TRAINING teams for the national and international collegiate crops judging contests represents a highly interesting phase of agronomic teaching which has not attained its proper place generally in the agronomic curriculum of the agricultural colleges and universities. This training is far more than contest participation since it prepares students for specialized work in several agronomic fields. This paper is written in anticipation of gaining more interest in this phase of agronomic education with more contest participation the major goal. If this goal is attained the other important aspects will come automatically.

These contests are by no means the "guessing contests" which may be found in some fields of agricultural endeavor, but are based upon three agronomic phases with ample information and application. These three phases are seed judging, grading, and identification. Seed judging involves the selection of planting seed with consideration given to crop, varietal, and weed seed purity together with the various quality factors. Much too often the price of planting seed in commercial channels is the primary criterion in selection, with the merits of purity and quality largely disregarded. Training toward this phase of the contest surely makes seed price secondary.

Grading involves the placing of a grade on samples of grain, hay and cotton by the same methods and upon the same standards used in governmental grading laboratories. We are all cognizant of the need of leading the farmer to see the value in selling price of the better grades of grain, hay, and cotton. This of necessity involves production, harvesting, storage, and marketing methods conducive to this higher price.

Identification involves the recognition of plant and seed specimens of crop varieties, plant and seed specimens of the major weeds and some of the more general and more important crop diseases of the entire United States. Common and Latin names are required of all specimens.

Collegiate crops team coaches very frequently are asked questions regarding the work by other agronomists who anticipate coaching teams. Some of the questions asked are: What is the value of such training? What is the value of contest participation? How much time is required of the student? How much credit is allowed toward graduation? Each of these questions seems to merit an answer. The answers given here are largely a summary of ideas obtained from several of the more successful coaches.

What is the value of the training leading toward judging contest work?—It gives a relatively clear view of a cross section of agriculture in the United States. Agriculture taught in agronomy departments must be broad in scope because we never know where a graduate will be farming in the vicinity of the college or university. He may be working with flax in Minnesota, red clover in New York or crimson clover in Georgia. Crops team work gives the Pennsylvania student some knowledge of and appreciation of the problems of the cotton farmer while the Oklahoma, Texas, or Arkansas student learns something of the problems of spring wheat production in North Dakota. The most important crop types and the weeds and diseases commonly found with them over the United States are learned by the students. It will be agreed that more stress is applied agronomically to the problems of the area in which the college or university is located, but surely none of us want our college trained students to be educated only in the practical application of agronomic principles to a single and limited area.

This training equips students for work in very little further intensified training necessary if they who have received this training are in great demand as farm managers of seed producing farms and as grain companies and other such businesses. Some colleges have not been able to fill the demand of industry for their graduates thus trained and publicized by their judging team work.