



World Seed Campaign

PRODUCTION and use of seed of the highest quality is recognised by FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations) as fundamental to the achievement of the organisation's aims. Accordingly, the last FAO conference designated 1961 as a World Seed Year. Already 70 countries have agreed to participate and in 59 of them national programmes have been begun.

SOME of the tasks which it is envisaged this campaign might undertake include:

1. National seed campaigns.
2. Publicity relating to the production, improvement, and use of high-quality seeds.
3. Encouragement of specialised training in various aspects of crop and tree improvement, including seed production.
4. Encouragement of research into improvement of crop and tree varieties.
5. Encouragement of commercial activities in production and distribution of seed of high quality.

In New Zealand the principles of this five-point programme have long been expressed in the policy of the Department of Agriculture. For almost 50 years the Department has offered to test seeds to determine their purity and germination and for 30 years it has conducted a scheme to certify the strain, variety, and, where appropriate, freedom from disease of the major farm seeds used in New Zealand. More than 25 years ago the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research began its programme of selection and breeding to make additional advances in the strain quality of New Zealand's pasture and crop seeds. There is also a certification scheme for certain vegetable seeds.

100 Years of Seed Growing

Testimony to the importance in an agricultural economy of the provision of an efficient commercial seed production service is given in an excellently produced booklet that has been published to celebrate completion this year of 100 years of business by F. Cooper Ltd., seed merchants with headquarters in Wellington and branches, dressing plants, and trial areas in other parts of New Zealand.

Illustrative of the way firms engaged in the seed trade have marched with the rapid expansion of agricultural and horticultural production, the booklet describes, with a restrained text and excellent illustrations, the large-scale organisation of seed production to high standards.

Embarking early on a programme of domestic production of basic agricultural seeds, the firm's growing business entailed careful selection of contract growers, continuous technical advice, and efficient harvesting, cleaning, and testing, particularly of garden and cannery peas, in the export of which the firm has been prominent. In its development of varieties of garden pea seeds the firm has promoted an export trade of considerable value to New Zealand and won for itself considerable recognition overseas.

The firm is to be congratulated not only on its growth and achievements since young Frederick Cooper established his modest business in Wellington in 1860, but also on the production of a booklet that in its quality and scope presents so well the integral part seed production as a business enterprise has played in the development of the country's economy.

The importance of using seeds of the highest quality has also been emphasised in the day-to-day advisory work of the Department.

A world seed campaign may not provide any great benefit to New Zealand, but the Deputy Director-General of FAO makes the following suggestions in connection with New Zealand's participation in a recent letter:

"In the international field . . . the Government of New Zealand could make an excellent contribution to the World Seed Campaign by assisting in encouraging less advanced countries in their efforts to develop a more extensive use of high quality seed of improved varieties in order to increase their food production and improve the quality of their agricultural products".

Accordingly, New Zealand has offered to give assistance in the technical training of representatives of under-developed countries in seed and crop improvement and to provide publicity material based on its own experiences which might assist other countries with the conduct of national seed campaigns.

Seeds are important for the sowing of pastures; for the provision of forest, plantation, and farm trees; for the production of cereals and their stored products; for use by commercial and home gardeners for a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables; and for growing flowers and shrubs for ornament. For whatever purpose seed is to be used it is most important that it should be of the highest standard in strain quality, germination, and purity.

Careless Inoculations Cause Losses through Downgrading

DAMAGE done to carcasses and pelts by careless inoculations has caused concern to freezing companies for some time. The consequent downgrading is "not only an economic loss to the Dominion, but it must also be reflected in schedule values", according to an official statement by the North Island Freezing Companies' Association. "It is therefore in everyone's interests to carry out inoculations carefully. . . .

"Freezing companies definitely prefer and are recommending that inoculations be made either

"(a) In the neck forward of the shoulder towards the base of the ear, or

"(b) In the loose skin on the neck above the brisket.

"Inoculations properly performed in either of these areas will avoid damage to carcasses and pelts", the Association states.