

THE CARE AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE FARM WOODS

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CONTENTS

	Page	Page	
Introduction.....	3	Pasturing of farm woods.....	9
Types of woods.....	3	Fire protection.....	12
Essentials of a good wood lot.....	3	Insects and diseases.....	13
Stocking.....	4	Fire in logging.....	14
Species.....	5	Methods of regeneration.....	15
Improvement cuttings.....	6	Natural restocking by seed.....	15
Cleanings.....	6	Regeneration by sprouts.....	15
Thinnings.....	6	Planting or artificial sowing.....	16
Liberation cuttings.....	8		
Cutting out of vines.....	8		

INTRODUCTION

THE FARM WOODS furnishes an essential portion of the farm output. Attention given to providing good conditions for the growth of the trees which it contains will pay the farmer well both in comfort and in cash. If properly cared for, the woods will furnish at all times a convenient supply of timber, fuel, fencing, and the like for home use and at intervals will yield valuable material for market. If neglected or abused, it is bound to deteriorate, and may eventually disappear altogether. On farms which have no woods the owner will often find neglected corners or poor-soil slopes where planted trees would be a profitable investment. The most should be made of these, for there are times when wood is as urgently needed as the products of the kitchen garden. The aim of this bulletin is to point out methods of caring for the farm woods and improving it so as to make it contribute as much as possible to both the owner's convenience and his purse.

By far the greater number of farm woods are in need of improvement. Poorer species are in the majority and are crowding out the better ones, many of the trees are overmature, some show evidence of attack by insects or disease, some are dead, young trees are entirely wanting in the open places, and grazing is allowed to the extent of damaging the older trees and preventing reproduction. Improvement of these conditions can be secured through the judicious use of the axe, by assisting natural reproduction, by the exclusion of stock from at least portions of the woods, and where necessary, through planting or sowing.

TYPES OF WOODS

There are two general types of farm woods, each of which requires a different method of handling: (1) Those which are characterized by the presence of old trees which dominate the stand, and (2) those which are made up of a nearly even-aged stand of second growth.

(1) Where there are old trees which dominate the stands to a certain extent these old trees may almost totally exclude the younger growth, or they may exist only as a few scattered individuals throughout the stand. Such material is very likely to be deteriorating in quality, and the problem is to remove it, and at the same time provide for a new stand of seedlings. From the standpoint of strict