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“Mousse of Cream” is the Secret

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Creation of Tokalon Ltd., Avon House, Oxford Street, London.



(continued from previous page)

few inches and this is nourished and increased by the addition of organic matter, with consequent increase of plant nutrients. It is a matter of striking a balance between the effect of the decomposition on the tender plant roots and the temporary utilisation of nitrogen minerals by the bacteria during the breaking-down processes. Where the greenstuff is ploughed under relatively deeply the conversion of the matter into humus is slowed up because of various factors. Farmers are well aware of this and so plough under their green manure long before planting time. Some authorities, such as Dr. Pfeiffer (formerly of Dornach, Switzerland, and more recently a member of the American Dust Bowl Commission) and Sir Albert Howard (one of Britain's Food Production Council) maintain that the quickest and most effective means is through controlled decomposition above ground—hence their compost processes which have been used for some years now on farms and plantations as large as 30,000 acres. Faulkner's method seems halfway between deep ploughing and composting, and may prove of considerable value over large areas of land where composting is scarcely practicable. Professor Truog's statement that Faulkner did not compare his method against a ploughed field is only partly true: Faulkner had the adjoining fields of his neighbours, and the superiority of his results was so striking as not to be gainsaid. Furthermore, Faulkner plainly states that official tests at the Nebraska Experiment Station have shown the crop yield to be greater from a trashy surface.

“A Living Biological Unit”

Professor Truog makes no attempt to explain the increased yield, better health, and resistance to pests. For a number of years Dr. Pfeiffer and, more recently, Sir Albert Howard have been maintaining that the earth is a living biological unit and that in cultivating it man must co-operate with its organic processes, rather than endeavour to replace these by artificial fertilisers.

I think Professor Truog's statement on Chinese agriculture quite misleading. The Professor King he mentions in connection with the root systems of plants went to Japan and China especially to study how they had maintained their soil fertility for from 20 to 40 centuries. He wrote a book, convincingly illustrated with photographs taken himself. Here is one of his comments:

“... China alone has as many acres in rice each year as the United States has in wheat, and her annual product is more than double and probably threefold our annual wheat crop, and yet the whole of the rice area produces at least one and sometimes two other crops each year. . . .”

Averaging the maintenance capacity of some Chinese holdings, Professor King assesses 1783 people, 212 cattle or donkeys and 399 swine per square mile, as against 61 people and 30 horses and mules for the United States.

By the acid test of results, Mr. Faulkner has shown that his method deserves reasonable investigation; to what extent it will need modification, or in what respects he may have misread the reasons for his success, will only be revealed by unbiased experiment. I have tried to show that research findings elsewhere indicate more potentialities in his method than may at first be apparent.

—DAVID RILEY (Havelock North)

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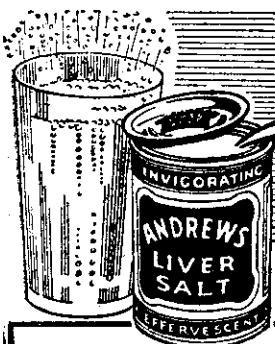
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