CHAPTER VI

DIVERSIFIED FARMING

The period of thirty years between the seventh and tenth United States censuses, 1850 to 1880, witnessed not merely a great expansion in Wisconsin agriculture, but also a great readjustment in its fundamental character. In that interval, if we take the figures for 1849 and 1879, wheat production was multiplied 5.8 times—from 4,286,000 bushels in 1849 to 24,888,000 in 1879. But the last figure was about 4,000,000 bushels less than the crop of 1860. For some years both the acreage and the yield had varied widely and no such production record was destined to be obtained again. Wheat growing was on the decline.

On the other hand, corn and oats, which together amounted in 1849 to 5,403,670 bushels, rose in 1879 to 67,140,900 bushels—12.4 times the former amount. This increase was steady and unbroken. The corn crops of the four census years 1849, 1859, 1869, and 1879 were respectively 1,989,000, 7,517,000, 15,034,000, and 34,230,578, or an increase of 7,000,000 bushels in the first ten years, 7,500,000 in the second, and 15,000,000 in the third; while oats increased from 3,400,000 to 11,000,000, to 20,000,000, and to 32,000,000 bushels.

During the same thirty-year interval the hay crop was multiplied almost seven times—from 275,662 tons in 1849 to 1,907,430 in 1879. That crop also had advanced regularly, by ten-year periods, even while the growing corn crop and the increasing use of corn stover or fodder were adding many thousands of tons yearly to the farm supply of roughage for stock.

With the proportional increase in grain and hay used for stock feed went the steady rise in the production of livestock—cattle, pigs, and horses—also of butter and cheese and, for a time, of sheep and wool. In other words, what the
census reveals is a change from the one-crop system of wheat raising to diversified farming.

All of the products mentioned had been grown from the first, but so long as and wherever wheat remained the dominant interest they were merely incidental. Indian corn was usually the pioneer’s first crop. After making his claim and building a cabin, he would break up a few acres of sod and plant his “sod corn.” This he did by making ax-cuts in the overturned sod at regular intervals for the corn hills, dropping seed into the hills and stepping on them. The result not infrequently was a fair crop of corn for “roasting ears,” for meal, and for grain to feed the oxen during the first winter. But, after the first season, when there was usually plenty of wheat for flour, corn was little used by settlers save in the form of “johnnycakes” or for a breakfast cereal. Neither the Northeasterners nor the European immigrants were fond of corn substitutes for wheat bread. The Southerners used it more freely, but they were not numerous. Besides, the Wisconsin climate was long supposed to be poorly adapted to corn growing, the state lying north of the great corn belt. Killing frosts sometimes destroy the young plants after they have come up, and more frequently the unripe crop is caught by frost in fall and is left “soft,” in which condition it has little feeding value. As compared with the corn crops grown in Illinois, those of Wisconsin were insignificant. Yet, experience and science combined to improve the status of corn. Earlier maturing varieties were selected or bred, corn culture for this climate came to be better understood, the custom of cutting the standing corn and letting the grain ripen in the shock defended the crop somewhat against early fall frosts.¹ Gradually it came to be understood that corn was as sure as any crop which the farmer could raise. On the dry prairie lands of the southern counties, on the rich, well drained openings, and on the alluvial bottoms it was much surer than wheat, and the yield per acre was generally much higher than

¹ The breeding of resistant corn has been one of the triumphs credited to the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin.
DRAFT HORSE TEAM, PROPERTY OF SIMON RUBLE, BELOIT

Won first prize at Milwaukee state fair, 1852. From State Agricultural Society
Transactions, 1852
AN EARLY SUBSTITUTE FOR WHEAT ON WISCONSIN FARMS

SHEARING TIME ON A WALWORTH COUNTY SHEEP FARM
the wheat yield. Wet lands, particularly if the soil was heavy clay, were less favorable, as were the stump infested fields of the heavily wooded area, where hoe tillage had to be employed.

