Haskell has estimated that in 1923 the crop returns from the use of commercial fertilizer were approximately $697,000,000. According to the United States Census of Agriculture for 1925, farmers spent approximately $230,000,000 for fertilizer in 1924. It may be assumed that about the same amount was spent in 1923 and that roughly, according to Haskell’s estimates, farmers obtained about $3 increase in added crop value for each dollar expended for fertilizer. So far as the writer knows, this is the only estimate that has been made of total returns from the use of commercial fertilizer.

During the spring and summer of 1928 a survey was made by The National Fertilizer Association, through the cooperation of about 60 member companies and some 900 salesmen, which involved personal interviews with 48,000 farmers located in 800 different counties and in 35 states. One of the 26 questions asked was, “From your general experience what increases do you expect from the use of fertilizers on your most important crops?” In answering this question each farmer gave his average yield with fertilizer and the average yield that he would expect without fertilizer.

The figures and conclusions here given are based on the farmers’ estimates of the increase in yield obtained by the use of fertilizer, the percentages of acreages fertilized, and the approximate quantities used on certain crops, as reported in American Fertilizer Practices; the value of crops, as reported by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Crops and Markets; an estimate of the average price paid by farmers for fertilizer used on cotton, as shown by figures published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in Crops and Markets; and an estimate made by the author of the average price paid for fertilizer used on other crops.

The farmers’ estimates of increased yield obtained by the use of fertilizer are the most comprehensive estimates of this kind ever obtained, and it therefore seems worth while to employ them to determine approximately the returns that farmers obtain by the

1Presented at the annual meeting of the Society held in Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 1929.
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