

Phila. 22^d March 1806

Mr Jefferson

Sir

Knowing the encouragement you have always given to every improvement connected with the agriculture of your country, I make no apology for troubling you with this letter, hoping that the subject of it must be interesting to one who has the good of the farmers so much at heart.

I have seen, in the travels of the Duc de Rochefoucault, an account of a threshing machine in your possession, made upon the plan of that invented in Scotland some time ago. It is not said how you obtained it, whether by importation, or by employing some mechanic, who understood the principles of Meikle's Scotch machine. - Whichever was the case, it will give you pleasure to learn, that other farmers are now beginning to follow your example, and to enjoy the benefits derived from the employment of those machines. -

I came from Scotland about eighteen months ago. - my profession there had been that of a threshing machine maker, and in that part of the country where I lived, these machines were in the greatest perfection: - I soon saw that something to abridge the labour of threshing was much wanted in this country, and therefore made public my ability to construct Meikle's Scotch Threshing Machine with the latest improvements. - In consequence of this several gentlemen applied to me, but I found them so generally prejudiced against threshing machines, in consequence of the many attempts and repeated failures to construct them

them upon different principles, that I was looked on as another projector whose chief design was against their pockets. — Confident, however, that the machines I made, had only to be seen, to be adopted, I sacrificed my time and money in constructing one or two, and engaged to take all the loss upon myself if they did not succeed. — This answered my expectations and I have now commissions for as many as it is in my power to make.

But the exertions of an obscure mechanic, are not likely to introduce an improvement so interesting to farmers, into all those places where its employment would be advantageous. — My cause for troubling you now, is to beg your assistance, who alone are capable of giving to this machine all the publicity it merits. — It is not self interest which prompts me to this. I have as much employment in this State as I could wish for; but I must confess that it would gratify me much, to be the means of generally introducing such an important improvement in the united States, or to be taken notice of by their President.

The names of some of the following gentlemen who have employed me. W^m Baskwell (nephew to the English breeder) Millington near Wilmington Dela. John Votwin near Haverdigrace, Cyrus Brooks of Spring grove Long Lancaster Co. Jo. Priestly Northumberland Co. Butler St. Simon's Georgia and James Maese Phila. may be known to you, and any of them would be glad to satisfy any one enquiring concerning the efficacy of their machines.

Besides the threshing mill, there are many other establishments of husbandry used in Britain which would be of great service to the farmer were they introduced here. — Some of those which I have

made may deserve mention. Cartwright's three furrow plow
which will do as much work as three common plows, is easily drawn
by 4 horses and requires no holder. Dutch's trenching plow, which
takes two furrows in depth and turns the under one up furmost. —

Cook's drill for sowing wheat. — Scotch turn's drill, which can be
made to sow corn or any other seed, and the Hoxbury plow for horse hoeing
any sort of crop sown in drills. — But too much caution is, some parts of
the character of the greater part of the farmers I have seen; they will fore-
go all the advantages derived from the use of improved implements, sooner
than employ one they do not know, especially if he is a foreigner. —

There is an improvement in wheel carriages lately introduced
in Britain. — It consists in throwing the load upon a greater
number of wheels than what is commonly used. — It has been repeatedly
proven that a horse will pull six small waggons with 12 Cwt in each
upon a level rail road, with more ease than he could draw one containing
40 Cwt. — The same principle is likewise introduced in stages by using
eight wheels in the place of four, and besides being much easier drawn
it contributes much to the ease of the passengers, for, the four fore
wheels being framed together, and the four hind ones the same, and the
body resting upon the center of each frame, it is obvious that when the
wheels sink or rise it can only give half its motion to the body, unless
both wheels should go over a stone at the same time, —

I have hoping that the subject will excuse my presumption

Wm. Barker's Alley

Wm. Barker
your most humble Servant

Prentiss David. Phila. Mar. 22. 06.

James D. Prentiss Esq. N.Y.

Washington.

