2B. SEED IMPROVEMENT WORK AS ORGANIZED IN MONTANA

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One of the vital questions confronting agronomists and others interested in farm crops may be stated in two ways, viz., (1) How can the results of the work of the experiment station in the testing and breeding of improved varieties of farm crops be most economically brought into farm practice and be made a definite and considerable factor in crop improvement with consequent influence on farm profits through more economic production? (2) How are farmers to be brought to make greater use of better seed of the best varieties of farm crops for their particular section?

The correct and most practical answer to these questions will, of course, vary with the various sets of affecting conditions in the different states. In this paper we make no pretense of laying down any uniform standard plan. Our primary purpose is to outline a plan worked out, the methods employed, and the results obtained under the conditions of one state, in the hope that the discussion may possibly bring out principles of value to workers in other states.

The crop standardization project is of interest not only from the standpoint of its importance from an economic standpoint, but also because it illustrates the fundamental principles of good extension work in an exceptionally clear and simple manner. In fact the crop standardization project has served to a great degree in popularizing among agents, planned, definite, and purposeful work along other lines.

Before the present plan of crop standardization was worked out and adopted, the "hit and miss" method of recommending crop varieties and of distributing the seed was in operation in Montana. Each substation was singing its own independent solo as to adapted strains and varieties, being very careful to note the yield differences to the second decimal place and possibly forgetting some insignificant (?) factor such as shortness of straw. Seed was increased on the stations in a haphazard fashion with no definite standards as to purity. The seed was distributed to individuals, sometimes because they were influential politically or merely because they expressed a desire to obtain some seed. In two or three years the identity of the seed was...

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