

**BUSINESS METHODS ON THE FARM.**

That farmers, as well as those who are engaged in trade, should adopt some systematic way of keeping account of their business transactions from day to day, there is no question. The farmer should also keep records which will enable him to calculate what the returns and profits are from the different crops sown and the different kinds of live stock kept. The tiller of the soil has a greater problem in determining these facts than the men in general business has in arriving at the profits upon the different classes of goods dealt in.

Estimates, valuations and markets are greater factors in the case of the farmer than with the tradesman, the latter selling what he deals in at a given percentage of increase over cost, while the former very seldom knows what the selling price will be until he is ready to market his goods, the price received not being determined by the cost of production so much as by the supply and demand. Again, when the farmer is called upon to make valuations or estimates of what he has on hand, he has a greater task than the tradesman. For these and other reasons the farmers' profits are very uncertain, and he should always have records from which he can determine the selling price which will give him a reasonable profit. As soon as the markets will not give him a working margin he should turn his attention to those branches which will give him a substantial return. He must not, however, be guided by every fluctuation in the market. It might be advisable to follow the line upon which he is estab-

lished at a loss for a time rather than to make a change to another branch at an expense or sacrifice greater than the loss suffered by continuing along established lines. It is always expensive to change from one branch to another, and, generally speaking, such changes should be brought about gradually.

It is not the intention in this short article to give full directions as to what accounts should be kept, in order that a full statement could be given at any time of the results of the operations in any one department of the farm work, but only to suggest the keeping of certain accounts which will enable the farmer to determine just what he is making in all departments combined, and also approximately what each department has given him in profits. It is doubtful whether the keeping of a set of farm books upon the usual double entry plan is advisable or not. A great many farmers who have undertaken the task of keeping such records and opened accounts with each kind of stock and each field, have found the task too great a drain upon their time at the busy season of the year, and as a consequence have discarded all records. The wise plan for the beginner is to keep a few general accounts, which can be enlarged upon as experience is gained. In commencing the records an inventory of all food stuffs, live stock, implements, etc., should be taken; then the following accounts should be started: Cash, Live Stock, Grain, Farm Implements, Permanent Improvements, Household Expenses and Sundries. The cash