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Observations On Sunflowers

The Dominion Experimental Farms' System has during the last two years paid considerable attention to the question of utilizing sunflowers for ensilage. Experiments have been conducted at the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa, in northern Ontario, on all the Farms and Stations on the prairies, and in British Columbia. Although the results so far obtained are somewhat conflicting and by no means definite enough to allow unqualified deductions as to the value of sunflowers as an ensilage crop, yet some observations have been made which may be of interest to prospective sunflower growers.

Generally speaking sunflowers out-yield corn, according to observations made so far, in such sections where on account of scant rainfall or cool seasons the latter can not be grown successfully. In sections where corn is grown to advantage, sunflowers may also outyield the latter. Thus, an acre of sunflowers grown at Ottawa last year yielded about 30 tons while the best corn variety only gave 20 tons to the acre.

The yield of sunflowers may, however, be influenced by several factors, most important one perhaps being the method of planting. According to observations made so far, seeding in rows 2½ to 3 feet apart will probably prove satisfactory for most sections of Canada. In the West the yield is not infrequently affected by the attack of rust. It may be possible, however, to lessen the damage from rust in the future by developing early maturing varieties ready to cut for ensilage before the rust, which seems to appear rather late in the season, has had time to affect the yield and quality of the crop.

In respect to ensilage making, it would seem that the best quality may be secured if the crop is harvested when the majority of the heads in a field have just opened up. Delaying the cutting until the seed is beginning to harden does not seem to be advisable. Early cutting may result in a heavy flow of juice from the bottom of the silo, but this may be overcome to certain extent at least, by allowing the crop to wilt slightly before putting it into the silo.

On the whole, ensilage of sunflowers is relished by stock and its feeding value has proven about equal to that of corn ensilage. The observation has been made that the feeding of sunflower ensilage may in cases stimulate the kidneys too much but.

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as the observation is an isolated one, we are not prepared to say anything definite on the subject.

On the whole, much more information than it has been possible to collect so far from experiments at the Experimental Farm is needed before any definite conclusions on the ensilage value and general usefulness of sunflowers can be drawn. Before the growing of sunflowers on an extensive scale can be safely recommended, it is among other things necessary to learn more about what effect a crop of sunflowers may have on the succeeding crops, particularly in dry seasons. Trials on a small scale may, however, be recommended.

Agricultural Aid For the Maritime Provinces

Of the \$1,100,000 granted annually for the aid and encouragement of agriculture and agricultural education under the Agricultural Instruction Act of the Dominion, \$177,176 is allotted to the Maritime Provinces. Of this amount, \$12,500 goes towards meeting and paying the salaries and expenses of agricultural representatives, of whom there are ten with five assistants; \$68,500 towards the salaries and maintenance of agricultural colleges and schools, and for education in agriculture in public, high, and normal schools; \$12,000 towards meeting the expenses of women's institutes and the encouragement of women's work, and the balance of \$83,966 to various forms of work such as demonstrations, lectures, short courses, and for preparing and circulating instructive literature. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in the five years following the coming into force of the Act in 1914, there has been contributed from this fund no less a sum than \$273,535 towards buildings and equipment and maintenance of colleges and schools of agriculture. This is quite apart from the large sums devoted to the special training of teachers and the giving of instruction in agriculture in the public schools and short courses at the colleges. Encouragement has also been given on a liberal scale to boys' and girls' clubs, school fairs and school and home gardening. Other features are the service rendered for the advancement of the live stock and dairying industries. Some indication of what is being accomplished will be found in the fact that upwards of 250 schools in Nova Scotia exhibited vegetable products, that thirty poultry club fairs were held in New Brunswick in 1920, that the Rural Science department of the Prince of Wales College at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, was entirely equipped, and is being maintained solely from the grant under the Agricultural Instruction Act, and that, from four in 1916, the number of school fairs held in the Island increased to 40, or ten times as many in 1919. The special attention given to entomological work is also noteworthy, particularly in Nova Scotia, where \$8,500 of the grant is expended in this connection.

