

# BE SURE TO TEST SEED CORN

**AGRICULTURAL**  
Experts predict short corn crop this year. Farmers advised to test every grain of seed in order to avoid loss—situation serious

By P. G. HOLDEN.



HERE will be a short corn crop this year and millions of dollars will be lost to the farmers if great care is not taken in selecting and testing the best matured corn for this season's planting.

We may well take the warning to heart, for this section of the country lives and prospers largely on the production of its land, and follow the advice of agricultural scientists who can tell our people how to escape heavy loss. This advice will work no hardship and no expense if followed. It will require a little careful work and sharp watching at a season of the year when the farmer is not overburdened with labor.

Nineteen fifteen was a bad year for corn. A cold, wet season retarded the growth of the grain. The crop in many parts of the corn belt was immature; it contains an excessive amount of water and is unfit for feed. The scarcity of seed corn is really the most serious in many years.

You farmers may say you are going to use seed from your 1914 crop. Don't trust it. The grain may have been damaged by the frost during the hard freezes of last year. Don't trust it—test it. The high price of corn, too, on account of the war has nearly exhausted the 1914 crop and this source of supply then is not reliable.

**Missing Hills, Weak Stalks.**  
There are about 800 kernels on the average ear of corn. One poor seed means 800 weak, moldy or dead kernels. If these are planted it means missing hills and weak stalks producing little or nothing. According to reports just received, every indication points to very serious trouble with seed corn, especially in sections lying north of central Illinois and in North Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Iowa.

This community ought to get busy right now, for the prosperity of our community—our merchants, our bankers, our builders, our workers—depends on the prosperity of the farmers hereabouts. We ought to start a seed corn campaign. The county superintendent of schools can reach the farmers through the rural schoolteachers, who in turn will see that the children carry the message home. You bankers, merchants and implement dealers who trade directly with the farmers ought to write personal letters urging them to get into this matter scientifically. In short, all of us ought to mobilize our forces, just as our nation would have to mobilize all its resources in case of war.

You farmers must not use poor seed this spring. It means too much to all of us. Poor seed means not only a poor stand and a portion of the field idle, but that you must cultivate missing hills, one-stalk hills, and poor, worthless stalks, and receive nothing in return.

**Don't Work for Nothing.**  
Thousands of people every year work more than a third of every day on ground that produces nothing. Do not depend for seed on the occasional good ears selected during the husking period. The corn will be injured by freezing before it is husked or before it has had time to become dry after husking.

Select the best ears, if you have not already done so, and string them on binder twine and hang up.

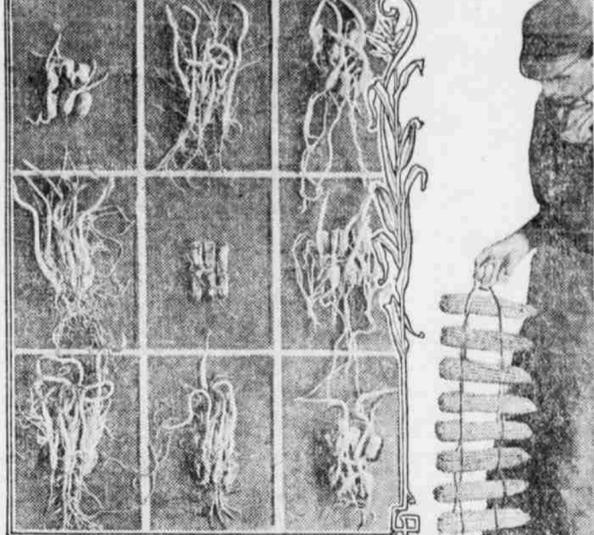
Do not store seed corn in barrels or boxes. It will "gather moisture" and mold or freeze. Do not store over the stable. Do not put immature or freshly gathered seed corn in a warm room, on the floor, or in piles. It will either sprout, or mold, or both. It should be hung up at once, and the windows opened to allow the freest circulation of air. Do not depend on the crib for seed corn.

One day devoted to the seed corn, at the proper time, may be worth more than an entire month of hard work next summer put on a poor stand of corn.

The attic is a good place to hang up the seed corn. There should be a circulation of air through the room. A space three by eight feet will hold 200 strings of corn; twelve to fifteen ears to each string, or about enough to plant 200 acres. Three-fourths of this



SELECT EARS CAREFULLY



SEED AFTER GERMINATION

corn may be discarded after testing, but there will be enough seed to plant fifty acres, more than the average acreage on each farm. There are several objections to the average cellar. It is apt to be too damp, and the corn must be well dried before putting in the cellar, and it must not be corded up or put in piles, but hung up.

