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SOIL REPORT NO. 15

EDGAR COUNTY SOILS

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

About two-thirds of Illinois lies in the corn belt, where most of the prairie lands are black or dark brown in color. In the southern third of the state, the prairie soils are largely of a gray color. This region is better known as the wheat belt, altho wheat is often grown in the corn belt and corn is also a common crop in the wheat belt.

Moultrie county, representing the corn belt; Clay county, which is fairly representative of the wheat belt; and Hardin county, which is taken to represent the unglaciated area of the extreme southern part of the state, were selected for the first Illinois Soil Reports by counties. While these three county soil reports were sent to the Station's entire mailing list within the state, subsequent reports are sent only to those on the mailing list who are residents of the county concerned, and to anyone else upon request.

Each county report is intended to be as nearly complete in itself as it is practicable to make it, and, even at the expense of some repetition, each will contain a general discussion of important fundamental principles, in order to help the farmer and landowner understand the meaning of the soil fertility invoice for the lands in which he is interested. In Soil Report No. 1, "Clay County Soils," this discussion serves in part as an introduction, while in this and other reports it will be found in the Appendix; but if necessary it should be read and studied in advance of the report proper.

EDGAR COUNTY SOILS

By CYRIL G. HOPKINS, J. G. MOSIER, E. VAN ALSTINE, and F. W. GARRETT

Edgar county is located on the eastern border of the state, about central north and south. It lies principally in the early Wisconsin glaciation, but the southern part is in the lower Illinoisan glaciation. In general topography its surface varies from flat to slightly rolling, but in the southeastern part of the county along Sugar creek and its branches it is quite hilly.

The difference in topography is due to two causes—glacial action and stream erosion. During the Glacial period snow and ice accumulated in the region of Labrador and to the west of Hudson Bay to such an extent that it pushed outward from these centers, especially southward, until a point was reached where it melted as rapidly as it advanced. In moving across the country, the ice gathered up all sorts and sizes of material, including clay, silt, sand, gravel, ordinary boulders, and even immense masses of rock. Some of these materials were carried for hundreds of miles and rubbed against surface rocks or against each other until ground into powder. When, thru the melting of the ice, the limit of advance was reached, the material carried by the glacier accumulated in a broad undulating ridge or moraine. When the ice melted more rapidly than the glacier advanced, the terminus of the glacier would recede and the material would be deposited somewhat irregularly over the area previously covered. The glacier receded and advanced a number of times, and with each advance another moraine was formed. Two of these ice sheets, or glaciers, reached Edgar county. The intermorainal areas are now made up chiefly of level, undulating, or slightly rolling plains.

The material transported by the glacier varied with the character of the rocks over which it passed. Granites, sandstones, shales, etc., were torn from their lodging places by the enormous denuding power of the ice sheet, and ground up together. A pressure of forty pounds per square inch is exerted by a mass of ice one hundred feet thick, and these ice sheets may have been hundreds or even thousands of feet in thickness. The material carried along in the ice, especially the boulders and pebbles, became powerful agents for grinding and wearing away the surface over which the ice passed. Preglacial ridges and hills were rubbed down, valleys were filled with the debris, and the surface features were changed entirely. The mixture of material deposited by the glacier is known as boulder clay, till, glacial drift, or simply drift.

GLACIATIONS OF EDGAR COUNTY

Edgar county was first covered by the Illinoisan glacier, which left a deposit of boulder clay and resulted in a partial leveling of the region. After this a long period elapsed, during which a surface soil known as the Sangamon soil was formed from this glacial deposit by the incorporation of organic matter by natural agencies. Then another advance occurred, known as the Iowan glacier. This glacier did not reach Edgar county, but after its melting the state was covered with a deposit of wind-blown loess, which buried the old soil that was formed from the drift of the Illinoisan glacier. A new soil, now called the Peorian, was formed on the surface of the loess, and after another long period had elapsed a third ice advance occurred, known as the early Wisconsin glacier. This glacier covered about 95 percent of Edgar county with immense quantities of material to a depth varying from 20 to more than 100 feet and averaging near 75 feet. In the case of moraines, the deposit probably reached nearly 200 feet in depth. One of these morainal ridges, the Champaign, crosses the northern part of the county, while another, the Shelbyville moraine, which marks the outer limit of the early Wisconsin glaciation, crosses the southern part. Both of these ridges are very distinct. (See state soil map in Bulletin 193.)

To the south of each of these moraines there has been more or less outwash, but the largest amount is south of the Champaign moraine. Here it has formed an irregular outwash plain, which is represented by a low, flat area having poor natural drainage. In places pockets of sand and gravel occur which are very irregular in distribution, quite varied in thickness, and which have subsequently been covered with from 3 to 6 feet of fine material. Areas with such subsoil are too small to be shown on the map.

Another small but rather distinct morainal ridge occurs northwest of Paris, extending to the west into Douglas county and thence to the southwest into Coles county. This is probably a part of the Cerro Gordo moraine, which is very distinctly developed in Piatt county but is no longer traceable across Moultrie. (See Bulletin 193.)

The Shelbyville moraine enters the southwest corner of the county, extends to the northeast until south of Paris, where its direction changes to the southeast, and leaves the county near the southeast corner. Part of this moraine is made up of two distinct ridges and probably represents two advances. The south slope is quite abrupt and presents a relief of about 150 feet.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE

The altitude of Edgar county varies from about 600 to 840 feet above sea level, with an average of approximately 700 feet. The highest point is 839 feet on the Shelbyville moraine near Kansas. The altitudes of some places in the county are as follows: Brocton, 663 feet; Cherry Point, 625; Chrisman, 643; Conlogue, 722; Dudley, 715; Edgar, 645; Ferrell, 605; Hildreth, 714; Horace 650; Hughes, 658; Hume, 651; Kansas, 713; May's, 690; Melwood, 669; Metcalf, 664; Mortimer, 703; Nevins, 687; Oliver, 633; Palermo, 742; Paris, 739; Payne, 674; Raven, 628; Redmon, 690; Sanford, 627; Scotland, 635; Vermilion, 674.

The western one-third of the county drains into the Embarras river, while the eastern part drains thru Clear, Sugar, and Bruellette creeks, into the Wabash river.

Soil Material and Soil Types

While the two glaciations which reached Edgar county left extensive deposits of boulder clay over the county, the soils as a rule are not formed from this material. The boulder clay has been covered by a deposit of wind-blown material, or loess, which now constitutes the soil to a depth of 2 to 5 feet. This loessial material has been removed from small areas on some of the more rolling parts to such an extent that the exposed boulder clay constitutes the soil material. South of the Shelbyville moraine the thin surface soil has been modified by age, by the character of the drainage, and by other agencies until it is now quite different from the soil of the early Wisconsin glaciation. It is very low in organic matter and is fairly typical of the light-colored soils of the lower Illinoisan glaciation.

The soils of the county are divided into four classes, as follows:

(a) Upland prairie soils, rich in organic matter. These were originally covered with wild prairie grasses, the partially decayed roots of which have been the source of the organic matter. The flat prairie land of the early Wisconsin glaciation contains the higher amount of this constituent because the grasses and roots grew more luxuriantly there, and the higher moisture content preserved them from complete decay. In the older glaciation, the lower Illinoisan, the organic matter is much less abundant.

(b) Upland timber soils, including those zones along stream courses over which for a long period of time forests once extended. These soils contain much less organic matter than the prairie soils, because the large roots of dead trees and the surface accumulations of leaves, twigs, and fallen trees were burned by forest fires or suffered almost complete decay. The timber lands are divided chiefly into two classes—the undulating and the hilly areas.

(c) Terrace soils, formed by deposits of gravel and sand from flooded streams overloaded with sediment at the time of the melting of the glacier. Finer deposits which were later made upon the coarse gravelly material now constitute the soil.

(d) Swamp and bottom lands, which include the flood plains along streams and some small peaty swamp areas.

Table 1 gives the area of each type of soil in Edgar county and its percentage of the total area. It will be observed that the early Wisconsin glaciation occupies 90.4 percent of the area of the county, the lower Illinoisan 4.9 percent, while the terrace soils and bottom lands occupy the remainder. The upland prairie soils occupy 65 percent of the entire area of the county. The accompanying maps show the location and boundary lines of the various soil types, even down to areas of a few acres.

TABLE 1.—SOIL TYPES OF EDGAR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Soil type No.	Name of type	Area in square miles	Area in acres	Percent of total area
	(a) Upland Prairie Soils (page 24)			
926, 1126	Brown silt loam	323.28	206 899	52.37
920, 1120	Black clay loam	53.39	34 170	8.65
1121	Drab clay loam	23.44	15 002	3.80
960, 1160	Brown sandy loam	.33	211	.05
330	Gray silt loam on tight clay	.71	454	.11
328	Brown-gray silt loam on tight clay	.63	403	.10
	(b) Upland Timber Soils (page 31)			
934, 1134	Yellow-gray silt loam	118.36	75 750	19.17
334	Yellow-gray silt loam	22.83	14 611	3.70
935, 1135	Yellow silt loam	39.79	25 466	6.45
335	Yellow silt loam	5.62	3 597	.91
964, 1164	Yellow-gray sandy loam	.13	83	.02
364	Yellow-gray sandy loam	.18	115	.03
	(c) Terrace Soils (page 40)			
1536	Yellow-gray silt loam over gravel	2.81	1 798	.46
1564.4	Yellow-gray sandy loam on gravel	1.11	710	.18
	(d) Swamp and Bottom-Land Soils (page 41)			
1454	Mixed loam	24.49	15 674	3.97
	Water	.17	109	.03
	Total	617.27	395 053	100.00

THE INVOICE AND INCREASE OF FERTILITY IN EDGAR COUNTY SOILS

SOIL ANALYSIS

In order to avoid confusion in applying in a practical way the technical information contained in this report, the results are given in the most simplified form. The composition reported for a given soil type is, as a rule, the average of many analyses, which, like most things in nature, show more or less variation; but for all practical purposes the average is most trustworthy and sufficient. (See Bulletin 123, which reports the general soil survey of the state, together with many hundred individual analyses of soil samples representing twenty-five of the most important and most extensive soil types in the state.)

The chemical analysis of a soil gives the invoice of fertility actually present in the soil strata sampled and analyzed, but, as explained in the Appendix, the rate of liberation is governed by many factors. Also, as there stated, probably no agricultural fact is more generally known by farmers and landowners than that soils differ in productive power. Even tho plowed alike and at the same time, prepared the same way, planted the same day with the same kind of seed, and cultivated alike, watered by the same rains and warmed by the same sun, nevertheless the best acre may produce twice as large a crop as the poorest acre on the same farm, if not, indeed, in the same field; and the fact should be repeated and emphasized that the productive power of normal soil in humid sections depends upon the stock of plant food contained in the soil and upon the rate at which it is liberated.

The fact may be repeated, too, that crops are not made out of nothing. They are composed of ten different elements of plant food, every one of which is absolutely essential for the growth and formation of every agricultural plant. Of these ten elements of plant food, only two (carbon and oxygen) are secured from the air by all plants, only one (hydrogen) from water, while seven are secured from the soil. Nitrogen, one of these seven elements secured from the soil by all plants, may also be secured from the air by one class of plants (legumes) in case the amount liberated from the soil is insufficient. But even the leguminous plants (which include the clovers, peas, beans, alfalfa, and vetches), in common with other agricultural plants, secure from the soil alone six elements (phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, and sulfur) and also utilize the soil nitrogen so far as it becomes soluble and available during their period of growth.

Table A in the Appendix shows the requirements of large crops for the five most important plant-food elements which the soil must furnish. (Iron and sulfur are supplied normally from natural sources in sufficient abundance, compared with the amounts needed by plants, so that they are never known to limit the yield of common farm crops.)

In Table 2 are reported the amounts of organic carbon (the best measure of the organic matter) and the total amounts of the five important elements of plant food contained in 2 million pounds of the surface soil of each type—the plowed soil of an acre about 6⅔ inches deep. In addition, the table shows the amount of limestone present, if any, or the soil acidity as measured by the amount of limestone required to neutralize it.

The soil to the depth indicated includes at least as much as is ordinarily turned with the plow, and represents that part with which the farm manure, limestone, phosphate, or other fertilizer applied in soil improvement is incorporated. It is the soil stratum that must be depended upon in large part to furnish the necessary plant food for the production of crops, as will be seen from the information given in the Appendix. Even a rich subsoil has little or no value if it lies beneath a worn-out surface, for the weak, shallow-rooted plants will be unable to reach the supply of plant food in the subsoil. If, however, the fertility of the surface soil is maintained at a high point. then the plants, with a vigorous start from the rich surface soil, can draw upon the subsurface and subsoil for a greater supply of plant food.

By easy computation it will be found that the most common prairie soil of Edgar county, the brown silt loam, does not contain more than enough total nitrogen in the plowed soil for the production of maximum crops for forty years; and the upland timber soils contain, as an average, much less nitrogen than the prairie land.

With respect to phosphorus, the condition differs only in degree, more than four-fifths of the soil area of the county containing no more of that element than would be required for fifteen crop rotations if such yields were secured as are suggested in Table A of the Appendix. It will be seen from the same table that in the case of the cereals about three-fourths of the phosphorus taken from the soil is deposited in the grain, while only one-fourth remains in the straw or stalks.

On the other hand, the potassium is sufficient for 26 centuries if only the grain is sold, or for 400 years even if the total crops should be removed and nothing returned. The corresponding figures are about 1,600 and 400 years for magnesium, and about 7,000 and 170 years for calcium. Thus, when measured by the actual crop requirements for plant food, potassium is no more limited than magnesium and calcium; and, as explained in the Appendix, with magnesium, and more especially with calcium, we must also consider the fact that loss by leaching is far greater than by cropping.

These general statements relating to the total quantities of plant food in the plowed soil certainly emphasize the fact that the supplies of some of these necessary elements of fertility are extremely limited when measured by the needs of large crop yields for even one or two generations of people. With a population increasing by more than 20 percent each decade, the future needs of the people dependent upon the corn belt are likely to be far greater than the requirements of the past, and soil fertility and crop yields should not decrease but should increase.

TABLE 2.—FERTILITY IN THE SOILS OF EDGAR COUNTY, ILLINOIS
Average pounds per acre in 2 million pounds of surface soil (about 0 to 6⅔ inches)

Soil type No.	Soil type	Total organic carbon	Total nitrogen	Total phosphorus	Total potassium	Total magnesium	Total calcium	Limestone present	Soil acidity present
	Upland Prairie Soils								
926 / 1126	Brown silt loam...	52 500	4 450	1 060	34 430	6 830	7 230		80
920 / 1120	Black clay loam...	81 600	7 620	1 970	30 940	11 490	18 290	Rarely	
1121	Drab clay loam....	60 380	5 770	1 570	33 360	9 540	14 250	Often	
960 / 1160	Brown sandy loam	20 800	1 650	740	27 430	3 730	5 840		80
330	Gray silt loam on tight clay	29 480	2 840	920	27 700	4 500	3 500		1 280
328	Brown-gray silt loam on tight clay	36 580	3 260	1 000	31 560	6 880	7 240		40
	Upland Timber Soils								
934 / 1134	Yellow-gray silt loam	19 520	1 790	790	33 010	5 000	4 550		70
334	Yellow-gray silt loam	22 230	1 970	770	35 220	5 150	5 660		50
935 / 1135	Yellow silt loam..	15 830	1 390	670	36 150	4 730	4 740		230
335	Yellow silt loam..	17 260	1 020	720	36 420	6 780	2 240		3 260
964 / 1164	Yellow-gray sandy loam	17 620	1 300	920	27 040	3 200	4 480		100
364	Yellow-gray sandy loam	8 620	1 120	540	30 400	3 960	3 000		200
	Terrace Soils								
1536	Yellow-gray silt loam over gravel	29 260	2 920	1 080	38 780	5 840	5 320		20
1564.4	Yellow-gray sandy loam on gravel..	23 820	2 700	1 200	34 660	5 320	5 620		60
	Swamp and Bottom-Land Soils								
1454	Mixed loam	25 100	2 500	1 130	37 890	9 470	12 310	Often	

The variation among the different types of soil in Edgar county with respect to their content of important plant-food elements is very marked. Thus the richest prairie land (black clay loam) contains from four to five times as much nitrogen and more than twice as much phosphorus as the common upland timber soils. The calcium content of the plowed soil varies from about 1 ton to 9 tons per acre, while the acidity varies from none to 20 tons per acre, as measured by the amount of limestone that would be required if the acid were to be neutralized to a depth of 40 inches. The most significant facts revealed by the investigation of the Edgar county soils are the lack of limestone and the low phosphorus content of the common prairie soil (brown silt loam) and of the most extensive timber types, which combined cover more than 80 percent of the entire county. And yet both of these deficiencies can be overcome at relatively small expense by the application of ground limestone and fine-ground raw rock phosphate. After these are provided, clover can be grown with more certainty and in greater abundance, and nitrogen can thus be secured from the inexhaustible supply in the air. If the clover is then returned to the soil, either directly or in farm manure, the combined effect of limestone, phosphorus, and nitrogenous organic matter, with a good rotation of crops, will in time double the yield of corn and other crops on most farms.

Fortunately, some definite field experiments have already been conducted on brown silt loam, the most extensive type of soil in the early Wisconsin glaciation, as at Urbana in Champaign county, at Sibley in Ford county, and at Bloomington in McLean county. Before considering in detail the individual soil types, it seems advisable to study some of the results already obtained where definite systems of soil improvement have been tried out on some of these experiment fields in different parts of central Illinois, for more than half the area of Edgar county is brown silt loam.

RESULTS OF FIELD EXPERIMENTS AT URBANA

A three-year rotation of corn, oats, and clover was begun on the North Farm at the University of Illinois in 1902, on three fields of typical brown silt loam prairie land which, after twenty years or more of pasturing, had grown corn in 1895, 1896, and 1897 (when careful records were kept of the yields produced), and had then been cropped with clover and grass on one field (Series 100), oats on another (Series 200), and oats, cowpeas, and corn on the third field (Series 300) until 1901. From 1902 to 1910 the three-year rotation (with cowpeas in place of clover in 1902) was followed. The average yields are recorded in Table 3.

A small crop of cowpeas in 1902 and a partial crop of clover in 1904 constituted all the hay harvested during the first rotation, mammoth clover grown in 1903 having lodged so that it was plowed under. (The yields of clover in 1903 were taken by carefully weighing the yields from small representative areas; but while the differences were thus ascertained and properly credited temporarily to the different soil treatments, they must ultimately reappear in subsequent crop yields, and consequently the 1903 clover crop is omitted from Table 3 in computing yields and values.) The average yields of hay shown in the table represent one-third of the two small crops.

