

POTATO ACREAGE SHOWS DECREASE

Field inspection for potato certification for the 1940 crop was completed recently by E. R. Jackman. An outstanding change has come about in Washington county during the past five or six years in the acreage of potatoes grown for certification, ac-

ording to W. F. Cyrus, county agent. Only 33 acres on nine farms were approved for 1940 certification. There will still be an inspection made of the tubers after they are in storage.

In 1934 Washington county reached its peak in potato seed production when there were more than 300 acres approved for certification. Most of the va-

riety grown at that time was Burbank, with a few Netted Gem and a very limited acreage of several other varieties including Bliss Triumph, Kaahdin, White Rose, Early Rose and Irish Cobblers. Practically all of the crop this year was Burbanks.

The decrease in acreage was due to three or four causes. First, there was a decreased demand from California for Burbanks seed. Because of the higher yields, the California growers could obtain White Rose, this later variety began to take the place of the Burbanks, particularly in the Sacramento River valley. Local growers familiar with the Burbanks took rather slowly to growing White Rose, and while some of them attempted to grow this variety under certification, most of them went back to Burbanks if they were going to grow potatoes at all. The White Rose is a variety much more susceptible to

disease that the Burbank or the Netted Gem.

Probably another factor bringing about this change, that is just as important is the increase in the acreage in this county being used for the production of legume seed crops. Potatoes had been, and are still, grown mostly on the hill land and the production of winter legume seed crops is scattered over even the hill lands. Another factor was the increase in the strawberry acreage on the same type of land that had been growing potatoes. Strawberries, generally, return a higher income per acre, and, naturally, took the place of the potato crop.

Still another important factor has been a developing awareness of the seriousness of erosion on our hill lands. Growing late potatoes makes it difficult and virtually impossible to get a sufficient winter covering on the hills to prevent erosion during the rainy season. When late potatoes are harvested in November and sometimes in December, the ground is left in about as unfavorable a condition from the standpoint of control-

ling erosion as possible. An awareness of that situation and considering at the same time the decreased market for seed and the competition they must meet producing commercial potatoes caused farmers to turn their attention to other crops.

Growers who have fields approved for certification in 1940 include: Findley Bros., F. Leis, Betty Joyce, George and Virgil Allison, Stanley and Ray Ego, Grant Freuler, George Wilson, Ralph Bell, Alfred Pieren, and Rowell Bros.

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