

## GOVERNMENT WANTS FALL ACREAGE OF WHEAT INCREASED FOR WAR NEEDS

STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON, Pullman, Wash., Sept. 20.—Ways to increase fall sowing of wheat and rye in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and North Dakota, were discussed at a meeting of representatives from these states in Spokane, Washington, August 27th and 28th. The meeting was called by Secretary of Agriculture D. F. Houston, and was the fifth meeting of the kind to be held in the United States, the purpose of all the meetings being to increase the fall sown acreage of wheat and rye. About 100 million bushels of these cereals will be needed by the European allies of the United States next year.

Present at the Spokane meeting were farmers, grange and farmers' union leaders, bankers, agricultural experiment station and extensive service directors, college presidents, millers, grain buyers, exporters and state and federal crop specialists. They were informed by Assistant Secretary R. A. Pearson, who presided at the meeting, that this year's production of wheat in the United States will be approximately 650 million bushels, a production scarcely exceeding the normal requirements of the United States alone. Rye could supplement wheat in America's war exports to her overseas allies, since the people of these countries had learned to use rye.

California, Professor J. W. Gilmore of the University of California being the representative of that state, proposed to increase fall sowings of wheat by decreasing the barley acreage by about ten per cent. Replacing ten per cent of California's barley acreage with wheat would amount to a 10 per cent increase in wheat, on account of the relation of these two crops in that state. Alfalfa fields under a 75 per cent stand were to be plowed under and sown to wheat; dry land was to be put under irrigation with emergency water rates, and sown to wheat; land formerly in wheat, but now gone back to pasture was to be reclaimed for wheat. California proposed also to increase wheat production through better cultural methods in the growing of that cereal.

Winter-killing of fall-sown wheat of 1916, a spring unfavorable to re-seeding the winter-killed areas, and unusual drought in large wheat zones of the west had in many of these regions reduced farmers to such straits that they would need financial help beyond the limits of good banking loans in order to put in another crop.

To extend these farmers the needed help for another year, government aid was suggested, but was not generally approved. Albert S. Roberts,

a large wheat farmer of The Dalles, Oregon, voiced the more nearly prevailing sentiment when he said that the government was fully occupied already; further, that it was unnecessary for the state to seek help of any kind.

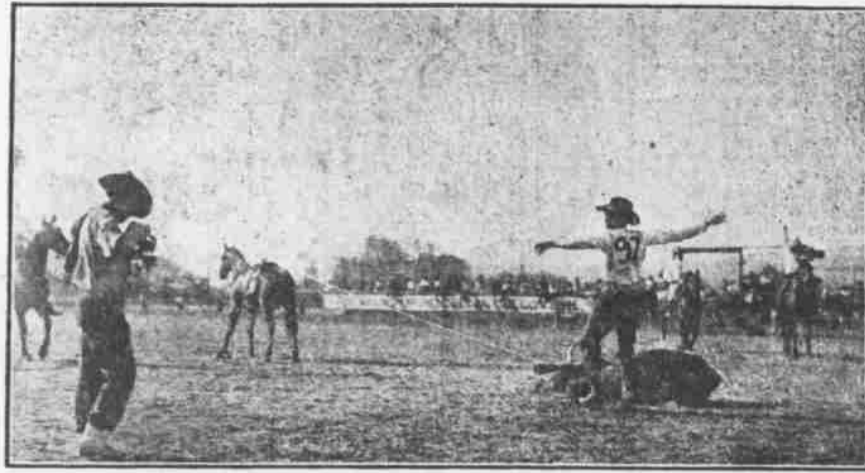
Director J. E. Caine of the Utah Extension service, stated that the council of defense of Utah had secured the cooperation of leading banks of the state in maintaining a fund from which reputable but needy farmers who desired assistance beyond the means of their local banks might borrow. Last year nearly \$40,000 had been loaned in this way. This year \$50,000 could be had if needed. No losses had occurred. Deserving farmers had received prompt help from this fund, the banks taking crop mortgages for their proportionate parts of the loan. The governor of the state had promised that if losses did occur, the Utah legislature would be asked to grant relief appropriations so that the loss might be borne by the state instead of by individuals.

Regional scarcity of seed wheat and rye was reported in various states; though, as it developed, the seed problem was mainly a matter of locating the seed and making it available when and where needed.

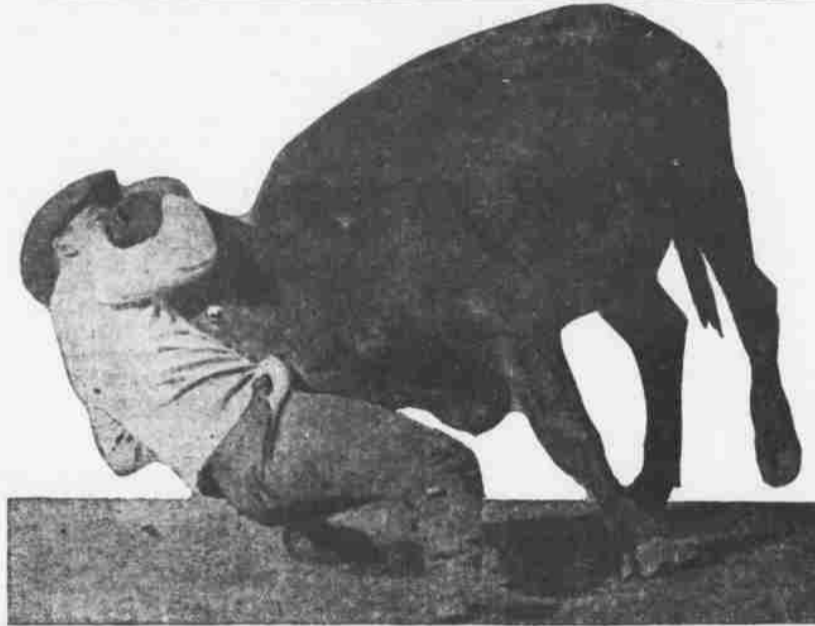
Director W. S. Thornber, of the Washington State College extension service, stated that the college had undertaken to locate good stocks of seed, both wheat and rye, and have them reserved from shipment or milling until the crops were in. A state seed committee, appointed by Director Thornber at the request of Director A. C. True of the States Relations Service, would help in locating seed, holding it back from export or milling, and in putting those who needed seed in touch with those who had seed for sale. Director True's request had been for such seed committees to be appointed in all the states, and it was urged that extension directors at once form these committees so that they could act in time to help in the fall seeding.

Crop failures due in part to faulty farming following the anxiety of farmers in all the states to respond to the national call for large crop acreage and production led to a discussion of the extent to which farmers were justified in departing from customary methods of farming on the chance of getting larger yields.

President W. J. Kerr of the Oregon Agricultural College, believed that farmers should depart from their regular practices just as little as possible, assuming that they had already determined what the best practices were.



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