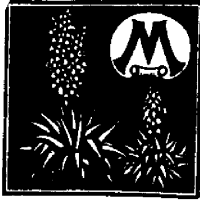


FRUIT GROWING COMPARED WITH GRAIN GROWING.



Y own experience has taught me that the fruit-raiser finds plenty of hard work to do. He often fails to produce a good crop, and prices are not always what he thinks even moderately good. But if he will candidly compare notes with the grain-raiser he will feel like "thanking his stars" that he is a fruit-grower.

Although the underlying reason may not be apparent, it is in most cases because the fruit-grower sells water chiefly instead of starch and potash. Water is cheap, except in rare cases, and what the market demands is, that it be put up in attractive and delicately flavored packages, for which a good price will be paid.

Wheat, corn, oats and all the grains are largely composed of materials that are costly to produce and contain but little water. They take from the soil fully 90 per cent. more of its costly elements than do fruits. It does not require very deep reasoning to convince a thoughtful person that if he sells water from the soil of his farm he is not drawing heavily on its resources.

Who does not know that the grain-grower is each year making heavy drafts upon the bank deposit in his farm, and that only by frequent replenishing can it be kept up. This is, in a measure, true of the fruit-farmer, but in a far less degree. He must keep his soil rich, but it requires far less manure to keep it in condition to yield a big crop of fruit than a medium crop of grain. If anyone does not believe this let him try it.

I never knew a farmer who sold the grain off his farm year after year who did not so deplete his soil that he could not make it profitable even for a single crop. In fact, observation has taught me that, with few exceptions, such farmers are on the road to failure. If not financial failure, it is absolutely certain that their farms are being impoverished. Thousands of abandoned farms all over the country are the silent and solemn witnesses of this truth. Some of them are so from other causes, but excessive grain farming is the one most common.

Many cases have come under my personal observation in which rich and valuable farms have been literally robbed of their native wealth by grain growing. It is true that if the grain fodder and hay be fed to stock and the manure saved and returned to the fields, their fertility will be preserved, or possibly increased. Even in such a case, is it true that the fat stock sold (and no other should be) is largely composed of water.

When we think of it, there is nothing the human system needs and craves so much as good water. If it is inside beautifully tinted wrappers, the skins of strawberries, peaches, plums, pears, apples, oranges, lemons, etc., combined with nutritious food and healthful acids, it is the more relished. Think of the price