

deep in the spring. The work should start as early as possible and continue at frequent intervals until the alfalfa is sown. This will kill the weeds, conserve the moisture, and prepare an ideal seed bed.

Varieties of Alfalfa

Within the past decade considerable interest has been taken in the development of varieties of alfalfa adapted to northern climatic conditions. Of these, seed of only three varieties, Grimm, Baltic and Turkestan, has been produced in commercial quantities. Grimm and Baltic are generally conceded to be the two hardiest of the three and are the only ones that should be grown if seed can be secured. The supply of seed, however, is limited; consequently the price per pound is very much higher than that of Turkestan. The latter is a commercial term used for alfalfa seed of somewhat varied strains, these different strains having originally been imported from Turkestan; consequently the plants from Turkestan seed may prove either hardy or tender. In most cases it has given satisfactory results in Southern Manitoba.

Noxious weed seeds are sometimes brought in along with alfalfa seed, hence in buying, the purchaser should take only No. 1 Seed sold under the regulations of the Seed Control Act.

Rate of Seeding

The quantity of seed sown per acre will depend on its viability and the annual precipitation. For most districts in Manitoba seed of high vitality should be sown about twelve pounds per acre. In the drier districts eight to ten pounds will be sufficient.

Time of Seeding

In general, it may be stated that alfalfa seed can be sown safely between the dates May 15th and June 15th. If sown earlier than the middle of May, the young plants may be damaged by freezing. Summer showers frequently come early in June, and to get the benefit of these the seeding should be done the latter part of May, or early in June.

Method of Seeding

The best results are obtained when the seed is sown with the grain drill, the latter being set to run about one inch deep. This permits covering with soil at a uniform depth, and the seed is brought directly in contact with soil moisture. In sowing the seed, it should be mixed with twice the quantity of coarsely cracked wheat or barley, from which the fine flour has been blown with the fanning mill. If the seeder is set to sow about two pecks of wheat, it will put on approximately twelve pounds of alfalfa seed.

Using a Nurse Crop

It is customary, in sowing clover seed, to put the seed in along with oats or barley, and this practice has led some farmers to believe that alfalfa can be sown in the same way. The nurse crop not only shades the young alfalfa plants and prevents them from making their most rapid growth, but it also consumes moisture and plant food, thereby reducing the supply available for the young and tender plants. For this reason it has proven to be much more satisfactory to sow the alfalfa without a nurse crop. In districts where the soil has a ten-