The topic assigned me is of great importance, as it means so much to the plant-breeder to start right. The testing of foundation varieties of corn and small cereals is the initial step in plant improvement, upon which the success of our subsequent efforts depends. Several years' patient breeding work can often be dispensed with by the proper selection of foundation stock. Any plant or animal-breeder is wise and justified in getting the best foundation stock possible, and his success will be largely dependent upon this selection. We should not let any false delicacy step in to prevent us from taking as our foundation stock corn or small grains that have already been improved along certain lines of effort that make them better than common stock. We are always pleased to furnish even our pedigreed varieties of grains as foundation stock to breeding stations for further improvement.

In Wisconsin hundreds of strains of corn were examined and tested at the station and on the farms of members of the Experiment Association in order to get the foundation stock upon which to start actual breeding work. Many selections were made, but few were retained for further improvement. Improved southern as well as northern varieties were put through the foundation test to determine if substantial characteristics would not show forth to warrant a place in the breeding plot.

Some varieties are grown for several years to establish a record sufficient to warrant a trial in the breeding plots.

After the breeder has determined upon a variety of corn for improvement, it should be planted in at least a two-acre plot, using the check-row system. At the time the corn reaches that stage of