4. WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY BREEDING SMALL GRAINS?

R. J. Garber

During the past few decades considerable time, thought, and money have been given to the improvement of small grains. What is the net result? Have we obtained a measurable increase in yield? Is the quality of the small grains which we are now growing superior to that of those grown by our forefathers? The cereal breeders undoubtedly have achieved some results which are not directly measurable in terms of increased yields or improved qualities, but which are nevertheless of great value to mankind.

Sometimes we forge ahead with too little regard for the past. Occasionally, it is well to pause and look back as by so doing we may improve our perspective and our method of work. The annual reports of the United States Commissioner of Patents, issued about 75 years ago, contain many interesting references to agriculture. It will be recalled that at that early period there was no federal Department of Agriculture. The sections of the reports which concern agricultural practices are made up largely of clippings from the agricultural journals of the day and quotations from recognized

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2Agronomist.