Brief Articles

HULLED OATS CAN RESULT IN INCORRECT DECISIONS
Franklin A. Coffman and Ivan K. Bespalow

Evidence obtained since 1956 has indicated that many nursery threshers are being improperly operated. This is resulting in much hulling of oat seed. Such practices can result in incorrect data on yield, test weight, and percentages of groats. The possibility for the occurrence of such errors was mentioned in several informal reports. Examinations disclosed that the percentages of thresher-hulled seed in seed lots received from different experiment stations differed widely. Threshed samples showed that little hulling of any entry had occurred at some stations, whereas at others it was excessive in most samples received. Hulling in some entries at certain stations was in excess of 30% in some varieties. Such hulling has an influence on yield data. The corrected yields for oats testing 32 pounds per bushel and giving threshed yields of 60 bushels per acre with 5, 10, 20, 30, 40, or 50% of hulled kernels in the samples would be, respectively, 61.25, 62.50, 65.00, 67.50, 70.0, or 72.50 bushels per acre.

Errors of considerable importance can also occur in test weight data as well as in calculated yields of oats as the result of thresher-hulled seed. The calculations for test weights are given in Table 1.

It is evident that unless corrections are made, oats that resist hulling have a decided advantage in yield data over oats that hull readily in threshing. Even when comparatively little hulling occurs, it can be sufficient to influence the ranking of varieties as to yield.

1 Principal Agronomist, Crops Research Division, ARS, USDA, and Plant Breeder, Eastern States Farmers Cooperative, W. Springfield, Mass., respectively.