



Mr. Sangor's snug little homestead in Rockingham County



He nets \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year from his 17-acre orchard

ONLY ONE GROWER—But FOUR Cash Crops

By George H. Dacy

A ONE-MAN farm over in the historic Valley of Virginia, which markets four profitable cash crops per annum, is a particularly good illustration of the worthwhileness of head-work farming; that is your writer's alibi for offering what follows about this practical project.

B. C. Sangor of Rockingham County farms according to the theory that it is wisdom to substitute wit-power for brawn and long hours wherever possible in winning a livelihood from the soil and its products. Just another of those stories which prove that mind often succeeds where muscle alone frequently fails.

This man Sangor owns and operates a 1400-bird flock, a 17-acre bearing orchard, a 4-cow dairy, in addition to growing some 30 acres of corn, wheat, soybeans, and vetch. Which sounds like a 52-weeks-in-the-year task, and is exactly that. Especially, as his is a one-man establishment where extra help is hired only during the haying and apple-picking periods. Here, in brief, is how this producer, who specializes in foresight instead of subsequent regrets, turns the trick.

Let's first of all consider the physical equipment and improvements. Buildings and their upkeep are fixed costs which frequently run the overhead to such dimensions that it eventually "paralyzes" both the farm and farmer. This particular Virginian, handy with tools, keeps his expenses down in putting new buildings up, repairing the old ones, by doing the carpenter and concrete work himself. His four useful poultry buildings are examples of his careful and intelligent workmanship. Certain features of their design are unique, planned painstakingly to accord with the labor possibilities of such a small farm.

Easy To Clean

One poultry laying house has double doors at each end, in simulation of a central driveway dairy barn. That arrangement enables the owner to drive his manure spreader into the chicken house when time for another clean-up rolls around. This practical shortcut speeds the job and minimizes handwork.

When Sangor built his apple grading houses, a structure 20 by 60 feet in floor dimension, he schemed out something quite different in buildings of that type by adding a second story, a sort of "sky bungalow" for hens and pullets where the "biddies" abide in peace and contentment during their lives, with never even a single jaunt to the soil below. This dual-purpose building, which he built himself, cost Sangor \$500 and in a few years it paid

for itself. He places the chicks in this permanent home fresh from the hatchery and removes the culled hens only when they have outlived their usefulness.

Culling Basis of Success

This producer actually felt his way into poultrying as he watched others fail or succeed in the specialized business for many years before he, personally, decided to try it. He had a practical farm flock of 60 hens at the time and during the month of January he kept tab on the return. Eggs were then high and the cash income for 30 days was a dollar

greenback per layer. That experience started the Virginian in culling, improving and standardizing his flock. He gained experience in the business from the bottom up and from the top down. Patience, persistence in study by night and application of what he learned by day paid dividends. In time, his layers were yielding an annual net of \$2 or more a bird and during the most successful years, the turnover has more often than not exceeded that figure.

Sangor says that no matter how excellent the breeding of the layers may be, they won't lay well unless well and properly fed. Proper feeding, careful consistent culling, and the systematic selection of breeding stock are the factors which this grower stresses. He saves steps by providing electric lights and running water in each hen house. One year his record in two separate flocks of 300 Plymouth Rocks and 800 White

He sells \$5,000 worth of poultry products annually.

A 1400-bird flock, a 17-acre orchard, a 4-cow dairy, and 30 acres of corn, wheat, soy beans and vetch returns 6% contentment and a healthy, happy life.

Leghorns showed an average of 200 eggs or better per bird. The straight pack eggs are marketed with special trade in New York City while the local prices for broilers and fat hens are high enough to yield a fairly good return from meat. Usually the broiler crop aggregates 800 to 1000 birds, weighing 1½ to 2 pounds each. State aid in culling the flock and blood-testing the birds aids greatly. It is not abnormal during a season of worthwhile prices for this Valley man to market \$5,000 worth of poultry products from his small but intensively operated project.

The quartet of dairy cows dovetails nicely with the poultry - fruit setup. The monthly check for sweet cream ranges

between \$30 and \$35. Skimmilk is used in feeding the heifer calves which are raised, and the growing chicks. The dairy stock convert homegrown feeds into cash and fertility and round out the useful occupation of labor program. The income from the few but well-bred cows kept is large as compared with the time and labor involved in caring for the animals. Seventeen acres of soybean and vetch hay feeds the cows and during the growing season provides cut green feed for the fowl.

This four-crop grower contends that the average farmer who keeps chickens wastes feed by handling his flock according to "shift and snatch" schemes. Sangor is opposed to the haphazard feeding of misfit home-raised rations, claiming that sick birds, heavy mortality, and low cash re-

turns sometimes result from such poor management. This is not intended to infer that the feeding of home-grown products is undesirable. But practical knowledge must be used in the preparation of rations so that the best results will obtain.

When his apple orchard was 13 years old, Sangor picked and packed a 1500-barrel crop of York Imperial, Gano, and Delicious apples which he marketed through the American Fruit Growers Association at a net profit of \$1 a barrel. That was a good year; the next season yielded a total loss due to cold weather during the bud stage. The test of time, however, has proved the trees only second to the hens as efficient and economical producers of profitable food products.

A six per cent return on his investment and the satisfaction of being boss of his own business as well as the contentment which comes from a healthy, happy life in the country are the direct and indirect returns which this modern Virginian reaps from his farming operations.

PRODUCTION COST

Farmers are keenly seeking to reduce their production costs according to H. S. McCrory, Chief, U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Engineering. They are making constantly greater use of the Bureau's research work in irrigation, drainage, farm machinery and farm structures, according to the head government agricultural engineer.

In telling of the work of his bureau, Mr. McCrory reports on cotton machinery studies on sandy loam, which show that too much cultivation proves harmful to the growth of plants. Seed beds giving best results had a cloddy structure at planting time, which is best obtained by throwing up loose clods 60 days before and letting them weather.

The bureau's engineers at the cotton-ginning laboratory have been seeking ways to increase the rate of ginning without sacrificing lint quality. Experiments indicate that changes in design of saw-teeth and in spacing of gin saws will accomplish his purpose.

In an effort to reduce production costs by balancing crops, livestock, farm machinery and farm buildings in the farming program, the bureau has made surveys for a number of years on 108 farms in seven states including North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. When sufficient facts have been collected and correlated, the engineers hope they can show how farms can be arranged and operated to decrease production costs.



One of Mr. Sangor's home-made poultry houses.

