



A crop of Montgomery red clover in Southland closed for seed.
[H. Drake, Photo.]

Small Production of Ryegrass Seed In Southland

Other Varieties Which Should Yield Profitable Returns

A. STUART, Instructor in Agriculture, Invercargill.

SOME eleven years have elapsed since the introduction of certification to lines of perennial ryegrass in Southland, and since that time there has been a decided falling-off in ryegrass seed production in this province.

This did not occur because of any local prejudice in growing lines which originated in other districts or because of the high prices which these lines commanded; the real reason was that the germination of certified lines of seed could not be depended on when produced in this locality. Consequently, the risk of failure was too great, as one fortunate season could not be expected to compensate for three unfortunate seasons, even after taking into consideration the high yields obtained.

An article entitled "Blind-Seed Diseases in Ryegrass" in the "Journal of Agriculture" for March, 1939, p. 223, discusses what is known concerning low germination and the avenue being explored by research workers in an

Until the problem of germination of perennial ryegrass is solved, the sowing of ryegrass for seed production is not likely to be an attractive proposition for many Southland farmers. However, there are other varieties of grasses and clovers which should yield profitable returns in this province, and this article sets out several points which will assist farmers who may be contemplating entering the seed trade.

endeavour to combat what is a serious problem to the seed producer.

The following figures show the acreage of perennial ryegrass cut for seed and yield per acre:—

Season.	Acres.	Yield (lb.)
1924-25	15,651	480.52
1925-26	14,471	530.22

1926-27	15,592	434.54
1927-28	8,855	516.38
1928-29	9,967	464.34
1929-30	9,937	489.85
1930-31	13,354	407.35
1931-32	6,143	404.92
1932-33	11,629	479.94
1933-34	10,450	446.14
1934-35	10,479	413.41
1935-36	10,636	512.41
1936-37	4,661	368.57
1937-38	5,299	365.14

Decrease in Area

From these figures it will be noticed that a decrease in area took place from the season 1926-27, although the very low acreage seen 10 years later in 1936-37 can be accounted for by the wet season experienced, which precluded the cutting of many areas which had been closed for seed production. In Southland, with its comparatively short grass-growing season, the rush of surplus growth in late spring is accentuated, and in addition to the closing of areas for hay and ensilage, the closing