

NOT GUILTY

CERTIFIED RYEGRASS BEFORE COURT

HELD TO BE SUPERIOR

UNCERTIFIED STRAINS CRITICISED

(From our Special Correspondent, D. R. Wilkie.)

BLLENHEIM, January 13.

After a trial lasting more than three years, Certified Ryegrass was acquitted by His Honour Mr. Justice Topdress in the Court of Agriculture at Blenheim recently on a charge of fraud. Certified Ryegrass pleaded not guilty.

It was alleged that Certified Ryegrass had falsely claimed that it was superior to Uncertified Ryegrass, but in his judgment his Honour said that on the facts laid before the Court it was definitely established that the charge was false, and that Certified Ryegrass had been completely vindicated. His Honour levelled severe criticism at the claims advanced by Uncertified Ryegrass, and stated that he had no hesitation in pronouncing the sentence that, contrary to the charge laid, Certified Ryegrass was definitely superior to Uncertified Ryegrass.

"Once again Certified Ryegrass has shown itself to be well worthy of the many favourable comments bestowed upon it," said his Honour, in giving his judgment. "On the facts before the Court the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that, where permanent, high-producing pastures are required, Certified Strains of ryegrass and clover should be used exclusively."

ALLEGED FAULTS.

Opening the case, Counsel for Uncertified Ryegrass said it was claimed that Certified Ryegrass was unjustified because (1) it cost more to establish in view of the higher price of the seed, and (2) it had a poorer production value because of its lower palatability in comparison with the cheaper established and more rapidly grown line.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: Can you prove those points?

Counsel for Uncertified Ryegrass: It is the general opinion.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: Opinions are not proof.

Continuing, Counsel for Uncertified Ryegrass said that his claim for cheaper cost of establishment must be generally admitted after a study of relative prices of seed, while under local conditions of relatively low rainfall the improvement in palatability through the use of fertilisers followed by good grazing management could not be obtained.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: May I ask my learned friend whether these swards can be economically maintained?

Counsel for Uncertified Ryegrass: Admittedly, these swards cannot be economically maintained even if desired.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: A point in favour of Certified Ryegrass, which has proved itself to be truly permanent.

RESULT OF EXPERIMENT.

Opening his case Counsel for Certified Ryegrass said an experiment just completed in Marlborough had demonstrated effectively the superiority of Certified Ryegrass over Uncertified Ryegrass. Its greater carrying capacity, excellent recovery after grazing, and its superior persistence were all clearly shown, while further light was shed on the much-debated question of its palatability.

Counsel for Uncertified Ryegrass: Your Honour, I submit that that is a question for the Court, and is not for my learned friend to say.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: I have evidence which I will place before the Court at a later stage.

His Honour: I think it would be as well if Counsel confined himself to facts at this stage.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass: I bow to your Honour's ruling.

Continuing, Counsel for Certified Ryegrass said an experiment was carried out on the farm of Mr. E. Smith, Tuamarina, and took the form of a grazing trial on two similar paddocks with identical treatment except that one paddock was sown with Certified Ryegrass while the other was sown with ordinary ryegrass below certification standard.

A nine-acre paddock was selected and prepared for sowing down to grass, all parts of the paddock having the same preliminary cultivation. A dividing fence was then erected, and in April, 1936, the paddocks were sown. A bushel and a half of ryegrass with 3 lb. of Certified White Clover was used in each case, and one bag of superphosphate per acre went on with the seed. Paddock "A" had, as mentioned earlier, Certified Ryegrass, while in Paddock "B" Uncertified Ryegrass was used. In all other respects the sowing down and manuring of the paddocks were identical.

Counsel went on to say that both paddocks struck well and made good growth in the spring, at which time half a ton of lime was applied to the whole experiment. Because of adverse weather experienced in the first few months, establishment was rather slow, but by October a fair sward was evident.

FIRST WITNESS.

Counsel for Certified Ryegrass then said he proposed to call evidence on the superior recovery after grazing of the certified strains.



Exhibit A.—Certified Ryegrass on the left, Uncertified Ryegrass on the right.