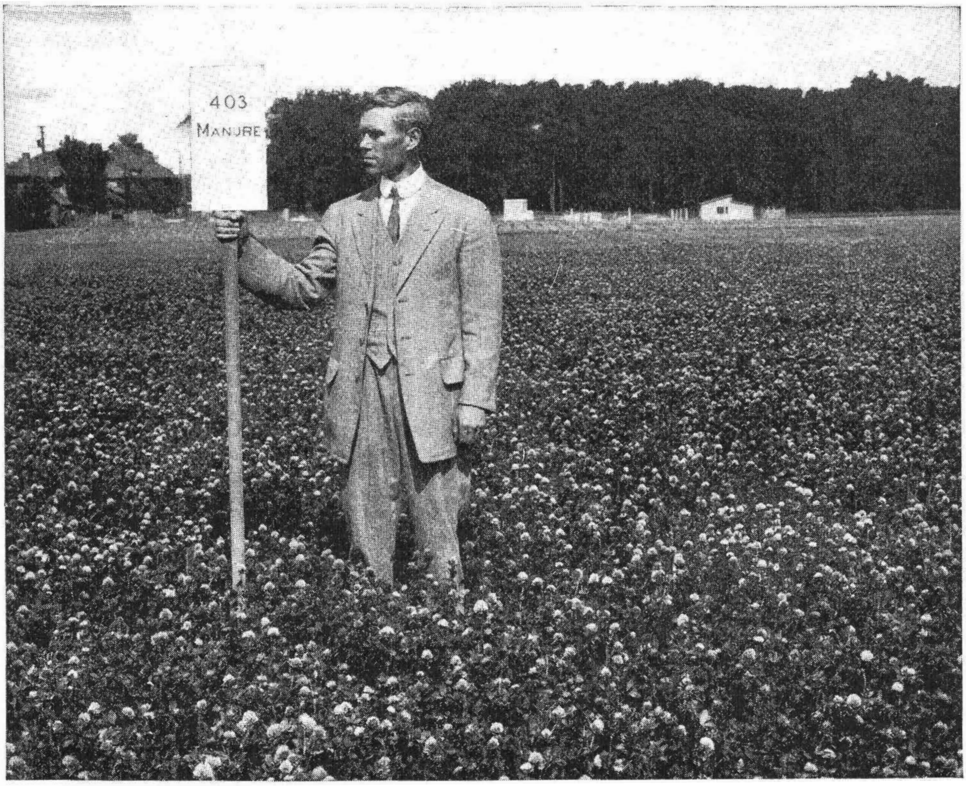

PLATE 1.—CLOVER IN 1913 ON URBANA FIELD
FARM MANURE APPLIED
YIELD, 1.43 TONS PER ACRE

From 1902 to 1907 legume cover crops (Le), such as cowpeas and clover, were seeded in the corn at the last cultivation on Plots 2, 4, 6, and 8, but the growth was small and the effect, if any, was to decrease the returns from the regular crops. Since 1907 crop residues (R) have been returned to those plots. These consist of the stalks of corn, the straw of small grains, and all legumes except alfalfa hay and the seed of clover and soybeans.

On Plots 3, 5, 7, and 9, manure (M) was applied for corn at the rate of 6 tons per acre during the second rotation, and subsequently as many tons of manure have been applied as there have been tons of air-dry produce harvested from the corresponding plots.

Lime (L) was applied on Plots 4 to 10 at the rate per acre of 250 pounds of air-slaked lime in 1902 and 600 pounds of limestone in 1903. Subsequently 2 tons per acre of limestone was applied to these plots on Series 100 in 1911, on Series 200 in 1912, on Series 300 in 1913, and on Series 400 in 1914; also 2½ tons per acre on Series 500 in 1911, two more fields having been brought into rotation, as explained on the following page.

Phosphorus (P) has been applied on Plots 6 to 9 at the rate of 25 pounds per acre per annum in 200 pounds of steamed bone meal; but beginning with 1908, one-half of each phosphorus plot has received 600 pounds of rock phosphate in the place of the 200 pounds of bone meal, the usual practice being to apply and plow under at one time all phosphorus and potassium required for the rotation.

PLATE 2.—CLOVER IN 1913 ON URBANA FIELD
FARM MANURE, LIMESTONE, AND PHOSPHORUS APPLIED
YIELD, 2.90 TONS PER ACRE

Potassium (K=kalium) has been applied on Plots 8 and 9 at the yearly rate of 42 pounds per acre in 100 pounds of potassium sulfate, regularly in connection with the bone meal and rock phosphate.

On Plot 10 about five times as much manure and phosphorus are applied as on the other plots, but this "extra heavy" treatment was not begun until 1906, only the usual lime, phosphorus, and potassium having been applied in previous years. These heavy applications are made in an attempt to determine the climatic possibilities in crop yields by removing the limitations of inadequate fertility.

Series 400 and 500 were cropped in corn and oats from 1902 to 1910, but the various plots were treated the same as the corresponding plots in the three-year rotation. Beginning with 1911, the five series have been used for a combination rotation, wheat, corn, oats, and clover being rotated for five years on four fields, while alfalfa occupies the fifth field, which is then to be brought under the four-crop system to make place for alfalfa on one of the other fields for another five-year period, and so on. (See Table 4.)

From 1911 to 1915 soybeans were substituted four years because of clover failure; accordingly four-fifths of the soybeans and one-fifth of the clover are used to compute values. Alfalfa from the 1911 seeding so nearly failed that after cutting one crop in 1912 the field was plowed and reseeded. The average yield reported for alfalfa in Table 4 is one-fifth of the combined crops of 1912, 1913, 1914, and 1915.

TABLE 3.—YIELDS PER ACRE, THREE-YEAR AVERAGES: URBANA FIELD
BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Serial plot No.	First rotation, 1902-1904						Second rotation, 1905-1907						Soil treatment	Third rotation, 1908-1910				
	Soil treatment	Corn, bu.	Oats, bu.	Hay, tons	Value of 3 crops: Lower prices	Value of 3 crops: Higher prices	Soil treatment	Corn, bu.	Oats, bu.	Clover, tons	Value of 3 crops: Lower prices	Value of 3 crops: Higher prices		Corn, bu.	Oats, bu.	Clover, tons (bu.)	Value of 3 crops: Lower prices	Value of 3 crops: Higher prices
1	0........	75.4	48.8	.49	$43.48	$62.12	0......	71.5	46.6	2.07	$52.56	$75.09	0......	49.4	40.8	2.30	$44.81	$64.02
2	Le.......	77.4	45.1	.44	42.80	61.14	Le.....	68.5	52.0	1.83	51.34	73.35	R......	51.5	43.4	(1.93)	43.69	62.41
3	0........	75.3	50.4	.41	43.33	61.91	M......	80.5	54.8	2.19	58.84	84.07	M.....	69.3	46.2	2.53	54.90	78.43
4	LeL.....	78.4	47.3	.42	43.62	62.32	LeL....	72.3	58.6	1.98	55.57	79.39	RL....	58.1	45.7	(2.02)	47.27	67.53
5	L.......	80.8	58.2	.44	47.66	68.08	ML....	84.8	59.8	2.46	63.64	90.92	ML....	74.9	47.5	2.94	60.09	85.85
6	LeLP....	88.0	52.5	.50	49.00	70.00	LeLP..	90.4	70.7	2.69	70.26	100.38	RLP...	83.8	54.5	(2.64)	63.07	90.10
7	LP......	88.8	56.6	.98	53.79	76.84	MLP...	93.2	71.6	3.47	76.96	109.94	MLP...	86.6	55.4	4.17	75.01	107.16
8	LeLPK..	90.1	48.3	.64	49.53	70.77	LeLPK.	93.8	71.7	3.06	74.32	106.18	RLPK..	86.7	53.5	(1.99)	59.26	84.65
9	LPK....	90.5	54.3	1.34	56.26	80.37	MLPK.	95.6	66.9	3.73	78.30	111.86	MLPK.	90.9	53.6	3.90	74.12	105.89
10	LPK....	86.5	53.2	1.23	53.78	76.83	MxLPx.	90.1	62.9	2.86	69.17	98.81	MxLPx.	81.3	54.3	3.79	70.19	100.27

Le=legume cover crop; L=lime; P=phosphorus; K=potassium; M=manure; x=extra heavy applications of manure and phosphorus; R=crop residues (corn stalks, straw of wheat and oats, and all legumes except seed).

TABLE 4.—YIELDS PER ACRE, FIVE-YEAR AVERAGES, 1911-15: URBANA FIELD
BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Serial plot No.	Soil treat-ment	Wheat, bu.	Corn, bu.	Oats, bu.	Soybeans–4, tons (bu.)	Clover–1, tons[1] (bu.)	Alfalfa, tons	Value of 5 crops	
								Lower prices	Higher prices
1	0........	22.2	53.9	46.3	1.60	2.50	2.27	$75.72	$108.17
2	R.......	23.5	56.4	47.8	(21.3)	(.74)	1.85	75.48	107.84
3	M.......	24.8	63.6	54.6	1.68	2.20	1.68	79.16	113.08
4	RL......	25.0	59.2	49.7	(20.7)	(1.03)	1.72	77.21	110.30
5	ML	28.1	63.4	57.3	1.72	2.81	2.25	87.22	124.60
6	RLP.....	39.1	66.0	64.3	(22.6)	(2.48)	3.28	107.56	153.66
7	MLP....	38.3	67.6	64.9	1.92	4.04	3.25	107.80	154.00
8	RLPK...	38.2	63.7	64.5	(24.2)	(1.41)	3.22	105.17	150.23
9	MLPK	37.4	64.6	69.3	2.09	3.91	3.31	108.54	155.06
10	MxLPx	42.9	61.0	72.5	2.19	4.24	3.45	114.03	162.90

[1] The second cutting of clover hay was not included in reporting this crop in Soil Reports 9, 10, and 12.

The "higher prices" allowed for produce are $1 a bushel for wheat and soybeans, 50 cents for corn, 40 cents for oats, $10 for clover seed, and $10 a ton for hay; while the "lower prices" are 70 percent of these values, or 70 cents for wheat and soybeans, 35 cents for corn, 28 cents for oats, $7 for clover seed, and $7 a ton for hay. The two sets of values are used to emphasize the fact that a given practice may or may not be profitable, depending upon the prices of farm produce. The lower prices are conservative, and unless otherwise stated, they are the values regularly used in the discussion of results. It should be understood that the increase produced by manures and fertilizers requires increased expense for binding twine, shocking, stacking, baling, threshing, hauling, storing and marketing. Measured by Illinois prices for the past ten years these lower values are high enough for crops standing in the field ready for harvest.

The cost of limestone delivered at a farmer's railroad station in carload lots averages about $1.25 per ton. Steamed bone meal in carloads costs from $25 to $30 per ton. Fine-ground raw rock phosphate containing from 260 to 280 pounds of phosphorus, or as much as the bone meal contains, ton for ton, but in less readily available form, usually costs the farmer from $6.50 to $7.50 per ton in carloads. (Acid phosphate carrying half as much phosphorus, but in soluble form, commonly costs from $15 to $17 per ton delivered in carload lots in central Illinois.) Under normal conditions potassium costs about 6 cents a pound, or $2.50 per acre per annum for the amount applied in these experiments, the same as the cost of 200 pounds of steamed bone meal at $25 per ton.

To these cash investments must be added the expense of hauling and spreading the materials. This will vary with the distance from the farm to the railroad station, with the character of the roads, and with the farm force and the immediate requirements of other lines of farm work. It is the part of wisdom to order such materials in advance to be shipped when specified, so that they may be received and applied when other farm work is not too pressing and, if possible, when the roads are likely to be in good condition.

The practice of seeding legume cover crops in the cornfield at the last cultivation where oats are to follow the next year has not been found profitable, as a rule, on good corn-belt soil; but the returning of the crop residues to the land may maintain the nitrogen and organic matter equally as well as the hauling

PLATE 3.—CLOVER ON URBANA FIELD, SOUTH FARM
CROP RESIDUES PLOWED UNDER

and spreading of farm manure—and this makes possible permanent systems of farming on grain farms as well as on live-stock farms, provided, of course, that other essentials are supplied. (Clover with oats or wheat, as a cover crop to be plowed under for corn, often gives good results.)

At the lower prices for produce, manure (6 tons per acre) was worth $1.05 a ton as an average for the first three years during which it was applied (1905 to 1907). For the next rotation the average application of 10.21 tons per acre on Plot 3 was worth $10.09, or 99 cents a ton. During the next four years, 1911 to 1914, the average amount applied (once for the rotation) on Plot 3 was 11.35 tons per acre, worth $6.42, or 57 cents a ton, as measured by its effect on the wheat, corn, oats, soybeans, and clover. Thus, as an average of the ten years' results, the farm manure applied to Plot 3 has been worth 84 cents a ton on common corn-belt prairie soil, with a good crop rotation including legumes. During the last rotation period moisture has been the limiting factor to such an extent as probably to lessen the effect of the manure.

Aside from the crop residues and manure, each addition affords a duplicate test as to its effect. Thus the effect of limestone is ascertained by comparing Plots 4 and 5, not with Plot 1, but with Plots 2 and 3; and the effect of phosphorus is ascertained by comparing Plots 6 and 7 with Plots 4 and 5 respectively.

As a general average, the plots receiving limestone have produced $1.17 an acre a year more than those without limestone, and this corresponds to more

PLATE 4.—CLOVER ON URBANA FIELD, SOUTH FARM
FINE-GROUND ROCK PHOSPHATE PLOWED UNDER WITH CROP RESIDUES

than $6 a ton for all of the limestone applied; but the amounts used before 1911 were so small and the results vary so greatly with the different plots, crops, and seasons that final conclusions cannot be drawn until further data are secured, the first 2-ton applications having been completed only for 1914. However, all comparisons by rotation periods show some increase for limestone, these increases varying from 82 cents on three acres (Plot 4) during the first rotation, to $8.06 on five acres (Plot 5) as an average of the last five years. The need of limestone for best results and highest profits seems well established.

As an average of duplicate trials (Plots 6 and 7), phosphorus in bone meal produced increases valued at $1.92 per acre per annum for the first three years and at $4.67 for the next three; and the corresponding subsequent average increases from bone meal and raw phosphate (one-half plot of each) were $5.12 for the third rotation and $5.09 for the last five years, 1911 to 1915. The annual expense per acre for phosphorus is $2.80 in bone meal at $28 a ton, or $2.10 for rock phosphate at $7 a ton.

Potassium, applied at an estimated cost of $2.50 an acre a year, seemed to produce slight increases, as an average, during the first and second rotations; but subsequently those increases have been almost entirely lost in reduced average yields, the net result to date being an average loss of $2.43 per acre per annum or a loss of 97 cents for every dollar invested in potassium.

TABLE 5.—YIELDS AND VALUES IN SOIL EXPERIMENTS, UNIVERSITY SOUTH FARM: SERIES 100
COMMON BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Corn 1903	Corn 1904	Oats 1905	Wheat 1906	Clover 1907	Corn 1908	Oats 1909	Clover 1910	Wheat[2] 1911	Corn 1912	Oats 1913	Soybeans 1914	Value 1st four years		Value 2d four years		Value 3d four years		Wheat 1915
		Bushels or tons per acre[1]												Lower prices	Higher prices	Lower prices	Higher prices	Lower prices	Higher prices	Bushels per acre
163	RP......	45.1	54.1	57.5	39.8	(.83)	72.0	45.4	(.60)	46.9	74.9	26.8	(16.6)	$78.68	$112.40	$47.92	$ 68.46	$78.17	$111.67	46.9
166	RP......	43.8	49.3	60.9	36.5	(1.00)	74.9	40.8	(1.30)	53.4	79.5	24.6	(17.5)	75.19	107.41	53.74	76.77	84.34	120.49	44.4
169	R.......	42.7	39.5	49.3	28.4	(.90)	65.0	39.9	(1.70)	36.7	67.9	19.1	(15.3)	62.45	89.22	52.12	74.46	65.51	93.59	26.6
170	M.......	41.8	38.7	52.2	26.2	2.56	69.6	40.1	2.87	35.9	76.7	22.5	1.09	61.13	87.33	73.60	105.14	65.90	94.15	31.8
173	MP.....	35.4	53.3	54.6	32.8	3.65	78.4	39.8	4.23	52.7	83.7	29.6	1.45	69.29	98.99	93.74	133.92	84.62	120.89	50.5
176	MP.....	39.3	58.1	61.9	38.8	3.74	79.5	40.0	4.23	51.0	85.6	32.1	1.52	78.58	112.26	94.81	135.45	85.29	121.84	48.9
163	RLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	49.9	87.0	28.2	(18.1)	.....	.....	.....	.....	85.94	122.78	50.9
166	RLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	53.6	81.4	26.8	(18.0)	.....	.....	.....	.....	86.11	123.02	49.6
169	R.......	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	33.8	62.7	17.0	(15.2)	.....	.....	.....	.....	61.00	87.15	25.9
170	M.......	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	32.4	74.4	22.0	1.09	.....	.....	.....	.....	62.51	89.30	31.2
173	MLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	51.3	85.7	28.0	1.37	.....	.....	.....	.....	83.33	119.05	52.4
176	MLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	51.0	85.6	30.9	1.47	.....	.....	.....	.....	84.60	120.86	53.0

TABLE 6.—YIELDS AND VALUES IN SOIL EXPERIMENTS, UNIVERSITY SOUTH FARM: SERIES 200
COMMON BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Oats 1903	Oats 1904	Wheat 1905	Clover 1906	Corn 1907	Oats 1908	Wheat 1909	Wheat[2] 1910	Corn 1911	Oats 1912	Soybeans 1913	Wheat 1914	Value 1st four years		Value 2d four years		Value 3d four years		Corn 1915
		Bushels or tons per acre[1]												Lower prices	Higher prices	Lower prices	Higher prices	Lower prices	Higher prices	Bushels per acre
263	RP......	24.7	25.7	32.1	.82	65.3	31.3	42.5	43.7	52.3	72.9	(13.7)	30.6	$42.32	$60.46	$91.96	$131.37	$69.73	$ 99.61	57.9
266	RP......	23.1	24.5	29.3	.80	59.7	26.7	40.7	32.3	50.2	75.7	(12.3)	33.9	39.43	56.34	79.47	113.53	71.11	101.58	56.4
269	R.......	26.8	22.5	26.8	.86	57.9	31.5	39.4	25.3	35.5	61.9	(10.7)	16.1	38.58	55.12	74.38	106.25	48.51	69.31	45.9
270	M.......	22.0	21.5	24.0	.82	55.3	30.0	37.1	28.7	43.1	67.8	.84	17.4	34.72	49.60	73.81	105.45	52.12	74.47	57.0
273	MP.....	23.9	25.0	27.8	.77	62.5	29.5	43.4	43.7	38.6	69.4	1.17	37.2	38.54	55.06	91.10	130.15	67.17	95.96	61.5
276	MP.....	16.1	25.3	30.7	.68	58.0	27.9	44.1	38.2	48.0	68.6	1.34	42.0	37.84	54.06	85.72	122.46	74.79	106.84	57.6
263	RLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	49.0	50.3	78.9	(13.2)	40.4	.....	.....	.....	.....	77.22	110.31	50.0
266	RLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45.2	47.1	78.7	(10.3)	36.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	70.93	101.33	55.8
269	R.......	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	35.3	45.3	68.4	(10.5)	20.7	.....	.....	.....	.....	56.85	81.21	53.3
270	M.......	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	33.3	45.2	73.2	(1.12)	20.1	.....	.....	.....	.....	58.23	83.18	55.5
273	MLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	46.2	53.7	69.0	(1.27)	46.2	.....	.....	.....	.....	79.34	113.35	49.6
279	MLP....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	39.5	50.6	69.5	(1.24)	49.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	80.15	114.50	53.5

[1]For legumes, figures in parentheses indicate bushels of seed; the others, tons of hay.
[2]From 1911 in Series 100, and from 1910 in Series 200, the acre-yields are based on half-plots, limestone having been applied to one half of each of the plots indicated.

