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EXTENSION SERVICE

Pullman, Washington

LADINO CLOVER

NMSU
WITHDRAWN

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Ladino clover was introduced into this country from Italy in 1903, by the United States Department of Agriculture, and since has been grown in various parts of the country. In most sections where it is now being grown, it still occupies a minor place. The plant is worthy of greater consideration. To be sure, care must be used in placing it where it has a chance to succeed. It requires its particular soil and climatic conditions like all other plants. It has, however, a rather wide climatic tolerance.

This plant prefers, first of all, the heavier types of soil. Silt and clay loam soils, if drained, are especially well suited. These soils should be rich in plant food, and should contain a liberal amount of organic matter. It does especially well on irrigated lands. Moist lands without irrigation are also well suited. Wet lands, where water stands during winter and early spring, are not so well suited, although the plant may grow under such conditions.

The yield produced depends very much upon the moisture that is available during the growing season. For successful growing the crop must be assured of a good and regular supply of moisture. If the soil dries out for a period during the summer, a reduction in yield must be expected.

Ladino is a close relative to the little white or Dutch clover, found so commonly in permanent pastures. It might be called the giant white, since it is a much larger and stronger plant than the Dutch clover. The seeds of the two look alike. It will grow to a length of 12 to 30 inches, depending upon soil and moisture conditions. The little white, under like conditions, would grow to a length of about 3 to 5 inches.

This clover is not upright in its growing habit. For that reason, it is better suited for pasture, than for hay. It is, however, used in a limited way for hay purposes. The stems are slender and drooping in their habit of growth; and they attach themselves readily to the ground by means of new roots. On account of this, the stand thickens with age. Often light seedlings develop into thick stands, after they are two or three years old. It is better, however, to use enough seed at the beginning so that a full stand will result.

A good seed bed must be made before sowing. It must be without clods and without depressions, and well packed. A corrugated type of roller is especially well suited to the making of a good seed bed. Good packing insures a shallow covering for the seed. A half inch of covering is better than deeper covering. A very satisfactory way of covering is to roll the ground just before seeding and then cross roll it after seeding. Around four pounds of seed per acre, when sown alone, should make a full stand.

Some growers like pure stands, while others use the Ladino in pasture mixtures, in place of or in combinations with the white clover. When added to regular pasture mixture, two pounds of seed per acre will be enough. Pure stands may cause bloat, especially where animals are hungry and during times when there is moisture on the plants. There is less danger from bloat if the Ladino is used in mixed seedings.

It is possible to maintain profitable stands as long as 7 to 8 years. A good stand pastures well, and should carry two or three cows per acre. The plant stands pasturing well, and recovers quickly after grazing. This accounts for its high carrying capacity.