FORAGE CROPS


This is the first strictly forage crops text since the revised edition of Piper's "Forage Crops" appeared in 1924. It is a thoroughly good text. Dr. Ahlgren does not title it "Forage Crops East of the Rockies", but it is essentially that. Barely 10% of his references, and a much smaller proportion of his 393 tables, come from west of meridian 100. This is not intended as a criticism—crops differ so widely in different regions that it is better to cover one region well and let another text cover other regions, than to try to cover too large an area.

His tables are valuable and well chosen. Dr. Ahlgren has tried to present a small, clear-cut table to drive home each point made. His success may be judged by the fact that he has included nearly one table to a page, yet the reader does not feel that he has an over-dose of tabular material.

The arrangement of the text is new and greatly improved. After giving the history and statistics of forage crops, he discusses the individual crops chapter by chapter first, then general topics. However "logical" it may be to go from general to particular, in practice we learn individual items first and then generalize. Classes using a text based on this order will make progress faster than with a text which tries to go the other way.

Dr. Ahlgren has elected to omit all mention of pastures and pasture problems—a serious defect for many forage crop courses, which treat pastures as a method of harvesting forages, inescapably related to their uses in other ways. It is hard to see just what text would be expected to give this part of crops courses—the book is announced as complementing Wilson's "Grain Crops", and except for this, does so.

The 98 figures are for the most part excellent, and have good teaching value. Some of the pen drawings are not so satisfactory, and one, Fig. 6, is so poor as to be completely out of keeping with the rest of the book.

In many statistical tables on various crops, he gives the five leading states, and arranges the states in order of their 1947 production instead of long-time averages. For many crops, the two coincide, but any single year may be abnormal. In a few instances, 1947 definitely was abnormal, and the impression of crop distribution given by the five highest in 1947 is likewise.

These are but minor items in a generally excellent production. The author and publishers have combined to do a first-class job of eliminating errors. They are few and unimportant. The trite "long-felt want" is seldom more completely true of a book than of a forage crops text. This one deserves to be widely used. —C. J. Willard.

IRRIGATED SOILS—THEIR FERTILITY AND MANAGEMENT


The book contains 25 chapters dealing with such subjects as special problems of saline and alkali soils, soil, water, and plant relationships, quality of irrigation water and methods of its application to various crops, and use and function of organic matter, fertilizers, and soil amendments on irrigated soils. It is an up-to-date, comprehensive, and yet terse treatment of the subject. The format is attractive and the book is unusually well illustrated with numerous photographs and diagrams. It is well documented, and should serve not only as a good college text, but also as a reference guide to those giving technical advice to farmers. The book is both scientific and practical, is timely, and fills an important need.—E. Truog.

EFFICIENT USE OF FERTILIZERS: FAO AGRICULTURAL STUDIES NO. 9


This publication is a monograph that brings together information on fertilizer materials and their use in the various countries that belong to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The list of contributing authors includes soil fertility experts and engineers from many nations.

Chapters in this bulletin, which makes interesting reading, include the following: The Role of Fertilizers; Plant Nutrients; The Necessity for Organic Matter; Commercial Fertilizers and Soil Amendments; Use of Fertilizers, Manures, and Soil Amendments; Crop Sequences and Fertilizers; Plant-Nutrient Relationships to Soil Regions; The Farmer and Agricultural Services.

It is only natural that a publication which attempts to cover so much territory as this one must limit itself to a discussion of the factors affecting fertilizer usage and the basic principles involved. Recommendations must of necessity be very general. The publication is well illustrated with good photographs taken in many countries of the world.—L. G. Monthey.