The substitution of corn for wheat when the latter proved itself an uncertain crop was not immediate but gradual, as may be shown from our study of towns. For example, Mount Pleasant in 1849 produced on the average 375 bushels of wheat per farm, and only 102 bushels of corn; while in 1879 the same town was credited with 308 bushels of corn and 86 of wheat, thus reversing the relation of these two crops in thirty years. But, since the intervening two censuses show respectively 175 bushels of wheat to 93 of corn, and 110 of wheat to 157 of corn, it becomes clear that the great change occurred in the last decade, between 1869 and 1879. Other towns give results to substantiate the conclusion that farmers did not go into corn raising wholeheartedly until wheat raising had become demonstrably unprofitable, which, for southeastern and southern Wisconsin counties, was about 1870.2

The census of 1880 showed five outstanding corn producing counties—namely, Rock (2,555,704 bushels), Lafayette (2,505,277 bushels), Green (2,187,550 bushels), Grant (3,408,034 bushels), and Dane (2,983,250 bushels). A secondary list, of counties credited with more than 1,000,000 bushels, included Walworth, Iowa, Dodge, and Columbia. These were all large counties. The lake shore counties were all producers of small aggregate amounts of corn, though the two southern ones, Kenosha and Racine, which had much prairie land, and also Milwaukee, which had a high percentage of cultivated land by this time, produced their full quotas according to cultivated

2 Plymouth, in Rock County, shows 346 bushels wheat to 131 bushels corn in 1849, 231 to 200 in 1859, 250 to 366 in 1869. In 1879 the figures were 46 bushels wheat and 813 corn. Disregarding the comparison with wheat, the production of which declined in all the towns by 1880, we find corn production increasing in Sugar Creek from 86 bushels in 1849 to 143 in 1859, to 459 in 1869, and 1063 in 1879. In Empire the course of the corn crop is represented at the four census periods by the figures 36, 24, 60, and 131. Franklin had an average per farm of 30 bushels, 60 bushels, 143 bushels, and 183 bushels. Whitewater figures run 51, 124, 222, and 620; New Glarus, 22, 173, 69, and 408; Norway, 14, 164, 10, and 230 bushels.
areas. The northern counties, whether wooded or open, raised but little corn. Brown had only a few thousand bushels, Manitowoc still less, while Winnebago and Fond du Lac had each somewhat more than half a million bushels. Some of the counties which were low in corn were still growing considerable wheat. That was true of Winnebago and Fond du Lac. The Mississippi counties, as far south as Vernon, were still raising wheat as their principal crop.

The history of oat production, as represented by our selected towns, shows that the range of that cereal was wider than the range of corn production. It was grown to a considerable extent everywhere; neither longitude nor latitude affected the crop, and the yield seems to have depended solely upon the quality of the soil and the type of culture employed. Strong soils produced heavy crops, light soils light crops. In 1879 Dane, the largest county, led in production of oats and was followed by Grant, Rock, Lafayette, Green, Iowa, Dodge, Fond du Lac, and Walworth in that order. Only Dane produced more than 2,000,000 bushels. The others named all had above 1,000,000 bushels, and Sauk, Vernon, Waukesha, and Columbia produced over 800,000 bushels each; while St. Croix, Racine, Manitowoc, Trempealeau, Sheboygan, Jefferson, and Kenosha exceeded 600,000 bushels. Considering relative

The best yields of corn among the counties named, in 1879, were obtained in Kenosha, 41 3/4 bushels to the acre, and in Walworth and Lafayette, 39+ bushels per acre. The lowest was in Columbia County, 32 1/2 bushels.

