Balanced Farming in Missouri

ARNOLD W. KLEMME

DURING the past 30 years farmers throughout Missouri and the nation have greatly improved their farming methods by the widespread adoption of improved practices found through the research of experiment stations and presented to them through the agricultural extension service. Much of the high level of production through the war years can be attributed to the wide use of these improved practices. In the past, in Missouri as in other states, information has been disseminated in the main on the basis of projects or individual practices, leaving it largely to the individual farmer to coordinate these practices into a well-balanced farming system. Some farmers have been able to make this coordination and to use the information advantageously. Other farmers have put into use one or more practices not fully realizing that the fullest economic benefits can be obtained only by the adoption of all essential practices related to the individual farm.

The close interrelationship of the various practices and the need for their coordination is well illustrated by the livestock enterprise from which Missouri farmers receive approximately 80% of their income. A successful livestock enterprise requires the coordinated use of several practices.

For example, an ample supply of high quality feed year in and year out is the first prerequisite. To grow sufficient feed to feed properly the livestock required to furnish sufficient income for a satisfactory living on the average Missouri farm necessitates high acre yields and quality crops. To accomplish this goal, maintenance of a high soil fertility level, good soil drainage, the wide use of systematic crop rotations including legumes, and the best adapted varieties and cultural methods are required. Of equal importance for maximum economic returns is production bred livestock capable of efficiently utilizing the feed produced and giving high production per unit. Diseases and parasites must be kept under control. A clean water supply and adequate shelter must be provided. To practice hog sanitation and have protein and mineral rich forage for hogs, a crop rotation including legumes must be used.

1Contribution from the Extension Department, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo. Presented as part of the Extension Program at the annual meeting of the Society held in Omaha, Neb., November 22, 1946. Received for publication December 26, 1946.

2Extension Professor of Soils and Chairman, Missouri Balanced Farming Committee.