn is seldom fully realized. In six areas of New York State, the cost of pasture, the cost of winter feed, and the returns from the milk per cow per day were as shown in Table 2.

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3Reference by number is to “Literature Cited,” p. 603.