There was some shifting of positions among the counties in the thirty years from 1880 to 1910, yet on the whole the Wisconsin "corn belt" has remained fairly well outlined. Grant continued as the leader in 1880. In 1900 Dane, a county of larger area, took and held first place as to quantity of product, Grant being second but returning to first place in the recent census. In 1890 other counties, after Dane, were Rock, Lafayette, Green, Columbia, Iowa, Walworth, Jefferson, Dodge, and Sauk. In 1900 the succession was Dane, Grant, Rock, Walworth, Green, Columbia, Dodge, Iowa, Jefferson, Sauk, Fond du Lac, Richland, and Waukesha. In 1910 it was Dane, Grant, Rock, Columbia, Lafayette, Dodge, Green, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Iowa, Sauk, Racine, Outagamie, and Richland. The acreage in 1890 was 1,120,341; in 1900, 1,497,474; and in 1910, 1,457,652; and the total production 34,924,216, 52,309,810, and 49,163,034 respectively. Up to 1910 no lake shore county is credited with as much as 1,000,000 bushels of corn, but 1,000,000 bushels for a small county like Racine was a high production record.
areas, the three southernmost lake shore counties had the most generous oat crops and showed the best yields.\textsuperscript{4}

In the growing of hay there were great differences among the towns compared, the average production per farm in 1849 ranging from 7 tons in Brookfield to 21 tons in Norway (Racine County); in 1859 from 5 in Eagle and in Castle Rock, both new towns, to 24 in Norway; in 1869 from 4 tons in Eagle and Castle Rock to 38 in Mount Pleasant; and in 1879 from 7 in Eagle to 41 in Mount Pleasant. The prominent hay producing towns at the date of the tenth census, in addition to Mount Pleasant, were Whitewater, Primrose, and Pleasant Springs, Norway, New Glarus, Franklin, and Empire. The counties represented by the above towns are Racine, Walworth, Dane, Green, Milwaukee, and Fond du Lac. At that census period Dane County was credited with 108,470 tons, Dodge with 93,076, Fond du Lac with 85,240, Walworth with 78,769, Rock with 76,205, Columbia with 71,991, Jefferson with 71,774, Green with 67,252, Waukesha with 63,388, and Grant with 62,951. Winnebago, Racine, Lafayette, and Iowa each had more than 50,000 tons, and Sauk had practically that amount.

The subjoined table shows the relation of the hay acreage to the acreages of oats, corn, and wheat in a list of 23 counties, and also the relation of wheat acreage\textsuperscript{5} to the combined acreages of these other crops. The proportion of wheat in the total crops varied from nine-sixteenths plus in the case of Dodge County to one-sixteenth minus in Lafayette. Five of the leading hay counties would also fall within a list of 15 leading wheat counties. These are Dodge, Fond du Lac, Dane, Winnebago, and Columbia. On the other hand, the counties of Lafayette, Green, Grant, Iowa, Rock, Walworth, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine are among the low counties in wheat.

It is found that in 1880 Kenosha County had approximately 17,000 head cattle, Racine 18,500, Milwaukee 12,000, Walworth 31,500, Rock 45,000, Green 45,000, Iowa 39,000, Grant 48,000,

\textsuperscript{4} The best yield in Kenosha County, $41\%$ bushels as an average.

\textsuperscript{5} Including rye and barley.
Lafayette 40,000. Dane County, whose area is more than four times that of Racine, had 59,000; Dodge, thrice the size of Racine, 48,000; Columbia 33,000; Fond du Lac 38,000; Jefferson 35,000; and Waukesha 25,000.

It is clear that the cattle interest was pursued most intensively in the southeast, the south, and the southwest. The impression that animal husbandry had largely supplanted wheat growing in that area is deepened when we combine with the statistics of neat cattle those relating to horses, sheep, and

*Manitowoc County also had 5396 acres of rye. Other rye producing counties in this list were: Columbia, 5556 acres; Dane, 5555; Grant, 4327; Jefferson, 4116; Milwaukee, 3468; Ozaukee, 2415; Rock, 3390; Sauk, 5364; Sheboygan, 4992; Washington, 4989; and Waukesha, 5344. In other cases the acreage is negligible.

