MOISTURE CONTENT OF FLAXSEED AND ITS RELATION TO HARVESTING, STORAGE, AND CRUSHING

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INTRODUCTION

The modern combined harvester and thresher has been used with marked success during the past two or three years in harvesting flax in Montana and the Dakotas. This new use of the combine has brought out the importance of the moisture content of flaxseed in relation to harvesting, storage, and crushing. The observations and tests made by the writers during the past two years may be of interest to agronomists in the flaxseed-producing states.

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MOISTURE CONTENT DURING GROWTH

The growing young flaxseed contains a high percentage of moisture, which is gradually reduced as the seed develops toward maturity. In the growth of the seed there is a more or less steady increase in dry weight coincident with a decrease in moisture content. In studies made at University Farm, St. Paul, Minn., in 1926 and 1927, the moisture content of flaxseeds ranged from 85% in seeds 1 to 5 days old, that is, that number of days after flowering, to 22% in seeds 40 to 42 days old. This is shown graphically in Fig. 1. When the seeds were fully developed, that is, when the deposition of oil and other plant food material ceased, as indicated by lack of further increase in dry weight and by the detachment of the seed at the hilum from the supporting placental thread, they still contained from 30 to 40% of moisture.