which had become almost a household word in the seed trade and among farmers, no great difficulty was experienced in disposing of the crop, but with a view to still further safeguarding the position the Akaroa Cocksfoot Seed-growers' Association was formed in 1930. This association works in close co-operation with the Department of Agriculture in operations affecting the certification of the cocksfoot seed produced in the district.

Certification Scheme

In maintaining and developing a seed industry under present-day conditions it has been amply demonstrated that purchasers require some guarantee as to type, purity, and germination, and the Department's certification scheme has proved of distinct benefit to the cocksfoot industry, as it has enabled purchasers of the seed to feel satisfied that they are protected, for it is in their power to demand the standard of purity and germination and origin of the seed before purchase is made.

The certified seed is machine-dressed at the various seed-dressing stations, and if it proves up to the requisite standard it is finally tagged and sealed by officers of the Department of Agriculture. Purchasers of this seed know that they are buying something with a guarantee behind it, and few farmers today are at all inclined to accept uncertified seed.

Seed production on the Peninsula is definitely governed by weather conditions. For the highest yields good autumn and winter rains are essential. Growers have generally found that with a good autumn growth and the absence of unfavourable weather at flowering time a satisfactory harvest can be expected. This crop is mainly cross-fertilised, and, this being so, there is a greater demand for favourable climatic conditions at flowering time than in the case of crops that are of the self-fertilising type. In some seasons heavy gales accompanied by a high rainfall have been experienced at the flowering period, and if these conditions persist for some days the ultimate yield is generally seriously affected.

There is practically no cultivation on Banks Peninsula, and all types of farming can be designated pastoral, as the farmers have all their properties under pasture, and the dominance of cocksfoot in most districts is the outstanding feature. Some of these pastures were sown approximately 80 years ago and are still in production, whether it be under dairying, fattening, or seed.

Riddling the seed on the farm before bagging.

Grazing

The grazing of the seed-producing areas during the winter can be carried out successfully and without detriment to the following seed crop as long as the grazing is light and with cows or young stock. The areas should not be grazed with sheep except, perhaps, for a short period in the early autumn, but sheep should definitely be removed before the usual late autumn growth sets in, as they tend to eat out this growth. The safe grazing period for cows or young cattle can be considered as from May until the end of July. Stocking with cattle at this time does much good in tramping down the dead growth, which forms a mulch around the roots of the plants and tends to hold the moisture and keep the soil cool during the heat of the summer.

In conclusion, it can be said that the cocksfoot seed industry has for more than 60 years been of great importance to the settlers, and at one time was their principal source of income. The district is very different climatically from the Plains. The rainfall is much better, and the influence of the sea is noticeable in the milder winter climate. On the more sheltered portions there is seldom a cessation of growth, and investigations made in June and July have shown appreciable growth.

It is these conditions, plus a fertile soil, that have enabled the seed industry to be conducted in this manner over a long period.

Eradicating Rat-tail Grass

"RAT-TAIL" (HAMILTON):—

Will you kindly advise me through the "Journal" what is the best method of eradicating "rat-tail" grass from pastures? It is mainly confined to sidlings, which are ploughable.

FIELDS DIVISION:—

Where land can be ploughed, no difficulty should be experienced in eradicating rat-tail. The most successful method is to plough the land during January, roll if possible, and leave fallow until end of February or prior to working the land for early March sowing. Care should be taken not to disturb the furrow by having too much set on the discs; the lighter the discing the better.

The whole success of eradication depends on how well the land is ploughed; bad ploughing means an invasion of the pest after a few seasons. Liberal seeding and fertilising is essential for a quick pasture sward establishment, which will completely choke any young rat-tail growth.

There is no known method of eradicating rat-tail in pastures where land is unploughable. The pest can be held partly in check by introducing better pasture species, liberal fertilising, and avoiding severe winter and spring grazing.