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Recommended Citation
(1952) "Checking run-off on cultivation," Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3: Vol. 1 : No. 6 , Article 15.
Available at: https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/journal_agriculture3/vol1/iss6/15

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CHECKING RUN-OFF ON CULTIVATION
Perenjori Farmer's Novel Experiment

Many people passing Mr. S. C. Leonard's property in the Perenjori district have been puzzled by the unusual patterns left on his cultivated paddocks (see right-hand photograph). They are the result of an interesting experiment to check run-off.

Noticing that after heavy rains, the furrows normally left by a cultivator were liable to become water-channels on sloping land, Mr. Leonard sought some method of checking this tendency.

Among various anti-erosion measures evolved to combat "dust bowl" conditions in the U.S.A. was a specially-designed plough which instead of making continuous furrows made short lengths with bars of unturned soil separating them. This gave the ploughing a "honeycomb" appearance, with thousands of short troughs which held the water until it was absorbed where it fell.

SCRAPHEAP MATERIAL
Having seen photographs of land treated in this manner, Mr. Leonard decided to experiment in the direction of the breaking up of the normal cultivator furrows. From the farm scrap-pile he obtained three sections of spiral beaters from an old sunshine harvester, together with two lengths of beater spindle and two small belt-pulleys.

He welded the spindles to give a bar of sufficient length to carry the beater sections with about nine inches protruding at each end. The beaters were fixed on the spindle with the usual setscrews and the belt-pulleys with collar.

Old harvester beaters revolving on a spindle used to break up the furrow pattern left by a spring-tyne cultivator.

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washers at each side to hold them in place were placed on the protruding portions of spindle to act as bearings. The set-screws, which normally hold the belt-pulleys in position, were removed and replaced by grease nipples.

A trimmed gimlet sapling was suspended across the rear of the cultivator by two lengths of chain.

Two old harvester wheel spokes had the riveted ends turned over to make eyes and these were attached by a few links of chain to the rims of the belt pulleys. The threaded ends of the spokes were inserted in holes bored in the gimlet bar and held there by nuts and washers at each side of the bar to give a fairly rigid coupling (see left-hand photograph).

The beaters and spindle rotate in the pulleys as the cultivator moves along, and the ridges and furrows left by the tyres are interrupted to give the waffle-like pattern shown in the photograph. Even in this primitive form, the device has proved quite successful in checking run-off but a similar idea incorporating wider and heavier blades would give still better results.
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