+Rock County had a crop of barley grown on 23,420 acres. Other counties in this list had areas of barley as follows: Columbia, 6547; Dane, 21,361; Dodge, 15,049; Fond du Lac, 12,075; Jefferson, 9865; Manitowoc, 5290; Milwaukee, 7038; Ozaukee, 5262; Sheboygan, 9445; Walworth, 9679; Washington, 7448; Waukesha, 10,209. Others have small areas.
swine. For example, Racine had 48,000 sheep, Dane 81,000; 14,362 swine, Dane 96,000; 6684 horses, Dane 22,150. In sheep and horses Racine greatly exceeded her proportion, in swine she fell below. In sheep Walworth County was first in number, and also first in intensity, with Kenosha, Racine, and Waukesha following in her wake, and Fond du Lac a trifle further behind. Grant County had the largest absolute number of swine and Dane the second largest; but Lafayette and Iowa, together about the size of Dane, showed a higher intensity than either of these. In general, swine were plentiful in the corn counties and scarce in the wheat counties.

To summarize: We find that, by 1880, the counties of the older Wisconsin may be divided into two groups. The first was that in which the growing of feeding crops—corn, oats, and hay, or any two of them—predominated very much over the market cereals—wheat, rye, and barley. The second was that in which the market cereals still occupied a larger area of the cultivated lands than the crops ordinarily raised for feeding livestock. Taking Dane County as our norm, we find there two acres of other crops to every acre of the market cereals. Jefferson County, lying on her eastern border, was on precisely the same basis, while Sauk, Grant, Richland, Crawford, Green, Lafayette, and Iowa, her neighbors on the south and west, had a much lower proportion of their lands in market cereals, and the same may be said of Rock, Walworth, Racine, and Kenosha counties. Milwaukee was in the same situation with Dane; Waukesha was somewhat more favorable to the market cereals though her acreage of these was still far below that of the feeding crops. On the other hand, the counties near the lake shore north of Milwaukee—Ozaukee, Washington, Manitowoc—also Fond du Lac, Dodge, and Columbia farther west, were distinctly favorable to the market cereals, while Sheboygan and Winnebago leaned slightly to the other side.

A line drawn from Lake Michigan along the north boundary of Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Jefferson counties, thence by
the north boundary of Dane County to the Wisconsin, and including the counties of Sauk, Richland, and Crawford north of the river, would establish the northern limits of the distinctively feed producing area in 1880. Finding as we do that livestock production in those counties harmonizes with the above conclusions, we are safe in describing this as the area in which diversified farming has made most progress. 8

Both the systematic beginnings and the fundamental conditions of this new development are revealed in the story of the first successful state agricultural society. Various attempts to organize a state society on the model of New York and other eastern states had failed. Finally, in March, 1851, members of the legislature and other prominent citizens met in the capitol and effected an organization which immediately began to function and has proved permanent. 9

In his first report the secretary of the society makes it clear that the state had no choice but to organize for the improvement of farming conditions, and to utilize the results gleaned elsewhere to promote better farming here. He says: "Organized in a new state, with a sparse population, our farmers nearly all in moderate circumstances and of limited means, suffering under the failure of our staple crop for the past three years, and in a time of unexampled pecuniary disaster, and agricultural depression, we have no time to wait for a long preparatory training; and it becomes to us a matter of necessity, that this Society—Minerva like—shall at once step from birth to maturity."

Acting under such convictions, the society raised funds by private means for holding a fair and cattle show, which occurred at Janesville in October. The society also encouraged

---

8 In the report of the first state fair, held at Janesville in October, 1851, it is stated that "none of the western counties had any specimens on the ground, and the northern counties but few." Counties strongly represented were Rock, Dane, Walworth, Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee; less strongly, Waukesha, Jefferson, and Dodge. Wis. State Agric. Soc., Trans., i, 16.