Thus phosphorus nearly paid its cost during the first rotation, and has subsequently paid its annual cost and about 100 percent net profit; while potassium, as an average, has produced no effect, and money spent for its application has been lost. These field results are in harmony with what might well be expected on land naturally containing in the plowed soil of an acre only about 1,100 pounds of phosphorus and 35,000 pounds of potassium.

The total value of five average crops harvested from the untreated land during the last five years is about $75. Where limestone and phosphorus have been used together with organic manures (either crop residues or farm manure), the corresponding value is $107. Thus 200 acres of the properly treated land would produce almost as much in crops and in value as 300 acres of the untreated land.

The excessive applications on Plot 10 have usually produced rank growth of straw and stalk, with the result that oats have often lodged badly and corn has frequently suffered from drouth and eared poorly. Wheat, however, has as an average yielded best on this plot. The largest yield of corn on Plot 10 was 118 bushels per acre in 1907.

As an average of the results secured during the twelve years 1903 to 1914, on the University South Farm where fine-ground raw rock phosphate is applied at the rate of 500 pounds per acre per annum on the typical brown silt loam prairie soil, the return for each ton of phosphate[1] used has been $13.57 on Series 100 and $12.07 on Series 200, with the lower prices allowed for produce, the rotation being wheat, corn, oats, and clover (or soybeans). This gives an average return of $12.82 for each ton of phosphate applied. Averages for each rotation period show the following values for the increase per ton of phosphate used:

	Lower prices	Higher prices
First rotation, 1903 to 1906	$ 8.26	$11.80
Second rotation, 1907 to 1910	11.33	16.19
Third rotation, 1911 to 1914	18.89	26.98

Thus the rock phosphate paid back more than its cost during the first rotation, more than 1½ times its cost during the second rotation, and more than 2½ times its cost during the third rotation period.

One ton of fine-ground rock phosphate costs about the same as 500 pounds of steamed bone meal. Altho in less readily available form, the rock phosphate contains as much phosphorus, ton for ton, as the bone meal; and, when equal money values are applied in connection with liberal amounts of decaying organic matter, the natural rock may soon give as good results as the bone—and, by supplying about four times as much phosphorus, the rock provides for greater durability.

The results just given represent averages covering the residue system and the live-stock system, both of which are represented in this crop rotation on the South Farm.

Ground limestone at the rate of 8 tons per acre was applied to the east half of these series of plots (excepting the check plots, which receive only residues or manure), beginning in 1910 on Series 200 and in 1911 on Series 100. Subse-

[1]During the first four years Series 100 received only 1,500 pounds per acre of phosphate, and both series received also ½ ton per acre of limestone, the effect of which probably would be slight, as may be judged from the data secured later and reported herein.

quent applications are made of 2 tons per acre each four years, beginning in 1914 on Series 200 and in 1915 on Series 100. As an average of the results from both series, the crop values were increased during the third rotation, 1911-1914, as follows:

	RESIDUE SYSTEM		LIVE-STOCK SYSTEM	
	Lower prices	Higher prices	Lower prices	Higher prices
Gain for phosphate..........	$18.82	$26.89	$18.95	$27.07
Gain for limestone...........	2.30	3.29	2.54	3.63

Detailed records of these investigations are given in Tables 5 and 6, the data being reported by half-plots after 1910-11. (Series 300 and 400, which are also used in this rotation, are located in part upon black clay loam and a heavy phase of brown silt loam. (See discussion under *Black Clay Loam,* p. 26.)

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTS ON SIBLEY FIELD

Table 7 gives the results obtained during twelve years from the Sibley soil experiment field located in Ford county on the typical brown silt loam prairie of the Illinois corn belt.

Previous to 1902 this land had been cropped with corn and oats for many years under a system of tenant farming, and the soil had become somewhat deficient in active organic matter. While phosphorus was the limiting element of plant food, the supply of nitrogen becoming available annually was but little in excess of the phosphorus, as is well shown by the corn yields for 1903, when the addition of phosphorus produced an increase of 8 bushels, nitrogen produced no increase, but nitrogen *and* phosphorus increased the yield by 15 bushels.

After six years of additional cropping, however, nitrogen appeared to become the most limiting element, the increase in the corn in 1907 being 9 bushels from nitrogen and only 5 bushels from phosphorus, while both together produced an increase of 33 bushels. By comparing the corn yields for the four years 1902, 1903, 1906, and 1907, it will be seen that the untreated land apparently grew less productive, whereas, on land receiving both phosphorus and nitrogen, the yield appreciably increased, so that in 1907, when the untreated rotated land produced only 34 bushels of corn per acre, a yield of 72 bushels (more than twice as much) was produced where lime, nitrogen, and phosphorus had been applied, altho the two plots produced exactly the same yield (57.3 bushels) in 1902.

Even in the unfavorable season of 1910 the yield of the highest producing plot exceeded the yield of the same plot in 1902, while the untreated land produced less than half as much as it produced in 1902. The prolonged drouth of 1911 resulted in almost a failure of the corn crop, but nevertheless the effect of soil treatment was seen. Phosphorus appeared to be the first limiting element again in 1909, 1910, and 1911; while the lodging of oats, especially on the nitrogen plots, in the exceptionally favorable season of 1912, produced very irregular results. In 1913 wheat averaged 6.6 bushels without nitrogen or phosphorus (Plots 101, 102, 105) and 22.4 bushels where both nitrogen and phosphorus were added (Plots 106, 109, 110).

In the lower part of Table 7 is shown the total value of the twelve crops from each of the ten different plots, the amounts varying, at the lower prices (35 cents a bushel for corn, 28 cents for oats, and 70 cents for wheat), from $167.32 to $257.91 per acre. Phosphorus without nitrogen has produced $31.27

TABLE 7.—CROP YIELDS IN SOIL EXPERIMENTS, SIBLEY FIELD
BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Corn 1902	Corn 1903	Oats 1904	Wheat 1905	Corn 1906	Corn 1907	Oats 1908	Wheat 1909	Corn 1910	Corn 1911	Oats 1912	Wheat 1913
		Bushels per acre											
101	None..............	57.3	50.4	74.4	29.5	36.7	33.9	25.9	25.3	26.6	20.7	84.4	5.5
102	Lime..............	60.0	54.0	74.7	31.7	39.2	38.9	24.7	28.8	34.0	22.2	85.6	6.8
103	Lime, nitro.........	60.0	54.3	77.5	32.8	41.7	48.1	36.3	19.0	29.0	22.4	25.3	18.3
104	Lime, phos..........	61.3	62.3	92.5	36.3	44.8	43.5	25.6	32.2	52.0	31.6	92.3	10.7
105	Lime, potas.........	56.0	49.9	74.4	30.2	37.5	34.9	22.2	23.2	34.2	21.6	83.1	7.5
106	Lime, nitro., phos....	57.3	69.1	88.4	45.2	68.5	72.3	45.6	33.3	55.6	35.3	42.2	24.7
107	Lime, nitro., potas...	53.3	51.4	75.9	37.7	39.7	51.1	42.2	25.8	46.2	20.1	55.6	19.2
108	Lime, phos., potas...	58.7	60.9	80.0	39.8	41.5	39.8	27.2	28.5	43.0	31.8	79.7	11.8
109	Lime, nitro., phos., potas............	58.7	65.9	82.5	48.0	69.5	80.1	52.8	35.0	58.0	35.7	57.2	24.5
110	Nitro., phos., potas..	60.0	60.1	85.0	48.5	63.3	72.3	44.1	30.8	64.4	31.5	54.1	18.0

Increase: Bushels per Acre

	Corn 1902	Corn 1903	Oats 1904	Wheat 1905	Corn 1906	Corn 1907	Oats 1908	Wheat 1909	Corn 1910	Corn 1911	Oats 1912	Wheat 1913
For nitrogen............	.0	.3	2.8	1.1	2.5	9.2	11.6	–9.8	–5.0	.2	–60.3	11.5
For phosphorus.........	1.3	8.3	17.8	4.6	5.6	4.6	.9	3.4	18.0	9.4	6.7	3.9
For potassium..........	–4.0	–4.1	–.3	–1.5	–1.7	–4.0	–2.5	–5.6	.2	–.6	–2.5	.7
For nitro., phos. over phos	–4.0	6.8	–4.1	8.9	23.7	28.8	20.0	1.1	3.6	3.7	–50.1	14.0
For phos., nitro. over nitro	–2.7	14.8	10.9	12.4	24.8	24.2	9.3	14.3	26.6	12.9	16.9	6.4
For potas., nitro., phos. over nitro., phos......	1.4	–3.2	–5.9	2.8	1.0	7.8	7.2	1.7	2.4	.4	15.0	–.2

Value of Crops per Acre in Twelve Years

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Total value of twelve crops: Lower prices	Higher prices
101	None..	$172.89	$246.98
102	Lime..	186.51	266.45
103	Lime, nitrogen..	177.44	253.49
104	Lime, phosphorus..	217.78	311.11
105	Lime, potassium...	167.32	239.03
106	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus..	246.91	352.73
107	Lime, nitrogen, potassium...	198.16	283.08
108	Lime, phosphorus, potassium.......................................	204.90	292.71
109	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium.............................	257.91	368.45
110	Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium...................................	242.47	346.38

Value of Increase per Acre in Twelve Years

	Lower prices	Higher prices
For nitrogen..	–$ 9.07	–$12.96
For phosphorus..	31.27	44.66
For *nitrogen* and phosphorus over phosphorus.............................	29.13	41.62
For *phosphorus* and nitrogen over nitrogen...............................	69.47	99.24
For *potassium*, nitrogen and phosphorus over nitrogen and phosphorus........	11.00	15.72

in addition to the increase by lime, but with nitrogen it has produced $69.47 above the crop values where only lime and nitrogen have been used. The results show that in 26 cases out of 48 the addition of potassium has decreased the crop yields. Even when applied in addition to phosphorus, and with no effort to liberate potassium from the soil by adding organic matter, potassium has produced no increase in crop values as an average of the results from Plots 108 and 109.

By comparing Plots 101 and 102, and also 109 and 110, it is seen that lime has produced an average increase of $14.53, or $1.21 an acre a year. The in-

TABLE 8.—CROP YIELDS IN SOIL EXPERIMENTS, BLOOMINGTON FIELD
BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Corn 1902	Corn 1903	Oats 1904	Wheat 1905	Clover 1906	Corn 1907	Corn 1908	Oats 1909	Clover 1910	Wheat 1911	Corn 1912	Corn 1913	Oats 1914
		Bushels or tons per acre[1]												
101	None	30.8	63.9	54.8	30.8	.39	60.8	40.3	46.4	1.56	22.5	55.2	32.4	29.8
102	Lime	37.0	60.3	60.8	28.8	.58	63.1	35.3	53.6	1.09	22.5	47.9	30.0	40.6
103	Lime, crop residues[2]	35.1	59.5	69.8	30.5	.46	64.3	36.9	49.4	(.83)	25.6	62.5	37.5	30.8
104	Lime, phosphorus	41.7	73.0	72.7	39.2	1.65	82.1	47.5	63.8	4.21	57.6	74.5	44.1	45.0
105	Lime, potassium	37.7	56.4	62.5	33.2	.51	64.1	36.2	45.3	1.26	21.7	57.8	32.1	35.8
106	Lime, residues,[2] phosphorus	43.9	77.6	85.3	50.9	([3])	78.9	45.8	72.5	(1.67)	60.2	86.1	50.4	62.3
107	Lime, residues,[2] potassium	40.4	58.9	66.4	29.5	.81	64.3	31.0	51.1	(.33)	27.3	58.9	34.5	34.5
108	Lime, phosphorus, potassium	50.1	74.8	70.3	37.8	2.36	81.4	57.2	59.5	3.27	54.0	79.2	49.4	63.1
109	Lime, residues,[2] phosphorus, potassium	52.7	80.9	90.5	51.9	([3])	88.4	58.1	64.2	(.42)	60.4	83.4	49.0	54.4
110	Residues, phosphorus, potassium	52.3	73.1	71.4	51.1	([3])	78.0	51.4	55.3	(.60)	61.0	78.3	33.8	44.8
	Increase: Bushels or Tons per Acre													
	For residues	–1.9	–.8	9.0	1.7	–.12	1.2	1.6	–4.2		3.1	14.6	7.5	–9.8
	For phosphorus	4.7	12.7	11.9	10.4	1.07	19.0	12.2	10.2	3.12	35.1	26.6	14.1	4.4
	For potassium	.7	–3.9	1.7	4.4	–.07	1.0	.9	–8.3	.15	–.8	9.9	2.1	–4.8
	For residues, phosphorus over phosphorus	2.2	4.6	12.6	11.7	–1.65	–3.2	–1.7	8.7		2.6	11.6	6.3	17.3
	For phosphorus, residues over residues	8.8	18.1	15.5	20.4	–.46	14.6	8.9	23.1	(.84)	34.6	23.6	12.9	31.5
	For potassium, residues, phosphorus over res., phos.	8.8	3.3	5.2	1.0	.00	9.5	12.3	–8.3	(–1.25)	.2	–2.7	–1.4	–7.9

[1]For clover the figures indicate tons per acre, except where in parentheses, in which case they indicate bushels of seed.
[2]Commercial nitrogen was used from 1902 to 1905.
[3]Clover smothered by previous wheat crop.

TABLE 9.—VALUE OF CROPS PER ACRE IN THIRTEEN YEARS, BLOOMINGTON FIELD
BROWN SILT LOAM PRAIRIE; EARLY WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Total value of thirteen crops	
		Lower prices	Higher prices
101	None	$186.83	$266.90
102	Lime	186.76	266.80
103	Lime, residues	193.83	276.90
104	Lime, phosphorus	286.61	409.45
105	Lime, potassium	190.53	272.19
106	Lime, residues, phosphorus	285.03	407.19
107	Lime, residues, potassium	191.10	273.00
108	Lime, phosphorus, potassium	294.91	421.31
109	Lime, residues, phosphorus, potassium	284.47	406.39
110	Residues, phosphorus, potassium	259.10	370.15

Value of Increase per Acre in Thirteen Years

For residues	$ 7.07	$10.10
For phosphorus	99.85	142.65
For *residues* and phosphorus over phosphorus	–1.58	–2.26
For *phosphorus* and residues over residues	91.20	130.29
For *potassium*, residues, and phosphorus over residues and phosphorus	–.56	–.80

NOTE.—Lower prices are based on 70 cents a bushel for wheat, 35 cents for corn, 28 cents for oats, $7 a ton for hay: higher prices, $1 a bushel for wheat, 50 cents for corn, 40 cents for oats, $10 a ton for hay.

crease on these plots is practically the same as on the field at Urbana, and it suggests that the time is here when limestone must be applied to some of these brown silt loam soils.

While nitrogen, on the whole, has produced an appreciable increase, especially on those plots to which phosphorus has also been added, it has cost, in commercial form, so much above the value of the increase produced that the only conclusion to be drawn, if we are to utilize this fact to advantage, is that the nitrogen must be secured from the air.

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTS ON BLOOMINGTON FIELD

Space is taken to insert Tables 8 and 9, giving the results obtained from the Bloomington soil experiment field, which is also located on the brown silt loam prairie soil of the Illinois corn belt.

The general results of the thirteen years' work tell much the same story as those from the Sibley field. The rotations have differed since 1905 by the use of clover and the discontinuing of the use of commercial nitrogen—in consequence of which phosphorus without commercial nitrogen, on the Bloomington field, has produced an even larger increase ($99.85) than has been produced by phosphorus and nitrogen over nitrogen on the Sibley field ($69.47).

It should be stated that a draw runs near Plot 110 on the Bloomington field, that the crops on that plot are sometimes damaged by overflow or imperfect drainage, and that Plot 101 occupies the lowest ground on the opposite side of the field. In part because of these irregularities and in part because only one small application has been made, no conclusions can be drawn in regard to lime. Otherwise all results reported in Table 8 are considered reliable. They not only furnish much information in themselves, but they also offer instructive comparison with the Sibley field.

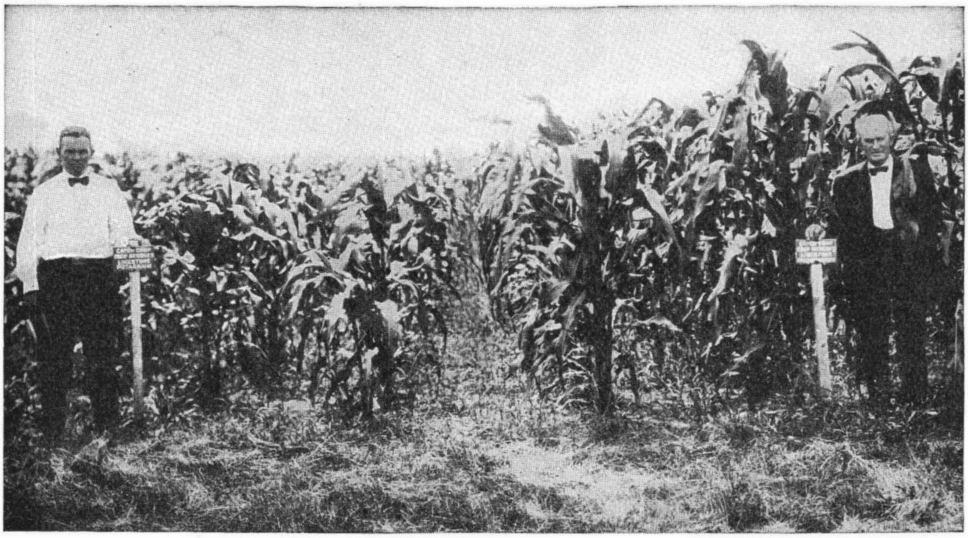

PLATE 5.—CORN IN 1912 ON BLOOMINGTON FIELD
ON LEFT, RESIDUES, LIME, AND POTASSIUM: YIELD, 58.9 BUSHELS
ON RIGHT, RESIDUES, LIME, AND PHOSPHORUS: YIELD, 86.1 BUSHELS

Wherever nitrogen has been provided, either by direct application or by the use of legume crops, the addition of the element phosphorus has produced very marked increases, the average yearly increase for the Bloomington field being worth $7.02 an acre at the lower prices. This is $4.52 above the cost of the phosphorus in 200 pounds of steamed bone meal, the form in which it is applied on the Sibley and the Bloomington fields. On the other hand, the use of phosphorus without nitrogen will not maintain the fertility of the soil (see Plots 104 and 106, Sibley field). As the only practical and profitable method of supplying nitrogen, a liberal use of clover or other legumes is suggested, the legume to be plowed under either directly or as manure, preferably in connection with the phosphorus applied, especially if raw rock phosphate is used.

