4. BREEDING IMPROVED VARIETIES OF FORAGE CROPS

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Progress in forage crop improvement has been slow due to the lack of an effective method with plants that are wind- or insect-pollinated. Problems in cereal breeding, being more urgent, naturally were the first to receive the attention of the plant breeders. Also, the mode of pollination of most small grains is such as to assist the investigator in obtaining results in the shortest possible time. Nevertheless forage crops offer many opportunities for improvement. Some of the more important improvements in forage crops which may be mentioned are hardiness combined with high yield of seed in alfalfa and red clover; early, productive varieties of soybeans; a finer stemmed, more leafy type of growth, less objectionable flavor, and better pasture qualities in sweet clover; strains of timothy, brome grass, orchard grass, and other grasses which are better adapted to regional requirements; increased productiveness and disease resistance in all of them.

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