9 Erastus W. Drury of Fond du Lac was made president; Albert C. Ingham of Dane, secretary. Vice presidents were Roswell C. Otis of Kenosha, Henry M. Billings of Iowa, and William F. Tompkins of Rock. See Wis. State Agric. Soc., Trans., i, 10, 95.
the organization of county societies, of which several modeled after the Berkshire County, Massachusetts, fair, founded in 1810 by Elkanah Watson, already existed. The secretary was instructed to assemble material for a volume of transactions, in the expectation that it might be published at state expense.

The principal part of this first volume, which appeared in January, 1852, consisted of a series of papers by local men, in the nature of surveys of agricultural conditions in the counties. In that series all the counties of the older Wisconsin were reviewed, save Milwaukee and Calumet on the east and the lead counties in the southwest. The tone of the writers was one of discouragement with wheat raising, but just as uniformly they exhibited a reserve of optimism based on the hope that agriculture would now promptly change from the wheat basis to a more diversified type of industry.

Their summarized testimony showed that only the smallest beginnings of general farming, crop rotation, and especially livestock production existed at that time in most of the counties. Crops other than wheat were mainly corn and oats, but they were grown on a very small scale. Potatoes, stricken with the rot a few years earlier, were almost a complete failure at that period; and while other roots, like carrots, turnips, and rutabagas, could be produced with both ease and success, very few farmers took the trouble to raise them or had much occasion to use them for feeding. In some sections barley was grown for market, in others rye, but these crops merely tempered the effort to grow as much wheat as possible. Nearly all the hay that was gathered, at least in the counties away from the lake shore, came from the natural wild-grass meadows or marsh lands. In Kenosha and Racine a movement was on foot to change the wild meadows into tame-grass meadows, and there was also some interest in the growing of clover and timothy on cultivated lands. Such experiments, however, were as yet sporadic.

From nearly all counties came the complaint that local dairy products were insufficient to meet local demands, that much

10 In addition, there are papers on St. Croix, Crawford, and Sauk counties.
cheese and butter had to be imported from other states and sold here at high prices. Reasons for the failure of farmers to give more attention to dairying were said to be a want of appreciation of its benefits, a lack of the means necessary to procure cows and equipment, and (among many of the foreign born) a want of knowledge of the processes of cheese and butter making. A more potent cause, however, as pointed out by a Dane County writer, was the universal habit farmers had of depending on the wild grasses for pasture feed. These were good for ten or twelve weeks in late spring and early summer, but when grazed down in the later summer no new growth would start in the fall, and such of the earlier growth as might be left was both unpalatable and unproductive of milk, while the pasture was permanently depleted by cattle during the dry season tearing out roots of the grass. In a word, the "flush season" was a very short one, and during the greater part of each year milk cows were a care, a nuisance, but not a source of profit. He was a far-sighted farmer indeed who deliberately planned, by sowing clover and other grass with his grain crops, to have good late summer and fall pasturage for his cows, and yet that was the only method by which dairying could be made to pay. Only in Kenosha and Racine counties, and to a less extent in Milwaukee and Walworth, was dairying carried on under conditions guaranteeing success, and even there the number of experimenters was extremely small. Nearly every farmer had a few head of cattle, including cows, but as a rule they were a poor class of "scrub" stock and they received wretched care. From many sources we learn that it was almost the universal practise to let cattle "rustle" for a living both summer and winter. At best their winter shelter was a straw-roofed shed and their feed the straw from the wheat crop and perhaps a little coarse slough hay. The pitiful spectacle of cattle humped and shivering around the farm yard in the coldest days and nights of Wisconsin's bitterest winters was so common as to be considered

" John Y. Smith.
ELKANAH WATSON

Founder of the Berkshire County Fair, 1810, and promoter of New York state and county fairs
the rule. There were only occasional exceptions. Under these circumstances, little or no advantage was taken of the barn-yard fertilizer which might have been derived from the farm livestock. The work horses alone, when there were such, and the working oxen were regularly stabled and more or less regularly fed and cared for, and the manure from these was often a small part of what might have been available for crops if all livestock had been properly stabled and generously fed and bedded.