From the soil of the best treated plots on the Bloomington field, 180 pounds per acre of phosphorus, as an average, has been removed in the thirteen crops. This is equal to 15 percent of the total phosphorus contained in the surface soil of an acre of the untreated land. In other words, if such crops could be grown for eighty years, they would require as much phosphorus as now constitutes the total supply in the ordinary plowed soil. The results plainly show, however, that without the addition of phosphorus such crops cannot be grown year after year. Where no phosphorus has been applied, the crops have removed only 120 pounds of phosphorus in the thirteen years, which is equivalent to only 10 percent of the total amount (1,200 pounds) present in the surface soil at the beginning of the experiment in 1902. The total phosphorus applied from 1902 to 1914, as an average of all plots where it has been used, has amounted to 325 pounds per acre and has cost $32.50.[1] This has paid back $97.20, as an average of four trials, or 300 percent on the investment; whereas potassium, used in

[1]This is based on $25 a ton for steamed bone meal, but in recent years the price has been advanced, as a rule, to nearly $30.

the same number of tests and at the same cost, has paid back only $2.20 per acre in the thirteen years, or less than 7 percent of its cost. Are not these results to be expected from the composition of such soil and the requirements of crops? (See Table 2; also Table A in the Appendix.)

Nitrogen was applied to the residue plots of this field (except Plot 110), in commercial form only, from 1902 to 1905; but clover was grown in 1906 and 1910, and a cover crop of cowpeas after the clover in 1906. The cowpeas were plowed under on all plots, and the 1910 clover, except the seed, was plowed under on the five residue plots. Straw and corn stalks have been returned to these plots, beginning with 1908. The effect of returning these residues to the soil has been appreciable since 1908 (an average increase on Plots 106 and 109 of 5.5 bushels of oats, 4.5 bushels of wheat, and 5.4 bushels of corn) and probably will be more marked on subsequent crops. Indeed, the large crops of corn, oats, and wheat grown on Plots 104 and 108 during the thirteen years have drawn their nitrogen very largely from the natural supply in the organic matter of the soil, for the roots and stubble of clover contain no more nitrogen than the entire plant takes from the soil alone, but they decay rapidly in contact with

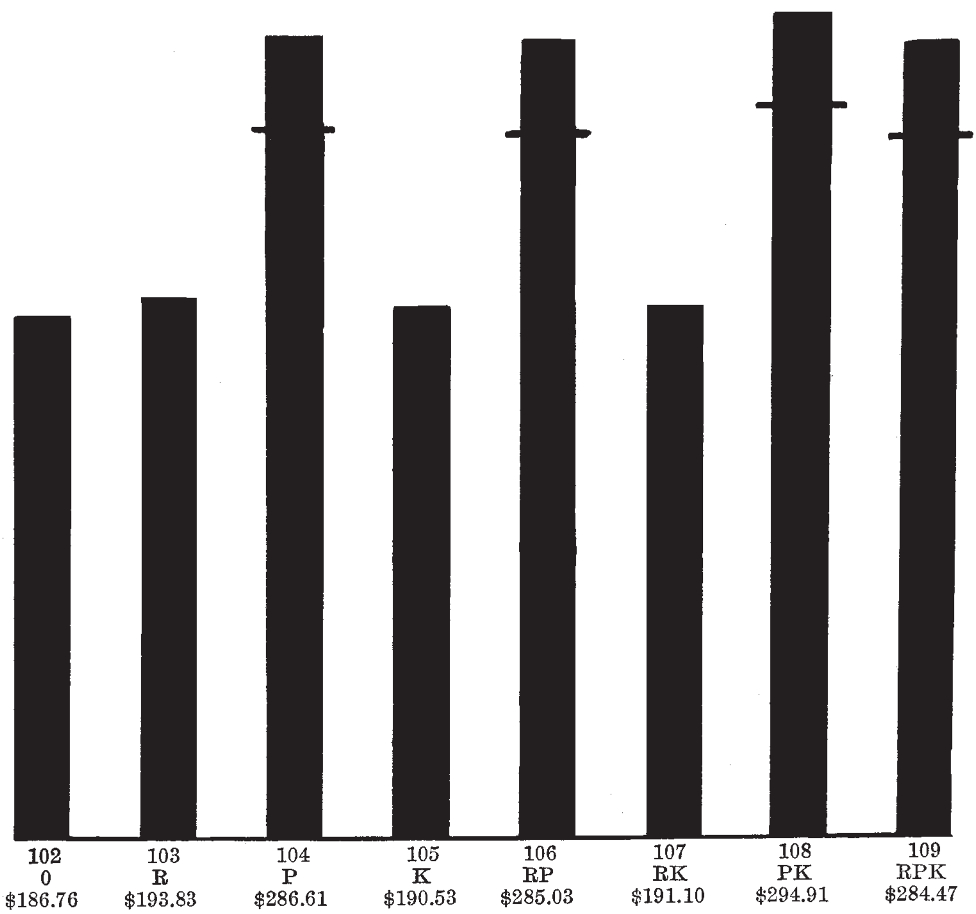

PLATE 6.—CROP VALUES FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, BLOOMINGTON EXPERIMENT FIELD (R=residues; P=phosphorus; K=potassium, or kalium)

the soil and probably hasten the decomposition of the soil humus and the consequent liberation of the soil nitrogen. But of course there is a limit to the reserve stock of humus and nitrogen remaining in the soil, and the future years will undoubtedly witness a gradually increasing difference between Plots 104 and 106, and between Plots 108 and 109, in the yields of grain crops.

Plate 6 shows graphically the relative values of the thirteen crops for the eight comparable plots, Nos. 102 to 109. The cost of the phosphorus is indicated by that part of the diagram above the short crossbars. It should be kept in mind that no value is assigned to clover plowed under except as it reappears in the increase of subsequent crops. Plots 106 and 109 are heavily handicapped because of the clover failure on those plots in 1906 and the poor yield of clover seed in 1910, whereas Plots 104 and 108 produced a fair crop in 1906 and a very large crop in 1910. Plot 106, which receives the most practical treatment for permanent agriculture (RLP), has produced a total value in thirteen years only $1.58 below that from Plot 104 (LP). (See also table on last page of cover.)

TABLE 10.—FERTILITY IN THE SOILS OF EDGAR COUNTY, ILLINOIS
Average pounds per acre in 4 million pounds of subsurface soil (about 6⅔ to 20 inches.)

Soil type No.	Soil type	Total organic carbon	Total nitrogen	Total phosphorus	Total potassium	Total magnesium	Total calcium	Limestone present	Soil acidity present
	Upland Prairie Soils								
926 / 1126	Brown silt loam..	68 850	6 000	1 710	70 190	15 080	12 920		210
920 / 1120	Black clay loam..	78 970	7 280	2 880	65 400	24 490	30 050	Rarely	
1121	Drab clay loam..	58 400	5 160	2 360	66 920	23 660	24 960	Often	
960 / 1160	Brown sandy loam	29 280	2 640	1 320	58 520	11 720	11 000		180
330	Gray silt loam on tight clay	27 720	2 680	1 320	60 840	14 240	6 320		7 440
328	Brown-gray silt loam on tight clay	36 240	3 400	1 360	62 920	19 800	11 240		320
	Upland Timber Soils								
934 / 1134	Yellow-gray silt loam...........	13 350	1 780	1 290	70 060	16 660	7 670		4 640
334	Yellow-gray silt loam	16 430	1 610	1 270	73 360	13 450	9 190		4 390
935 / 1135	Yellow silt loam..	12 920	1 510	1 550	78 350	16 070	9 630		3 040
335	Yellow silt loam..	22 440	1 480	1 400	74 360	13 720	7 280		18 720
964 / 1164	Yellow-gray sandy loam	12 440	840	1 120	56 000	8 480	9 200		520
364	Yellow-gray sandy loam	5 840	920	1 200	57 840	10 960	4 640		7 680
	Terrace Soils								
1536	Yellow-gray silt loam over gravel	25 760	3 120	1 680	80 440	14 920	10 320		40
1564.4	Yellow-gray sandy loam on gravel..	29 680	3 600	2 200	68 760	10 520	12 000		80
	Swamp and Bottom-Land Soils								
1454	Mixed loam	29 360	3 380	1 960	37 500	15 160	17 740	Often	

The Subsurface and Subsoil

In Tables 10 and 11 are recorded the amounts of plant food in the subsurface and the subsoil of the different types of soil in Edgar county, but it should be remembered that these supplies are of little value unless the top soil is kept rich. Probably the most important information contained in these tables is that the most common prairie soil (brown silt loam) and the upland timber soils are from slightly to strongly acid in the subsurface and sometimes even more strongly acid in the subsoil. This fact emphasizes the importance of having plenty of limestone in the surface soil to neutralize the acid moisture which rises from the lower strata by capillary action during times of partial drouth, which are critical periods in the life of such plants as clover. While the common brown silt loam prairie is usually slightly acid, the upland timber soils are, as a rule, more distinctly in need of limestone, and, as already explained, they are also more deficient in organic matter and nitrogen than the prairie soils, and therefore more in need of growing clover.

Table 11.—Fertility in the Soils of Edgar County, Illinois
Average pounds per acre in 6 million pounds of subsoil (about 20 to 40 inches)

Soil type No.	Soil type	Total organic carbon	Total nitrogen	Total phosphorus	Total potassium	Total magnesium	Total calcium	Limestone present	Soil acidity present
	Upland Prairie Soils								
926 1126	Brown silt loam..	32 330	3 550	1 970	107 230	36 630	24 070	Rarely	
920 1120	Black clay loam..	29 390	3 350	3 380	102 470	55 160	73 370	Rarely	
1121	Drab clay loam..	25 890	2 760	3 000	100 050	63 180	87 090	Often	
960 1160	Brown sandy loam	24 090	2 640	2 190	98 010	33 000	19 620		3 750
330	Gray silt loam on tight clay	22 920	2 400	2 100	104 340	36 360	17 220		4 380
328	Brown-gray silt loam on tight clay	22 020	2 820	1 380	112 080	38 040	23 220		180
	Upland Timber Soils								
934 1134	Yellow-gray silt loam..........	15 700	2 220	2 020	111 650	32 750	19 330		3 980
334	Yellow-gray silt loam	17 540	1 840	2 040	107 640	25 500	15 300		9 600
935 1135	Yellow silt loam..	13 000	1 620	2 280	114 760	28 320	14 380		5 380
335	Yellow silt loam..	18 420	1 200	1 860	100 500	15 840	8 580		27 060
964 1164	Yellow-gray sandy loam	12 480	900	1 080	76 920	13 620	14 040		2 040
364	Yellow-gray sandy loam	8 760	1 380	1 800	86 760	16 440	6 960		11 520
	Terrace Soils								
1536	Yellow-gray silt loam over gravel	23 400	3 240	2 880	114 960	30 720	16 080		420
1564.4	Yellow-gray sandy loam on gravel..	25 800	3 900	3 300	97 560	22 560	23 940		120
	Swamp and Bottom-Land Soils								
1454	Mixed loam	25 650	2 820	2 430	104 640	21 480	21 060	Often	

INDIVIDUAL SOIL TYPES

(a) UPLAND PRAIRIE SOILS.

The upland prairie soils of Edgar county occupy about 400 square miles, or 65 percent of the entire area of the county. They are characterized, as a rule, by a black or a brown color which is due to their large content of organic matter.

The accumulation of organic matter in the prairie soils is due to the growth of prairie grasses that once covered them, and the protection of the network of roots from complete decay by the imperfect aeration resulting from the covering of fine soil material and the moisture it contained. On the native prairies the tops of these grasses were usually burned or became almost completely decayed. From a sample of virgin sod of "blue stem," one of the most common prairie grasses, it has been determined that an acre of this soil to a depth of seven inches contained 13.5 tons of roots. Many of these roots died each year and by partial decay formed the humus of these dark prairie soils.

Brown Silt Loam (1126, *or* 926 *on moraines*)

Brown silt loam is the most important as well as the most extensive soil type in Edgar county. It covers an area of 323.28 square miles (206,899 acres), or 52.37 percent of the area of the county.

This type occupies the slightly undulating to rolling areas of the prairie land. Altho much of it is well surface-drained, many areas need artificial drainage. The morainal areas are in some places sufficiently rolling to require considerable care to prevent them from eroding.

Altho brown silt loam is normally a prairie soil, yet in some limited areas forests have recently invaded it. These forests consist quite largely of black walnut, wild cherry, hackberry, ash, hard maple, and elm. A black-walnut soil is recognized generally by farmers as being one of the best timber soils because of the fact that it still contains a large amount of organic matter, which is characteristic of prairie soils. After the growth of several generations of trees, the organic matter would ultimately become so reduced that the soil would then be classed as a timber type.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a brown silt loam varying on the one hand to black as the type grades into black clay loam (1120 or 920), and on the other hand to grayish brown or yellowish brown as it grades into the timber type, yellow-gray silt loam, (1134 or 934). In physical composition it varies to some extent but it is normally a silt loam containing from 65 to 80 percent of silt, together with 10 to 20 percent of sand and from 10 to 15 percent of clay. The amount of clay increases as the type approaches black clay loam (1120 or 920), and becomes greatest in the level, poorly drained areas.

The organic-matter content of the surface stratum averages approximately 4.5 percent, or 45 tons per acre. The amount is less in the rolling areas than in the low and poorly drained parts owing to the fact not only that less vegetation grew on the drier, rolling areas, but that when incorporated with the soil much of it was removed by erosion or has undergone more rapid decomposition because of the better aeration and the lower moisture content. Where the type passes into yellow-gray silt loam (1134 or 934), the content of organic matter becomes less, while in the low, swampy tracts, where the grasses grew more luxuriantly and their roots were more abundant, the larger moisture content provided conditions more favorable for the preservation of organic matter.

The natural subsurface stratum varies from 6 to 16 inches in thickness, being thinner on the more rolling areas and decidedly thicker and darker on the more level areas. In physical composition it varies in the same way as the surface soil, but it usually contains a slightly larger amount of clay, especially as it approaches black clay loam (1120 or 920). Both color and depth vary with topography, the stratum being lighter in color as well as shallower on the more rolling areas and where the type grades into yellow-gray or yellow silt loam (1134 or 1135). The amount of organic matter varies with depth, but the average for the stratum (which as sampled is twice the thickness of the surface soil) is 2.8 percent, or 56 tons per acre.

The natural subsoil begins at a depth of 12 to 23 inches and extends to an indefinite depth but is sampled to 40 inches. It varies with topography both in color and in texture, and becomes slightly coarser with depth. It consists of a yellow or drabbish mottled yellow, clayey silt or silty clay, which is plastic when wet. Where the drainage has been good, it is of a bright to a pale yellow color. With poor drainage, it approaches a drab or an olive color with pale yellow mottlings or a yellow color with mottlings of drab.

Each stratum of brown silt loam is pervious to water, so that drainage takes place with little difficulty.

A phase of brown silt loam has been found in Edgar county which, because of the removal of part of the fine loessial material by erosion, contains glacial drift less than 30 inches from the surface. Since this glacial drift, or boulder clay, is quite compact, even tho it frequently contains considerable gravel, its presence in the subsoil is not a serious objection. This phase of the type occurs mostly on the Shelbyville moraine south and east of Kansas and on the Champaign moraine west of Mortimer. South of the Champaign moraine a phase of brown silt loam is frequently encountered, in areas too small to be mapped, that is sufficiently sandy to be classed as a sandy loam.

Small grayish patches, which have a tight clay subsoil, also occur in certain areas of brown silt loam. They are really small areas of brown-gray silt loam on tight clay, but they are too small to be shown on the map. They occur usually where there is poor drainage. The soil is cold, not readily pervious, and needs good drainage and the incorporation of organic matter.

While the normal common brown silt loam is in fair physical condition, yet continuous cropping to corn, or to corn and oats, with the burning of the stalks, is destroying the tilth; the soil is becoming more difficult to work; it runs together more; and aeration, granulation, and absorption of moisture do not take place as readily as formerly. This condition of poor tilth may become serious unless better methods of management are more generally adopted; it is already one of the factors that limit the crop yields. The remedy is to increase the organic-matter content by plowing under farm manure and crop residues, such as corn stalks, straw, and clover.

The addition of fresh organic matter is not only of great value in improving the physical condition of this type of soil, but it is of even greater importance because of its nitrogen content and because of its power, as it decays, to liberate potassium from the inexhaustible supply in the soil and phosphorus from the phosphate contained in or applied to the soil.

For permanent, profitable systems of farming on brown silt loam, phosphorus should be applied liberally, and sufficient organic matter should be provided to furnish the necessary amount of nitrogen. On the ordinary type, limestone is already becoming deficient. An application of two tons of limestone and one-half ton of fine-ground rock phosphate per acre every four years, with the return to the soil of all manure made from a rotation of corn, corn, oats, and clover, will maintain the fertility of this type, altho heavier initial applications may well be made. If grain farming is practiced, the rotation may be wheat, corn, oats, and clover, with an extra seeding of clover as a cover crop in the wheat, to be plowed under late in the fall or in the following spring for corn; and most of the crop residues, with all clover except the seed, should also be plowed under. In either system, alfalfa may be grown on a fifth field and moved every five years, the hay being fed or sold. In live-stock farming, the regular rotation may be extended to five or six years by seeding both timothy and clover with the oats, and pasturing for one or two years. Alsike and sweet clover may well replace red clover at times, in order to avoid clover sickness. (For results of field experiments on the brown silt loam prairie, see Tables 3 to 9.)

Black Clay Loam (1120, *or* 920 *on moraines*)

Black clay loam represents the flat prairie. It is sometimes called a "gumbo" because of its sticky character. Its formation in the flat, poorly drained areas is due to the accumulation of organic matter and to the washing in of clay and fine silt from the higher adjoining lands. This type occupies 53.39 square miles (34,170 acres), or 8.65 percent of the area of the county. It is so flat that proper drainage is one of the most difficult problems in its management.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a black, granular clay loam varying locally to a black clayey silt loam on the large flat areas. The organic-matter content varies from 55 to 96 tons per acre but averages 76 tons, or 7.6 percent. In physical composition this stratum varies somewhat as the type grades into other types. As it passes toward brown silt loam, which nearly always surrounds it, it becomes more silty. Some small areas contain gravel and coarse sand in considerable quantities, but these are too small to be shown on the map.

The subsurface stratum has a thickness of 10 to 16 inches and varies from a black to a brownish gray clay loam, usually somewhat heavier than the surface soil. The average amount of organic matter is 3.4 percent, or 68 tons per acre. The lower part of this stratum frequently is a drab or yellowish drab silty clay. The stratum is quite pervious to water owing to the jointing or checking from shrinkage in times of drouth.

The subsoil to a depth of 40 inches varies from a drab to a yellowish drab silty clay. As a rule, the iron is not highly oxidized, because of poor drainage and lack of aeration. Concretions of carbonate of lime are frequently found. The perviousness of the subsoil is about the same as that of the subsurface and is due to the same cause. When thrown out on the surface where wetting and drying may take place, it soon breaks into small cubical masses. Gravel is frequently present.

