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Home Course In Modern Agriculture

VII.—The Selection of Seed

By C. V. GREGORY.

Agricultural Division, Iowa State College

ONE of the most important factors in crop production is the selection of seed. This is important not only in producing a large yield, but also in obtaining a high quality of the product.

The use of the hand mill as a means of selecting out the heaviest, plumpest grains was spoken of in the previous article. The importance of this method of seed selection cannot be too greatly emphasized.

One of the principal reasons for selecting the largest grains for seed is that they contain so much more food for the young plant. This enables it to make a strong, vigorous start.

Such plants have more vitality, grow faster and produce larger yields than plants from shriveled seeds, which have a struggle for existence from the time they germinate. Another reason for selecting plump seed is that the resulting crop is likely to be of better quality and will thus bring a higher price when sold.

The old law of "like produces like" applies to plants as well as to animals. One of the surest ways of bringing about improvement is by using parents of the desired type year after year.

Selecting seed according to size by screening out the small grains is not



FIG. XIII—GOOD AND BAD TYPES OF SEED WHEAT.

(Note the difference in the shape of the kernels.)

enough. Some of the best of grain are shrunken and light in weight. This is due to the fact that they have been subjected to a severe drought. Such grain is not fit for food, but is entirely unfit for seed. In the selection of seed, it is especially important to select the largest, plumpest grains, as it is these that will produce the best results.

It is a common mistake to select seed according to weight. It is not the weight of the grain, but the size of the kernel that is important. A large, plump kernel will contain more food than a small, shriveled kernel, and will thus produce a stronger, more vigorous plant.

When selecting seed, it is also important to select the cleanest grain. This means that the grain should be free from weeds, chaff, and other foreign matter. Clean seed will produce a stronger, more vigorous plant than seed that is mixed with weeds and chaff.

Another important factor in the selection of seed is the maturity of the grain. It is important to select seed that is fully mature, as this will produce a stronger, more vigorous plant than seed that is immature.

Finally, it is important to select seed that is free from disease. This means that the grain should be free from smut, rust, and other diseases. Seed that is diseased will produce a weaker, less vigorous plant than seed that is free from disease.

By following these principles, it is possible to select the best seed for your crop. This will result in a stronger, more vigorous plant, which will produce a larger yield of high quality grain.

The second year, if the first year's selection was properly carried on, considerable improvement will be observed. This year the seed from each of the strongest rows should be saved in bulk after sorting out any heads that are not of the required type. The seed from each of these rows is to be planted in a little plot by itself the following spring.

Notes on these plots regarding the strength of straw, amount of standing and resistance to rust should be carefully kept. The main point to be considered, however, is the yield. The grain from each of the plots should be weighed and the preference given to the heaviest yielders. Seed from five or six of the best producing plots may then be saved for larger plots the fourth year. The yield of these, together with the quality of grain and amount of straw, will determine which strain is to be selected for field use.

A factor which often cuts off as much as 10 per cent from the yield of seed grain is smut. Unlike rust, the treatment of this disease comes more into the head of preparation of the seed than that of selection. It may be

well, however, to give a brief outline of the methods of prevention here.

Smut is a fungus growth that is a low form of plant which lives on other plants. It usually attacks the heads of small grain, filling the place where the kernels should be with a thick, worthless mass. The fungus grows in such a way that it is not possible to see it until the grain is ready to be threshed. When the grain is threshed, the smut spores are scattered over the field, where they develop into the familiar smut balls. Often these smut balls are inside of a hull that appears perfectly sound from the outside, so that the damage from smut is much greater than would appear from simply glancing over the field.

Any method of treatment which will destroy the smut spores on the grain will prove effective, although the smut which is scattered in the field some times infects the plants the next year. When rotation is practiced, however, this is seldom the case, as the smut will not attack corn, for will not grow on corn.

The selection of seed corn is even more important than the selection of small grain, since so much less corn is required to plant an acre, thus permitting of much more careful choice. The most important point to be considered in the selection of seed corn is maturity. An ear that is not entirely mature will be light, the kernels will be loose on the cob and have a dull, chalky appearance, and the grain will be shrunken and the back of the kernel shrunken.

Such corn should not be selected for seed, because the quantity of food material stored by the kernel is too small to give the young sprout much of a start. The corn is also likely to be weak from being from a stubble field in the autumn, where conditions are such that an ear is not entirely ripe until late in the fall, or even in the winter.

There are also other factors to be considered in the selection of seed corn. It is important to select the cleanest grain, free from weeds, chaff, and other foreign matter. It is also important to select the largest, plumpest grains, as these will produce the best results.

Finally, it is important to select seed that is free from disease. This means that the grain should be free from smut, rust, and other diseases. Seed that is diseased will produce a weaker, less vigorous plant than seed that is free from disease.

