COGON GRASS, *IMPERATA CYLINDRICA* (L.) BEAUV., IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

The note "Cogon Grass, *Imperata cylindrica*, in the Western Hemisphere", by Robert L. Pendleton, in the November, 1948, issue of the Journal does not adequately describe the occurrence of this grass in the Southeastern United States.

Cogon grass was established in the grass garden of the McNeil, Miss., Experiment Station prior to 1920. Its introduction from the Philippines was suggested by the late C. V. Piper, formerly Head, Office Forage Crops and Diseases, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, according to the story told the writer by the former personnel of the McNeil Station. A few years later Cogon grass was established in the grass garden of the Florida Experiment Station, Gainesville, Fla. It was later planted with torpedo grass, *Panicum repens* L., in an experimental grazing plot at Brooksville (not Brookston, Fla). Plantings have been made on firebreaks of the nearby Withlacoochee Land Utilization Project. A small plot has been established at Auburn, Ala.

According to Dr. Fred H. Hull, Agronomist and Head of Agronomy Department, "The policy of the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station regarding Cogon grass has always been not to release planting material" due to "its potential danger as a pest" and because "records show other pasture grasses superior to it."

About 1935, Cogon grass was taken without authorization from the Florida Experiment Station at Gainesville and planted in northwest Florida. From this planting, it has been carried by cattlemen to Central Florida and perhaps other portions of the state. Probably more than 1,000 acres of Cogon grass have been established on Florida ranches during the past 10 years.

Apparently, Cogon grass has spread little from seed in Mississippi and Florida. It has been suppressed by close continuous grazing. The writer revisited the site of the abandoned grass garden at McNeil, Miss., on July 20, 1945, and found Cogon grass spreading very little in contrast to an enormous spread of centipede grass, *Eremochloa ophiuroides* (Munro) Hack. The area had been grazed. Little evidence of spreading by seed was found. At Brooksville, Fla., Cogon grass is escaping from the experimental grazing area mainly by vegetative growth. In southern Florida, about the town of Homestead, the writer has found many clumps of *Imperata* in a vegetative stage. It might be Cogon grass or a related species, *Imperata brasiliensis* Trin.

The writer has been unwilling to include Cogon grass in observational plantings of promising soil conserving plants at Soil Conservation Service nurseries because of its reputation as a weed in Southeast Asia. Ten years of field observations have convinced him that it is not as bad in the Southeastern United States as reported in Asia and Africa. Its eradication from the Southeastern United States is desirable but will not be easy.—PAUL TABOR, Soil Conservation Service, Spartanburg, S. C.