Black clay loam presents many variations. In Edgar county as elsewhere, the boundary lines between it and the brown silt loam are not always distinct. In some areas topography is a great help in locating the boundary, but in other places there may be an intermediate zone of greater or less width. The washing in of silty material from the surrounding higher lands, especially near the edges of the areas, modifies the character of the soil, giving the surface a silty character. This change is taking place more rapidly now, with the annual cultivation of the soil, than formerly, when washing was largely prevented by prairie grasses.

Drainage is the first requirement in the management of this type. Altho it usually has but little slope, yet because of its perviousness it is easily tile-drained. Keeping the soil in good physical condition is very essential, and thoro drainage helps to do this to a great extent. As the organic matter is destroyed by cultivation and nitrification, and as the limestone is removed by cropping and leaching, the soil becomes poorer in physical condition, and as a consequence it becomes more difficult to work. Both organic matter and limestone tend to develop granulation. The former should be maintained by turning under manure or such crop residues as corn stalks and straw, and by the use of clover and pasture in rotations. Ground limestone should be applied when needed to keep the soil sweet. It should be remembered that the difficulty of working clay soils is in proportion to their deficiency in organic matter.

While black clay loam is one of the best soils in the state, yet the clay and humus which it contains give it the property of shrinkage and expansion to such a degree as to be somewhat objectionable at times, especially during drouth. When the soil is wet, these constituents expand, and when the moisture evaporates or is used by crops, they shrink. This results in the formation of cracks, sometimes as much as two or more inches in width at the surface and extending with lessening width to two or three feet in depth. During the drouth of 1914, the cracks were so large and deep that in many cases a one-inch auger could be forced into them, without turning, to a depth of more than two feet. These cracks allow the soil strata to dry out rapidly, and as a result the crop is injured thru lack of moisture. They may do considerable damage by "blocking out" hills of corn and severing the roots. While cracking may not be prevented entirely, good tilth with a soil mulch will do much toward that end. Both for aeration and for producing a mulch for conserving moisture, cultivation is more essential on this type than on brown silt loam. It must be remembered, however, that cultivation should be as shallow as possible, in order to avoid injuring the roots of the corn.

This type is fairly well supplied with plant food, which is usually liberated with sufficient rapidity by a good rotation and by the addition of moderate amounts of organic matter. The amount of organic matter added must be increased, of course, with continued farming, until the nitrogen supplied is equal to that removed. Altho the addition of phosphorus is not expected to produce marked profit, it will probably pay its cost in the second or third rotation; and even if it does not, by maintaining the productive power of the land, the capital invested in it is protected.

At Urbana, on the South Farm of the University of Illinois, a series of plots devoted chiefly to variety tests and other crop-production experiments extends across an area of black clay loam. Where rock phosphate has been applied at the rate of 500 pounds an acre a year in connection with crop residues, in a four-year rotation of wheat, corn, oats, and clover (or soybeans), the value of the increase produced per ton of phosphate has been, in three successive rotation periods, $2.13, $4.70, and $6.48, respectively, at the lower prices for produce, or $3.04, $6.71, and $9.26, respectively, at the higher prices.[1] In the live-stock system, the phosphorus naturally supplied in the manure, supplemented by that liberated from this fertile soil, has thus far been nearly sufficient to meet the crop requirements; the increase in crop values per ton of phosphate applied having been, as an average for the twelve years, only $2.26 at the lower prices, or $3.26 at the higher prices. These returns are less than half the cost of the phosphorus applied, and some seasons no benefit appears.

This type is rich in magnesium and calcium, and in the Wisconsin glaciation it sometimes contains plenty of carbonates. With continued cropping and leaching, applications of limestone will ultimately be needed.

Drab Clay Loam (1121)

Drab clay loam occurs in the large flat areas, which have probably received only the very finest material carried down from the low uplands surrounding them. The type occupies 23.44 square miles (15,002 acres), or 3.8 percent of the area of Edgar county. The topography is flat.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a dark drab, granular clay loam, usually lighter in color than black clay loam but more plastic. It contains about 5 percent of organic matter, or 50 tons per acre. It may contain a perceptible amount of gravel and fine sand. It varies somewhat as it grades into black clay loam.

The subsurface stratum is not separated from the subsoil by any very distinct line. Its thickness varies from 10 to 15 inches. In color it frequently approaches a dark drab or brownish drab. The organic-matter content averages 2.5 percent, or 50 tons per acre.

The subsoil to a depth of 40 inches is usually drab, but varies somewhat with the amount of oxidation that has taken place. In some places it shows dull yellow blotches, while in others it has brownish or blackish blotches that are due probably to the action of crayfish.

In general this type closely resembles black clay loam. The checking of the subsoil renders it easy to drain. It is fairly well supplied with plant food, but phosphorus and organic manures should be added for the best results.

Brown Sandy Loam (1160, *or* 960 *on moraines*)

Brown sandy loam occurs in two small areas west of Brocton and one larger area just below the Shelbyville moraine to the south of Paris, covering a total of 211 acres. It owes its origin to sand dunes.

The surface soil contains 1.3 percent of organic matter, while in the more sandy subsurface and subsoil the percentage is still lower. The surface and subsurface strata are slightly acid, and the subsoil quite strongly acid. Very marked improvement can be made with ground limestone and legume crops, which, of

[1]See first paragraph on page 11 for explanation of values.

course, should be turned under with other crop residues or returned in farm manure. It is doubtful whether the application of either phosphorus or potassium would prove profitable. The very porous character of the subsoil affords such a deep feeding range for plant roots that they are likely to secure plenty of those elements even tho the percentage is below that of normal soils.

For detailed records of field investigations on sandy land, see page 482 of Bulletin 193, entitled "Summary of Illinois Soil Investigations."

Gray Silt Loam on Tight Clay (330)

Gray silt loam on tight clay is the predominating soil type in the lower Illinoisan glaciation. A large area occurring in Clark county extends just across the line into Edgar county, covering only 454 acres in the latter county. This area, however, is not so typical as are areas found in the counties to the south, owing to the fact that the soil here has undoubtedly received more or less outwash from the moraine, as well as material carried by the wind.

The surface stratum, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a friable silt loam varying in color from a light to a dark gray and containing sufficient clay to make it slightly plastic when wet. It contains about 2.5 percent of organic matter, or 25 tons per acre. It is fairly pervious to water, but the low organic-matter content and the consequent lack of granulation render it poor in tilth, causing it to "run together" readily with heavy rains or with freezing and thawing when very wet. Mechanical analyses show it to contain from 10 to 13 percent of the various grades of sand and from 70 to 80 percent of silt.

The subsurface stratum varies from 10 to 14 inches in thickness. It contains about 1.2 percent of organic matter. It is usually of a grayish color, very silty, and not readily pervious.

The natural subsoil begins at a depth of about 20 inches and is usually made up of two distinct layers. The upper layer consists of a tough, plastic, tight clay, sometimes called hardpan, while the lower subsoil is friable, porous, and silty. The tight clay stratum varies from 6 to 12 inches in thickness and is very gummy and sticky when wet and very hard when dry. Water percolates thru it very slowly.

Because of the level topography of this type and the tight clay subsoil, drainage as a rule is rather poor. It is still a question whether the type can be tile-drained profitably; experiments are now being conducted with the view to answering this question.

This type is strongly acid and low in nitrogen. It is in poor physical condition; it is too compact for good aeration, and the tight clay subsoil makes it very unfavorable for moisture movement. Therefore in the management of this type it is essential that limestone be applied and the organic matter increased by every practical means.

Limestone is needed, not only to correct soil acidity, but also to supply calcium as plant food. It also increases granulation, or flocculation, and thus improves the tilth. About two tons per acre of ground limestone should be applied every four or five years, and the initial application may well be from four to six tons.

In order to increase the organic-matter content, all forms of vegetation, such as legume crops, manure, straw, corn stalks, weeds, etc., should be plowed under and no part of them burned. Cowpeas, soybeans, and red, alsike, or sweet clover should be grown and turned back into the soil, or fed and the manure returned. Probably no crop will prove better adapted to adding organic matter and nitrogen to the soil than the common sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*), a deep-rooting plant which will also help to loosen the tight subsoil and make it more pervious. In order to grow this clover, the soil must be sweetened with ground limestone and well inoculated with the proper nitrogen-fixing bacteria.

When one is prepared to turn under some decaying organic matter, then it is well to begin the application of phosphorus, using about one ton per acre of fine-ground rock phosphate. This application may well be repeated every four to six years, until the phosphorus content of the plowed soil is raised to about 2,000 or 2,500 pounds per acre, after which 800 to 1,200 pounds of phosphate every four to six years will be ample to maintain the supply.

For details of results secured from field investigations on gray silt loam on tight clay, those who are especially interested in this soil type in Edgar county are referred to pages 7 to 22 of Soil Report No. 8, "Bond County Soils," which will be sent upon request.

Brown-Gray Silt Loam on Tight Clay (328)

Brown-gray silt loam on tight clay occupies an area of 403 acres. It is located just south of the Shelbyville moraine and principally toward the western part of the county. This type usually contains many "scalds"—places where the subsoil comes to the surface or injuriously near it, usually less than 10 inches from it. These "scalds" are very irregular in their occurrence, some fields being devoid of them while others contain many. They are indicated by their lighter color, distinctly seen when the ground has been plowed.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a dark gray to a brown, mealy silt loam varying in color with its gradation toward other types. It contains about 3 percent of organic matter, or 30 tons per acre. It is porous, friable, and easy to work.

The subsurface stratum varies both in thickness and in color. Its average thickness is from 10 to 12 inches, but it may be entirely absent where there are "scalds." It consists chiefly of a grayish brown to brownish gray silt loam, the color usually becoming lighter with depth. A distinct grayish layer is usually found, from 2 to 10 inches thick, just above the subsoil. The character of the subsurface varies a great deal, but more especially where it grades toward gray silt loam on tight clay (330) or brown silt loam (926).

The subsoil is made up of two distinct strata somewhat similar to those of gray silt loam on tight clay (330). The upper stratum, however, is not so nearly impervious as it is in that type, tho it is sufficiently tight to prevent good drainage.

In the improvement of this type, practically the same methods should be employed as are recommended for gray silt loam on tight clay (330), including liberal use of ground limestone, legume crops in rotation, organic matter, and phosphorus.

(b) UPLAND TIMBER SOILS

The upland timber soils occur along streams, or, in some cases, on or near somewhat steep morainal ridges. They are characterized by a yellow, yellowish gray, or gray color, which is due to their low organic-matter content. This lack of organic matter has been caused by the long-continued growth of forest trees. As the forests invaded the prairies, two effects were produced: (1) the shading of the trees prevented the growth of prairie grasses, the roots of which are mainly responsible for the large amount of organic matter in prairie soils; (2) the trees themselves added very little organic matter to the soil, for the leaves and branches either decayed completely or were burned by forest fires. As a result the organic-matter content of the upland timber soils has been reduced until in some parts of the state a low condition of apparent equilibrium has been reached.

Yellow-Gray Silt Loam (334 *and* 1134, *or* 934 *on moraines*)

Yellow-gray silt loam occurs in the outer timber belts along streams and in the less rolling of the timbered morainal areas.

In the early Wisconsin glaciation (1134 and 934), this type covers 118.36 square miles (75,750 acres), or 19.17 percent of the area of Edgar county. In topography it is sufficiently rolling for good surface drainage, without much tendency to wash if proper care is taken.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a yellow, yellowish gray, gray, or brownish gray silt loam, incoherent but not granular. The more nearly level areas are gray in color, while the more rolling phase of the type has a yellow or brownish yellow color. As the type approaches brown silt loam, it becomes decidedly darker. The organic-matter content averages 1.7 percent, or 17 tons per acre, but varies considerably with topography. As the type approaches brown silt loam, the organic-matter content increases, while as it approaches yellow silt loam, it diminishes. In some places it is extremely difficult to draw the line between the long-cultivated brown silt loam and yellow-gray silt loam, because of the gradation between the types.

The subsurface stratum varies from 3 to 10 inches in thickness, erosion having reduced its thickness on the more rolling areas. It is usually a gray, grayish yellow, or yellow silt loam, somewhat pulverulent but becoming more coherent and plastic with depth. The organic-matter content is about .7 percent or 14 tons per acre.

The subsoil is a yellow or mottled grayish yellow, clayey silt or silty clay, somewhat plastic when wet but friable when only moist, and pervious to water.

Glacial drift is sometimes encountered at a depth of less than 40 inches. This is due to the removal by erosion of part of the loessial material. The glacial drift may be locally a very gravelly deposit, but usually it is a slightly gravelly clay.

Each stratum of this type is quite pervious to water, except in the level gray areas, where a tight and more or less compact clayey layer has been formed at a depth of 18 to 24 inches. Small areas of light gray silt loam on tight clay are found in the county, but none are large enough to be shown on the map.

In the lower Illinois glaciation (334) yellow-gray silt loam aggregates 22.83 square miles (14,611 acres), or 3.7 percent of the area of the county. It covers almost the entire area south of the Shelbyville moraine. In topography it usually varies from undulating to almost flat.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a yellow, grayish yellow, or gray silt loam. The freshly plowed surface when first dry after a rain takes on a decided grayish appearance. The type varies somewhat, owing to outwash from the moraine: in some places, which were previously very heavily timbered, it approaches a dark gray color. The organic-matter content of the surface stratum is approximately 1.9 percent, or 19 tons per acre. The soil is porous and friable but it "runs together" badly because of its deficiency in organic matter and lime.

The subsurface varies in color from a gray to a yellowish gray. It is sufficiently porous to permit slow percolation. Its physical composition is such that capillary movement takes place very readily. It contains about .7 percent of organic matter.

The subsoil is a yellow or mottled yellow, clayey silt, somewhat compact but rather pervious. The depth to this clayey silt varies from 20 to 30 inches.

In the management of this yellow-gray silt loam, one of the most essential points is the maintaining or the increasing of organic matter. This is necessary in order to supply nitrogen and liberate mineral plant food, to give better tilth, to prevent "running together," and on some of the more rolling phases to prevent washing.

Another essential is that the acidity of the soil be neutralized by the application of ground limestone, so that clover, alfalfa, and other legumes may be grown more successfully. The initial application may well be 4 or 5 tons per acre, after which 2 tons per acre every four or five years will be sufficient. Since the soil is poor in phosphorus, this element should be applied, preferably in connection with farm manure or clover plowed under. In permanent systems of farming, fine-ground natural rock phosphate will be found the most economical form in which to supply the phosphorus, altho when prices are normal steamed bone meal or acid phosphate may well be used temporarily until plenty of decaying organic matter can be provided.

For definite results from the most practical field experiments upon typical yellow-gray silt loam, we must go down into "Egypt," where the people of Saline county, especially those in the vicinity of Raleigh and Galatia, have provided the University with a very suitable tract of this type of soil for a permanent experiment field. There, as an average of duplicate trials each year for the four years 1911 to 1914, the crop values from four acres were $23.49 from untreated land, $26.03 where organic manures were applied in proportion to the amount of crops produced, and $47.97 where 6 tons per acre of limestone and the organic manures were applied—the wheat, corn, oats, and clover (or cowpeas or soybeans) grown in the rotation being valued at the higher prices heretofore mentioned. In 1915 the wheat crop was completely destroyed by hail, but the corresponding values for the other three crops were $21.85 with no soil enrichment, $28.67 with organic matter, and $47.01 with limestone and organic matter.

Owing to the low supply of organic matter, phosphorus produced almost no benefit, as an average, during the first two years; but with increasing applications of organic matter, the effect of phosphorus is becoming more apparent in subsequent crops (see circular 181 for details). Of course the full benefit of a four-year rotation cannot be realized during the first four years. The farm manure was applied to one field each year, and the fourth field received no manure until the fourth year. Likewise, crop residues plowed under during the first rotation may not be fully recovered in subsequent increased yields until the second or third rotation period.

More recently the people of White county have furnished the University with a tract of yellow-gray silt loam near Enfield, on which experiments have been started. The crop values from four acres, as an average of the first three years (1913-1915), were $25.30 from unfertilized land, $28.18 with organic manures, $33.86 with manures and limestone, and $39.42 with manures, limestone, and rock phosphate; and the corresponding values for 1915 were $30.95 with no treatment, $40.96 with organic manures, $50.53 with manures and limestone, and $60.36 with manures, limestone, and phosphate. (In all of these cases, the results given are the averages of data from two systems of farming, which include the use of farm manure in one and green manures and crop residues in the other.)

While limestone is the material first needed for the economic improvement of the more acid soils of southern Illinois, with organic manures and phosphorus to follow in order, the less acid soils of the central part of the state are first in need of phosphorus, altho limestone and organic matter must also be provided for permanent and best results.

Table 12 shows in detail thirteen years' results secured from the Antioch soil experiment field located in Lake county on the yellow-gray silt loam of the late Wisconsin glaciation. In acidity this type in Edgar county is intermediate between the similar soils in Saline and Lake counties, but no experiment field has been conducted on this important soil type in the early Wisconsin glaciation, in which most of Edgar county is situated.

The Antioch field was started in order to learn as quickly as possible what effect would be produced by the addition to this type of soil, of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, singly and in combination. These elements were all added in commercial form until 1911, after which the use of commercial nitrogen was discontinued and crop residues were substituted in its place. (See report of Urbana field, page 7, for further explanations.) Only a small amount of lime was applied at the beginning, in harmony with the teaching which was common at that time; furthermore, Plot 101 proved to be abnormal, so that no conclusions can be drawn regarding the effect of lime. In order to ascertain the effect produced by additions of the different elements singly, Plot 102 must be regarded as the check plot. Three other comparisons are also possible to determine the effect of each element under different conditions.

