

Hay and Pasture Crops in Manitoba

In the early days in Manitoba little or no attention was given to the cultivation of hay and pasture crops. This was largely due to the fact that only a small amount of stock was kept on the average farm and the native meadows supplied all the hay and pasture required. As the country became more thickly settled these meadows were broken up and put under cultivation. It has, therefore, become necessary to seed down to cultivated grasses and clovers. Another reason for the increased interest in these crops is that the pernicious results from all wheat growing is becoming apparent. In the older districts it is now necessary to adopt methods of cultivation and crop rotation that will at least hold the weeds in check and return vegetable matter to the soil. The introduction of a grass crop into the rotation seems to be one of the most effective methods of accomplishing this.

PERENNIAL GRASSES

There are a great number of cultivated grasses but there seems to be only five or six that are suited to Western conditions. Among these Western Rye, Timothy, Bromo, English Blue and Red Top are the most common. No one of these can be recommended for the whole province or for all purposes. Of them all Western Rye and Timothy are probably better suited to a wider range of conditions and uses than any of the others.

WESTERN RYE GRASS

Western Rye Grass is a native found on the prairies of Western Canada. The first record we have of it being grown under cultivation was in 1885 by Mr. K. Melvor, of Virton, Manitoba. It was later proven to be well adapted to cultivation by Mr. S. A. Bedford, Superintendent of the Brandon Experimental Farm. Since then it has been recognized as one of the best grasses in the West.

It is a tufted or bunch grass and is therefore better suited for the production of hay than pasture. When used for hay it gives a large yield per acre and if cut before it becomes too mature makes hay of first-class quality.