Proper care of seed vs. feed grain. Bulletin no. 25 August 1915

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WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

Proper Care of Seed vs. Feed Grain

By

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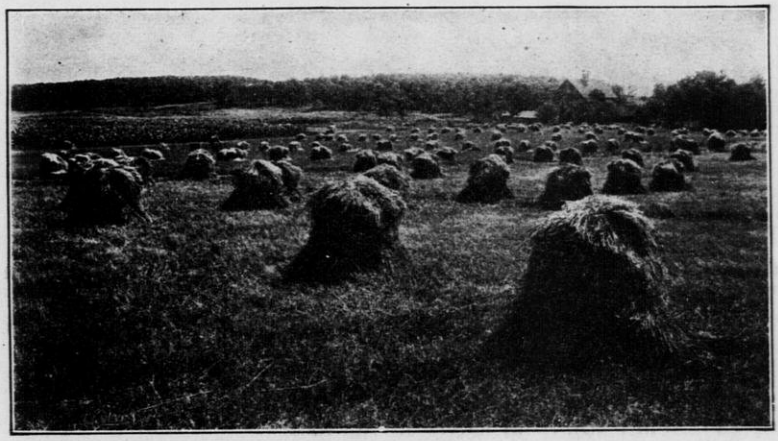

A GOOD START FOR ANOTHER BUMPER CROP.

Grain carelessly shocked becomes badly discolored in times of wet weather and is sometimes injured by partial sprouting. Such grain is of little value as seed and its feeding value is also reduced.

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Proper Care of Seed vs. Feed Grain

"By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them."

In raising live stock most of us use only the very best foundation stock.

It is equally important to use only the best and most productive seed in the raising of grain and other crops.

VITALITY OF SEED GRAINS IS AFFECTED BY:

1. **Maturity.**—Although seeds will germinate when not fully mature, the plants are weaker than those from fully matured seeds.
2. **Size.**—Large and heavy seeds have greater germinating power and produce plants with more vigor than small light seeds.
3. **Methods of Curing and Preserving.**—Seeds cured and stored in a moist atmosphere lose their strength quite rapidly. Seeds should be stored in dry, cool places.
4. **Parentage.**—Seed grains should come from plants which have a known pedigree. "Run out" strains produce seed of low vitality.
5. **Storage.**—Seed grains need to be stored in dry, cool places that are mouse and rat proof.

What is the best foundation stock?—The best grains of any variety for seed purposes are those which give the largest yields of good quality. The Wisconsin pedigree varieties of seed grains and corn are the best for seed purposes because—

(1) They have been bred from the very best stock.
(2) They yield better than scrub varieties.
(3) They stand up better in the field.
(4) They germinate evenly.
(5) They mature and ripen uniformly.
(6) They are in greater demand.

Do you raise your own seed grains?—Most of our grains have been known in the wild state within the written history of man. Through selection and cultivation they have been made different and more valuable. It is natural to expect then that they should be grown under nearly the same conditions as those under which they were improved. Plants like animals become acclimated to certain soil and climatic conditions. There is no truth in the old saying "Crops run out," providing proper attention has been paid to the selection and care of the seeds. Home grown seeds of the pedigree varieties are the best. You know exactly what kind of seeds you have, under what conditions they have been cured and stored and their age when using home grown seed.

Do you keep your seed grains pure?—It matters little when

considered from the feeding viewpoint whether or not barley contains a small mixture with oats. In fact mixing grains for feeding purposes is often a valuable practice. On the other hand, when viewed from the seedman's standpoint absolute freedom from mixture with other grains is necessary. Seed grains can be kept free from mixture by looking after some of the small details.

(1) See that the grain separator is thoroughly cleaned after threshing each variety. Insist that the machine be run empty for a few minutes and dump the first two or three sacks into the feed bin.

CLEAN YIELDS FROM CLEAN SEED.

It costs but little more to produce large yields of clean, first class grain than it does to raise an inferior crop, good only for feeding purposes.

(2) Store the grain in bins that have been thoroughly cleaned.

(3) Before using a second time, turn grain sacks inside out, thoroughly shaking out any grain that may have been left in the sack.

(4) Thoroughly clean the grain drill before seeding a new variety.

(5) Prevent mixing of grains by keeping out rats and mice.

(6) Make use of the fanning mill.

Maturity an important factor.—Whether to be used for seeding or feeding purposes, grain should be allowed to fully mature. Mature seeds produce the strongest plants, while for feeding they possess a greater total feeding value. Cutting grains before being fully matured makes shrunken kernels that are light in weight, poor in quality, off in color and low in germinating power. On the other hand, if allowed to become over ripe there is danger in loss through shattering and discoloration.

Quality preserved by right shocking.—Careful shocking is a matter of no small importance in preserving good quality in grains. Many times the difference between well shocked grain and poorly shocked grain is one of dollars and cents to the grower. Grain carelessly shocked becomes badly discolored in times of wet

weather and in extreme cases is often badly injured by partial sprouting. Such grain is of little value as seed and even has had its feeding value reduced. From the standpoint of actual market values good color is an important factor. Badly discolored grain especially barley and oats, is severely cut in price. The seed grower cannot afford to offer such seed for sale.

Capping the shocks is an aid in maintaining good color. By threshing the cap bundles separately it is an easy matter to keep the color uniform. For feeding purposes color is important only in so far as it may be an index to odor and hence palatability of the grain.

Shocks should not be set on any of the low places in the field where water is liable to stand in case of heavy rains. The bundles will not readily dry out and the grain will be badly damaged. It pays to guard against this danger by building the shocks on the high ground. One additional word—by all means shock every bundle of grain. It is next to impossible to expect the bundles to cure out by allowing them to lie on the ground until time to haul them.

Do you shock thresh?—Shock threshing is the only possibility in the large wheat areas of Kansas and the Dakotas where help is scarce and rainfall scant. Although a little cheaper than stack threshing it is a poor practice for a humid climate like that of Wisconsin. Adverse weather conditions and chances of heating in the bin cannot be avoided where shock threshing is practiced. It would be much better either to stack the grain or put it in the barn, allowing it to go through the natural sweating process. This practice alone assures one of seed grains having good quality in so far as this feature of their production is concerned.

In case of threshing from the stack, the bundles on the top and bottom of the stack are liable to be injured from too much moisture. The grain in these may be musty and discolored. It is a good plan to dump the grain from these bundles into the feed bin. It will guarantee larger profits for feed than for seed.

At present it would be impossible to do anything else but shock threshing in some districts because that has become the established custom and the threshermen will not return to the neighborhood for one small job of stack threshing. However, it ought to be possible for a sufficiently large number of farmers of a neighborhood to get together and agree to do only stack threshing. From the seed viewpoint it surely pays.

Storing grains.—The storage of seed grains should receive greater attention than that of feed grains. The successful preservation of either depends upon the same principle—keeping them in a dry, cool place that is clean and mouse proof.

Cheap seed is expensive seed.—It is an unwise policy to save the cent on the seed and lose the dollar on the crop. With seed grain that has been properly selected and stored, treated with formalin next spring to guard against the losses from smut, graded and cleaned by means of the fanning mill, it is safe to say that proper precautions have been taken to insure the largest returns.