

again there is a vast difference between the mixed lines sold as Italian ryegrass and the pure certified strain. False perennial ryegrass and mixtures of Italian and perennial ryegrass are much slower growing, and do not produce the same bulk of food as the true Italian ryegrass.

Lack of working capital and courage prevents many would-be progressive farmers from making a start, but the old idea of sowing a nucleus seed block is still a good one. Many farms have changed hands lately, and new occupiers with extensive sowing-down programmes ahead would do well to put down five or ten acres of mother seed ryegrass and mother seed white clover and harvest it in order to have seed available in a year or two. The

header harvester contracting in nearly all districts has solved the problem of the labour and machinery required to grow your own seed. The same policy can be advocated for those who wish to start with Montgomery red clover, which is still expensive compared with the common broad red clover.

Palatability

No discussion on ryegrass in Canterbury would be complete without mentioning palatability. The true perennial would not be a perennial if it were as tender and as quick-growing the first year as Italian ryegrass. It must be sown with a good vigorous strain of white clover, and must not be allowed to get away in the spring. The

present trend of farming is to eliminate expensive cultivation costs and to topdress with lime and superphosphate to try to hold the pastures. This policy will fail unless it is built on a solid foundation, and the only safe foundation is correct strain in the seed sown.

There are many sheep farms in North Canterbury on which all the pastures can be traced back to one or two bushels of certified ryegrass bought ten years ago at 25s. a bushel. It was harvested and sown around the farm, and now the whole property is down in the permanent strain. From these people one hears only praise of its lasting qualities. Alongside is found the man who has never made a start, still with his run-out pastures.

—A. S. NASH, *Instructor in Agriculture, Rangiora.*

Clover Dodder Is A Dangerous Parasitic Weed



Fig. 1.—A close-up view of a dodder-infected patch prior to flowering. The numerous thread-like, leafless stems are clearly visible.

ALL farmers are familiar with the more common varieties of weeds which flourish so luxuriantly on their neighbour's farm. Not all, however, will readily recognise the less familiar but highly objectionable clover dodder; and yet, judging from observations dur-

ing the past year, this weed is by no means uncommon.

Unlike the great majority of weeds which, having green leaves, are able to be entirely self-supporting, the dodder has no green tissue whatever, and can live and grow only by de-

vouring the substance of its unfortunate host—usually red or white clover.

Most weeds are objectionable because they compete with crops and waste ground space, or they may be dangerous to stock or cause taints in cream, etc. Dodder is objectionable because it actually kills the clovers.

Start as a Seed

Starting as a small seed, very like a white clover seed, it germinates in the soil and presently sends forth a thin, thread-like brownish and completely leafless stem, which entwines closely round any clover plants within reach, and may eventually form a dense mat covering an area of several square yards. Once in contact with a clover plant, the dodder sucks in the plant juice through a myriad of tiny suckers which penetrate into the tissue.

Growing at the expense of its unfortunate host—and victim—the dodder ultimately produces a dense mat of pinkish-white coloured flowers, so profuse that the infested area appears to be covered with a rose-tinted snow. These flowers presently produce seeds, which fall to the ground, to cause further trouble next year, or they may be transported in clover seed to spread the weed in fresh sowings.