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WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

Save Clover Seed

By

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A WAGON LOAD OF CLOVER SEED WORTH \$540

It costs as much to deliver some crops to the railroad station as it does for freight to the consumer a thousand miles away. The farmer remote from rail connections should consider the products of high value per load.

File this bulletin where you can find it

Distributed by

Wisconsin Bankers' Association

W. A. von Berg,
Chairman Agricultural Committee,
Mosinee

George D. Bartlett,
Association Secretary,
Pabst Building, Milwaukee

A Profitable Cash Crop

Of all the cash crops grown in Wisconsin, few, if any, sell for as much a pound as does clover seed.

Besides, the cost of marketing, in proportion to value, is much less than with such crops as potatoes, hay, barley, oats, or wheat.

A fifty-bushel load of barley worth sixty cents a bushel, if hauled twelve miles to market costs about \$4.00 for hauling, or one-ninth of its value.

A one and one-half ton load of timothy hay worth \$18.00 hauled for the same distance, costs two-ninths of its value for marketing. Out of every nine dollars, two dollars go to pay for hauling.

Clover seed, in proportion to its value, costs far less to market than the ordinary farm crops, such as timothy hay, barley and potatoes.

Compared with most other farm crops raised for market, it produces a greater net return to the acre.

A good stand is necessary for best results with clover seed. This can be gotten by sowing plenty of good seed, and growing in the right rotation.

The largest yields of medium red clover seed are obtained when the first cut is harvested early. About June 15 is an average date for Wisconsin.

Care should be used in handling the seed crop so as not to waste seed in cutting, stacking or hulling.

The windrowing attachment saves time and seed in harvesting clover seed.

Clover for seed should be stacked as soon as dry enough to haul.

Clover for seed should be well covered to protect from the weather.

An enclosed shed is most desirable for storing the seed.

Clover straw and hulls are of value for feeding to sheep and young stock.

A fifty-bushel load of wheat worth \$50.00 requires one dollar out of every \$12.50 of its value to meet the cost of marketing.

A fifty-bushel load of potatoes worth \$20.00, takes one dollar out of every five dollars to defray cost of marketing.

In contrast, a fifty-bushel load of clover seed worth \$500.00, costs only one dollar out of every \$125.00 to get it to market.

MUST BE WELL HANDLED.

Clover grown for seed pays well under Wisconsin conditions when rightly handled. In 1915 at the Superior station, on heavy red clay soil, alsike clover yielded over five bushels per acre.

At Marshfield, medium red clover gave a yield of $1\frac{1}{4}$ tons of cured hay in first crop and $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of seed in the second crop. At \$10.00 per bushel, the alsike seed crop was worth \$50 an acre. The crop of medium red was worth, at \$10 per ton, about \$12 for the hay, and at \$11 per bushel, \$38.50 for the seed, or about \$50.50 an acre.

Compared with barley, which yielded forty-five bushels an acre and sold for seventy cents a bushel, giving a return of \$31.50, the returns for the clover were very much in favor of clover seed as a cash crop.

In comparison with timothy yielding two tons to the acre and selling for \$12 a ton, the returns from the clover crop were fully one hundred per cent greater. Few crops pay better net returns than clover, when the seed crops yield over $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of seed to the acre.

HOW TO GROW THE CROP

To secure good yields of high class clover seed, only high testing seed, free from weed seeds, should be sown. Unless clover seed has been carefully cleaned, there is always danger of foul weed seeds being found in it. The safe way is to sow seed that has been tested for purity and germination.

SOW ENOUGH SEED

In order to get pure stands of clover, plenty of seed should be sown—more than when the crop is intended for hay only. The stand of clover should be thick in order to crowd out annual weeds as much as possible. On heavy soils and loams, about ten pounds of alsike and about twelve pounds of red clover should be sown. On light soils, medium red and mammoth clover should be sown at the rate of about fifteen pounds to the acre.



CLOVER GROWS ON SANDY SOIL

Of all legumes, the clovers are probably better adapted to sandy soils than any other.

Good success usually follows the sowing of clover with winter grain. The seed is broadcasted either on the last snow, or early in the morning when the wet ground is frozen. As the ground thaws the seed sinks in the soil and is covered. On clay soils it is not usually necessary or desirable to harrow after seeding in rye or winter wheat unless the ground is very dry. In the case of light soil the land should be well harrowed so as to cover the seed properly. If done when the ground is fairly dry, the grain will suffer no injury from the harrowing.