Sheep were not yet numerous, but considerable interest was manifested in them and a number of good-sized flocks, some as large as 700 to 1000 head, were to be found in the southeastern counties, particularly Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth. Most of the sheep, like the cattle and the pigs, were derived from stock brought in by drovers from southern Illinois and Indiana. Almost every farmer had a few pigs for a home supply of pork. A small amount of barreled pork was sold to the pinery and some was shipped from the lake ports; but the business of pork raising was in its infancy. The prairie counties were passing from the use of oxen for farm work to the use of horses. This general change, supposed to represent a fundamental economy—horses moving so much faster at their work—produced a rather widespread market for good farm horses, and some attention was given to their breeding. It was the southeastern counties which led in that line, as well as in sheep, in cattle, in tame grasses, in crop rotation, and in all efforts to underprop an agriculture made sick by the long continued cropping of the lands with wheat.

Doubtless it was significant of the sentiment in that region that the first agricultural journal to be published in Wisconsin had its birth in Racine. This was the Wisconsin Farmer and Northwestern Cultivator, issued by Mark Miller in January, 1849. Under various modifications of title, with numerous changes in editorial management and in character, this journal has persisted, though not continuously, to the present time. Its announced purpose was to assist farmers, through a modi-
cum of "book knowledge," to understand the "capabilities and deficiencies of the soil, and how it may be improved—the proper rotation of crops—the right application . . . of manures," etc. The editor emphasized the necessity of livestock, the dairy, tame grasses, soil analyses, and soil treatment. He advocated deeper and more thorough cultivation, cheaper fencing (Dr. Hoy wrote some articles on a "living fence," which meant hedge fence), better stock shelters, more attention to making salable butter and cheese, wool growing, and pork raising. He also urged the organization of county and state agricultural societies.

In 1857 John Wesley Hoyt, an Ohio man of twenty-four years, who had been educated in medicine but had turned his chemical studies to account as a teacher of agriculture, came to Madison as assistant editor of the Wisconsin Farmer, which then and afterwards was published at the capital. Dr. Hoyt, in 1859, was elected secretary of the Wisconsin Agricultural Society, and early in 1860 he assumed in addition to his former duties the sole editorship of the Farmer. Hoyt's editorials, from his first appearance in Wisconsin, began to influence the thought of the people toward a more scientific view of agricultural problems. He also lectured extensively on scientific agriculture, covering, in two or three years, most of the settled portions of the state, performing in this way a service analogous to that performed by the later farmers' institutes. In 1860 he proposed the name "farmers' institute" for a month's lecture course for farmers, which he offered to arrange if farmers desired it. The institute was not held, but at the time set for it Yale University held the first farmers' course given on a collegiate basis in America. Hoyt continued to edit the Farmer till 1867, and remained as secretary of the State Agricultural Society till 1872. He was a vital influence during fifteen years in developing a sentiment for better farming, for agricultural education, and for agricultural organization. He died in 1912, at Washington, D. C.

12 He printed articles on soil analysis and other subjects, from the pen of the distinguished physician-scientist Dr. Philo R. Hoy of Racine.
From the time of Dr. Hoyt’s arrival, and even from the founding of the Farmer, the people of Wisconsin were never permitted to worship unmolested their golden idol wheat. Yet, as crops and prices improved together, beginning in 1853, with railway transportation to add another increment of value to every bushel grown, it is not surprising that the movement for diversified farming for some years should have made but slow and halting progress. Several money making specialties were introduced which gained some currency. Chief among these were tobacco, hops, and sorghum. The first, begun at least as early as 1840, had a gradual development for some years and finally established itself as a regular feature of Wisconsin agriculture.\(^{13}\) Hops had a meteoric career in this state as in some others, but about 1869 the drop in price to a point below the cost of production led to the plowing up of the hop yards in Sauk, Dane, Richland, and the other counties where the business had been most largely developed, and the substitution therefor, at least in some cases, of a new type of dairying.\(^{14}\)

