

The current season has seen three main modifications to the certification scheme: (1) The acceptance of entries of only those crops planted with seed from a provisionally certified crop, or seed once grown from a provisionally certified crop. (2) The introduction of qualification trials, carried out under the supervision of the Fields Superintendents. Farmers may now forward fifty tubers of the seed they are planting, and receive a report as to its suitability for entry into certification the following season. (3) The deletion of the second field-inspection from the certification procedure.

The first alteration was introduced primarily with a view to restricting applications, and, secondly, with the idea of doing away with the inspection of a large number of crops which had no possibility of reaching the required standard. This decision was reached following upon such figures as the following, which were obtained in the 1929-30 season: One hundred and seven lines of Dakota were entered in that season: (a) Forty-eight of these were from crops provisionally certified the previous season, and 62 per cent. of these forty-eight again reached the required standard. (b) Fifty-five were from crops about which nothing was known, and only 20 per cent. of these fifty-five came up to standard. (c) Four were from crops rejected the previous season, and none of these passed. So that whereas 62 per cent. of certified lines again passed, only 20 per cent. of those lines passed which had not previously been entered.

As a result of this change in the scheme, applications were received as follows:—

	1930-31.	1929-30.
Manawatu and Hawke's Bay	15	4
Canterbury and Marlborough	320	310
Otago and Southland	28	65
Total	363	380

Thus the number of entries was not materially affected, but when it is considered that in addition to these 363 entries, 262 applications for the qualification trials were received, and that under the old conditions of entry practically all these would be entered into certification, one can readily see the advantage derived from limiting the applications. This is still more noticeable when it is pointed out that whereas 85 per cent. of the crops in certification passed the field inspection, an estimate would reveal that probably not 20 per cent. of the samples in the qualification trial would reach that standard.

Reports on the field inspection for the current season are to hand, and the following figures reveal the difference in the standard of lines entered this season and last. After deducting the crops which have been withdrawn for various reasons (thirty-four withdrawn in 1929-30 and fifteen in 1930-31) we have—

	1930-31.	1929-30.
Crops inspected	331*	341
Crops rejected on account of rogues	22	87
Crops rejected on account of virus	26	88
Crops passed field inspection	283	166
	= 86 per cent.	= 49 per cent.

* A few crops yet to be inspected.

A slightly higher standard was adopted in the current season, so that these figures show the great improvement in the general standard of lines under certification, and also indirectly the advantage of certified over uncertified seed.

In the 1929-30 season 1,200 acres were inspected in the field. This season a similar acreage has been inspected, equal to about 6 per cent. of the total New Zealand acreage. One would be safe in saying, therefore, that from 10 per cent. to 12 per cent. of the New Zealand acreage was this season planted with seed from provisionally certified crops. It is anticipated that of the 283 crops passed in the field well over two hundred will pass the cropping-power test, and qualify for provisional certificates, thus materially increasing the area in New Zealand to be planted with certified seed.

The work in Canterbury this season (where most of the potato certification is undertaken) has been made difficult by the peculiar weather conditions prevailing. The dry season and the January frosts so affected growth as to make the work of the Inspectors at times extremely difficult.

A feature of potato certification this season is the entry of twenty-five lines of different varieties from the Ashburton Experimental Farm (referred to in Part I). Most of these lines are produced from seed imported from Scotland and Ireland, though some are from local selections. All seem to be comparing favourably with local farmers' lines of the same variety.

WHITE CLOVER.

The certification of white-clover seed in the 1929-30 season resulted in the sealing and tagging of about 35½ tons of machine-dressed seed, which has been certified to as being the produce of pastures five years of age or over. This current season certification of white clover on an age-basis is again being undertaken. Up to the present most of the lines certified have been dressed out of certified rye-grass seed, and it is impossible at the present juncture to give an estimate of the total amount which will be handled this season. In the meantime as much information as possible regarding samples from known areas is being collected, so that, when classification on a type-basis is introduced, it will be possible to locate immediately areas which will be eligible.

BROWN-TOP.

Records of the 1929-30 season in connection with the certification of brown-top indicate that 170 areas, approximately 22,000 acres, were inspected and declared free from red-top. There were 24 acres rejected as containing red-top. Not all the area passed in the field was harvested, while not all the seed harvested was sealed after machine-dressing; but approximately 76 tons of seed was sealed and certified after machine-dressing.

The United States tariff somewhat upset the organization in that the dressing-plants immediately commenced to work twenty-four hours per day in order to ship as much seed as possible before the tariff came into operation. The result was an unforeseen rush in the dressing-stations of Southland and Otago, and in some cases merchants preferred to ship their seed unsealed rather than to delay shipping and incur the extra tariff.

With the exception of one sample of seed, the origin of which was doubtful, all samples received at the Plant Research Station for trial have proved to be free from red-top, and the areas concerned, together with those which pass the field inspection this year, will again be eligible for certification.

The brown-top harvest for the 1930-31 season has not commenced at time of writing, and there is speculation as to the demand for New Zealand seed from overseas; but it seems almost certain that any seed sealed and certified will be preferred to uncertified seed.