

years later, only 36 percent of all farm labor was expended on cotton while the proportion expended on peanuts had risen to 23 percent.

For the four years studied, there was less variation in net returns from cotton than from peanuts or watermelons. This was true despite the fact that the price of cotton fell more than 50 percent during the period studied. During 1925, when crop prices and the weather were good, net returns were high for all crops. During 1928 when prices were good but the weather was less favorable, net returns were negative for peanuts and watermelons. During 1934 and 1935 prices were low but weather conditions were normal. Both cotton and peanuts were grown at a profit during these years. Under low prices there was a great decrease in watermelon acreage. The cash outlay to raise a crop of watermelons is large. The cost of marketing watermelons is a large part of the retail price, so that when prices are low farmers frequently find that they are unable to sell their melons at any price. When this happens farmers lose the entire cost of production. This is one of the principal reasons why there is greater risk in producing watermelons than in producing crops like cotton and peanuts, for which there is almost always a market at some price.

CROPPING PRACTICES

Cropping practices affect crop yields and costs of production. In turn, these factors affect farming returns. The soil fertility as measured by crop yields is dependent to such an extent on cropping practices that the effect can be measured within a comparatively short period of time.

Cotton is one of the most important crops of this area. The yield of cotton is the result of certain cropping practices and in turn it largely determines farming returns. During the summer of 1941 about 160 cotton farms were visited for the purpose of studying the effect of different cropping practices on cotton yields. Only Jackson County farms within six miles of Graceville were visited. The study was limited to farms having only one field of cotton so that accurate yield data could be obtained from ginning records. Ginning records for each farmer show the total amount of cotton produced on the farm, regardless of the number of fields. By limiting the study to farms with one field, yield data for that particular field could then be obtained. The farms were thus necessarily small, the usual amount of cotton grown per farm being about five acres. Some records were