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Being held in Manitoba this Winter

DATES	CIRCUIT 1.	CIRCUIT 2.	CIRCUIT 3.
Nov. 26-Dec. 7	Morden	Kenton	Plumas
Dec. 11-Dec. 22	Crystal City	Melita	Grand View
Jan. 8-Jan. 12	Reston	Virden	Russell
Jan. 19-Jan. 26	Souris	Carberry	Rossburn
Jan. 29-Feb. 9	Hartney	Langruth	Glenella
Feb. 12-Feb. 23	Partners' Week at Winnipeg		
Feb. 25-Mar. 8	Roland	Portage la Prairie	Neepawa

LECTURERS AND DEMONSTRATORS

	CIRCUIT 1.	CIRCUIT 2.	CIRCUIT 3.
Livestock	Geo. H. Jones	Geo. H. Jones	J. R. Bell
	A. J. Mackay	A. J. Mackay	K. McGregor
Field Crops	J. M. Kiteley	H. Walker	A. J. McGregor
Gas Engines	D. R. A. Drummond	A. C. Campbell	M. Smyth
	E. Kincaid	W. Ferguson	T. E. Allen
Home Nursing	Miss L. Clarke	Miss Winram	Miss E. Winram
Cookery	Miss R. M. A'kinson	Miss Atkinson	Miss Mitchell
Dressmaking	Miss M. Smith	Miss C. Senior	Miss E. Blackburn
Millinery	Mrs. C. Graham	Miss E. Blackburn	

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Better Farming Club

By L. H. Newman, Secretary Canadian Seed Growers' Association

FORMING A SEED CENTRE

In a former issue of The Guide there was published a short article by the present writer entitled "Seed Growing Centres." In this article it was pointed out that the three western provinces require each spring approximately 25,000,000 bushels of seed grain. Evidence was also adduced to show that the seed grain commonly used, even by the best farmers, is not as good as it might be in respect to yielding power, freedom from weed seeds and ability to resist unfavorable conditions. As a result of this condition, enormous losses are annually sustained. The sowing of seed containing weed seeds may be avoided by the careful use of the fanning mill. It is not so easy however to insure the "breeding" of the seed. This is something which lies deeper, concerning as it does obscure life processes and forces. It is something which is determined and regulated by ancestry. One has only to visit one of our experimental stations during the growing season and examine the numerous varieties and strains of a given crop to be convinced of the great practical differences which exist between them. These strains represent variations of one form or another which have arisen in the parent variety. Even some of our so-called pure lines are known to produce plants which differ from the parent sort. Sometimes these aberrant types differ in form and may be quite easily detected. Others differ less visibly and are revealed only when propagated separately.

Constant Selection Necessary

The work of isolating and propagating superior strains requires much time and skill and must therefore be left largely to experts. Unfortunately, however, very few farmers nowadays seem to realize the fact that constant and systematic care must be exercised in order to maintain the good quality and high producing capacity of this seed after it comes to their hands. If they are prepared to purchase a fresh supply every two or three years from someone who is making a specialty of producing specially selected seed, well and good, but if they hope to use their own seed year after year they should under no circumstance neglect to carry out certain practices which have proven good. The use of seed especially selected from good crops is really a very ancient practice. The experience of farmers for centuries has shown it to be very good practice to select seed from vigorous productive plants for the following year's crop. In Scotland it has been a common practice to select grain from that part of the crop which was most vigorous and most productive. The grain was kept by itself for seed after being thoroughly cleaned. That practice was not followed first in Scotland however. It has been the practice ever since man applied his intelligence and his insight to farming. In an old book containing a translation of the works of Virgil, who lived before Christ's time, I read the following:

"Some men I have seen medicate the seeds they sow and steep them in alkali and black lees of oil, to give a fuller fruit to the deceitful pods, that with any fire however low, soon may they be sodden. I have seen these, though, picked long before and tested with much care, yet for all that degenerate if human toil does not pick with the hand the largest, one by one, each year. Thus all in nature is fated to speed from worse to worse and slipping back to run in downward course; just as when a man with oars painfully rows a boat up against the torrent, if perchance he slacks his arms, lo, headlong down the descending stream the current sweeps him on."

The selecting of seed therefore is a practice of reasonably ancient origin.

How the C.S.G.A. was Suggested

A few years ago, up in the hills of the Gatineau-River, there lived a family by the name of Meldrum. Mr. Meldrum was a good farmer and had several daughters. He had his daughters go into the wheat fields before the harvest and pluck a number of the best heads of wheat in their aprons and from the seed obtained from these heads he would sow a small patch of land the following year. This process he continued for a number of years and by means of it produced a wheat which won first prize at the World's Fair at Paris. This brought us our first international reputation as a wheat growing country. The practice was profitable to Meldrum and was helpful to his neighbors.

The system so well carried on by this farmer suggested a regular system of seed selection for use by farmers, and gave birth in fact, to the organization now known as the Canadian Seed Growers' Association. This association is organized to encourage those who wish to adopt a simple and practical system of seed selection on their own farms. The rules require that a few pounds of seed be selected and threshed by hand each year in order that a small seed plot of at least one-quarter-acre may be sown the following year. This area can be looked after in a way which it is impossible to do in the case of large fields. Impurities may be picked out by hand from time to time during the growing season, and the crop allowed to mature thoroughly. This should then be harvested and threshed by itself and the grain kept separate for sowing the following year. Where this system has been followed for a number of years, there has been produced seed of very superior quality. The demand for this seed has increased not only amongst farmers but among seed dealers. The difficulty of knowing that you are getting what you want when you order a certain variety of seed is overcome, since all growing crops and threshed seed is inspected and all of the seed, which is called "registered seed," goes out in sealed sacks. Farmers who have to buy seed of any kind should whenever possible, obtain seed of this class.

Establishing Seed Centres

Up to the present the members of the association have been widely scattered, there being very seldom, two members operating in the same locality. This fact has made the inspection of crops of seed an expensive operation. It has also, in many cases, made it difficult to obtain any considerable quantity of registered seed in a given locality especially in the eastern provinces. Furthermore it has been found that the number of farmers who would take the time to select heads each year and operate a seed plot has not been adequate to meet the demands of the buying public. As a means of meeting these difficulties, steps have been and are being taken to organize what are known as "seed centres." The plan usually followed by those taking the initiative in the organizing of these centres in a province is first to ascertain the districts best suited to growing seed of a given kind of crop. A meeting is then called in each district of all farmers interested and the matter presented as a business proposition. The need and demand for large quantities of seed of better breeding is explained, as are also the details of the system by which this seed may be produced. It is pointed out that if those interested will get together, adopt a constitution and bye-laws satisfactory to the C.S.G.A. and appoint competent officers, they may choose one of their number to produce what is known as "elite stock seed." Quantities of this seed or its immediate progeny may then be procured at a certain price by each member of the centre for