

WHITE CLOVER.

Considerable work has been done by various officers in the past few years to evolve a more rapid method than the plot test for the determination of type in respect to white clover. A suitable laboratory method having been developed, it was decided during 1936 to replace the existing scheme of white clover certification by a scheme somewhat similar in method of operation to that employed in the certification of perennial rye-grass seed in the commercial class.

The scheme, which classifies the white clover accepted into "mother" and "permanent pasture" as formerly, was brought into operation at the beginning of January, 1937. During the first three months 120 lines, totalling almost 200,000 lb. of seed, were offered for certification. Of this quantity, 22,000 lb. were classified as mother seed and 129,000 lb. as permanent pasture seed. The advantages of this method in extending the benefits of certification are best realized when it is stated that in these three months, before most of the new season's seed came on the market, the total quantity certified under the new scheme was in excess of that certified in the two preceding seasons under the previous existing scheme.

RED CLOVER.

A considerable increase has been recorded in the acreage of Montgomery red clover entered for certification. The demand for certified seed of this type of clover is considerably in excess of the supply, and prospective purchasers are at times finding it impossible to obtain seed. In view of the likely development of the overseas trade there seems ample scope for a considerable increase in seed production in respect to this crop.

BROWN-TOP.

The acreage of brown-top entered for certification remains fairly constant at about 24,000 acres. The quantity actually harvested is likely to vary considerably, however, in that farmers will only strip those portions of the area entered which are likely to return a payable yield of seed.

ITALIAN RYE-GRASS.

The certification of Italian rye-grass seed is becoming firmly established, 650 acres having been submitted for inspection in the 1936-37 season. The seed harvested is, in some instances, lower than normal in regard to germinating capacity, but this fault is fairly general in all this season's rye-grass seed.

The strain quality of the certified seed is a great improvement on that of any seed of uncertified origin.

PHALARIS TUBEROSA.

A mercantile firm has further interested itself in the production under certification of *Phalaris tuberosa* seed, following upon the results obtained from its efforts of the previous season. The area at present under certification is 85 acres, but, in the main, the yields are low, and not a great quantity of seed will be harvested.

POTATOES.

The scope of the certification scheme covering seed potatoes which in previous years had been confined to crops grown in the South Island was extended in the 1936-37 season to include certain crops grown at high altitudes in the Ohakune district of the North Island. A total of approximately 2,500 acres was inspected in the field, the greatest proportion of this area being located in the Canterbury district.

The potato certification scheme is perhaps the one most enthusiastically accepted at the present time, growers and merchants alike according it their full support. Not only is the quality of crops in regard to purity and freedom from disease being improved, but growers are also appreciating the advantages appertaining to the more careful grading of both the table and the seed produce of their crops. This in turn enables merchants to negotiate with more confidence in the quality of the product offered.

It is confidently expected that a large South American market will be available for table potatoes this season, and to supply this demand merchants are already interesting themselves particularly in the table produce of crops under certification. Inquiries from the same country are also being received for the supply of seed potatoes, it being stipulated that only certified seed will be accepted. Such a recognition from an overseas country of the value of this Department's certification scheme is very encouraging.

WHEAT.

The wheat certification scheme has been the subject of a few alterations in procedure, which, it is expected, will result in the farmer being able to purchase the certified article with still greater confidence. Chief among the amendments is the insistence that all grain must reach a reasonable standard of dressing, and the recognition as finally certified of that wheat only which has reached the required standard and has been officially tagged and sealed. As a result of these alterations there is being shown a great increase in the quantity of certified seed-wheat being machine-dressed.

While a further increase is recorded in the acreage under certification the general position at present is that little improvement can now be made in regard to existing varieties. The scheme will continue to perform a useful service, however, in the maintenance of the present high standards, and will be invaluable in the proper control of any new varieties, or of any selections of existing varieties which may be introduced to commerce from time to time.

RAPE.

With the complete failure of the nucleus stocks of rape-seed of the Broad Leaf Essex type in the 1935-36 season, there was available for distribution for seed production in the 1936-37 season only supplies of seed of the Giant type. This seed was sown out under certification on three areas comprising 30 acres. Yields were lower than those obtained in the previous season, but the seed harvested is of good quality. The development of rape-seed production appears to be merely a matter of time.

GENERAL.

In certain crops it would appear that the extent of the certification scheme has almost reached its maximum point of development, until such time as a greater overseas demand eventuates for seed of such crops. In other crops there is still ample scope for extension, and it will be seen that this development is in fact taking place. The increases in the areas of Montgomery red clover and Italian rye-grass seed illustrate this point. It is hoped that in the near future, with the finalization of investigational work at present under way, the certification scheme will be extended to other pasture and crop seeds.