

In weighting stacks it is not advisable to attach the weights to single wires running over the stack, as they are liable to "gully" the stack, with the result that the rain enters very easily. Weights attached to the stack covers or to wire netting laid over the stack do not cause this "gulying."

If treated with bluestone, sack stack covers will last for four seasons at least. Because of the value of the seed, every endeavour should be made to ensure that the crop, once it is in stack, is given all possible protection.

Threshing

Threshing should not be carried out until the clover has finished sweating, usually about six weeks. In general, the longer a crop is in stack the better will it hull. An ordinary wooden threshing mill is, as a rule, virtually useless for dealing satisfactorily with clover seed, as, although some seed is hulled, a large proportion is left unhulled. Nevertheless, odd cases have been noticed where a reasonably good piece of work has been done with one of these mills.

Tin mills are also used to a certain extent and, when properly managed, give good results. They are, however, liable to crack the seed unless they are fitted with clover teeth and the machine is driven at a reduced speed. This is best done by fitting a larger driving pulley.

There is no doubt that the specially constructed clover huller is the best threshing implement available. With the crop in good condition, this threshes efficiently with regard to both the quantity and quality of the seed saved.

Yields

Farmers contemplating seed production naturally want some information regarding the yields. In estimating yields no account of yield off the mill should be taken, as, according to the variation in the purity of the mill-dressed seed, so does the amount of pure seed harvested vary. The only reliable way of estimating the yield is to divide the amount of seed that comes out of the dressing plant as firsts by the acreage closed up for seed production.

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The following table shows clearly the fallacy of estimating yields on field-dressed weights:—

	F/D (seed per acre).	M/D (seed per acre).	Loss lb.
Pdk. A. . .	171.7	142.7	16.9
Pdk. B. . .	184.1	110.5	40.0

Yields recorded during the past few years have been very variable. Some exceptional yields of over 450 lb. (in one case 770 lb.) of seed per acre have been recorded. On the other hand, there have been some very low yields, amounting to 20 lb. per acre and less. Examination of certification records shows that over the last few years the average yield of seed in New Zealand has been approximately 100 lb. per acre. This yield may appear to be low, especially to those farmers who have been fortunate enough to secure higher average yields, but it should be realised that the gross value per acre of a crop yielding 100 lb. per acre is approximately the same as a 44 bushel crop of wheat, which average yield is not likely to be obtained on the second class country which is recommended for the growing of Montgomery red clover.

Maintenance of Pastures

The maintenance of Montgomery red clover seed-producing areas deserves some consideration. On the lighter soils the only important point in this connection—namely, liming and top-dressing—has already been dealt with. On the heavier country, however, there is one important feature that must be attended to. Here, where heavy, tall crops are grown, the crowns of the plants have been able to obtain no light and little growth is made from the crown for some time before the crop is cut. When the crop is cut the soft and sappy crown is left to fend for itself like a shorn sheep. Any encouragement that this crown can be given to produce fresh leaves before the frosts start will assist materially in its preservation.

It is therefore advisable to clean up the paddock as quickly as possible by grazing or mowing and raking in order to remove any of the half-dead stems that may have been missed. By this means the air and light are let into the crown to encourage growth again. The removal of these stems also reduces to a considerable extent the chance of the crowns rotting during the winter. This rotting is not infrequent in crops which continue to carry much dead growth during this period.

Irrigation

In parts of Canterbury and Central Otago, Montgomery red clover seed is being produced under irrigation. Under these conditions the grower is able to exercise greater control of the growth, with the result that the consequent crop is more assured.

Under irrigation paddocks may be closed up fairly late (mid-December). The amount of water required is the minimum quantity which will maintain the crop in a healthy condition. If irrigation is carried out too frequently a large bulk of clover is produced, and flowering is not satisfactory and carries on too long. This means that the harvest is carried on until the early winter, with all its attendant risks.

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