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Nor are we told how to deal with the sowing of a crop or the subsequent cultivation and cleaning; hoeing must be at best an annoying and difficult job when the land is cluttered up with half-decayed "trash," as he calls it, left on the ground when a green crop is only disked in. Less ploughing and shallower ploughing may be good policy in some cases, but not scrapping the plough altogether. The harrows—disc or any other sort—are meant to supplement, and not to supersede, the plough. The success of Faulkner's experiment, and the great lesson for other farmers, is not the shallow cultivation, but supplying the land with the much-needed humus without which no land can retain its fertility indefinitely. That, I think, is the secret of it.

—NAMRON (Auckland)

A DIFFERENT stand is taken by a correspondent from Havelock North. We have deleted a passage about Sir Albert Howard's investigations into mycorrhizae.

"Acid Test of Results"

Sir, your article in the September 22 issue on *Plowman's Folly* was most interesting, and the presentation in brief of the case for and against was an excellent idea; unfortunately, however, Professor Truog's criticism is, in my mind, misleading, and both he and Mr. Faulkner appear to be unaware of important research findings in England and Europe, which possibly give one key to Faulkner's success and perhaps indicate the lines on which his work will eventually prove the most valuable.

Professor Truog in his comparison of surface tillage and ploughing states that experiments by the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station show the superiority of ploughing on both heavy and light soils. He omits to state whether the land used for the experiments was fallow or in a green crop. If the land were fallow or near fallow, the experiments were not a fair parallel, as the crux of Faulkner's experimentation is the incorporation of the organic matter in the surface soil, which everyone knows increases aeration and water-holding capacities, in addition to any plant food released. As the crop in the Wisconsin test was wheat, we can fairly safely assume that the soil was reasonably clear before the immediate preparation of the seedbed, which fact automatically relegates the experiment to a test only between surface tillage and ploughing of a clear soil—and not one between the trashy surface Faulkner advocates and ploughing-in of a similar surface or of normal ploughing.

A factor which plays an important part is that soils fertilised solely by artificial manures steadily lose humus, and in such soils, without the addition of organic matter, the deeper cultivation of the plough would obviously be an advantage. Where organic matter is mixed with the surface layer, the improved aeration, etc., could easily produce a different result, as in fact is claimed by Faulkner. By all means let us subject Faulkner's claims to the most severe tests, but let us make them accurate ones.

Striking a Balance

It is well known that the greatest bacterial activity in a soil is in the top

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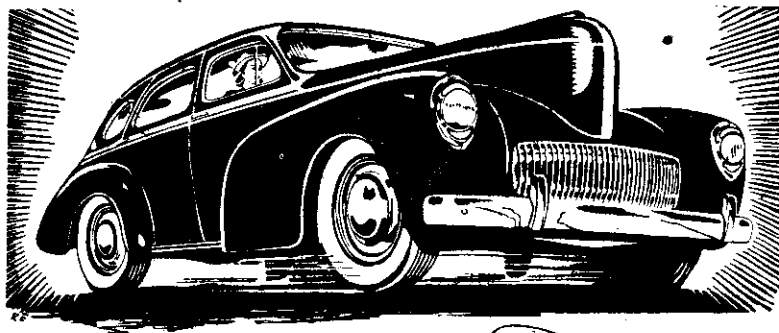
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