**Will Your Seed Corn Grow?**  
It is only good business to know that the seed that you put into the ground will grow; and the only way you can tell good seed is by testing it. You can't tell by merely looking at it. If you want profitable yields, you must plant good seed.

The ten million acres of corn planted in Iowa every year are grown in 217,000 farms, an average of about forty-six acres to each farm. It will take about 600 ears to plant forty acres. Twenty-four hours' time of one man, two days' work, will test six kernels from each ear to plant forty acres. Yet, because it is "too much bother," most of us pick out 600 ears, look at them, guess that they will grow, and plant them. As a consequence, more than twelve acres out of each forty acres of corn planted produce nothing. This is worse than useless, because one must plow, plant and cultivate these twelve acres and get nothing in return.

By testing you get rid of the bad, weak, and moldy ears. Testing does not hurt the corn. It costs but about ten cents an acre, and can be done at a time of the year when other farm work is not pressing. By testing you have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

**Discard Poor Ears.**  
In the winter, during a slack season or in the early spring, from February 20 to March 20, select the best ears from the corn you have stored in the fall and get ready to put them through the test.

The sawdust germination box is no doubt the best method for testing seed corn. It costs nothing but a little time and labor. It furnishes nearly natural conditions. It is not essential that the box be of any particular size, although about thirty inches square and four or five inches deep will be found convenient. This size will test 100 ears at a time.

The sawdust is light, clean, and easy to get and handle in February and the first of March, when the testing should be done; is a good nonconductor of heat and cold, so that the temperature is kept even during germination, and holds the moisture so perfectly that there is no danger of drying out.

The number of boxes required will depend upon the amount of seed to be tested and the time limit. After the germination boxes are made, inspect carefully the ears you are to test from the standpoint of the kernel.

Take two or three kernels from each ear, about a third of the length of the ear from the butt. Lay them germ-side up at the tip of the ear from which they were taken. If the kernels are small, wedge-shaped, narrow, shallow, too deep, or if they show immaturity, starchiness, a tendency to mold, or if the germs are small, or shriveled, discard the ear.

Remove six kernels from six different places on each ear you have selected to test, taking two from near the butt on the opposite sides of the ear, two from near the tip, turning the ear enough so as not to take two kernels out of the same row.

**How to Test Seed Corn.**  
Fill the box about half full of moist sawdust, well pressed down, so as to

leave a smooth, even surface. The sawdust should be put in a gunnysack and set in a tub of warm water for at least an hour (or still better, overnight) so that it will be thoroughly moistened before using. Rule off a piece of good quality white cloth (sheeting), about the size of the box, into squares, two and one-half inches each way. Number the squares, 1, 2, 3, etc. Place the cloth on the sawdust and tack it to the box at the corners and edges.

Use care that the kernels do not get mixed with those from the ear next to it. After the kernels are removed, boards may be laid over the rows of ears to keep them in place until the result of the germination test is known. Place the six kernels from ear No. 1 in square No. 1 of the germination box; from ear No. 2 in square No. 2, and so on with all the ears. Lay a piece of good cloth (a good quality of sheeting) on top of the kernels and dampen it. Press the cloth down gently with the palm of hand, being careful not to misplace the kernels in the squares.

Now place over this cloth another cloth of the same material, considerably larger than the first one (about six feet square), and fill in on top with two or three inches of moist, warm sawdust. Pack it down firmly with a brick or with the feet. The edges of the cover should then be folded over the sawdust in the box to prevent drying out. Now set the box away until the kernels sprout. Keep in an ordinary warm place, like the living room, where it will not freeze. The kernels will germinate in about eight days.

Remove the cover carefully to avoid displacing the kernels in the squares. Examine the kernels in each square in the germination box, and discard all ears whose kernels in the box are dead, moldy, or show weak germination.

**Caring for Seed Corn.**  
If the kernels show weak, spindling sprouts, or a part of them are very weak and uneven, the ear should be thrown out to make place for an ear whose kernels give strong, vigorous sprouts. Remember that the kernels which are slow to sprout, and are weak, will be behind the strong ones in the field.

After the seed has been sorted, tested, shelled, and graded for the planter, and the bad kernels removed, it should be placed in half-bushel sacks and hung up in a dry place. Put in sacks, separate from the rest, the seed from the best 100 ears. When planting, use the seed from "the best 100 ears" on one side of the field from which to pick your seed corn for the next year's planting.

