Turkestan Alfalfa Seed Poor

A WARNING to alfalfa growers to avoid the use of commercial Turkestan seed is contained in Department Bulletin No. 138, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which is shortly to be issued under the title "Commercial Turkestan Alfalfa Seed."

Specialists of the department have been investigating the comparative merits of different kinds of alfalfa seeds and have reached the conclusion that there is nothing to recommend the Turkestan variety for general use in this country. It is, they say, particularly unsuited to the humid climate of the East which, as a matter of fact, uses most of the Turkestan seed imported into this country. This seed is also not sufficiently hardy to warrant its general use in the upper Mississippi Valley, where hardiness is an important factor. Investigators, however, are careful to distinguish between commercial Turkestan alfalfa and special strains of hardy alfalfas that have been developed from certain introductions of seed from Turkestan. Valuable varieties of alfalfas unquestionably exist in Central Asia, but these are at present only fitted for use in experimental work in breeding.

Imported Seed Inferior.

At the present time, approximately one-fifth of the alfalfa seed used in the United States is imported. Of this quantity, practically all—95 per cent in the last twelve months—comes from Russian Turkestan. In the European market, commercial Turkestan is the cheapest seed available, in this country its wholesale price is less than that of domestic seed. In spite of this fact, however, a mistaken belief in its superior qualities has resulted in raising its retail price to a point frequently above that of domestic seed. No such preference is shown in the alfalfa growing regions of Europe. There French seed is commonly considered the best, with Italian ranking next and Turkestan last. Under these circumstance, very little French and Italian seed finds its way to the United States, the bulk of the importations being, as already stated, the cheap commercial Turkestan.

Easily Identified.

Fortunately, growers who wish to avoid this variety can readily identify it by the presence of Russian knapweed seeds. These seeds have not been found anywhere except in commercial Turkestan seed, and here they are practically always present. Russian knapweed is in some ways similar to quack grass, Johnson grass and Canada thistle, spreading both by seeds and underground rootstocks. The seeds are slightly larger than those of alfalfa and cannot all be removed by any practicable method of machine cleaning. Their chalky white color makes them especially conspicuous, and their symmetrical form—slightly wedge shaped—distinguishes them from the notched seed of other species often found in varieties of alfalfa from other sections. The knapweed seeds, however, are not usually found in large quantities and any lot of alfalfa should, therefore, be examined in bulk. The examination of small samples is not sufficient to show whether the alfalfa comes from Turkestan or not.

Silo Filling

HAPHAZARD methods of filling silos has spoiled many thousand tons of good corn and often given silage a "black eye." Careful tramping and leveling, together with other essential features in filling the silo are important.

Corn makes the best silage when the majority of the ears are dented, or just beginning to glaze. If corn is put into the silo before this stage of maturity is reached, the silage becomes very sour or acid, and is apt to have a low feeding value.

When corn becomes dry from being frosted or allowed to get ripe, it will make good silage if water is added at filling time. No definite rule can be given as to the right amount of water to add, but the aim should be to make the moisture content equal to that of green corn.

It is very essential that the cut corn be thoroughly mixed after it is elevated or blown into the silo. If this is not done, the heavier portions will fall in one place and cause the silage to settle unevenly, resulting in much loss, due to spoiling.

During the process of filling, the cut material should be kept slightly higher at the edges than in the center, and well tramped close to the sides where friction prevents it from settling. It is not necessary to tramp in the center of the silo, for the weight of the silage there is sufficient to insure thorough packing. Silos that are deep and of large diameter require less tramping than those of smaller dimensions.

Northwest Crops Good

THE Northwestern Fruit Exchange, through their representatives in the various districts, report as follows:

Wenatchee will ship about 4,700 cars; weather conditions good and quality of crop excellent. The dry weather seems to be causing apples to mature a little too fast. Growers generally optimistic and seem to feel that even a black cloud, as caused by big general crop and war conditions, may have a silver lining. Wenatchee is moving some Jonathans, Winter Bananas and Early Fall apples. Sales give some evidence of cash buyers. Some inclination on the part of shippers from this district to store. However, majority desire to take advantage of whatever opportunity the opening of the market will give.

Hood River reports estimated crop of 1,200 cars, conditions very favorable, weather very dry with a tendency to retard color, which is made safe by irrigation. Attitude of growers not to say much and await developments. General matter of discussion marketing "C" grade of apples. Some shipping, mostly Gravensteins and pears. Everyone asks: "When will the war end?"

Yakima—Six thousand cars, quality of crop good, weather dry with cool nights; hardly enough dampness to color as fast as desired. However, general conditions satisfactory. Growers in this district also seem to have the "Watching and Waiting" spirit, and seem to believe that this year will be a crucial test from many angles. Situation for coming picking season is splendid. Growers making preparation to harvest whole crop, although general trend of conversation is toward apparent need of proposed emergency rate by railroads. Winter peaches, pears and few apples moving now, divided in usual proportion among handlers.

Peshastin—Upper Wenatchee Valley reports excellent conditions and splendid quality of crop, apples maturing one week early and few peaches, pears and summer apples are moving; mostly operations with Seattle commission men; not many sales reported. Very little talk and much guessing.

Hogs in Northwest

DURING recent years the hog industry in the Pacific Northwest has been inadequate to supply the local demands for pork and pork products. This has caused the average price of pork to be relatively high and his made it necessary to ship a large percentage of the hogs slaughtered and bacon consumed from east of the Rocky Mountains.

It is possible to provide pasture for hogs in most of this region throughout much of the year. In most localities it is also possible to provide crops that may be hogged off during several months of the busy season. The crops generally used for this purpose are wheat, field peas, corn and barley. By supplementing well-managed pasture with the proper grain rations and utilizing the ability of the hog to harvest grain crops for himself, the average cost of producing pork may be materially reduced. These conditions offer an opportunity for profitable pork production in the Pacific Northwest on a much larger scale than at present practiced.

At the Opera.

A certain representative in Congress from the West is very fond of music, and it annoys him to a degree at the opera to perceive the inattention of the audience.

One night when he had slipped over to New York to visit the Metropolitan a friend found him supping at a Broadway establishment.

"I have been to the opera," said he, in response to the other's inquiry.

"What did you hear?"

"I heard," said the representative, "that the Twillers are going to get a divorce, that young Van Gilder has married an English barmaid, and that Mrs. J. C. Spreckelmeyer is gradually pawning her jewels."

THE HEART OF THE TREE.

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants the friend of the sun and sky;
He plants the flag of the breezes free;
The shaft of beauty towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh
For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard—
The treble of heaven's harmony—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that flush and fade again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good—
His blessing on the neighborhood.
Who in the hollow of his hand
Holds all the growth of all our land—
A nation's growth from sea to sea,
Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

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