

Rye as a Weed Eradicator

This circular gives the tentative results of the experience of farmers in the Morden-Rhineland District in keeping down noxious weeds by growing Fall Rye and Spring Rye. These grains have been grown in that District for over five years. Their cultivation was undertaken in the first instance for the money value of the rye crop, but owing to the additional value of these grains as a means of eradicating weeds their cultivation has been extended till a substantial area is now sown.

FALL RYE.

This should be sown from August 15th to September 15th, as soon as the previous crop is harvested. The ground should be plowed and harrowed and the rye seeded at the rate of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels to the acre. It ripens about the last week in July and is cut with the binder, stooked, and threshed in the same way as wheat. The yield runs from 15 to 25 bushels per acre. On good clean ground it yields more, but it is ordinarily sown on the weediest ground the farmer has.

It makes a strong stand in the fall, which helps to hold the snow. Thus far it has not winter-killed. When sown early the weeds grow up with it and the tender varieties of weeds are killed by the frost. The rye grows rapidly, leafs freely and ordinarily outstrips the weeds and tends to crowd them out and weakens the growth of perennial weeds. When the frost comes the rye forms a carpet on the ground, which further tends to smother the weeds. It starts early in the spring, grows rapidly, and shades any weeds that grow up—such, for example, as Wild Oats, Sow Thistles and Canadian Thistles—and thus tends to prevent them blossoming. Few of the weeds that do blossom are far enough advanced when the rye is cut to mature their seeds.

While the above is the normal mode of culture there are several variations —

- (a) The rye may be pastured in the fall when it has a fair growth, say after it has been sown six weeks.
- (b) It may be pastured in the spring till about May 20th.
- (c) Or it may be cut for hay early in July, after the head is well formed.

Light pasturing does not appear to affect greatly the yield of either grain or hay; but heavy pasturing lessens the yield of both and affects the quality of the grain, the kernel not being so plump.

Fall rye is sometimes sown on very weedy summer-fallow as an additional measure for cleaning up the ground.