The committee on soil horizon criteria was appointed by this association in 1928. It consists of five members, most of whom are either conducting or supervising soil surveys, or conducting soil studies the greater part of each field season. Their association with the soil in its natural environment offers excellent opportunity for accumulating soil data. Three of the members have prepared articles in which the results of their studies on the horizons of certain soils are recorded.

The horizon criteria to be presented this year pertain largely to soils developed from loess or loess-like materials; partly because most of the committee members were operating on such soils, and partly because of the desire for confining the criteria to those obtained from soils developed upon as nearly uniform parent formation as possible. Profile variations resulting from differences in geologic formations are thereby minimized, and those produced by the action of the soil forming processes are more pronounced.

The committee's assignment is broad, and its work is barely begun. However, the members fully realize that knowledge of a soil's internal construction, and of its development, together with the conditions under which it has developed, is of primary importance in determining its relationships to plant growth.

The soil is an independent natural body. Its anatomy and history are recorded in its profile and must be obtained therefrom. Since few profiles, excepting some composed of recently deposited or exposed geologic materials, are uniform, most soil studies are studies of layers or horizons in the profiles.

Each horizon differs from the others in one or more, often several features. When these features are known and thoroughly understood, the internal construction and history of the soil will be explained.

Few soils have been studied in sufficient detail for the recognition of their less conspicuous features, and their more pronounced ones are not always correctly evaluated when used in determining soil relationships. The writer is of the opinion that each layer in a soil profile should be studied exhaustively, and that all features observed, regardless of their apparent significance, should be recorded, because our present knowledge of soils does not warrant a determination of the relative importance of the different features.