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Seeding

CRESTED-
WHEAT-
GRASS

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Seeding Crested Wheat Grass

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Introduction

Crested wheat grass has a very definite place in soil erosion control and soil improvement plans in Eastern Washington. It has additional value also as a forage plant. It is the one grass that fits a greater variety of conditions of soil and climate in Eastern Washington than any other grass now available.

Crested wheat grass seedings will remain profitable over a period of years, provided a good stand is secured. Since it is a long lived plant, the seed cost of establishing and maintaining a stand is very low.

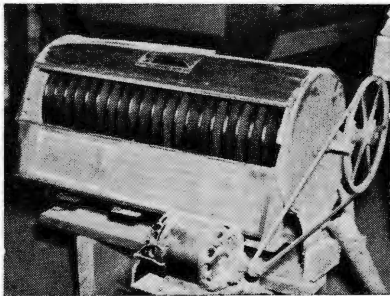
Lands that have been subjected to severe cropping in the past are in need of the benefits that this grass can supply. It will check erosion and add some much needed organic material. A seeding of this grass will be still better if it is possible to add some legume. There is a need at this time for a larger supply of seed to meet the demands created by the soil improvement programs.

Seed

Most of the seed grown thus far is of good quality. Fields, however, must be kept free from weeds and other foreign growth which endanger the value of the seed. Good harvest-

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ing and threshing methods are required in securing clean seed and in reducing the danger from noxious weed infestation on the farm. Good clean seed is all important in establishing stands and in cheapening costs.



Part of the modern equipment necessary to properly clean crested wheat grass seed. Pure seed helps make good stands.

Preparation of the Seed Bed

Crested wheat like all other grasses requires a firm seed bed. If the seed bed is loose, open or cloddy there is little chance for a satisfactory stand; and the seed used will likely be largely wasted.

A well prepared piece of fallow ground is best suited as a seed bed for crested wheat grass. Many good seedings are also made in stubble ground late in the fall, with only surface preparation. This practice is more common in the areas of lighter rainfall. Stubble ground offers one decided advantage in this regard, namely firmness of seed bed. Most spring seedings are made on fall plowed land. Weeds should always be put under the best possible control by thorough early soil preparation.

Time of Seeding

In sections of low rainfall, fall sowing is far safer than spring sowing. In heavier rainfall districts, spring sowing is usually practiced. Spring sowing should always be early. Growth starts when soil temperatures are still low, and soil moisture conditions during the early season are usually more favorable than they are at any time later in the season.

Method of Seeding

The seed is preferably sown with a drill. This method of sowing insures even distribution and places the seed at uniform depth. If the seed bed is not well packed, it becomes necessary to drop the seed outside the disks or shoes of the drill in order to guard against excessive covering. The disk drill and the shoe drill are the best types of machines to use. Crested wheat grass seed preferably should not be covered more than a half inch in depth.

Amount of Seed to Sow per Acre

Only good seed should be used. Sowing poor seed will likely result in a poor stand regardless of the amount sown. The amount of good seed needed is determined by the seed bed, method of seeding and the purposes for which the crop is intended. Seeding rates vary from two to ten pounds per acre.

If soil protection is desired, with drill rows seven or eight inches apart, six to ten pounds of seed should be used. Where rainfall conditions permit, an addition of alfalfa or sweet clover seed is desirable to still further thicken the stand and to secure the benefits to be de-

rived from a legume. A combination of grasses and legumes is always better than grass alone.

For pasture, eight pounds of seed per acre should produce a good stand. Again it is desirable under favorable conditions to sow some legume seed in addition in order to improve the quality of the pasture.



The arrow in this picture points to the spout from which trash mixed with crested wheat grass seed comes. Notice the large amount of material which is cleaned from the seed.

For seed production lighter seedings are necessary. Drill rows may be placed from 14 to 35 inches apart, the distance being governed by soil moisture supply. If placed 35 inches apart, the rows may be either single or in pairs. Two or three pounds of seed will sow an acre if rows are placed 35 inches apart. Where rows are only 14 inches apart around six pounds of seed should be used. Other widths of row seeding will require proportionate amounts of seed.

Where moisture is limited and where seedings are made in 28 to 35 inch rows alternate rows of wheat may be sown between to control

weeds. This wheat may be clipped when once the grass needs the room. The use of wheat in this manner is helpful in checking weed growth.

For detailed information to meet local conditions, see your county extension agent. This circular is the first of a series to be published on Crested Wheatgrass.

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