

# The Era of Farm Machinery

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while a less successful automatic shocker dispenses with all human labor except for driving the team. A machine somewhat similar to the hay loader now takes an entire shock of grain and elevates it to the wagon.

In sections of the West where the lack of livestock makes straw of little commercial value, and where dry weather may reasonably be expected between the harvesting and threshing of the crop, the machine known as the header is in common use. The heads of the grain, with as little straw as possible, are cut and elevated into the barge driven along side. The headed grain is stacked in the field and threshing is done without handling the bulk of the straw. In case of unfavorable weather the damage to the grain is enormous. The great advantage of the machine lies in its capacity as compared with the ordinary binder.

In place of the flail and winnowing sheet the grain separator has been developed until very complete and economical separation is secured. With the substitution of steam for horsepower for driving it, there came into use numerous labor-saving attachments, such as the self-feeder, band cutter, straw stacker, recleaner, and the devices for elevating and weighing the grain into wagons. The small horsepower threshers had a capacity of from three hundred to six hundred bushels of oats per day. The great steam outfits thresh from one to two thousand bushels of wheat or double that of oats in the same time. A complete outfit costs from three thousand to four thousand dollars, exclusive of teams and wagons, and was formerly used only thirty or forty days per year. With the advent of steam plowing, engines were made suitable for both kinds of work and the overhead cost of

threshing considerably reduced. Smaller outfits driven by gasoline engines have recently come into quite common use.

In the extreme West there has been developed the combined harvester, which seems to represent the greatest possible saving of human labor. This machine, drawn by from twenty to forty horses, under control of a single driver, cuts, threshes, recleans, and delivers into sacks the grain from forty to fifty acres per day. Two men are required for sewing the sacks. The straw, including all weed seeds, is scattered over the ground as the team proceeds. Four or five of these machines may often be seen in a single wheat field in the Palouse country in the State of Washington. On level land the horses may be replaced by the steam engine, which furnishes power sufficient to cut a swath up to forty feet in width and to cover from seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five acres per day. These outfits, though representing the shortest possible time from standing to marketable grain, retard the passing of exploitive methods of farming by making it possible to obtain some sort of yield on immense acreages with the least possible expenditure of labor and money. One of these outfits with a crew of from three to seven men may handle as much as six or seven thousand acres in a single season. They have also reduced the time of seeding to a minimum. In the tule lands in the San Joaquin Valley, engines with extremely wide wheels are necessary on account of the soft ground, but one outfit may plow, seed and harrow from seventy-five to one hundred acres per day. Thus the entire crop is handled in two operations.

From exploitive methods and machinery it is a relief to turn for brief consideration of a few of the machines contributing to better rather than greater farming. We

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