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Testing Seed Grain*

Testing seed grain is absolutely necessary in order to get the highest results in farming. Good seed is at the foundation of good farming. It takes nearly as much work to get a crop of 30 bushels an acre, as it does to get a crop of 50 bushels an acre. The difference in yield may be dependant largely on the seed.

As a preliminary to testing, all the seed should be carefully screened with a fanning mill, and only the largest and plumpest whole seeds should be saved for sowing. This applies to any kind of seed, and, especially, to root seed. During this process, all the weed seeds possible, and the dirt should be removed. Where it is possible to discriminate as to the age of seeds, old seed should not be sown, since most seeds deteriorate in germinating power very rapidly after the first year. It is not always necessary for the farmer

to test seed of his own growing, provided he selects the best and sows only the fresh seed each year. Testing is always advisable, however. Frequently the farmer must buy his seed, and then testing must be resorted to, or he will not know what he is getting. Appearances are deceptive, and even though the seedman gives a guarantee as to germinating power, it will be advisable to make a germinating test, as the seedman will not make good any losses sustained after the seed is once on the ground. Again, if the farmer finds it necessary to sow old seed, it should first be tested, so that he will know what quantity to sow an acre, in order to get a good stand of grain.

Many persons test the germinating qualities of seeds by observing whether they are smooth, plump, glossy and of good weight. Seeds which sink readily in water, and pop when placed on a hot stove are considered good by many farmers and seedmen. None of these tests, however, are sufficient. In some cases they are of no use whatever. Actual sprouting, or growing of the seed, is the only final test of germinating power.

The selection of seed for germinating tests, demands painstaking effort, and good judgment, in order that the seeds used may fairly represent the sample. This selection may best be made from a bag which is a good average of the whole lot. Empty this bag on a clean floor, and shovel it over several times in order to have it fairly mixed. Then take samples from various places in the pile, mix them thoroughly and select a sample from this. Pick out from this sample, 100 average seeds for testing.

*From an interview with Prof. Zavits, of Guelph, by a representative of The Canadian Dairyman and Farming World.

There are two plans, or systems of testing the germination of seeds. One is by the simple sprouting of the seeds, and the other the actual growing of them. The former is a very convenient and an easy method, but has the disadvantage of not properly showing the vitality of the seed. Many seeds that have not the sufficient vitality to grow into useful plants, will sprout or germinate. These are of no use to the farmer. It is only by the method of actual growth of the plant that one can be sure of their value as seed.

A method of simple germination, that is very convenient for use with small seeds, is as follows: Take two pieces of blotting paper, or several strips of cloth and put between these the 100 seeds selected. Dampen the whole, place on a plate, and invert another plate on the top. Moisten occasionally, and take out and keep

placed. The depth for planting should be regulated, according to the size of the seed; if the seeds are small, they should only be nicely covered. Place the 100 seeds in the holes, one in a place, cover, and press down with the fingers. Keep the soil watered, with a spray, if possible, and observe, not only the number of plants that come up, but also their vigor of growth.

Both of these methods can be conducted at the temperature of an ordinary living room, and at any time of the year, as long as there is not too wide a variation of temperature. Yet many of our grass seeds, such as timothy, meadow fox and blue grass, seem to require certain variations of temperature, which represents the difference between night and day during growing water.

Beet and mangel seed differ somewhat from our ordinary seeds in that what appears to be a single seed, is really a cluster of several seeds. One should not be surprised, therefore, if two, three, or even four plants, are produced from one seed. Since only one of these would be of any use finally, in the field, it would be advisable to count each cluster as one plant, and figure with 100 as the standard, the same as with the other kinds of seeds.

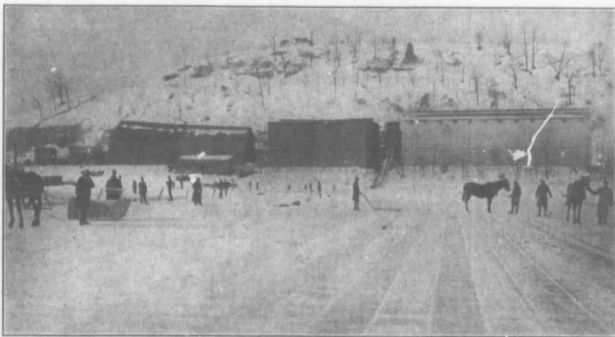
Now, is the time to make these tests, so as to be ready for the spring season. Either of the methods described may be used by any one with very little experience, and they require practically no outfit for equipment. There is no excuse for any one not knowing what he is planting, and a little time judiciously spent in testing now, will increase materially the harvest next fall.

Spring Care of the Brood Sow

Joseph W. Barnett, Ontario Co.

I like my brood sows to have plenty of exercise. They are given a dry place to sleep in and I let them have the run of the barnyard all winter, only penning them up at nights for a short time, before I expect them to farrow. After they farrow I let the sows out a few minutes every day. When the little ones get smart, if the weather is warm I let them go out with the sow, regulating the time to leave them out by the size of the pigs and the state of the weather.

I make roots the basis of the sows feed, with enough light grains, mixed in her slop to keep her in good flesh, gradually reducing the roots and increasing the grain as farrowing time approaches and follow on with the same feed after she farrows, only increasing the roots again.



ICE HARVESTING SCENE.

Herewith is shown an ice harvesting scene. This is an important winter industry. As will be noticed, the work is being done on a large scale, the company operating same being engaged in the ice supply business. In the foreground on the left of the picture will be noticed a snow scraper with horse attached. On the right are to be seen a plow and marker, to which also horses are attached. To the rear of the snow scraper are a number of men cutting ice with hand saws, while a little to the right of them is a man with a hand ice plow which shows up rather indistinctly in the picture. It will be noticed, also, in the foreground that the field has been gone over with the marker, the markings being indicated by the squares. After the ice has been cut, it is floated to the shore and taken up into the buildings in the rear by means of the elevator, which can be seen in the illustration. This is the store when next summer's supply of ice should be gathered. In a few weeks it will be too late for another year.

count of the seeds as they germinate.

For larger seeds, or, in fact, for nearly all seeds, Prof. Zavits recommends planting in boxes of soil or sand. The sand usually is used, since it is the most convenient and least variable. Any kind of soil, however, may be used, provided it is not too sticky, and does not vary too much. The boxes should be 11 inches by 11 inches, said measurement, and three inches deep. This admits of the sowing of 100 seeds at a distance of one inch apart each way, leaving a margin of an inch around the outside. To get the seeds properly spaced, a cover is made to fit the box, and ordinary shingle nails are driven into this at the proper distances, leaving about one inch exposed, with the head left on. By turning the cover upside down on the filled box, and pressing on it, the soil will be compressed, and at the same time, the holes in which to plant the seeds, are made. On removing this lid carefully, nice sized holes will be left, into which the seed may be