NOTE

RED TAG CERTIFIED ALFALFA SEED ADAPTED TO HAY PRODUCTION

The Tri-State Certification Conference, comprising the certifying agencies of Idaho, Montana, and Utah, in its third annual meeting at Blackfoot, Idaho, August 19 and 20, was confronted by the problem of sales resistance encountered in the handling of certified red tag alfalfa seed. Farmers in alfalfa seed-consuming sections were said to have an aversion for red tag based upon the belief that this seed was grade No. 2.

It was decided by the Conference that an investigation be made and information be published as to what certified red tag alfalfa seed really is. Accordingly, a review was made of all purity analyses and grade designations of Idaho certified Grimm alfalfa seed, performed in the state seed laboratory between the dates of June 30, 1927, and July 1, 1929. The entire poundage of seed represented by the samples analyzed and graded was taken into consideration.

The statements presented below show how the Idaho certified Grimm alfalfa seed graded during the seasons of 1927 and 1928 and also are indicative of the averages of impurity, sweet clover seed content, and discoloration which will be approximated in red tag seed during succeeding years.

"Idaho certified and sealed Grimm alfalfa seed is graded in the state seed laboratory by an official seed analyst and according to uniform standards specified by the certifying agencies of Idaho, Montana, and Utah. There are but two grades for certified seed, grade No. 1 and sample grade No. 2. There are two classes of No. 1 seed, blue tag and red tag. Bags of sample grade No. 2 are given yellow tags.

"The combined crops of Idaho certified alfalfa seed produced during the seasons of 1927 and 1928 graded 20.73% blue tag, 47.94% red tag, and 31.32% yellow tag, according to analyses made in the state seed laboratory. The predominating designation was red tag class of No. 1 seed, which many have presumed incorrectly to be No. 2 seed. The same analyses showed that all red tag seed averaged 20.43 sweet clover seeds per pound, or approximately 1/14o of 1%. The average discoloration was slightly over 7%, or approximately midway between the maximum tolerance for blue tag and that specified for red tag. The average of all red tag seed was slightly more than 99.2% pure alfalfa.

"Blue tag is extra No. 1 seed and is utilized extensively as foundation stock for seed-producing purposes because of its freedom from sweet clover. Red tag is No. 1 seed suitable for hay-producing purposes. Both are identical as to hardiness under severe climatic conditions and differ only in that the requirements for red tag allow one-half of 1% more impurity, one-sixteenth of 1% more sweet clover seed, and 5% more discolored seed than is allowed in blue tag seed. Impurity consists largely of broken seeds. Sweet clover will disappear from fields cut for hay within two years after planting. Slightly discolored seeds germinate almost as readily as bright seed.