RED ROCK WHEAT AND ROSEN RYE.1

FRANK A. SPRAGG.

I wish to take a little of your time this afternoon in discussing some of the new products of the plant breeding work at the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station.

When I took up the work ten years ago, our highest yielding wheats were white wheats of poor milling and of especially poor baking quality. The problem was to find a red wheat that would at least equal the white wheats in yield. This we are finding in the Red Rock, which originated from an individual plant selected in 1909. This strain was grown in a row in 1910, planted in the regular varietal series (twentieth-acre plat) in the fall of 1911, and distributed in peck lots through county agents in the fall of 1913. The Red Rock is a red wheat of exceptional winter hardiness, high yielding ability, an extra stiff straw, and those characteristics which make a bread of unusual quality.

The Rosen rye, on account of the exceptionally poor competitors, is yielding about twice as much as common rye. It has a shorter, stiffer straw than common rye and much larger heads, which are exceptionally well filled. There are four rows of kernels on every rye head, but the common rye has only scattering kernels along each row. The Rosen has four very nearly complete rows on 99 percent of its heads.

While I am talking about new pedigreed grains I want to mention the Michigan Winter barley. It has not proved as popular as the others, because it apparently does not fit into the rotation as well. It must be sown between August 15 and September 10 in order to produce a root system sufficient to stand the winter and give a good yield the next summer. When planted early on well-prepared, fertile soil, yields as high as 64 bushels to the acre have been reported. It matures before the wheat at a season of the year when the farmers usually need the grain to fatten their hogs. Unfortunately, however, on September 1 almost no land is available for the sowing of a fall crop.

1 Contribution from the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Mich. Presented by the writer, with illustrations, at the tenth annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Washington, D. C., November 13, 1917.