CONTRIBUTIONS TO AGRONOMIC TERMINOLOGY.—I.

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The function of language is to convey ideas. Unless the language is understood in the same way by writer and reader this function is not served and ideas are not transmitted exactly. Gregory makes the possession of a common language by teacher and learner one of the seven fundamental laws of teaching.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the terminology of agronomy is not always clear. The science has expanded rapidly in recent years and the number of workers has greatly multiplied. The definition and limitation of the terms used have been largely a matter of individual interpretation and preference. As a natural result there is some laxity in use and some confusion in meaning of many agronomic terms. This condition exists in other rapidly expanding subjects, as aeronautics, bacteriology, ecology, electrical engineering, and serum therapy.

The deficiencies of agricultural terminology are much older than the youthful science of agronomy. More than eighty years ago they were made the subject of comment as follows:1

One of the many requisites for advancing the improvement of agriculture is a correct nomenclature, in which respect no other science or art is so deficient. There are few terms used in agriculture which are of universal acceptance, and many of them are used in senses so different as to cause the written instructions given by one farmer to be unintelligible to most others. And these objections do not apply merely to the hundreds (if not thousands) of provincial terms used by unlettered cultivators; for they are found more or less to

1 Ruffin, Edmund, Farmers' Register, 1834.