As an average of forty tests (four each year for ten years), liberal applications of commercial nitrogen produced a slight decrease in crop values; but as an average of thirteen years each dollar invested in phosphorus paid back $2.54 (Plot 104), while potassium applied in addition to phosphorus (Plot 108) produced no increase, the crops being valued at the lower prices used in the tabular statement. Thus, while the detailed data show great variation, owing both to

TABLE 12.—CROP YIELDS IN SOIL EXPERIMENTS, ANTIOCH FIELD
YELLOW-GRAY SILT LOAM, UNDULATING TIMBERLAND; LATE WISCONSIN GLACIATION

Plot	Soil treatment applied[1]	Corn 1902	Corn 1903	Oats 1904	Wheat 1905	Corn 1906	Corn 1907	Oats 1908	Wheat 1909	Corn 1910	Corn 1911	Oats 1912	Clover 1913[2]	Wheat 1914
		Bushels or tons per acre												
101	None	44.8	36.6	17.8	18.5	35.9	12.4	65.6	12.2	5.2	34.4	21.3	.50	30.8
102	Lime	45.1	38.9	12.8	10.3	31.5	9.5	61.6	11.7	3.0	24.6	17.5	.60	30.0
103	Lime, nitrogen	46.3	40.8	2.8	17.8	37.8	6.4	60.3	13.0	1.4	10.4	24.4	([3])	40.8
104	Lime, phosphorus	50.1	53.6	12.5	35.8	57.4	13.4	70.9	23.3	6.8	37.4	49.1	1.32	54.2
105	Lime, potassium	48.2	50.2	9.7	21.7	34.9	12.9	62.5	13.5	4.6	20.4	18.8	.72	34.0
106	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus	56.6	62.7	15.9	15.2	59.3	20.9	49.1	33.8	6.0	37.0	46.9	([3])	41.3
107	Lime, nitrogen, potassium	52.1	54.9	10.3	11.8	39.0	11.1	52.6	21.0	1.6	7.0	16.9	([3])	43.2
108	Lime, phosphorus, potassium	60.7	66.0	19.7	28.7	59.1	18.3	59.4	26.2	3.2	42.2	35.9	1.60	46.0
109	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium	61.2	69.1	31.9	18.0	65.9	31.4	51.9	30.5	3.0	44.2	31.9	([3])	41.0
110	Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium	59.7	71.8	37.2	16.3	66.3	28.8	55.9	34.5	4.0	49.0	38.1	([3])	37.8
	Increase: Bushels or Tons per Acre													
For nitrogen		1.2	1.9	−10.0	7.5	6.3	−3.1	−1.3	1.3	−1.6	−14.2	6.9		10.8
For phosphorus		5.0	14.7	−.3	25.5	25.9	3.9	9.3	11.6	3.8	12.8	31.6	.72	24.2
For potassium		3.1	11.3	−3.1	11.4	3.4	3.4	.9	1.8	1.6	−4.2	1.3	.12	4.0
For nitrogen, phosphorus over phosphorus		6.5	9.1	3.4	−20.6	1.9	7.5	−21.8	10.5	−.8	−.4	2.2		−12.9
For phosphorus, nitrogen over nitrogen		10.3	21.9	13.1	−2.6	21.5	14.5	−11.2	20.8	4.6	26.6	22.5		.5
For potassium, nitrogen, phosphorus over nitrogen, phosphorus		4.6	6.4	16.0	2.8	6.6	10.5	2.8	−3.3	−3.0	7.2	−15.0		−.3

[1]Crop residues in place of commercial nitrogen after 1911.
[2]Figures in parentheses indicate bushels of seed; the others, tons of hay.
[3]No seed produced: clover plowed under on these plots.

TABLE 13.—VALUE OF CROPS PER ACRE IN THIRTEEN YEARS, ANTIOCH FIELD

Plot	Soil treatment applied	Total value of thirteen crops	
		Lower prices[1]	Higher prices[2]
101	None	$135.12	$193.03
102	Lime	119.74	171.06
103	Lime, nitrogen	124.70	178.15
104	Lime, phosphorus	202.20	288.85
105	Lime, potassium	138.88	198.40
106	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus	179.41	256.31
107	Lime, nitrogen, potassium	133.54	190.77
108	Lime, phosphorus, potassium	201.35	287.65
109	Lime, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium	191.22	273.18
110	Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium	196.62	280.88
	Value of Increase per Acre in Thirteen Years		
	For nitrogen	$ 4.96	$ 7.09
	For phosphorus	82.46	117.79
	For *nitrogen* and phosphorus over phosphorus	−22.79	−32.54
	For *phosphorus* and nitrogen over nitrogen	54.71	78.16
	For *potassium*, nitrogen, and phosphorus over nitrogen and phosphorus	11.81	16.87

[1]Wheat at 70 cents a bushel, corn at 35 cents, oats at 28 cents, hay at $7 a ton.
[2]Wheat at $1 a bushel, corn at 50 cents, oats at 40 cents, hay at $10 a ton.

some irregularity of soil and to some very abnormal seasons, with three almost complete crop failures (1904, 1907, and 1910), yet the general summary strongly confirms the analytical data in showing the need of applying phosphorus, and the profit from its use, and the loss in adding potassium. In mose cases commercial nitrogen damaged the small grains by causing the crop to lodge; but in those years when a corn yield of 40 bushels or more was secured by the application of phosphorus either alone or with potassium, then the addition of nitrogen produced an increase.

From a comparison of the results from the Urbana, Sibley, and Bloomington fields, we must conclude that better yields are to be secured by providing nitrogen by means of farm manure or legume crops grown in the rotation than by the use of commercial nitrogen, which is evidently too readily available, causing too rapid growth and consequent weakness of straw; and of course the atmosphere is the most economical source of nitrogen where that element is needed for soil improvement in general farming. (See Appendix for detailed discussion of "Permanent Soil Improvement.")

Yellow Silt Loam (335 *and* 1135, *or* 935 *on moraines*)

In the early Wisconsin glaciation (1135 and 935), yellow silt loam covers 39.79 square miles (25,466 acres), or 6.45 percent of the area of Edgar county. It occurs as hilly and badly-eroded land on the inner timber belts adjacent to the streams, usually only in irregular strips with arms extending up the small valleys and on the steeper slopes of the Shelbyville moraine. In topography it is very rolling, and in most places it is so badly broken that it should not be cultivated because of the danger of injury from washing.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a yellow or grayish yellow, pulverulent silt loam. It varies greatly in color and in texture owing to recent washing.

In places the natural subsoil may be exposed. This exposure results in a decidedly yellow color. When freshly plowed the soil appears yellow or brownish yellow, but when it becomes dry after a rain, it is of a grayish color. In some places the surface soil is formed from glacial drift, but this is only on very limited areas and on the steepest slopes. The organic-matter content is the lowest of any extensive type in the county, averaging about 1.1 percent, or 11 tons per acre.

The subsurface varies from a yellow silt loam to a yellow, clayey silt loam, and on the steepest slopes may consist of weathered glacial drift. The thickness of the stratum varies from 5 to 12 inches, depending on the amount of recent erosion. The organic-matter content amounts to only 10 tons per acre.

The subsoil is normally a yellow, clayey silt, but in some areas, not only the subsoil, but the surface and subsurface, may be composed entirely of glacial drift. Where Sugar creek passes thru the Shelbyville moraine, the glacial drift is very sandy and gravelly, giving slopes that are quite sandy.

The area of yellow silt loam within the lower Illinoisan glaciation is 5.62 square miles (3,597 acres), or .9 percent of the area of the county. It is of rather choppy topography, the slopes as a rule being short and abrupt.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a friable, yellow silt loam varying somewhat with topography.

The subsurface varies in thickness; where little or no washing has taken place, it is from 6 to 14 inches thick. It consists of a friable, slightly loamy yellow silt mottled with gray.

The subsoil is usually friable and pervious. Glacial drift is occasionally encountered at a depth of about 30 to 36 inches.

The first and most important point in the management of this type is the prevention of general surface washing and gullying. If the land is cropped at all, a rotation should be practiced that will require a cultivated crop as little as possible and allow pasture and meadow most of the time. If tilled, the land should be plowed deeply and contours should be followed as nearly as possible in plowing, planting, and cultivating. Furrows should not be made up and down the slopes. Every means should be employed to maintain and to increase the organic-matter content. This will help hold the soil and keep it in good physical condition so that it will absorb a large amount of water and thus diminish the run-off.

Additional treatment recommended for this yellow silt loam is the liberal use of limestone wherever cropping is practiced. This type is quite acid; and the limestone, by correcting the acidity of the soil, is especially beneficial to the clover grown to increase the supply of nitrogen. Where this soil has been long cultivated and thus exposed to surface washing, it is particularly deficient in nitrogen; indeed, on such lands the low supply of nitrogen is the factor that first limits the growth of grain crops. This fact is very strikingly illustrated by the results from two-pot culture experiments reported in Tables 14 and 15, and shown photographically in Plates 7 and 8.

In one experiment, a large quantity of the typical worn hill soil was collected from two different places. Each lot of soil was thoroly mixed and put in ten four-gallon jars. Wheat was planted in one series and oats in the other.[1] Ground limestone was added to all the jars except the first and last in each set, those two being retained as control, or check, pots. The elements nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium were added singly and in combination, as shown in Table 14.

As an average, the nitrogen applied produced a yield about eight times as large as that secured without the addition of nitrogen. While some variations in yield were to be expected, because of differences in the individuality of seed or other uncontrolled causes, yet there is no doubting the plain lesson taught by these actual trials with growing plants.

The question arises next, Where is the farmer to secure this much-needed nitrogen? To purchase it in commercial fertilizers would cost too much; indeed, under average conditions the cost of the nitrogen in such fertilizers is greater than the value of the increase in crop yields.

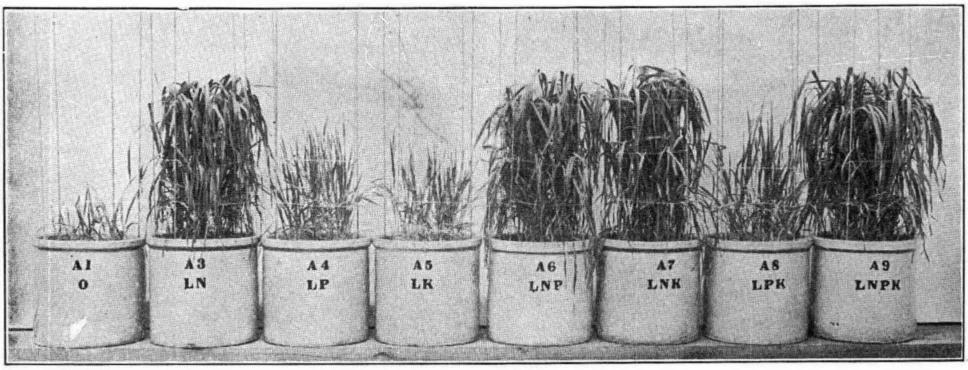

PLATE 7.—WHEAT IN POT-CULTURE EXPERIMENT WITH YELLOW SILT LOAM OF WORN HILL LAND (See Table 14)

TABLE 14.—CROP YIELDS IN POT-CULTURE EXPERIMENTS WITH YELLOW SILT LOAM OF WORN HILL LAND

(Grams per pot)

Pot No.	Soil treatment applied	Wheat	Oats
1	None	3	5
2	Limestone	4	4
3	Limestone, nitrogen	26	45
4	Limestone, phosphorus	3	6
5	Limestone, potassium	3	5
6	Limestone, nitrogen, phosphorus	34	38
7	Limestone, nitrogen, potassium	33	46
8	Limestone, phosphorus, potassium	2	5
9	Limestone, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium	34	38
10	None	3	5
Average yield with nitrogen		32	42
Average yield without nitrogen		3	5
Average gain for nitrogen		29	37

[1]Soil for wheat pots from loess-covered unglaciated area, and that for oat pots from upper Illinoisan glaciation.

But there is no need whatever to purchase nitrogen, for the air contains an inexhaustible supply of it, which, under suitable conditions, the farmer can draw upon, not only without cost, but with profit in the getting. Clover, alfalfa, cowpeas, and soybeans are not only worth raising for their own sake, but they have the power to secure nitrogen from the atmosphere if the soil contains limestone and the proper nitrogen-fixing bacteria.

In order to secure further information along this line, another experiment with pot cultures was conducted for several years with the same type of worn hill soil as that used for wheat in the former experiment. The results are reported in Table 15.

To three pots (Nos. 3, 6, and 9) nitrogen was applied in commercial form, at an expense amounting to more than the total value of the crops produced. In three other pots (Nos. 2, 11, and 12) a crop of cowpeas was grown during the late summer and fall and turned under before the wheat or oats were planted. Pots 1 and 8 served for important comparisons. After the second cover crop of cowpeas had been turned under, the yield from Pot 2 exceeded that from Pot 3; and in the subsequent years the legume green manures produced, as an average, rather better results than the commercial nitrogen. This experiment confirms that reported in Table 14 in showing the very great need of nitrogen for the

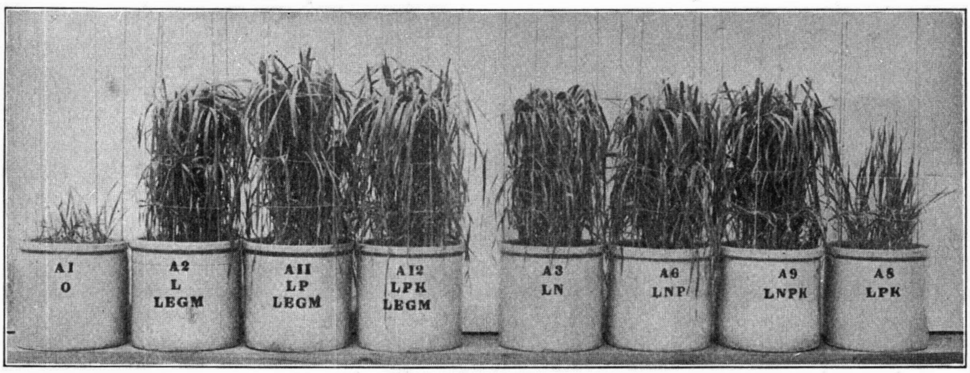

PLATE 8.—WHEAT IN POT-CULTURE EXPERIMENT WITH YELLOW SILT LOAM OF WORN HILL LAND (See Table 15)

TABLE 15.—CROP YIELDS IN POT-CULTURE EXPERIMENT WITH YELLOW SILT LOAM OF WORN HILL LAND AND NITROGEN-FIXING GREEN MANURE CROPS

(Grams per pot)

Pot No.	Soil treatment	1903 Wheat	1904 Wheat	1905 Wheat	1906 Wheat	1907 Oats
1	None..................................	5	4	4	4	6
2	Limestone, legume......................	10	17	26	19	37
11	Limestone, legume, phosphorus..............	14	19	20	18	27
12	Limestone, legume, phosphorus, potassium....	16	20	21	19	30
3	Limestone, nitrogen........................	17	14	15	9	28
6	Limestone, nitrogen, phosphorus.............	26	20	18	18	30
9	Limestone, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium...	31	34	21	20	26
8	Limestone, phosphorus, potassium...........	3	3	5	3	7

improvement of this type of soil,—and it also shows that nitrogen need not be purchased but that it can be obtained from the air by growing legume crops and plowing them under as green manure. Of course the soil can be very markedly improved by feeding the legume crops to live stock and returning the resulting farm manure to the land, if legumes are grown frequently enough and if the farm manure produced is sufficiently abundant and is saved and applied with care. As a rule, it is not advisable to try to enrich this type of soil in phosphorus, for with erosion, which is sure to occur to some extent, the phosphorus supply will be renewed from the subsoil.

Probably the best legumes for this type of soil are sweet clover and alfalfa. On soil deficient in organic matter sweet clover grows better than almost any other legume, and the fact that it is a very deep-rooting plant makes it of value in increasing organic matter and preventing washing. Worthless slopes that have been ruined by washing may be made profitable as pasture by growing sweet clover. The blue grass of pastures may well be supplemented by sweet clover and alfalfa, and a larger growth obtained, because the legumes provide the necessary nitrogen for the blue grass.

To get alfalfa well started requires the liberal use of limestone, thoro inoculation with the proper nitrogen-fixing bacteria, and a moderate application of farm manure. If manure is not available, it is well to apply about 500 pounds per acre of acid phosphate, or steamed bone meal, mix it with the soil, by disking if possible, and then plow it under. The limestone (about 5 tons) should be applied after plowing and should be mixed with the surface soil in the preparation of the seed bed. The special purpose of this treatment is to give the alfalfa a quick start in order that it may grow rapidly and thus protect the soil from washing.

Yellow-Gray Sandy Loam (364 *and* 1164, *or* 964 *on moraines*)

In Edgar county only one small area of yellow-gray sandy loam (83 acres) occurs in the early Wisconsin glaciation. This varies quite largely both in organic-matter and in sand content.

Several small areas of the type are found, principally on the east side of creeks, in the lower Illinoisan glaciation. They cover a total of 115 acres. They have been produced by the blowing of the sand from the bottom lands adjacent, and usually show a dune topography. They vary in physical composition, nearly every one of them showing a small sand area on the top, with varying amounts of sand on the sides. The soil not only contains no limestone but is generally distinctly acid, and it is exceedingly deficient in organic matter and nitrogen.

For the improvement of these sandy areas, ground limestone and organic manures are the only materials advised. With the deep feeding range afforded the plant roots by the very porous subsoil, marked improvement can be made without the addition of phosphorus or potassium. The initial application of ground limestone may well be 4 or 5 tons per acre, and 6 or 8 tons will give still better results, especially for the production of alfalfa or sweet clover. Of course large use should be made of legume crops. Cowpeas and soybeans are both good crops for such land; they may be grown and plowed under in place of manure in preparing the land for alfalfa or other crops. (See also pages 482-483 of Bulletin 193, "Summary of Illinois Soil Investigations," which will be sent upon request.)

(c) TERRACE SOILS

Terrace soils were formed on terraces or old fills in valleys. The terraces owe their formation generally to the deposition of material from an overloaded and flooded stream during the melting of the glaciers. The material varied from fine to coarse. These valleys were sometimes filled almost to the height of the upland. Later the streams cut down thru these fills and developed new bottom lands, or flood plains, at a lower level, leaving part of the old fill as a terrace. The lowest and most recently formed bottom land is called first bottom. The higher land no longer flooded (or very rarely, at most) is generally designated as second bottom. Finer material later deposited on this sand and gravel of the fill now constitutes the soil.

Yellow-Gray Silt Loam over Gravel (1536)

Yellow-gray silt loam over gravel occurs principally along Bruelette creek, in the eastern part of Edgar county, at heights varying from forty feet above the bottom land to almost to the level of the upland. It covers an area of 2.8 square miles (1,798 acres), or .46 percent of the area of the county.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a yellow to yellow-gray silt loam containing some fine sand. The organic-matter content averages 2.5 percent, or 25 tons per acre.

The subsurface soil is a somewhat uniform yellow silt loam, changing but slightly to a depth of 20 inches, where it passes into the subsoil, which contains a little more clay than the subsurface. Isolated gravel is frequently encountered below 30 inches, altho the stratum of gravel is not reached much above 48 to 60 inches.

This type is well drained. The liberal use of ground limestone and legume crops is the most important point in its management. An increase of organic matter is very essential, as this constituent is so low that the soil "runs together" badly during rains. Phosphorus must also be applied for the best results.

Yellow-Gray Sandy Loam on Gravel (1564.4)

Yellow-gray sandy loam on gravel is found almost entirely as a terrace along Sugar creek, lying from six to twenty feet above the stream. The type covers an area of 1.1 square miles, or 710 acres.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is a variable sandy loam containing 2 percent of organic matter, or 20 tons per acre.

The subsurface varies from 10 to 20 inches in thickness. It is a sandy loam and becomes more sandy and gravelly with depth until at 16 to 28 inches a deposit of medium to coarse gravel is found, which constitutes the subsoil.

Limestone and organic matter are most needed for the practical improvement of this soil. This means large use of legume crops and organic manures.

(d) SWAMP AND BOTTOM-LAND SOILS

Mixed Loam (1454)

Mixed loam occurs as overflow land along the streams in areas varying from a few rods to almost half a mile in width. It covers 24.49 square miles (15,674 acres), or 4 percent of the entire area of Edgar county.

The surface soil, 0 to 6⅔ inches, is mostly a silt loam, but varies from that to a very sandy loam. It contains 2.2 percent of organic matter, or 22 tons per acre. The subsurface soil contains 1.3 percent of organic matter, or 26 tons per acre.

