

**EXPERT ENCOURAGES
BETTER FARMING IN
DU PAGE COUNTY**

**Farmers Make Good Use of Their
County Man, and Many Are
Following His Advice.**

As we were rolling rapidly over one of the graveled roads that are found everywhere in DuPage county, I leaned forward and read the speed indicator on the crop expert's little automobile. It showed a total mileage for the season of well up toward two thousand miles. This was July 24, and Mr. Heaton had been at work only since the middle of May. Evidently he had been keeping busy.

Mr. Heaton told me that he had spent the previous afternoon consulting with a man who intended to put in 30 acres of alfalfa, and who wanted to be sure to get it put in right. Alfalfa advice has been at a premium in DuPage county lately, for the dairymen, who constitute the majority of the farmers, are coming to appreciate the value of alfalfa hay. Since the alfalfa campaign a few weeks ago Heaton's time has been largely taken up visiting farmers who intend to put in alfalfa this fall.

Soil improvement is a question which interests the farmers greatly. "I can remember when this farm was taken up from the government," one old man told the expert. "It used to raise three crops of clover a year then, and I have known it to produce considerably more than a hundred bushels of oats per acre. I won't begin to do that well now. I have tried my best to keep it up with manure, but for all that it won't yield what it used to. I want you to come over and tell me what I can do to bring it back to where it was 50 years ago."

At first thought it would seem that it would be easy to maintain fertility in a county where most of the feed grown, and some that is shipped in, is fed to dairy cows. The trouble is that too much of the feed goes into the cows. A large proportion of the corn grown in the county is cut up for silage or fodder. Little organic matter is left to be returned to the land. Clover and alfalfa are so valuable as feed that they are taken off the land. It is hard for a man to plow under a crop of clover when he has a barnyard full of hungry cows. The result of all this is that it is difficult to keep up a sufficient supply of organic matter in the soil. There is the manure, it is true. But the greater part of the organic matter in a corn stalk is destroyed by the time it has gone through the silo and the cows. Then, too, comparatively few farmers handle their manure in such a way as to get anywhere near its full value.

So the problem of increasing the organic matter supply of the soils, of adding limestone so that clover and alfalfa can be grown to better advantage, and of supplying phosphorus in many cases, furnishes the county expert with an abundance of advisory work.

On the morning in question we made a brief stop at the Simpson farm near Naperville. Mr. Simpson is one of the comparatively few cattle feeders in the country. He had two carloads of cattle on feed, using silage as a large part of the ration. He feeds in stalls in the barn, so that each steer can take his time to eat and gets all that is coming to him. The barn and the outside yard are floored with concrete, so that all the manure is saved.

The adviser had been here before, so we did not stop long. The scheduled visit for the forenoon was at G. R. Goss's farm. We found in Mr. Goss a man who, like many another of the more progressive farmers in this section, believes in living comfortably as well as in making money. His large modern house is heated by hot water, lighted with gas, and supplied with running water from an automatic pressure tank. The sewage is taken care of by the big 20-inch tile that supplies drainage for the farm. The barns and other outbuildings are well built and nearly all floored with concrete. There are two miles of tile on the farm.

When Mr. Goss came into possession of this 86-acre farm a little over a year ago, one of the first things he did was to put \$7,000 into improvements. "It is worth every cent it cost, too," he said. "It will mean pretty close figuring for a time while the children are in school, but with the help of the county expert here we will come out all right."

As we were starting for the fields a boy of thirteen years or thereabouts came running in from the road where he had been herding the cows to ask if he could not go along.

"Yes, put the cows in and come along, Sonny," his father said, smiling indulgently. "That boy takes as much interest in the farm as I do," he added, turning to us.

In the first corn field Mr. Goss called the expert's attention to several unproductive spots which on investigation proved to be alkali. The expert, like a Kentucky colonel, always carries a bottle. It contains nothing worse than hydrochloric acid, however. He poured a little on the ground in one of the alkali spots. The boy watched the operation with great interest and his father bent down so as not to miss anything. The acid bubbled up violently as soon as it touched the soil. "Those large bubbles indicate alkali," the expert explained. "We use the same test for limestone, but the bubbling is different, the bubbles in that case being smaller and more frothy."

"You will want to put lots of horse

manure on these spots," he continued. "When the field is in oats they usually go down here, don't they?" Mr. Goss nodded.

"Well, just plow them under. It won't be long until you will get to raising as good corn on these spots as anywhere else."

A little farther along in the field we came to a line between the old land and the newer that had been worked only since it was drained.

"I suppose this old land has been worked for 50 years," Mr. Goss said. "I have manured it heavily two or three times, but it won't grow corn like the newer land. I don't know what to do with it."

DOWNERS GROVE—Gal. 2

"It still lacks organic matter," the adviser told him after he had examined it. "You'll have to keep on manuring it heavily, or turn under some cover. Then this soil is doubtless low in phosphorus, too, and it will take a good many years to supply enough of that with manure. Some rock phosphate put on here with the manure will hasten things a good deal."

