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## THE PLOUGHMAN'S WEARY WAY

AS we expected, our article on the book "Plowman's Folly" (now available in New Zealand) brought protests from some of our readers. It also opened a door (some of them thought) to the compost heap. Well, the compost clubs have the same right to existence as any other clubs, but they have no special right to space in our columns at the present time. We have therefore rejected letters and articles sent for the purpose of proving that artificial fertilisers "poison the ground," but print two contributions dealing with Faulkner's own arguments or with Truog's reply to them. We need hardly add that further letters on the subject must be brief. We cannot find space for correspondents who repeat what has already been said or who raise issues that Faulkner himself does not raise. Meanwhile we print an article by a contributor who makes no claim to scientific knowledge, but who has farmed both in New Zealand and in England. His argument generally is that Faulkner overstates the case.



### "Somewhere Between The Two"

TO plough or not to plough? To believe with Edward H. Faulkner that the plough is the enemy of man and should be scrapped, or to argue with Professor Truog that Falkner is "talking through his hat"? While by no means posing as an expert, I had 14 years' farming, which included quite a lot of cropping—10 years' "cow-cockeying" in Taranaki, Waikato and Auckland, and four years' mixed farming in Yorkshire—and I should like to make a few comments that may help farmers to steer their way between the enthusiasm for a new idea and the entrenched conservatism of the old ones. I think the most practical farmers will incline more to Professor Truog's views than to Edward H. Faulkner's, but there is something to be said on both sides and we may find the truth to be somewhere between the two.

The question is also of great interest to gardeners, for, if shallow cultivation is best on the farm it is also best in the garden. Since I forsook the plough for the pen and the cow for the inkpot, I have spent most of my spare minutes in the garden and am myself deeply interested in this side of the picture.

### Faulkner Too Sweeping

The first point is that Faulkner's assertions are too sweeping. Because his experiments were successful with certain crops and on certain soils, he concludes they will be equally successful with all crops on all soils. Now every farmer knows that what is the correct treatment for light land is altogether wrong for a heavy clay, and cultivation which is deep enough for corn is altogether too shallow for carrots or parsnips.

Many of Faulkner's experiments seem to have been with the disking in of green crops. I believe his practice in this respect is perfectly sound, but his deductions are not as sound as his practice. Nature's way is for leaves and other debris to rot on top of the ground, but this is too slow for farmers and gardeners. A quicker way is to put it all in the compost heap, and when properly rotted return it to the land. This is the best method in the garden, but on the farm, where it must be done on a fairly large scale to be worth while, the question of time and labour enter into our calculation. Experiments in England are trying out large-scale composting, but the average farmer will view the labour involved with alarm until the best

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