The growing of sorghum was followed in a small way before the Civil War. During that crisis time the patriotic motive of affording the nation an independent supply of sugar called out extraordinary efforts, both in Wisconsin and in other states, to expand the area of the crop and to develop facilities for making sugar. “Sorghum conventions” were held annually; the agricultural press teemed with advice about sorghum culture, preparation of soil, high quality seed, planting, cultivating, harvesting, and the machinery required for sugar making. A goodly proportion of Wisconsin farmers experimented with it and the result had some influence upon the sugar supply. But with the close of the war, when access was gained once more to the cane-sugar growing areas of the South, the crop dwindled to insignificance. However, the

\(^{13}\) See Benjamin H. Hibbard, *History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wis., 1904), chap. iii, pt. 2.

\(^{14}\) Hibbard has an admirable summary of the hop business in chap. ii, pt. 2. See also Frederick Merk, *Economic History*, chap. i.
knowledge of sorghum growing and syrup making persisted, so that during the recent war sorghum revived in a noticeable manner as an emergency crop.

Among the features of the better-farming program preached by all farm journals, perhaps none prospered more during the later years of the wheat growing era than growing of tame grasses, especially clover. Farmers once habituated to the sight of the clover plant as a supplementary crop drilled in with the wheat seed and, after the removal of the grain, pastured and then either permitted to produce hay and seed or plowed under as a green manure, could not long blink its benefits, and it spread from farm to farm and from county to county. Also, the use of gypsum as a stimulant to the growth of clover spread in like manner, and in many districts the custom became general of “seeding down” portions of the cultivated land with clover and timothy either for pasture, for seed, or for hay in a rotation. This in itself was no slight benefit to agriculture.

A shift from wheat raising to dairying always involved the use of considerable capital. When times were hard, capital for the purpose was wanting. On the other hand, pork raising could be entered upon with a very small initial outlay for breeding stock. Experience had demonstrated the success of corn as a crop in most portions of the older Wisconsin, and the habit of growing it to a small extent was almost universal. All that was needed, when wheat became doubtful or a proved failure, was to expand the area of corn and the area of clover pasture for pigs, to keep a few breeding animals, and to raise and fatten hogs. The markets could be easily reached by means of the new railways, and moreover, where swine were raised at a considerable distance from the railway they could be driven to the shipping point much more cheaply than wheat could be hauled to the same point.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} The “‘prairie farmers’” in Grant and Iowa counties in the days before the completion of the Northwestern Railway along the Military Ridge, used to drive their hogs 25, 30, or 40 miles to stations like Boscobel, Muscoda, and Avoca on the Prairie du Chien line.
In these ways, although in the years 1850 to 1870 no startling revolution in favor of diversified agriculture can be observed, circumstances were forcing the change by little and little. Meantime, a widely read agricultural press was preaching the doctrine unremittingly, the state and county fairs were demonstrating its benefits to the multitudes, while every successful general farmer, sheep farmer, or dairyman was a means of spreading it through his own community first, and sometimes of exerting a wider influence.

In this connection one ought not to overlook the steady condemnation of bad farming methods involved in the patient, plodding devotion to the principles of good tillage exemplified by thousands of the emigrants from older countries where a more intensive type of agriculture had been compulsory. These people proved to the devotee of extensive farming that it often paid to employ fewer acres and to plow deeper, utilize all fertilizing material, and grow clover with the aid of gypsum. They were undaunted by the labor involved in grubbing, so they cleared out all stumps from their fields instead of cultivating round them. They generally cared well for such livestock as they kept and, in a word, were object lessons in better farming on several fundamental points inculcated by tradition. When, however, it became a question of change to a type of farming better adapted to the time and region, leadership at first was provided mainly by American farmers.

**SOURCES**

The two main sources for this chapter are the *Transactions of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society*, which began to be printed in 1851, and the *Wisconsin Farmer*, whose publication was begun in 1849. But Hibbard's admirable *History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin*, was also very useful, as were the *Domesday Book Town Studies*. 