The litmus paper showed the top was sour. The soil auger showed limestone gravel about two feet under the surface. The gravel frothed and boiled when the acid was applied, much to the delight of the boy.

"I find a large portion of the soil in the county is underlaid with that limestone gravel," Heaton said. "In some cases it is even in the surface soil, when, of course, no limestone need be applied. Usually, however, it is like this—the surface soil sour and the limestone down two feet or so. In such a case it is necessary to sweeten the surface soil with a ton and a half or two tons of limestone per acre, in order to take care of alfalfa and clover until the roots get down to the limestone layer."

There were other problems in the other fields—spring sown clover that was looking considerably the worse for the dry weather and the acid soil—more alkali—and over at one side of the farm a peat bed. The adviser prescribed limestone for the clover, and potash for the peat bed, explaining that there was already so much organic matter in the peat that it would not pay to try to make it productive by using manure.

Then we went up to the orchard, where there was more or less trouble with bugs and diseases. Heaton took samples of the affected leaves and fruit to send to the experiment station, for he does not claim to be much of a horticulturist. Mr. Goss wished to seed down the orchard for a calf pasture, and wanted to know what would be best for the purpose. Heaton recommended sweet clover as being a good plant to furnish nitrogen for the trees, and one that would stand pasturing better than alfalfa.

While we were waiting for dinner Heaton showed the boy and his four year old brother how to tie up seed corn by the double string method. "I find bright boys like this all over the country," he told me later. "I always try to have something to show them—how to make a new knot or a splice, or how to tie up seed corn. They are the coming farmers, and there will be a tremendous change in agriculture, too, when they get to farming."

"I'm not worrying about my boy wanting to leave the farm," Mr. Goss told me. "He has his heart set on being a farmer, and from the interest he takes I believe he will be a good one."

I was sure of it myself, for he is the kind of a boy who will never be satisfied with anything else.

After washing in water from the pressure tank and eating a dinner cooked by gas—and most excellently cooked, too—we left for the next appointment.

This was with George Keller, one of the county supervisors. The expert went over his farm in much the same way as he had Mr. Goss's, giving a suggestion here and a word of advice there, all to the end that the poor spots might be eliminated from the fields, and the whole farm brought up to a higher state of productiveness.

Mr. Schwartz, a good natured, round-bodied German neighbor, drove up as we were leaving.

"Vell, vell! So dis is der soil doctor," he exclaimed as he was introduced. "Ven can you git time to come ofer and help me pick out a piece of ground for allfalla?"

Heaton promised to try to see him the next week, and we left him chuckling at one of the supervisor's jokes.

Heaton is kept so busy with field calls that he can hardly find time to do all the other things he has in mind. He has some variety plots of corn on the county farm. Next season he plans to do some corn breeding work in the hope of developing a type of corn especially adapted to DuPage conditions. This fall he plans to have local corn shows in every township. He is outlining some work on corn and other subjects to explain to the teachers at their county institute. There is a decided lack of type and quality in the corn of DuPage County, a condition which Heaton means to remedy if possible.

He wants to fit out a small chemical laboratory in the basement of the court house, too, where analyses of soils and feeds and fertilizers can be made. He also wants to find time to make a collection of weeds this summer for use in his talks next winter. There are lots of weeds in DuPage County and Heaton is going to use some of his time this coming winter getting the farmers warmed up to fight them harder than ever next year.

The DuPage County Agricultural

Improvement Association was formed early in the spring. It has now about 140 members and will have more as soon as the officers can find time to canvass the county more thoroughly. The local funds are supplemented by \$1,000 of the Rosenwald board and \$600 from the county money. It is probable that the county support will be increased materially a little later.

Mr. Heaton, whose full name is Edward B., graduated from the Iowa Agricultural College in 1909. Since then he has done considerable dairy demonstration and investigation for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and has also had some experience in farm management. His office is in the court house at Wheaton. The officers of the DuPage County Agricultural Improvement Association are: E. F. Adams, president; Glen Elyas; H. F. E. at Congress Park; D. G. Congo Bandemer, vice-president; Wheaton; J. M. Stevens, secretary; Wheaton, and D. G. Methodist at Downers Grove.

Peter Hoy, treasurer, Lombard—Editor Prairie Farmer.

WEST SUBURBAN CHURCH LEAGUE.

Standing as Follows:

	W.	L.	Pct.
Brookfield	9	1	900
D. Congo	7	4	636
Congress Park	7	4	636
D. G. Methodist	4	5	444
D. G. Congo	2	8	200
D. G. Baptist	2	9	182

Downers Grove Congo defeated Congress Park M. E. at Downers Grove by a score of 15 to 4 last Saturday.

Games scheduled for August 23: Brookfield M. E. vs. Congress Park M. E. at Congress Park; D. G. Congo Bandemer, vice-president; Wheaton; J. M. Stevens, secretary; Wheaton, and D. G. Methodist at Downers Grove.

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