This type varies not only in composition at a given time, but also from one time to another because of floods. Sand may be deposited over a silt loam or a large amount of silt deposited over a sandy loam. The type south of the Shelbyville moraine differs but little from that to the north because of the fact that very little gray material of the lower Illinoisan glaciation is deposited before the stream leaves the county.

Overflowing as this type does, there is very little need of adopting any method of soil enrichment.

APPENDIX

A study of the soil map and the tabular statements concerning crop requirements, the plant-food content of the different soil types, and the actual results secured from definite field trials with different methods or systems of soil improvement, and a careful study of the discussion of general principles and of the descriptions of individual soil types, will furnish the most necessary and useful information for the practical improvement and permanent preservation of the productive power of every kind of soil on every farm in the county.

More complete information concerning the most extensive and important soil types in the great soil areas in all parts of Illinois is contained in Bulletin 123, "The Fertility in Illinois Soils," which contains a colored general soil-survey map of the entire state.

Other publications of general interest are:

Bulletins

76 Alfalfa on Illinois Soils
94 Nitrogen Bacteria and Legumes
115 Soil Improvement for the Worn Hill Lands of Illinois
125 Thirty Years of Crop Rotation on the Common Prairie Lands of Illinois
181 Soil Moisture and Tillage for Corn
182 Potassium from the Soil
190 Soil Bacteria and Phosphates

Circulars

82 Physical Improvement of Soils
110 Ground Limestone for Acid Soils
127 Shall We Use Natural Rock Phosphate or Manufactured Acid Phosphate for the Permanent Improvement of Illinois Soils?
129 The Use of Commercial Fertilizers
149 Results of Scientific Soil Treatment: Methods and Results of Ten Years' Soil Investigation in Illinois
165 Shall We Use "Complete" Commercial Fertilizers in the Corn Belt?
167 The Illinois System of Permanent Fertility
181 How Not to Treat Illinois Soils
186 The Illinois System of Permanent Fertility from the Standpoint of the Practical Farmer: Phosphates and Honesty

NOTE.—Information as to where to obtain limestone, phosphate, bone meal, and potassium salts, methods of application, etc., will also be found in Circulars 110 and 165.

SOIL SURVEY METHODS

The detail soil survey of a county consists essentially of ascertaining, and indicating on a map, the location and extent of the different soil types; and, since the value of the survey depends upon its accuracy, every reasonable means is employed to make it truthworthy. To accomplish this object three things are essential: first, careful, well-trained men to do the work; second, an accurate base map upon which to show the results of the work; and, third, the means necessary to enable the men to place the soil-type boundaries, streams, etc., accurately upon the map.

The men selected for the work must be able to keep their location exactly and to recognize the different soil types, with their principal variations and limits, and they must show these upon the maps correctly. A definite system is employed in checking up this work. As an illustration, one soil expert will survey and map a strip 80 rods or 160 rods wide and any convenient length, while his associate will work independently on another strip adjoining this area, and, if the work is correctly done, the soil type boundaries will match up on the line between the two strips.

An accurate base map for field use is absolutely necessary for soil mapping. The base maps are made on a scale of one inch to the mile. The official data of the original or subsequent land survey are used as a basis in the construction of these maps, while the most trustworthy county map available is used in locating temporarily the streams, roads, and railroads. Since the best of these published maps have some inaccuracies, the location of every road, stream, and railroad must be verified by the soil surveyors, and corrected if wrongly located. In order to make these verifications and corrections, each survey party is provided with a plane table for determining directions of angling roads, railroads, etc.

Each surveyor is provided with a base map of the proper scale, which is carried with him in the field; and the soil-type boundaries, ditches, streams, and necessary corrections are placed in their proper locations upon the map while the mapper is on the area. Each section, or square mile, is divided into 40-acre plots on the map, and the surveyor must inspect every ten acres and determine the type or types of soil composing it. The different types are indicated on the map by different colors, pencils for this purpose being carried in the field.

A small auger 40 inches long forms for each man an invaluable tool with which he can quickly secure samples of the different strata for inspection. An extension for making the auger 80 inches long is carried by each party, so that any peculiarity of the deeper subsoil layers may be studied. Each man carries a compass to aid in keeping directions. Distances along roads are measured by an odometer attached to the axle of the vehicle, while distances in the field off the roads are determined by pacing, an art in which the men become expert by practice. The soil boundaries can thus be located with as high a degree of accuracy as can be indicated by pencil on the scale of one inch to the mile.

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

The unit in the soil survey is the soil type, and each type possesses more or less definite characteristics. The line of separation between adjoining types is usually distinct, but sometimes one type grades into another so gradually that it is very difficult to draw the line between them. In such exceptional cases, some slight variation in the location of soil-type boundaries is unavoidable.

Several factors must be taken into account in establishing soil types. These are: (1) the geological origin of the soil, whether residual, glacial, loessial, alluvial, colluvial, or cumulose; (2) the topography, or lay of the land; (3) the native vegetation, as forest or prairie grasses; (4) the structure, or the depth and character of the surface, subsurface, and subsoil; (5) the physical, or mechanical, composition of the different strata composing the soil, such as the percentages of gravel, sand, silt, clay, and organic matter which they contain; (6) the texture, or porosity, granulation, friability, plasticity, etc.; (7) the color of the strata; (8) the natural drainage; (9) the agricultural value, based upon its natural productiveness; (10) the ultimate chemical composition and reaction.

The common soil constituents are indicated in the following outline:

Soil constituents	Organic matter	Comprizing undecomposed and partially decayed vegetable or organic material	
	Mineral matter	Clay	.001 mm.[1] and less
		Silt	.001 mm. to .03 mm.
		Sand	.03 mm. to 1. mm.
		Gravel	1. mm. to 32 mm.
		Stones	32. mm. and over

[1]25 millimeters equal 1 inch.

Further discussion of these constituents is given in Circular 82.

GROUPS OF SOIL TYPES

The following gives the different general groups of soils:

Peats—Consisting of 35 percent or more of organic matter, sometimes mixed with more or less sand or silt.

Peaty loams—Soils with 15 to 35 percent of organic matter mixed with much sand. Some silt and a little clay may be present.

Mucks—Soils with 15 to 35 percent of partly decomposed organic matter mixed with much clay and silt.

Clays—Soils with more than 25 percent of clay, usually mixed with much silt.

Clay loams—Soils with from 15 to 25 percent of clay, usually mixed with much silt and some sand.

Silt loams—Soils with more than 50 percent of silt and less than 15 percent of clay, mixed with some sand.

Loams—Soils with from 30 to 50 percent of sand mixed with much silt and a little clay.

Sandy loams—Soils with from 50 to 75 percent of sand.

Fine sandy loams—Soils with from 50 to 75 percent of fine sand mixed with much silt and a little clay.

Sands—Soils with more than 75 percent of sand.

Gravelly loams—Soils with 25 to 50 percent of gravel with much sand and some silt.

Gravels—Soils with more than 50 percent of gravel and much sand.

Stony loams—Soils containing a considerable number of stones over one inch in diameter.

Rock outcrop—Usually ledges of rock having no direct agricultural value.

More or less organic matter is found in all the above groups.

SUPPLY AND LIBERATION OF PLANT FOOD

The productive capacity of land in humid sections depends almost wholly upon the power of the soil to feed the crop; and this, in turn, depends both upon the stock of plant food contained in the soil and upon the rate at which it is liberated, or rendered soluble and available for use in plant growth. Protection from weeds, insects, and fungous diseases, tho exceedingly important, is not a positive but a negative factor in crop production.

The chemical analysis of the soil gives the invoice of fertility actually present in the soil strata sampled and analyzed, but the rate of liberation is governed by many factors, some of which may be controlled by the farmer, while others are largely beyond his control. Chief among the important controllable factors which influence the liberation of plant food are limestone and decaying organic matter, which may be added to the soil by direct application of ground limestone and farm manure. Organic matter may be supplied also by green-manure crops and crop residues, such as clover, cowpeas, straw, and corn stalks. The rate of decay of organic matter depends largely upon its age and origin, and it may be hastened by tillage. The chemical analysis shows correctly the total organic carbon, which represents, as a rule, but little more than half the organic matter; so that 20,000 pounds of organic carbon in the plowed soil of an acre correspond to nearly 20 tons of organic matter. But this organic matter consists largely of the old organic residues that have accumulated during the past centuries because they were resistant to decay, and 2 tons of clover or cowpeas plowed under may have greater power to furnish or liberate plant food than the 20 tons of old, inactive organic matter. The recent history of the individual farm or field must be depended upon for information concerning recent additions of active organic matter, whether in applications of farm manure, in legume crops, or in grass-root sods of old pastures.

Probably no agricultural fact is more generally known by farmers and landowners than that soils differ in productive power. Even tho plowed alike and at the same time, prepared the same way, planted the same day with the same kind of seed, and cultivated alike, watered by the same rains and warmed by the same sun, nevertheless the best acre may produce twice as large a crop as the poorest acre on the same farm, if not, indeed, in the same field; and the fact should be repeated and emphasized that with the normal rainfall of Illinois the productive power of the land depends primarily upon the stock of plant food contained in the soil and upon the rate at which it is liberated, just as the success of the merchant depends primarily upon his stock of goods and the rapidity of sales. In both cases the stock of any commodity must be increased or renewed whenever the supply of such commodity becomes so depleted as to limit the success of the business, whether on the farm or in the store.

As the organic matter decays, certain decomposition products are formed, including much carbonic acid, some nitrous acid, and various organic acids, and these have power to act upon the soil and dissolve the essential mineral plant foods, thus furnishing soluble phosphates, nitrates, and other salts of potassium, magnesium, calcium, etc., for the use of the growing crop.

As already explained, fresh organic matter decomposes much more rapidly than old humus, which represents the organic residues most resistant to decay and which consequently has accumulated in the soil during the past centuries. The decay of this old humus can be hastened by tillage, which maintains a porous condition and thus permits the oxygen of the air to enter the soil more freely and to effect the more rapid oxidation of the organic matter, and also by incorporating with the old, resistant residues some fresh organic matter, such as farm manure, clover roots, etc., which decay rapidly and thus furnish, or liberate, organic and inorganic food for bacteria, the bacteria, under such favorable conditions, appearing to have power to attack and decompose the old humus. It is probably for this reason that peat, a very inactive and inefficient fertilizer when used by itself, becomes much more effective when composted with fresh farm manure; so that two tons of the compost[1] may be worth as much as two tons of manure. Bacterial action is also promoted by the presence of limestone.

The condition of the organic matter of the soil is indicated more or less definitely by the ratio of carbon to nitrogen. As an average, the fresh organic matter incorporated with soils contains about twenty times as much carbon as

[1]In his book, "Fertilizers," published in 1839, Cuthbert W. Johnson reported such compost to have been much used in England and to be valued as highly, "weight for weight, as farmyard dung."

nitrogen, but the carbohydrates ferment and decompose much more rapidly than the nitrogenous matter; and the old resistant organic residues, such as are found in normal subsoils, commonly contain only five or six times as much carbon as nitrogen. Soils of normal physical composition, such as loam, clay loam, silt loam, and fine sandy loam, when in good productive condition, contain about twelve to fourteen times as much carbon as nitrogen in the surface soil; while in old, worn soils that are greatly in need of fresh, active, organic manures, the ratio is narrower, sometimes falling below ten of carbon to one of nitrogen. Soils of cut-over or burnt-over timber lands sometimes contain so much partially decayed wood or charcoal as to destroy the value of the nitrogen-carbon ratio for the purpose indicated. (Except in newly made alluvial soils, the ratio is usually narrower in the subsurface and subsoil than in the surface stratum.)

It should be kept in mind that crops are *not* made out of nothing. They are composed of ten different elements of plant food, every one of which is absolutely essential for the growth and formation of every agricultural plant. Of these ten elements of plant food, only two (carbon and oxygen) are secured from the air by all agricultural plants, only one (hydrogen) from water, and seven from the soil. Nitrogen, one of these seven elements secured from the soil by all plants, may also be secured from the air by one class of plants (legumes), in case the amount liberated from the soil is insufficient; but even these plants (which include only the clovers, alfalfa, peas, beans, and vetches, among our common agricultural plants) secure from the soil alone six elements (phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, and sulfur), and also utilize the soil nitrogen so far as it becomes soluble and available during their period of growth.

Plants are made of plant-food elements in just the same sense that a building is made of wood and iron, brick, stone, and mortar. Without materials, nothing material can be made. The normal temperature, sunshine, rainfall, and length of season in central Illinois are sufficient to produce 50 bushels of wheat per acre, 100 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of oats, and 4 tons of clover hay; and, where the land is properly drained and properly tilled, such crops would frequently be secured *if the plant foods were present in sufficient amounts and liberated at a sufficiently rapid rate to meet the absolute needs of the crops.*

CROP REQUIREMENTS

The accompanying table shows the requirements of wheat, corn, oats, and clover for the five most important plant-food elements which the soil must furnish. (Iron and sulfur are supplied normally in sufficient abundance compared with the amounts needed by plants, so that they are never known to limit the yield of general farm crops grown under normal conditions.)

To be sure, these are large yields, but shall we try to make possible the production of yields only a half or a quarter as large as these, or shall we set as our ideal this higher mark, and then approach it as nearly as possible with profit? Among the four crops, corn is the largest, with a total yield of more than six tons per acre; and yet the 100-bushel crop of corn is often produced on rich land in good seasons. In very practical and profitable systems of farming, the Illinois Experiment Station has produced, as an average of the ten

TABLE A.—PLANT FOOD IN WHEAT, CORN, OATS, AND CLOVER

Produce: Kind	Produce: Amount	Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Potassium	Magnesium	Calcium
		lbs.	*lbs.*	*lbs.*	*lbs.*	*lbs.*
Wheat, grain........	50 bu.	71	12	13	4	1
Wheat straw	2½ tons	25	4	45	4	10
Corn, grain..........	100 bu.	100	17	19	7	1
Corn stover	3 tons	48	6	52	10	21
Corn cobs...........	½ ton	2		2		
Oats, grain..........	100 bu.	66	11	16	4	2
Oat straw...........	2½ tons	31	5	52	7	15
Clover seed..........	4 bu.	7	2	3	1	1
Clover hay...........	4 tons	160	20	120	31	117
Total in grain and seed..................		244[1]	42	51	16	4
Total in four crops......................		510[1]	77	322	68	168

[1]These amounts include the nitrogen contained in the clover seed or hay, which, however, may be secured from the air.

years 1906 to 1915, a yield of 77 bushels of corn per acre in grain farming (with limestone and phosphorus applied, and with crop residues and legume crops turned under), and 79 bushels per acre in live-stock farming (with limestone, phosphorus, and manure).

The importance of maintaining a rich surface soil cannot be too strongly emphasized. This is well illustrated by data from the Rothamsted Experiment Station, the oldest in the world. On Broadbalk field, where wheat has been grown since 1844, the average yields for the ten years 1892 to 1901 were 12.3 bushels per acre on Plot 3 (unfertilized) and 31.8 bushels on Plot 7 (well fertilized), but the amounts of both nitrogen and phosphorus in the subsoil (9 to 27 inches) were distinctly greater in Plot 3 than in Plot 7, thus showing that the higher yields from Plot 7 were due to the fact that the plowed soil had been enriched. In 1893 Plot 7 contained per acre in the surface soil (0 to 9 inches) about 600 pounds more nitrogen and 900 pounds more phosphorus than Plot 3. Even a rich subsoil has little value if it lies beneath a worn-out surface.

METHODS OF LIBERATING PLANT FOOD

Limestone and decaying organic matter are the principal materials which the farmer can utilize most profitably to bring about the liberation of plant food. The limestone corrects the acidity of the soil and thus encourages the development not only of the nitrogen-gathering bacteria which live in the nodules on the roots of clover, cowpeas, and other legumes, but also the nitrifying bacteria, which have power to transform the insoluble and unavailable organic nitrogen into soluble and available nitrate nitrogen. At the same time, the products of this decomposition have power to dissolve the minerals contained in the soil, such as potassium and magnesium, and also to dissolve the insoluble phosphate and limestone which may be applied in low-priced forms. Thus, in the conversion of sufficient organic nitrogen into nitrate nitrogen for a 100-bushel crop of corn, the nitrous acid formed is alone sufficient to convert seven times as much insoluble tricalcium phosphate into soluble monocalcium phosphate as would be required to supply the phosphorus for the same crop.

Tillage, or cultivation, also hastens the liberation of plant food by permitting the air to enter the soil and burn out the organic matter; but it should never be forgotten that tillage is wholly destructive, that it adds nothing whatever to the soil, but always leaves it poorer. Tillage should be practiced so far as is necessary to prepare a suitable seed bed for root development and also for the purpose of killing weeds, but more than this is unnecessary and unprofitable in seasons of normal rainfall; and it is much better actually to enrich the soil by proper applications or additions, including limestone and organic matter (both of which have power to improve the physical condition as well as to liberate plant food) than merely to hasten soil depletion by means of excessive cultivation.

PERMANENT SOIL IMPROVEMENT

The best and most profitable methods for the permanent improvement of the common soils of Illinois are as follows:

(1) If the soil is acid, apply at least two tons per acre of ground limestone, preferably at times magnesian limestone ($CaCO_3MgCO_3$), which contains both calcium and magnesium and has slightly greater power to correct soil acidity, ton for ton, than the ordinary calcium limestone ($CaCO_3$); and continue to apply about two tons per acre of ground limestone every four or five years. On strongly acid soils, or on land being prepared for alfalfa, five tons per acre of ground limestone may well be used for the first application.

(2) Adopt a good rotation of crops, including a liberal use of legumes, and increase the organic matter of the soil either by plowing under the legume crops and other crop residues (straw and corn stalks), or by using for feed and bedding practically all the crops raised and returning the manure to the land with the least possible loss. No one can say in advance what will prove to be the best rotation of crops, because of variation in farms and farmers and in prices for produce, but the following are suggested to serve as models or outlines:

First year, corn.
Second year, corn.
Third year, wheat or oats (with clover or clover and grass).
Fourth year, clover or clover and grass.
Fifth year, wheat and clover or grass and clover.
Sixth year, clover or clover and grass.

Of course there should be as many fields as there are years in the rotation. In grain farming, with small grain grown the third and fifth years, most of the coarse products should be returned to the soil, and the clover may be clipped and left on the land or returned after threshing (only the clover seed being sold the fourth and sixth years); or, in live-stock farming, the field may be used three years for timothy and clover pasture and meadow if desired. The system may be reduced to a five-year rotation by cutting out either the second or the sixth year, and to a four-year system by omitting the fifth and sixth years.

With two years of corn, followed by oats with clover-seeding the third year, and by clover the fourth year, all produce can be used for feed and bedding if other land is available for permanent pasture. Alfalfa may be grown on a fifth field for four or eight years, which is to be alternated with one of the four; or the alfalfa may be moved every five years, and thus rotated over all five fields every twenty-five years.

Other four-year rotations more suitable for grain farming are:

Wheat (and clover), corn, oats, and clover; or corn (and clover), cowpeas, wheat, and clover. (Alfalfa may be grown on a fifth field and rotated every five years, the hay being sold.)

