

POINTERS GIVEN ON PLANTING AND CARE OF CROPS

WM. F. CYRUS, County Agent.

Getting crops planted to provide needed hay supplies is the most serious job confronting many Washington county farmers. Due to the long dry fall red clover stands that looked exceptionally good last summer were killed or thinned out badly by cold winter weather. Vetch and oats have in some cases nearly all been frozen out and in other instances the oats were killed with varying amounts of vetch left. Losing so much of the clover and vetch means a short hay crop unless something to take its place is seeded this spring. This loss of the hay crop was the most serious result of the winter freezes. Spring hay crops are under ordinary weather conditions never as satisfactory as fall-seeded hay crops.

Some farmers seeded oats and vetch last week. We are now around to that period of the season when it is getting rather late to seed vetch with the expectation of getting a satisfactory hay crop unless we should have exceptionally favorable spring weather. Canadian field peas and oats can be seeded later than vetch. In some instances where there is some vetch left but not enough for a good stand and the oats were killed out of the mixture farmers are going on to the land with a disk drill as fast as it gets dry enough and drilling in these field peas with oats. Working the ground and preparing a seed bed prior to drilling is of course preferable, and putting it in otherwise seems more or less like "shotgun farming" but may be justified when it is desirable to save vetch that was not killed. This mixture may be seeded in varying rates per acre. Seventy-five pounds of peas and sixty pounds of oats makes a reasonably good hay crop providing weather is at all favorable. Some farmers who are planting this crop for hay are seeding as much as 90 pounds of peas to the acre. Where it is desired to take advantage of vetch that was not killed out the rate of seeding of the peas may be decreased according to the amount of vetch that is left.

In 1933 Canadian peas and oats were seeded as late as the middle of April and hay yields of two tons and more per acre were harvested. That year we had a long cool moist spring and conditions for the growth of our annual legumes were exceptionally good. We can hardly expect such favorable conditions again. Hagg Bros., south of Reedville, that year had a field of peas and oats that averaged approximately four tons of hay to the acre. This was on exceptionally rich ground. A. P. Ireland, north of Forest Grove was one of many other farmers who had a fine crop of Canadian field peas and oat hay. In both these instances the crop was seeded early in April and land plowed. In spite of the success of those seeding in April wherever it is possible the crop should be put in earlier.

Thin red clover stands present a problem. Usually it is desirable to thicken the stand up with some other crop when this can be done with something that will mature at about the same time the clover will. Some have already seeded vetch and oats in the clover, but this does not reach the desired stage of maturity when the clover is ready to cut. Domestic or Italian rye grass is one possibility but this should be put in immediately if it is expected to amount to much this season. This particular kind of rye grass will ordinarily make a considerable growth the first season and will increase the tonnage considerably and be ready to cut at approximately the same time the clover will. Normally when rye grass is seeded alone 18 to 20 pounds per acre of seed will be used. Where there is some clover left the amount of seed per acre may be decreased somewhat but it is desirable to use plenty of seed. In any case the rye grass should be drilled in.

In some instances where there is a fair stand of clover left, farmers have drilled in a winter variety like White Winter or White Holland. These two varieties seeded at this time will usually not head this season and, consequently will add nothing to the hay crop but will stool out and provide a considerable amount of pasture after the clover hay is removed.

Condition of the Austrian field peas is causing considerable concern and thought. Some fields show a decided thinning out while some others apparently look very good but close examination discloses the fact that a lot of the plants now alive have the tap root broken off. Where this tap root is broken above the pea seed from which the plant germinated or if it is broken close to the seed, those plants probably will never amount to much. Where they are broken above the seed they most certainly won't be any good and if broken so there is only a very short stub of tap root left they probably will be very low yielding if we have dry weather. Where there is two inches or more of tap root below the pea seed it would be

good practice not to tear these fields up at this time because if they have that much root there is every probability that they may produce a satisfactory crop. Of course, the yield will probably not be as heavy as would be produced had the end of the tap root never been broken off. Some opinion has been expressed that these peas with the broken tap root, even though it be broken deep in the ground will not make anything. Harry Schott at the Oregon Experiment Station says "If there is two or three inches or more of good root below that old pea seed there is every probability of a satisfactory crop. In those instances where the plant is broken above the seed or right close to the seed there isn't much question but what it will never amount to any thing."

With practically all the fall oat acreage frozen out there will certainly be a large acreage of spring oats and barley. Hanchen barley is one of our best cereal crops and is the standard variety for spring planting. Of the spring oat varieties, Victory has consistently proven about the highest yielding kind we have. Wheat stood the winter-freeze better than any other crop and probably but very little spring wheat will be seeded. Under normal conditions it is about the poorest spring crop we have and could

be recommended in cases where it is absolutely necessary to have some wheat.

Flax for seed is a cash crop possibility on some farms. There is every indication of a ready market at the Duluth Minnesota price. Flax seed yields in this county have averaged around 15 bushels to the acre when all the plantings are considered. When only the plantings are considered that were put in at the right time, at the proper rate on well-prepared seed beds the average yield will run considerably higher than this figure. Bison is the variety particularly suitable to this section according to the Oregon Experiment Station and is ordinarily seeded at from 40 pounds to 50 pounds per acre. Plantings should be made as early as possible providing the ground can be thoroughly worked and a rather finely pulverized seed bed prepared.

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