Crop ecology is a comparatively recent addition to the curricula of as yet but a limited number of institutions. Only five institutions at the present time offer definite courses in this subject and in two of these, in the Michigan State College and in the University of Wisconsin, it is offered to graduate students only. The University of Illinois, the Kansas State Agricultural College, and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College are the only institutions in the United States at the present time offering courses in crop ecology to undergraduate students. In Canada, the Ontario Agricultural College offers crop ecology to undergraduates. Some institutions, such as the Agricultural College of Utah, offer courses in the geography of agriculture, either in the agronomy or in the economics departments. Such courses may include many of the topics to be outlined for crop ecology and ecological crop geography as may also courses in agricultural meteorology. No doubt many of the factors to be outlined may be made use of in the teaching of agronomic subjects even where distinct crop ecology courses may not at present be organized.

It is the object of this paper to outline the scope of crop ecology and ecological crop geography and to point out what factors may be considered in such a course.

SCOPE OF CROP ECOLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL CROP GEOGRAPHY

Agronomy, as stated by Ball (1), is the “Art and Science of Field Crop Culture.” The agronomist and especially the producer who offers his crops to a competitive market is, however, concerned with far more than that. He is interested as much, if not more, in the distribution, the acreage devoted to a crop, the cost of production on the part of competitive growers, and the final utilization of an agricultural commodity, as in its original production. All these factors determine whether or not he may successfully produce a certain crop.