Potato Certification

During the season of 1920, 7,613 acres of potatoes were inspected by inspectors of the Division of Botany, Experimental Farms Branch. Of this number 2,850% acres were, on account of the general freedom from disease and excellent condition of the growing crops, classified as Grade No. 1, and, subject to a further inspection of the tubers after harvest, these crops were considered to be worthy of certification for seed purposes. Again, of the total inspected, 1,105 acres were found to be reasonably free from disease as to warrant their certification as Grade No. 2, subject to tuber inspection. The presence, however, of a considerable amount of rot in the tubers at harvest-time, owing chiefly to the general prevalence of Late Blight in 1920, appreciably reduced the amount of seed which would otherwise have attained the standard of certification. Notwithstanding this, it has been recently ascertained that in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba there is a total of approximately 120,000 bags of seed of several varieties of potatoes, from fields which passed field inspection, available for sale as certified seed this spring, subject to final inspection at shipping points.

Further particulars with regard to the exact location of this seed and the available quantities and varieties in any given district may be obtained from the Markets Division, Seed Branch, Ottawa.

The system and methods adopted in the work of inspection and certification were given in detail in the press some months ago. Growers who are not already familiar with the system may obtain information by writing to the Division of Botany, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, for a circular on the subject.

The work will be continued this year along the same lines as in previous years, and all prospective growers of seed potatoes who may be interested and desirous of participating in the benefits of the inspection, which is carried out free of charge, are invited to make application to the Division of Botany as early in the season as possible.



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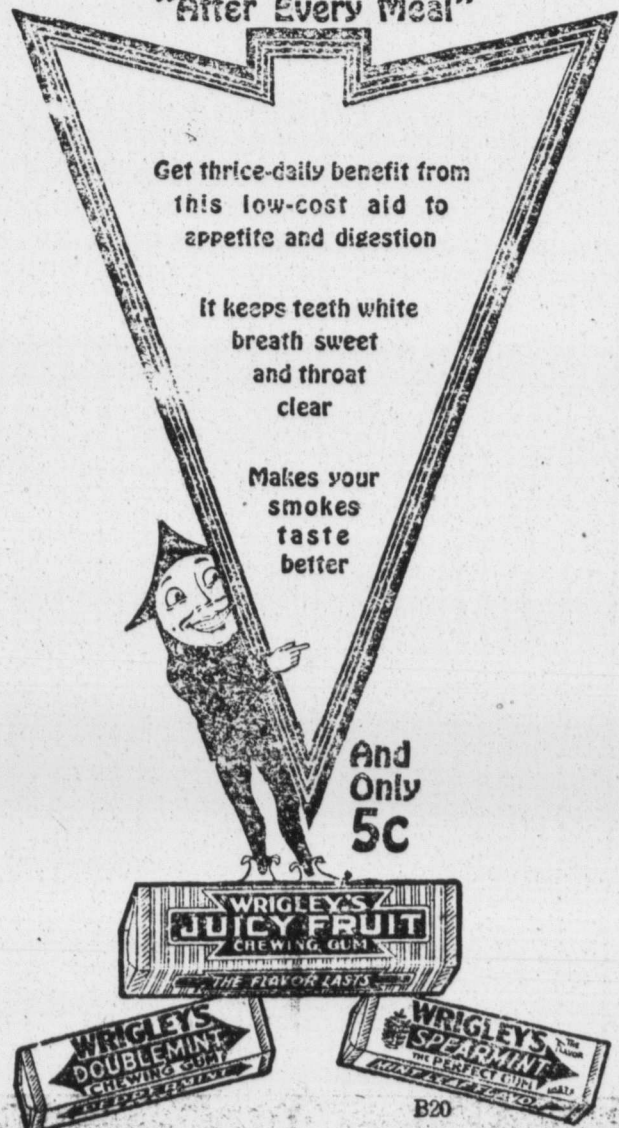
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