

## Penalty of Sowing Inferior-Quality Grass Seed

**N**OWHERE is the result of sowing inferior-quality grass seed more striking than on the reverting and reverted land in the Southern King Country.

Because of the ruggedness of the country, the high rainfall and the types of seed mixtures sown in the early days of settlement, much country is today carrying poor and indifferent pasture. Some of this land, which probably should never have been cleared of bush, has today reverted so far that it will take years of good management and topdressing before any appreciable improvement can be accomplished.

However, this does not apply to all the land, and, if small quantities of white clover have managed to survive, or if certified white clover and perennial ryegrass are broadcast with the topdressing, the high rainfall is turned to the advantage of the farmer. By exploiting these conditions, wonderful improvements can be achieved in both pasture cover and stock-carrying capacity in a very short period.

### Suitable Mixture

In renovating land which has run to manuka the scrub should be cut and burned about six weeks later. If the scrub is left longer, much of the leaf will fall, and the chances of a poor burn are greatly increased. A suitable grass seed mixture for scrub burns of this type is:—Perennial ryegrass (certified), 12lb.; cocksfoot (certified), 8lb.; white clover (certified), 2lb.; crested dogtail, 3lb.; *Danthonia pilosa*, 2lb.; browntop, 1½lb.; subterranean clover (Mount Barker), ½lb.; *Lotus major*, 1lb.; total per acre, 30lb.

This mixture is also suitable for sowing after a bracken fern burn.

It will be noted that seeds suitable for both first and second-class pasture are included. If pastures sown with this mixture are topdressed in the autumn each year the resultant pasture will most likely be white-clover-dominant, with perennial ryegrass fairly prominent and other grasses in lesser proportions.

If, however, the pasture is neglected and the fertility of the soil is not supplemented with topdressing, the browntop, danthonia, *Lotus major*, and subterranean clover will take charge. This pasture, although not so produc-

tive as the first type, will at least give a fair ground cover of hardy grasses, and will help to control weed invasion.

### "Cheap Seed"

When a sward sown with a mixture of this type is compared with a pasture established from a cheap, inferior mixture of seeds of unknown type and quality it is surprising that any farmer even considers the purchase of inferior seed. To give some idea of the inferiority of "cheap seed," the following, which is a Government Seed-Testing Station report, is quoted. The "cheap seed" mixture was purchased in Taumarunui at 5½d per pound.

	Percentage by weight.	Percentage Germination.
Red clover ..	25.1%	30% plus 2% hard seeds.
Ryegrass ..	22.3%	14%
Crested dogtail	19.5%	18%
Suckling clover	7.4%	45% plus 27% hard seeds.
Cocksfoot ..	5.2%	74%
Alsike ..	1.4%	
White clover ..	4.0%	45% plus 15% hard seeds.
Yorkshire fog ..	trace	
Weed seeds ..	3.4%	(Sorrel, dock, vetch sweet vernal haresfoot, trefoil, chickweed, self-heal, ribgrass, hawkweed).
Inert matter ..	11.7%	(Chaffy material broken seeds)

Both the ryegrass and the white clover are of an extremely poor type.

### The Penalty

This sample was sown before the analysis was known, and today the results show that the comment, "Both the ryegrass and the white clover are of extremely poor type," is absolutely true, as the farmer, who inadvisedly used poor seed, now has a field of flat-weeds, sweet vernal, and sorrel, with a little white clover and ryegrass, and much bare ground.

With swards such as this, the buyer of "cheap seed" has to plough up his new pasture and start all over again. As a further penalty, he has to add to his cultivation expenses the extra cost of cultivation required to eradicate the weeds sown by himself. Added to all this is the dead loss of production from the field for 12 months, plus the price paid for the "cheap seed."

It is surely a much sounder practice to buy seed of known quality at the outset and be assured of success, rather than gamble with one's pastures. Bar-

gains are certainly not available in the seed trade.

—W. T. BROWN, *Fields Instructor, Taumarunui.*

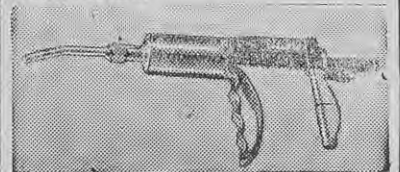
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