Good three-year rotations are:

Corn, oats, and clover; corn, wheat, and clover; or wheat (and clover), corn (and clover), and cowpeas, in which two cover crops and one regular crop of legumes are grown in three years.

A five-year rotation of (1) corn (and clover), (2) cowpeas, (3) wheat, (4) clover, and (5) wheat (and clover) allows legumes to be seeded four times. Alfalfa may be grown on a sixth field for five or six years in the combination rotation, alternating between two fields every five years, or rotating over all the fields if moved every six years.

For the best production of seed in grain farming, alsike, sweet clover, or mammoth clover may well be grown. To avoid clover "sickness" it may sometimes be necessary to substitute sweet clover or alsike for red clover in about every third rotation, and at the same time to discontinue its use in the cover-crop mixture. If the corn crop is not too rank, cowpeas or soybeans may also be used as a cover crop (seeded at the last cultivation) in the southern part of the state, and, if necessary to avoid disease (such as cowpea wilt) these may alternate in successive rotations.

For easy figuring it may well be kept in mind that the following amounts of nitrogen are required for the produce named:

1 bushel of oats (grain and straw) requires 1 pound of nitrogen.
1 bushel of corn (grain and stalks) requires 1½ pounds of nitrogen.
1 bushel of wheat (grain and straw) requires 2 pounds of nitrogen.
1 ton of timothy requires 24 pounds of nitrogen.
1 ton of clover contains 40 pounds of nitrogen.
1 ton of cowpeas contains 43 pounds of nitrogen.
1 ton of average manure contains 10 pounds of nitrogen.

The roots of clover contain about half as much nitrogen as the tops, and the roots of cowpeas contain about one-tenth as much as the tops.

Soils of moderate productive power will furnish as much nitrogen to clover (and two or three times as much to cowpeas) as will be left in the roots and stubble. In grain crops, such as wheat, corn, and oats, about two-thirds of the nitrogen is contained in the grain and one-third in the straw or stalks. (See also discussion of "The Potassium Problem," on pages following.)

(3) On all lands deficient in phosphorus (except on those susceptible to serious erosion by surface washing or gullying) apply that element in considerably larger amounts than are required to meet the actual needs of the crops desired to be produced. The abundant information thus far secured shows positively that fine-ground natural rock phosphate can be used successfully and very profitably, and clearly indicates that this material will be the most economical form of phosphorus to use in all ordinary systems of permanent, profitable soil improvement. The first application may well be one ton per acre, and subsequently from one-half ton to one ton per acre every four or five years should be applied, at least until the phosphorus content of the plowed soil reaches 2,000 pounds per acre, which may require a total application of from three to five or

six tons per acre of raw phosphate containing 12 to 14 percent of the element phosphorus.

Steamed bone meal and even acid phosphate may be used in emergencies, but it should always be kept in mind that phosphorus delivered in Illinois costs about 3 cents a pound in raw phosphate (direct from the mine in carload lots), but 10 to 12 cents a pound in steamed bone meal and acid phosphate, both of which cost too much per ton to permit their common purchase by farmers in carload lots, which is not the case with limestone or raw phosphate.

Phosphorus once applied to the soil remains in it until removed in crops, unless carried away mechanically by soil erosion. (The loss by leaching is only about 1½ pounds per acre per annum, so that more than 150 years would be required to leach away the phosphorus applied in one ton of raw phosphate.)

The phosphate and limestone may be applied at any time during the rotation, but a good method is to apply the limestone after plowing and work it into the surface soil in preparing the seed bed for wheat, oats, rye, or barley, where clover is to be seeded; while phosphate is best plowed under with farm manure, clover, or other green manures, which serve to liberate the phosphorus.

(4) Until the supply of decaying organic matter has been made adequate, on the poorer types of upland timber and gray prairie soils some temporary benefit may be derived from the use of a soluble salt or a mixture of salts, such as kainit, which contains both potassium and magnesium in soluble form and also some common salt (sodium chlorid). About 600 to 800 pounds per acre of kainit applied and turned under with the raw phosphate will help to dissolve the phosphorus as well as to furnish available potassium and magnesium, and for a few years such use of kainit may be profitable on lands deficient in organic matter, but the evidence thus far secured indicates that its use is not absolutely necessary and that it will not be profitable after adequate provision is made for supplying decaying organic matter, since this will necessitate returning to the soil the potassium contained in the crop residues from grain farming or the manure produced in live-stock farming, and will also provide for the liberating of potassium from the soil. (Where hay or straw is sold, manure should be bought, as a rule.)

On soils which are subject to surface washing, including especially the yellow silt loam of the upland timber area, and to some extent the yellow-gray silt loam and other more rolling areas, the supply of minerals in the subsurface and subsoil (which gradually renew the surface soil) tends to provide for a low-grade system of permanent agriculture if some use is made of legume plants, as in long rotations with much pasture, because both the minerals and the nitrogen are thus provided in some amount almost permanently; but where such lands are farmed under such a system, not more than two or three grain crops should be grown during a period of ten or twelve years, the land being kept in pasture most of the time; and where the soil is acid a liberal use of limestone, as top-dressings if necessary, and occasional reseeding with clovers will benefit both the pasture and indirectly the grain crops.

ADVANTAGE OF CROP ROTATION AND PERMANENT SYSTEMS

It should be noted that clover is not likely to be well infected with the clover bacteria during the first rotation on a given farm or field where it has not been grown before within recent years; but even a partial stand of clover the first time will probably provide a thousand times as many bacteria for the next clover crop as one could afford to apply in artificial inoculation, for a single root-tubercle may contain a million bacteria developed from one during the season's growth.

This is only one of several advantages of the second course of the rotation over the first course. The mere practice of crop rotation is an advantage, especially in helping to rid the land of insects and foul grass and weeds. The clover crop is an advantage to subsequent crops because of its deep-rooting characteristic. The larger applications of organic manures (made possible by the larger crops) are a great advantage; and in systems of permanent soil improvement, such as are here advised and illustrated, more limestone and more phosphorus are provided than are needed for the meager or moderate crops produced during the first rotation, and consequently the crops in the second rotation have the advantage of such accumulated residues (well incorporated with the plowed soil) in addition to the regular applications made during the second rotation.

This means that these systems tend positively toward the making of richer lands. The ultimate analyses recorded in the tables give the absolute invoice of these Illinois soils. They show that most of them are positively deficient only in limestone, phosphorus, and nitrogenous organic matter; and the accumulated information from careful and long-continued investigations in different parts of the United States clearly establishes the fact that in general farming these essentials can be supplied with greatest economy and profit by the use of ground natural limestone, very finely ground natural rock phosphate, and legume crops to be plowed under directly with other crop residues or in farm manure. On normal soils no other applications are absolutely necessary, but, as already explained, the addition of some soluble salt in the beginning of a system of improvement on some of these soils produces temporary benefit, and if some inexpensive salt, such as kainit, is used, it may produce sufficient increase to more than pay the added cost.

THE POTASSIUM PROBLEM

As reported in Illinois Bulletin 123, where wheat has been grown every year for more than half a century at Rothamsted, England, exactly the same increase was produced (5.6 bushels per acre), as an average of the first twenty-four years, whether potassium, magnesium, or sodium was applied, the rate of application per annum being 200 pounds of potassium sulfate and molecular equivalents of magnesium sulfate and sodium sulfate. As an average of sixty years (1852 to 1911), the yield of wheat was 12.7 bushels on untreated land and 23.3 bushels where 86 pounds of nitrogen and 29 pounds of phosphorus per acre per annum were applied. As further additions, 85 pounds of potassium raised the yield to 31.3 bushels; 52 pounds of magnesium raised it to 29.2 bushels; and 50 pounds of sodium raised it to 29.5 bushels. Where potassium was applied, the wheat crop removed annually an average of 40 pounds of that element in the grain and straw, or three times as much as would be removed in the grain only for such crops as are suggested in Table A. The Rothamsted soil contained an abundance of limestone, but no organic matter was provided except the little in the stubble and roots of the wheat plants.

On another field at Rothamsted the average yield of barley for sixty years (1852 to 1911) was 14.2 bushels on untreated land, 38.1 bushels where 43 pounds of nitrogen and 29 pounds of phosphorus were applied per acre per annum; while the further addition of 85 pounds of potassium, 19 pounds of magnesium, and 14 pounds of sodium (all in sulfates) raised the average yield to 41.5 bushels. Where only 70 pounds of sodium was applied in addition to the nitrogen and phosphorus, the average was 43.0 bushels. Thus, as an average of sixty years the use of sodium produced 1.8 bushels less wheat and 1.5 bushels more barley than the use of potassium, with both grain and straw removed and no organic manures returned.

In recent years the effect of potassium on the wheat crop is becoming much more marked than that of sodium or magnesium; but this must be expected to occur in time where no potassium is returned in straw or manure and no provision made for liberating potassium from the supply still remaining in the soil. If the wheat straw, which contains more than three-fourths of the potassium removed in the wheat crop (see Table A), were returned to the soil, the necessity of purchasing potassium in a good system of farming on such land would be at least very remote, for the supply would be adequately maintained by the actual amount returned in the straw, together with the additional amount which would be liberated from the soil by the action of decomposition products.

While about half the potassium, nitrogen, and organic matter, and about one-fourth the phosphorus contained in manure is lost by three or four months' exposure in the ordinary pile in the barn yard, there is practically no loss if plenty of absorbent bedding is used on cement floors and if the manure is hauled to the field and spread within a day or two after it is produced. Again, while in average live-stock farming the animals destroy two-thirds of the organic matter and retain one-fourth of the nitrogen and phosphorus from the food they consume, they retain less than one-tenth of the potassium; so that the actual loss of potassium in the products sold from the farm, either in grain farming or in live-stock farming, is wholly negligible on land containing 25,000 pounds or more of potassium in the surface 6⅔ inches.

The removal of one inch of soil per century by surface washing (which is likely to occur wherever there is satisfactory surface drainage and frequent cultivation) will permanently maintain the potassium in grain farming by renewal from the subsoil, provided one-third of the potassium is removed by cropping before the soil is carried away.

From all these facts it will be seen that the potassium problem is not one of addition but of liberation; and the Rothamsted records show that for many years other soluble salts have practically the same power as potassium to increase crop yields in the absence of sufficient decaying organic matter. Whether this action relates to supplying or liberating potassium for its own sake, or to the power of the soluble salt to increase the availability of phosphorus or other elements, is not known, but where much potassium is removed, as in the entire crops at Rothamsted, with no return of organic residues, probably the soluble salt functions in both ways.

As an average of 112 separate tests conducted in 1907, 1908, 1909, and 1910 on the Fairfield experiment field in Wayne county, an application of 200 pounds of potassium sulfate, containing 85 pounds of potassium and costing $5.10, increased the yield of corn by 9.3 bushels per acre; while 600 pounds of kainit, containing only 60 pounds of potassium and costing $4, gave an increase of 10.7 bushels. Thus, at 40 cents a bushel for corn, the kainit paid for itself; but these results, like those at Rothamsted, were secured where no adequate provision had been made for decaying organic matter.

Additional experiments at Fairfield included an equally complete test with potassium sulfate and kainit on land to which 8 tons per acre of farm manure was applied. As an average of 112 tests with each material, the 200 pounds of potassium sulfate increased the yield of corn by 1.7 bushels, while the 600 pounds of kainit also gave an increase of 1.7 bushels. Thus, where organic manure was supplied, very little effect was produced by the addition of either potassium sulfate or kainit, in part perhaps because the potassium removed in the crops is mostly returned in the manure if properly cared for, and perhaps in larger part because the decaying organic matter helps to liberate and hold in solution other plant-food elements, especially phosphorus.

In laboratory experiments at the Illinois Experiment Station, it has been shown by chemical analysis that potassium salts and most other soluble salts increase the solubility of the phosphorus in soil and in rock phosphate; also that the addition of glucose with rock phosphate in pot-culture experiments increases the availability of the phosphorus, as measured by plant growth, altho the glucose consists only of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, and thus contains no plant food of value, but its decomposition yields organic acids.

If we remember that, as an average, live stock destroy two-thirds of the organic matter of the food they consume, it is easy to determine from Table A that more organic matter will be supplied in a proper grain system than in a strictly live-stock system; and the evidence thus far secured from older experiments at the University and at other places in the state indicates that if the corn stalks, straw, clover, etc., are incorporated with the soil as soon as practicable after they are produced (which can usually be done in the late fall or early spring), there is little or no difficulty in securing sufficient decomposition in our humid climate to avoid serious interference with the capillary movement of the soil moisture, a common danger from plowing under too much coarse manure of any kind in the late spring of a dry year.

If, however, the entire produce of the land is sold from the farm, as in hay farming or when both grain and straw are sold, of course the draft on potassium will then be so great that in time it must be renewed by some sort of application. As a rule, farmers following this practice ought to secure manure from town, since they furnish the bulk of the material out of which manure is produced.

Calcium and Magnesium

When measured by the actual crop requirements for plant food, magnesium and calcium are more limited in some Illinois soils than potassium; and with these elements we must also consider the loss by leaching. As an average of 90 analyses[1] of Illinois well-waters drawn chiefly from glacial sands, gravels, or till, 3 million pounds of water (about the average annual drainage per acre for

[1]Reported by Doctor Bartow and associates, of the Illinois State Water Survey.

Illinois) contained 11 pounds of potassium, 130 of magnesium, and 330 of calcium. These figures are very significant, and it may be stated that if the plowed soil is well supplied with the carbonates of magnesium and calcium, then a very considerable proportion of these amounts will be leached from that stratum. Thus the loss of calcium from the plowed soil of an acre at Rothamsted, England, where the soil contains plenty of limestone, has averaged more than 300 pounds a year as determined by analyzing the soil in 1865 and again in 1905. Practically the same amount of calcium was found, by analyses, in the Rothamsted drainage waters.

Common limestone, which is calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$), contains, when pure, 40 percent of calcium, so that 800 pounds of limestone are equivalent to 320 pounds of calcium. Where 10 tons per acre of ground limestone was applied at Edgewood, Illinois, the average annual loss during the next ten years amounted to 780 pounds per acre. The definite data from careful investigations seem to be ample to justify the conclusion that where limestone is needed at least 2 tons per acre should be applied every four or five years.

It is of interest to note that thirty crops of clover of four tons each would require 3,510 pounds of calcium, while the most common prairie land of southern Illinois contains only 3,420 pounds of total calcium in the plowed soil of an acre. (See Soil Report No. 1.) Thus limestone has a positive value on some soils for the plant food which it supplies, in addition to its value in correcting soil acidity and in improving the physical condition of the soil. Ordinary limestone (abundant in the southern and western parts of the state) contains nearly 800 pounds of calcium per ton; while a good grade of dolomitic limestone (the more common limestone of northern Illinois) contains about 400 pounds of calcium and 300 pounds of magnesium per ton. Both of these elements are furnished in readily available form in ground dolomitic limestone.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENT OF SOILS

In the management of most soil types, one very important thing, aside from proper fertilization, tillage, and drainage, is to keep the soil in good physical condition, or good tilth. The constituent most important for this purpose is organic matter. Not only does it impart good tilth to the soil, but it prevents much loss by washing on rolling land, warms the soil by absorption of heat, retains moisture during drouth and prevents the soil from running together badly; and as it decays it furnishes nitrogen for the crop and aids in the liberation of mineral plant food. This constituent must be supplied to the soil in every practical way, so that the amount may be maintained or even increased. It is being broken down during a large part of the year, and the nitrates produced are used for plant growth. This decomposition is necessary, but it is also quite necessary that the supply be maintained.

The physical effect of organic matter in the soil is to produce a granulation, or mellowness, very favorable for tillage and the development of plant roots. If continuous cropping takes place, accompanied with the removal or the destruction of the corn stalks and straw, the amount of organic matter is gradually diminished and a condition of poor tilth will ultimately follow. In many cases this already limits the crop yields. The remedy is to increase the organic-matter content by plowing under manure or crop residues, such as corn stalks, straw, and clover. Selling these products from the farm, burning them, or feeding them and not returning the manure, or allowing a very large part of the manure to be lost before it is returned to the land, all represent bad practice.

One of the chief sources of loss of organic matter in the corn belt is the practice of burning the corn stalks. Could the farmers be made to realize how great a loss this entails, they would certainly discontinue the practice. Probably no form of organic matter acts more beneficially in producing good tilth than corn stalks. It is true that they decay rather slowly, but it is also true that their durability in the soil after partial decomposition is exactly what is needed in the maintenance of an adequate supply of humus. The nitrogen in a ton of corn stalks is 1½ times that in a ton of manure, and a ton of dry corn stalks incorporated with the soil will ultimately furnish as much humus as 4 tons of average farm manure; but when burned, both the humus-making material and the nitrogen which these stalks contain are destroyed and lost to the soil.

The objection is often raised that when stalks are plowed under they interfere very seriously in the cultivation of corn, and thus indirectly destroy a great deal of corn. If corn stalks are well cut up and then turned under to a depth of 5½ to 6 inches when the ground is plowed in the spring, very little trouble will result. Where corn follows corn, the stalks, if not needed for feeding purposes, should be thoroly cut up with a sharp disk or stalk cutter and turned under. Likewise, the straw should be returned to the land in some practical way, either directly or as manure. Clover should be one of the crops grown in the rotation, and it should be plowed under directly or as manure instead of being sold as hay, except when manure can be brought back.

It must be remembered, however, that in the feeding of hay, or straw, or corn stalks, a great destruction of organic matter takes place, so that even if the fresh manure were returned to the soil, there would still be a loss of 50 to 70 percent owing to the destruction of organic matter by the animal. If manure is allowed to lie in the farmyard for a few weeks or months, there is an additional loss which amounts to from one-third to two-thirds of the manure recovered from the animal. This is well shown by the results of an experiment conducted by the Maryland Experiment Station, where 80 tons of manure were allowed to lie for a year in the farmyard and at the end of that time but 27 tons remained, entailing a loss of about 66 percent of the manure. Most of this loss occurs within the first three or four months, when fermentation, or "heating," is most active. Two tons of manure were exposed from April 29 to August 29, by the Canadian Experiment Station at Ottawa. During these four months the organic matter was reduced from 1,938 pounds to 655 pounds. To obtain the greatest value from the manure, it should be applied to the soil as soon as it is produced.

It is a common practice in the corn belt to pasture the corn stalks during the winter and often rather late in the spring after the frost is out of the ground. This tramping of stock sometimes puts the soil in bad condition for working. It becomes partially puddled and will be cloddy as a result. If tramped too late in the spring, the natural agencies of freezing and thawing, and wetting and drying, with the aid of ordinary tillage, fail to produce good tilth before the crop is to be planted. Whether the crop is corn or oats, it necessarily suffers, and if the season is dry, much damage may result. If the field is put in corn, a poor stand is likely to result, and if put in oats, the soil is so compact as to be unfavorable for their growth. Sometimes the soil is worked when too wet. This also produces a partial puddling which is unfavorable to physical, chemical, and biological processes. The bad effect will be greater if cropping has reduced the organic matter below the amount necessary to maintain good tilth.

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