

# Grass Seed One of Best for Use On Dry Land, Rich Soil

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Growing a cash crop that returns more per acre than any heretofore raised in the county is part of the cropping program for many of Union county's enterprising farmers.

Grass seed production is a relatively new farm industry for growers in the area but it has proved to be one of the most profitable and certain yet. It adds the most promise as a pasture crop. Not all soils in Union county are suitable for grass seed production as only heavy soils high in fertility produce high yields. Irrigation is not a factor as all grass seed is grown under dry land farming conditions. September rains provide sufficient moisture to give the grass a good start in the fall and necessitating early June rains supply the needed water for maturing.

**Prepare in Spring**  
Early spring, when there is abundant moisture in the soil fields these farmers begin preparing the best possible seedbed. The crop is then planted in rows 28 inches apart at an average rate of three pounds of seed per acre. From the time of the first emergence of the young blades of grass until it is mowed under five or six years later it is necessary that a constant program of weeding by hand, hoeing and cultivation be followed. Growers consider it a cardinal sin to let a weed be left in the field as it is literally impossible to clean out seed and they grade themselves on the purity of their grass seed.

The crop being a perennial one cropping seasons are limited to establish it. However, it can be profitably harvested four consecutive years and sometimes times five. The cost of establishing a grass seed crop runs from \$75 to \$100 an acre. Application of commercial fertilizer at an annual average of 200 to 250 pounds an acre is required for maximum seed production. Ammonium phosphate applied in the fall is generally used and at the rate of 100 to 125 pounds an acre and a like amount of ammonium sulphate in the fall is generally used and at the rate of 100 to 125 pounds an acre and a like amount of ammonium sulphate in the spring.

**The Harvest**  
Harvesting of grass seed is not all a bed of roses for these farmers. As harvest time approaches they spend many days and nights of "sweating it out" for a heavy rain or a strong wind will ruin the crop for them. Few instances of such misfortune have been recorded, however.

Modern grain binders are used in harvesting the crop. It is necessary that these binders be altered somewhat, setting up all escape routes the seed might take. As with wheat, the binder cuts the grass stalk about four inches from the ground. The binder automatically feeds the remaining stubble into a tight box attached to the binder. These binders are then lifted into a slip trailer alongside of the binder box and trailer transported to a central location in the field where the threshing takes place. All seed that shatters in the binder box and in the slip is carefully gathered and added to the final harvesting. Threshing is done with a stationary machine and large concaves spread over the ground catch all shattered seed.

**Purity High**  
The seed germination and seed purity in this area runs high while the yields are excellent. Yields are very high with the variety of grass seed. The ten year county average for harvest is 300 pounds of No. 1 seed per acre while best grasses average 175 pounds per acre. In 1945 the county harvested a total of 2200 acres of grass seed and the 1945 figures are expected to show an increase in acreage. Harvest is several 60 cents a pound and year for heavy grass seed 75 cents for the best variety. This year the price has been about 55 cents to 60 cents per pound. Last year, thing else, prices being paid for grass seed are higher than in normal times when prices range from 30 to 35 cents depending upon the variety.

The more important varieties of grass seed grown in the county include Blue Bell, Red Crown, King, Kentucky, Cheviots and Blue Top. Cheviots and King are the best known and highest yielding. Cheviots and King are the best known and highest yielding. Cheviots and King are the best known and highest yielding.

U. L. Wagner and Son of Imbler are the largest growers, having over 300 acres of all varieties grown in the county. On about 600 acres planted to heavy seed they averaged 400 pounds of No. 1 seed per acre last year. They own and operate their own cleaning plant, buy and sell seed, and do custom

## Sheep Population in State at Low Point Because of Labor

Sheep, lambs and wool produced in Union county are raised mostly around Union and North Powder country, with only a few large producers.

The long-time data on record since 1937 show the sheep industry in Union county as well as all Oregon is at its lowest ebb. This is accountable to lack of available seasonal labor when most needed by sheep men during the lambing period in the spring months and because herders could not be secured.

Numbers of ewes in Oregon is now the lowest of record. General trends in lamb numbers and wool production have followed the trend of breeding ewes. The 1944 lamb crop, estimated at 250,000 head was one percent below the previous year, with wool production 8 percent less than 1943.

Last year Union county produced 15,000 head of sheep and lambs as compared to 25,000 head in 1940, and the comparison of ewes one year old and over for the same period showed 12,500 for 1944 and 17,000 for 1940.

## Potato Output in Union County Low

Potato production in Union county is low, with scarcely enough produced to supply the home need. Production of this vegetable has always been low in Union county with the exception of two years ago when large quantities were grown for army consumption and no transportation was provided for the crop.

An estimate placed the acreage at approximately 350 acres, with yield 75 to 80 sacks to the acre. Reconversion does not point to a larger crop.

Wheat shot down 10% enemy planes.

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