

the presentations challenging and informative. Certainly it will be difficult for anyone interested in the subject of farmland to ignore this book.

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

GILBERT C. FITE

New Roots for Agriculture, by Wes Jackson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. xv, 150 pp. \$6.95 paper.

New Roots for Agriculture is a new edition of Wes Jackson's 1980 volume on the ecological shortcomings of American agriculture. Jackson believes that our heavily-mechanized, chemically-oriented agriculture is indictable on many grounds, but especially for its destructiveness of soil resources. He suggests a shift away from the cultivation of annual grains and toward "perennial polyculture"—the growth of self-perpetuating grains in an uncultivated prairie setting. Not only does Jackson believe that this would save, and perhaps even restore, the soil but he also sees it as an integral part of a new and more fulfilling rural life. In a new afterword, Jackson discusses his recent experiments with perennial grains at his land institute near Salina, Kansas.

It is appropriate that a new edition of Jackson's book should come out in the mid-eighties, when agriculture faces an immediate economic crisis and perhaps a long-term environmental one. One of the thoughtful spokespeople for alternative agriculture, Jackson deserves the attention of people concerned about the future of our food and farming system.

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DAVID DANBOM

Cotton Crisis, by Robert E. Snyder. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. xvii, 174 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth.

Throughout most of its history the economy of the Deep South was in thrall to a single crop: cotton. An inedible commodity produced largely for sale on a far-flung market, the fleecy staple rewarded its servants handsomely in antebellum times but its sway became increasingly burdensome in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Inhibited from developing a diversified agricultural base by numerous structural and technological impediments, southern farmers not only suffered from chronic poverty, but were subject to the constant risk that the intricate web of market relations which attached them to Boston and Liverpool might be disrupted, plunging an already precarious

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