DISCUSSION OF SOIL SURVEY REPORTS.

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My only purpose in entering this discussion regarding soil survey reports is to raise the question of the possibility of the Bureau of Soils and the cooperating state agency issuing joint county soil survey reports that will be of more direct value to the farmers of the county than the report now issued by the Bureau, which, besides the technical description of the soil types found in the county and a general description of the area and its agricultural conditions, contains very little that is helpful to the man who is farming the land. Should the present form of this report be continued, or should it be made to include a discussion of the practical problems to be met in the management of each of the soil types with instructions regarding profitable treatments? As it now stands, the report is generally criticised as failing to meet the needs of the farmer. Some of the state experiment stations have met the needs of the farmer by taking the descriptive report of the Bureau and combining with it a practical discussion of the management of the several soils, including suggestions regarding soil treatment, systems of cropping, etc., and issuing this as a separate and additional report. Is such a separate report necessary or desirable?

In states where the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Bureau of Soils are co-operating in soil survey work, it seems to me there should be some way of making the report serve the purposes of both the Bureau and the Station, and that it should not be necessary for the two agencies to publish separate reports, as is being done in several cases. One difficulty seems to be the matter of credit, the kind of cover to use and what should be printed on the outside. Would it not be possible to devise a cover and form of statement showing the co-operative relation in the work that would be acceptable to both the Bureau and the state agency? The other difficulty relates to what shall be included in the report other than a general description of the area and the scientific description of the soils. The Bureau seems to be satisfied with the descriptive report, with here and there a word regarding some practical phase of soil management, while the stations would like to include a rather full discussion of the practical management of the several soil types, including data from experiment fields where such exist, either in the area or on the same soil type in some other county in the vicinity. I think it is generally agreed that the latter would add materially to the value of the report, but no such combined report has yet been published, except as a separate report published by the state agency. Perhaps a committee of this association could help solve these difficulties. In any such combined report, I believe the Bureau of Soils should govern as regards soil classification and scientific description, and that the State Experiment Station should determine what is to be said regarding soil management and the recommendations that are to be made, because this institution is most likely to have the best information upon which to base practical suggestions that will be helpful to the farmer. Would not such a combined report serve the purposes of all concerned, and save duplication?