INSTRUCTION IN FARM CROPS.

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Farm crops, as a distinct and separate course of instruction, has but recently appeared in our college catalogues. An examination of the "write-ups" in the various college catalogues will show that, after making exceptions for local conditions, the courses are not uniform and not well organized. At a meeting like this, a free discussion of the subject ought to clarify our views and unify our ideas.

Farm crops are commonly considered to be those which are grown in field areas and usually include the various grain and forage crops, but they may also include certain others, which are certainly not grain or forage crops; for example, tobacco, cotton and other fiber crops, sugar cane, sugar beets, etc.

Before entering upon a course in farm crops, it is highly desirable that the student should have had a good course in agricultural botany. This course in botany should teach the fundamental things about the structure of the plant, its parts and their functions, the structure of the seed, and the use of the key in the identification of plants. It is also desirable that the course in farm crops be preceded or accompanied by an elementary course in soils.

The instruction in crops should comprise both class-room and laboratory work. The work in the class-room should give facts about the culture of crops and these facts should be based upon the results of good practice and exact experimentation. The work may be presented either in lectures or from text-books. At the present time there is no text which is entirely satisfactory.

The laboratory work should give practice in applying and observing some of the principles laid down in the class-room. There are also certain subjects which can not be well dealt with in the class-room and which need practice rather than discussion, for example, inspection of seeds for vitality and impurities, and the judging of grain and fibers.

Before beginning a discussion of the individual crops, there should be a few lectures or studies on the importance of good seed, the essentials for germination, the parts and functions of the plant, the classification of farm crops, and the principles of rotation.

In the class-room, attention should first be given to the staple crops of the state in which the institution is located, and later to