SOIL SURVEY REPORTS.

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The effective presentation to the general reader of the results of investigation is a matter which workers in the field of agriculture have had to consider and to deal with for many years. Soil reports are the means by which are recorded the findings of soil survey investigations. During the past ten years great progress has been made in refining soil mapping and in making it a really scientific work. Soil reports have not changed much in content and form, and have not kept pace with the advance in soil mapping. I have no desire to minimize the great value of the soil report in its present form, yet it is evident that our increasing fund of soil knowledge, as revealed by the soil survey does not find adequate expression in the soil report. The need of a change in the reports has been felt for a long time. The subject has been discussed at the two previous meetings of this Association, and some valuable suggestions have been made. However, since no definite action has as yet been taken to modify soil reports, a further discussion of the subject seems still in order.

Because of the wide range of uses of these reports and the many classes of people to which they must appeal, there are many opinions as to what a soil report should and should not contain. The question at once arises—should the soil survey report be a technical or popular paper? Since soil surveying is a scientific study of soils, it seems logical that the soil report should be a technical paper. To prepare it in this form is the ideal report. However, practical considerations at once made such a plan impracticable. The readers to whom such reports would appeal are entirely too limited to justify their publication. Moreover, the difficulty of getting appropriations for such work must be considered. Again not all soil workers have the soil knowledge to prepare a really technical paper. Soil reports must, therefore, be popular papers, written in such a way as to be easily read and understood by the layman or man of ordinary education.

In the preparation of soil reports, there are three general classes of readers that are to be considered:

1. The farmer
2. Student and investigator
3. Banker, realtor, investor and general public

It seems right that the report should be written primarily for the farmers, but not wholly so. The survey stands for a broader relation than the local agriculture. It is a contribution to the knowledge of soils. The report should be instructive as well as informing, it should be scientific in its purport and interpretation, and not alon a record of observations and facts whose relationship are not traced and whose real significance is not indicated. All information obtained on the soils of