When sown with spring grain clover seed should be covered as a rule. In sowing with the grain drill with grass seed attachment, we prefer broadcasting in front of the drill or seeder rather than to run the clover in the grain spouts. On heavy soils and loams we seldom harrow after seeding with the grain drill. On the lighter soil types we usually run the smoothing harrow after seeding. This helps to cover the clover seed more uniformly. On the lightest soils we prefer sowing the clover without a nurse crop, in which case seeding is done as soon as the ground is fit to work.

HAVE LAND CLEAN OF WEEDS

Clover, particularly alsike and mammoth, should be grown for seed only on clean land free from noxious weeds. Because the first crop of medium red clover is cut for hay, this variety does not demand as clean land as the other clovers named. The best seed is grown on land in a good rotation, when sown with small grain following a cultivated crop such as corn, potatoes or roots.

Alsike and mammoth are too late in maturing, under Wisconsin conditions, to permit cutting a first crop for hay. Although some growers pasture for a few weeks so as to retard the crop somewhat this practice is not to be recommended under average conditions in this state. Medium red clover, on the other hand, furnishes a hay and a seed crop as a rule.

The first crop should be cut about June 15 in central Wisconsin, about a week earlier for the southern section, and a week later for the northern part of the state. Some growers pasture the first crop instead of cutting for hay. When this is done the mower should be run over the field after pasturing so as to give all plants an even start, and to cut down weeds.

SEASON GOVERNS CUTTING

The time of cutting the first crop is largely governed by the season. The largest yields of seed are usually secured by cutting when about two-thirds of the plants have started to bloom. If the clover contains much timothy, it is better to delay cutting a little later to insure against any of the timothy plants forming seed in the second crop. Weather conditions may affect results considerably, but as a rule, the yields of seed increase in direct ratio with earliness of cutting.

HANDLING THE SEED CROP

The seed crop of mammoth and medium red clover should be cut when the heads are all brown, with the seed firm and shiny. When the seed crop is cut before it is well matured there is a large proportion of shriveled seeds. On the other hand, if cut too late, some of the heads are likely to break off and thus reduce the yield of seed. Alsike is cut when the heads are brown and the seed is in the dough stage. Too late cutting means a loss by shattering.

Whether a certain crop of clover should be left for seed can usually be determined by inspection. With a full stand, well headed, approximately one bushel of seed to the acre can be expected with an average of fifteen seeds to the head. This is for red clover. The relative market value of clover hay and clover seed in a given locality should govern in deciding whether or not the crop should be left for seed.

WINDROWERS SAVE SEED

Care must be used in handling the seed crop; otherwise much of the seed is likely to be wasted. A clover seed windrowing attachment, costing from \$12 to \$15, should be used when cutting with the mower. Such an implement not only saves seed but effects a great saving of time. It takes three men to take clover out of the way of the team as fast as it is cut, when no attachment is used. The practice of raking up clover with the horse rake is extremely wasteful of seed.

If the crop is well ripened, in order to avoid shattering, it should be cut in the early morning or evening when damp with dew.

Clover for seed should be handled as little as possible. Usually the crop can be left to cure in windrows and turned just before hauling. In wet weather it is often necessary to lift the wet clover out of the stubble with a fork so as to help in drying. The practice of leaving the clover lie in the field for several weeks after it is cured, is bad from two standpoints at least. Much seed is likely to spoil through contact with the damp ground, and the clover straw and hulls will become rotted and of little value for feed.

SHELTER SEED FROM WEATHER

As it does not shed water but absorbs it like a sponge, clover for seed should be properly sheltered from the weather. Unless stacks are well covered with either boards, canvas or even marsh hay, there is bound to be much loss of seed in a wet fall. A well-enclosed shed or barn is the best place in which to store clover before hulling.

Clover hulls and straw from clover which has been properly protected from the weather before hulling, have considerable feeding value. It may be fed to sheep and young stock with good results.

Clover may be hulled as soon as freezing weather starts in the fall or at any time after it has had time to go through the sweat. Much loss of seed results when hulling is done from the stock in windy and stormy weather.