

at so-much per pound. The mixture shown in the photograph is of this class, and farmers undoubtedly will be wise to leave such lines alone. At certain times rye-grass and cocksfoot seconds may be bought fairly satisfactorily, but these so-called cheap mixtures as a whole represent little better than seed-cleanings to which a small quantity of good-coloured seed—generally of Italian rye-grass—has been added for the purpose of giving the sample a good general appearance. There is a fourth alternative—namely, for the farmer to grow his own seed. This last method scarcely comes within the scope of the present article, but there is no doubt that where a farmer has difficult country to grass the growing on some cultivated portion of his farm of small areas of those crops the seed of which he requires is well worth considering. Very rough threshing methods could be adopted, and often, too, the straw could be strewn about the burn. Expensive seeds like brown-top, Lotus major, yarrow, subterranean clover, &c., might well be secured in this manner.

In the buying of agricultural seeds in general there are three main considerations: (1) Germination of the seed; (2) purity of the seed; and (3) its place of origin.

GERMINATION.

Germination, or the capacity of the seed to grow, is the prime consideration in the buying of all seeds. High germination means high vitality: high vitality means success in the competition that will follow in the pasture. No amount of cultivation of the land and no amount of manure applied can make a dead seed grow. The farmer, at present, has no actual guarantee that the seed he buys will grow, but that the seed-merchants of New Zealand can be relied on very largely in this prime matter of germination is reflected in the statistics of our seed-testing station, where out of ten thousand samples tested last year only eighty samples were sent in by farmers. The farmer can always have recourse to the official seed-testing free of charge, both for germination and purity, but so far as his ordinary seed-buying is concerned he is advised rather to demand from his merchant seed bearing a high germination percentage shown by the official test. "Government-tested" seeds are often displayed by vendors, but it does not suffice to buy merely on the strength of this label, for the test may show the seed to be of high or of low germination. The seed should have a high germination as shown by the official test. The foregoing course is recommended because the farmer, as a rule, does not buy his seed until he is practically ready to sow, and it would take fully a week to secure a germination test even with the quicker-germinating seeds. Further, if the test proved the seed of low germination the line would have to be returned to the vendor and a fresh stock secured, meaning another week's delay. The farmer, of course, could get samples preparatory to buying, but then he has no guarantee that the seed ultimately delivered would be of the same line as that from which the sample was originally drawn.

Practically all seed-merchants at the present day know the germination of the seed they have in stock, and while they may charge a little more for their high-germinating lines, yet these are undoubtedly the best ones to buy. High germination means great vitality;