REGISTRATION OF VARIETIES AND STRAINS OF SWEET CLOVER, I

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COMMERCIAL seed of both biennial white sweet clover (Melilotus alba) and biennial yellow sweet clover (Melilotus officinalis) have become a mixture of different types and strains varying widely in degree of adaptation and desirability for different locations and uses. A considerable quantity of seed sold as sweet clover is a mixture of biennial white sweet clover and biennial yellow sweet clover. When such seed is shipped in interstate commerce in order to comply with the Federal Seed Act, the percentage of each species must be given, if more than 5% is present, or the seed must be labeled sweet clover without species designation.

A large part of the total sweet clover seed crop of the United States is produced in the region of western Minnesota and eastern North Dakota and South Dakota. Seed from this region produces semi-dwarf, early maturing types of biennial white and common biennial yellow sweet clover adapted to the culture and harvesting methods of that section. Their use in the seed-consuming sections of the Corn Belt states, however, reduces the potentialities of the crop, as the need there is for late-maturing, rank-growing strains to increase the quantity of forage and length of the grazing season.

The identification and multiplication of improved varieties and strains of sweet clover are desirable in order to preserve and make available seed containing the superior characteristics of this crop. Due to the problems of volunteer seed, pollination, and lack of seed-identifying characteristics, certification by state crop improvement associations seems essential to maintain the inherent superior qualities of the improved strains and varieties. Sweet clover varieties were registered in 1942 for the first time and three varieties have been approved for registration.

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Spanish (P. I. 27, 465), a variety of Melilotus alba formerly called Madrid white, originated as an introduction through the Division of Plant Introduction and Exploration from the Madrid Botanical Garden, Madrid, Spain, in 1910. Early trials were limited and it was not until 1926 that it was widely distributed to state agricultural experiment stations.

Spanish, the progeny of bulked seed of the introduction, is biennial

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