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## Winter pasture

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# Mississippi Agricultural

## EXPERIMENT STATION.

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### WINTER PASTURE.

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E. R. LLOYD.  
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To encourage the farmers of the State to give more thought and attention to good pastures; to show what an easy matter it is to provide good grazing for stock during winter and early spring, the following report on the Winter Pastures of the Station is made. While we only report on Vetch, Turf Oats, and Alfalfa we have some Barley that is furnishing excellent grazing and Bur Clover or California Clover is beginning to cover the land with green.

**Hairy Vetch.**—The seed of this leguminous plant was first sown in 1888, and the Station began the distribution of the seed, in small quantities, in 1889-'90, and the plant has grown in greater favor each year since, and is now planted in large areas on many farms in the State for both winter grazing and for a hay crop. While we have obtained excellent results from the Vetch sown on brown loam and stiff clay soils, containing little lime, like most other plants of its family, it prefers a lime soil. We are not yet fully determined as to its adaptability to the light

sandy soils of the State. In a few instances it has given good results on these soils, but in the majority of cases Vetch has proven a failure when sown on light open sandy soils. Vetch has proven to be an excellent crop for either soiling, grazing or hay. Stock of all kinds are fond of Vetch, and the hay is richer in potien than clover hay, and is more digestible.

In September, 1893, we seeded one of our pasture lots containing one acre, to Vetch and Turf Oats. This lot was grazed by both hogs and cattle, from the middle of November to the 1st of May, when all stock was kept off the land. The crop was cut for hay May 17, and yielded one ton and seventy-two pounds of cured hay per acre. On the Station farm we have several fields of Vetch that were sown five years ago. These fields have yielded annually, about ten bushels of seed per acre. The seed ripen and are gathered in June. After the seed had been gathered each year, the land was plowed with two horse plow, and sown to Cowpeas, and we have never failed to get a large amount of excellent hay. With the first rains in the fall the Vetch seed, that had been shattered out on land, when Vetch was gathered, would come up, and grow off rapidly. This plant is not injured by cold or frost. The stand of Vetch on these fields is perfect, and about six inches high now. No seed have been put on this land in five years, except those wasted in harvesting the crop each year. There is no quicker or cheaper way in which to enrich our land, than by growing two leguminous crops (Vetch and Cowpeas) on it in the same season, and both of these crops utilized for stock food.

**Turf Oats and Hairy Vetch.**—We have gotten more and better grazing from these two plants when sown together, than from either when sown separately.

The seeding should be done in August or September, using one and a half bushels of Oats and one bushel of Vetch seed per acre. The preparation of land and seeding is same as for oats.

These two plants make a happy combination, both mature about same time, and while oats is exhaustive to land the Vetch is a renovating crop, and I think will add more fertility to the soil than will be removed by the oats.

We have not found a better combination than is furnished by these two plants for winter and early spring grazing. The Station has now about forty acres that is furnishing excellent grazing for our stock. The College Farm has over 100 acres in Oats and Vetch, about one-half of which is used for winter pasture and the remainder to be harvested for seed and feed.

Neither of these plants is injured by our coldest weather, and can be grazed from the middle of November until the 1st of April, and if a crop of seed or hay is desired, the stock should then be taken off the field, and the crop for hay will be ready to harvest by the middle of May, or a crop of seed can be harvested by the middle of June. The College Farm had, last year, fifty acres sown to Turf Oats and Vetch. The crop was harvested in June, and the yield of seed per acre was fifty bushels. The land on which this crop was grown was a fine peice of valley. After the crop was gathered the land was broken broadcast with a two-horse plow, and planted to Cowpeas. One part sown broadcast, and the other planted in drill. The broadcast peas were cut for hay in the fall, and those planted in the drill were cultivated and the peas gathered for seed.

During the harvesting of the Oats and Vetch in June, enough seed of both shattered out on the land to perfectly reseed the field. And with the first rains in the fall the seed of both Oats and Vetch came up, and now the land is perfectly covered with a green mat of Oats and Vetch to a depth of six inches, and is furnishing fine grazing for the cattle.

The Oats and Vetch can be sown in the cotton field at the last plowing, and after the cotton has been gathered. the Oats and Vetch will furnish good grazing until spring.

when the land will be in fine condition for the spring planting. After the stock have grazed a field of Oats and Vetch during the winter, the seed will mature, and may be harvested in time to get a good corn crop from the same land the same season.

**Alfalfa.**—We have, invariably, secured better results from fall seeding than we have from spring seeding. If possible, the seed should be sown in August or September, at the rate of twenty pounds per acre. On account of the long drouths, we have had for the past few years, it has been very difficult to get the land in proper shape and the seed sown at right time. In the fall of 1896 we could not seed our land until October 31 for the above reason, and as a result of the late planting we got only two cuttings for hay last summer, when we should have had three heavy cuttings and one or two lighter ones, but the pasturage we had from this field, compensated in a measure, for the small hay yield. This meadow furnished excellent grazing for the dairy cows during November and December.

Great care should be taken in turning cattle or sheep on an Alfalfa pasture, for the reason that, this plant when young and tender or if wet from rains or heavy dews will bloat cattle or sheep. It does not have this affect on horses or hogs, and hogs will keep in good condition on Alfalfa pastures with little other feed.

When cattle or sheep are to be put on an Alfalfa meadow, they should be, well fed and watered, and allowed to remain on the meadow only a few hours at first. With this precaution, there will be little danger of bloat. This meadow presents a pretty sight now, the plants are from six to eight inches high and very vigorous. We have another field of Alfalfa sown October 14, 1897. This field is perfectly green and plants from four to six inches high.

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The bulletins of this Station are sent free to all farmers in Mississippi who apply for them.

Address all communications to **Agricultural Experiment Station**, Agricultural College, Miss.