By following these principles, it is possible to select the best seed for your crop. This will result in a stronger, more vigorous plant, which will produce a larger yield of high quality grain.

Since the size of the crop depends to a considerable extent on the size of the ear, the seed ears selected should be as large as is consistent with early maturity. More size of ear is not enough, however. The ears should be well proportioned and full of grain.

The ears should be selected so that they will be well filled out at butt and tip and fairly uniform in size from end to end. The kernels should be so firm on the ear that it cannot be twisted in the hands. There should be no spaces between the kernels next to the cob, nor should the spaces between the tops of the kernels be too great. They should not be packed together too tightly at this latter point, however, as this hinders rapid drying out. The rows should be straight and the kernels of uniform size.

In starting out to select ears of the desired type the work can be done much more quickly if the corn is laid out on a table or bench. Then by taking an ear for a sample which most nearly represents your best you can go over the entire lot and quickly pick out the ears that are most like it. The main point in selecting ears of a uniform type is to select ears of a uniform size, as this will make the corn grower's work easier.

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DISSOLUTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore existing between J. T. Beecraft and C. L. Beecraft under the name of James T. Beecraft & son, of Vastilis, Oregon, was dissolved Sept. 25th 1909, by mutual consent. C. L. Beecraft will collect all bills due above firm, and pay all liabilities.

JAMES T. BEERCRAFT, C. L. BEERCRAFT. Dated Sept. 25th, 1909.

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS

The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of Lake County Telephone and Telegraph Company will be held at Masonic Hall in the town of Paisley, Lake Co., Oregon, on Monday, October 11th 1909, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M. for the purpose of electing a Board of Directors to serve for the ensuing year, and for the transaction of such other business as may come before the Meeting.

Chas. T. Smith, Secretary.

The American Mining Company is now in session at Goldfield, Nevada. The attendance is large and the outlook for the future is bright. It is expected that the system will be extended to Nevada, which will be a great benefit to the miners there, and will enable them to get on better. The company is now in session at Goldfield, Nevada.

Note the Valley Falls adv. for the best buy.

IT RAISES THE DOUGH CRESCENT EGG-PHOSPHATE BAKING POWDER. One pound 25 cents. Sold by grocers.

NOTICE OF BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, the 15th day of October, 1909, the Board of Equalization of Lake County, Oregon, will be in session at the County Court House in Lakeview, Oregon, for the purpose of hearing and determining upon the appeals of the taxpayers of Lake County, Oregon, from the assessment of the property of said county for the year 1909.

It is the duty of every taxpayer to appear at the hearing and to state the grounds of his appeal. If a taxpayer fails to appear at the hearing, his appeal will be considered as abandoned.

The Board of Equalization is composed of the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, and the County Assessor. The Board will be in session at the County Court House in Lakeview, Oregon, on Monday, the 15th day of October, 1909, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M.

Witness my hand and the seal of said Court this 2nd day of September, 1909.

F. S. FIELDS, County Clerk. By C. C. ROSE, Deputy. GRAHAM & CLEETON, Attorneys for Administratrix.

SUMMONS In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon, for the County of Lake. Bert Egan Plaintiff vs. Joel McCullough, Defendant.

The defendant, Joel McCullough, the above named defendant, is hereby summoned to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled court and cause on or before Friday the 29th day of October, 1909, and if you fail to answer for want thereof, the plaintiff will take judgment against you for the sum demanded in his complaint, to-wit: For one hundred dollars and interest thereon at the rate of six per centum per annum from the 16th day of April, 1908, and for his costs and disbursements herein.

This summons is served on you by publication thereof in the Lake County Examiner, a news paper of general circulation published in Lake County, Oregon, for a term of six consecutive and successive weeks, by order of the Hon. George Noland, Judge of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Lake County, made on the 11th day of September, 1909, and the date of the first publication hereof is the 16th day of September, 1909. S16021

W LAIR THOMPSON, Attorney for the Plaintiff.

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Department of the Interior, United States Land Office, Lakeview, Oregon, Aug. 31st, 1909.

Notice is hereby given that the State of Oregon has filed in this office its application to select under the provisions of Act of Congress of Aug. 14th, 1898, and the acts supplemental and amendatory thereto, the SE quarter Section 26, T. 35 S. R. 33 E., E. 21 E., W. M.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the lands described, or desiring to object because of the mineral character of the land, or for any other reason, to the disposal of applicant, should file their affidavits of protest in this office on or before the 25th day of October, 1909.

ARTHUR W. ORTON, Register. The foregoing notice will be published in the Lake County Examiner, a weekly newspaper printed in Lakeview, Oregon, for a period of not less than thirty days prior to the date last herein mentioned. S16014 ARTHUR W. ORTON, Register.