We cannot afford to neglect this important work. If every farmer would test every ear of his seed corn in the winter in the way described above, the yield would be wonderfully increased. No other time will be so profitable to the farmer as that spent in testing the vitality of his seed and in grading to insure the planter dropping the proper number of kernels in each hill. It is possible for everyone to do this work. It will cost nothing but the time, of which there is plenty at the season when the work should be done.

## BACK TO THE LAND

MORE FARMS BEING OPERATED THAN IN 1914.

## FORTUNE IN THE SAND CHERRY

Items of General Interest Gathered from Reliable Sources Around the State House.

**Western Newspaper Union News Service.**  
Lincoln.—Twelve thousand and six hundred more farm owners occupied and worked their farms in Nebraska in 1915, than the previous year and 16,200 more tenants occupy farms last year than the year before.

That is the record as disclosed in the annual summary given out by the state agricultural board. Here is shown the number of farms worked:

Year.	Owners.	Tenants.
1915	17,880	55,986
1914	65,221	39,747
1913	69,752	49,353
1912	72,448	55,275
1911	68,600	45,135
1910	68,611	47,578

Grant county has the greatest proportion of owners to tenants. There are 249 owner-worked places there and only three tenant-worked ranches. Hooker county is next with a proportion of 293 to 12. Richardson county, among the richer counties of the state, stands highest with a proportion of 3,229 to 817.

Counties where tenant-worked farms exceed owner-worked farms, are Adams, Burt, Clay, Dodge, Fillmore, Hamilton, Hitchcock, Kearney, Lancaster, Lincoln, Nemaha, Nemaha, Phelps, Polk, Sarpy, Seward, Thurston, Wayne and York.

### Fortune in the Sand Cherry.

A modest fortune awaits the man who is willing to cultivate the sand cherry in Nebraska and put it on the market, according to predictions made by Prof. G. E. Condra, of the state university, speaking to the members of the Nebraska State Horticultural society at Lincoln, Tuesday morning. "Three weeks before he died, Doctor Bessey, of the state university, urged that something be done with this fruit," said Doctor Condra. "While we are experimenting with all sorts of foreign shrubs and plants in the state why not take a look around and use some of the very plants that nature has adapted to the soil. Instead of putting in your own varieties of plants, make use of nature's own plan. There is the wild rice growing in northern Nebraska just waiting for someone to find a use for it. The rivers are lined with choke cherries, but no one has seen fit to make use of them."

### Dismisses Suit Over Water Rights

Without passing on the question whether the state railway commission has authority to fix the price at which an irrigation corporation may charge for perpetual water rights, the state supreme court has decided that Lavilla J. Burtless and Isaiah H. Wasson have no legal basis for their suits against the McCook Irrigation & Water Power company, in which they demanded perpetual water rights for the sum of \$6.25 an acre. The plaintiffs set up pleadings to the effect that the irrigation company formerly sold everlasting rights for the price stated, and that contracts were signed with a large number of land owners at that rate. It was shown in the trial that such rights had been sold at different prices, varying from \$6.25 to \$20 per acre and about five years ago the company increased the rate to \$35 per acre. When the two plaintiffs in these proceedings applied for water rights, they were told they would have to pay that rate. They refused and brought injunction suits against the company to prevent it from discriminating between themselves and other users.

N. A. Huse of Norfolk, who preferred charges against Superintendent W. D. Guttery of the state hospital for the insane at Norfolk, has declined to make his charges more specific and the state board of control has decided to make inquiry into every charge covered by affidavits on file. The board originally set February 2 as the date for the hearing and this date has not been changed.

### Claim Insurance Men Active.

The statement is made by a member of the legislature that insurance men are organizing throughout the state with the end in view of trying once more to pass a so-called anti-discrimination bill, similar to S. F. 46, which was defeated in the house of representatives during the last session. It is alleged that an army of fire insurance agents who have the secret support of their companies will get busy and remain busy from now on working for candidates for the legislature who will favor such a bill.

State Treasurer Hall has held up a state warrant for \$400 for the payment of ten interchangeable mileage books of 2,000 miles each bought by the hotel commissioner. Mr. Hall does not believe in investing so much money in mileage at one time, and he opposes the use of mileage in any event by state officers and employees. But his principal reason for not countersigning the state warrant is that he believes the railway commissioner may rule the railroads have no right to withdraw from same the books bought by Mr. Ridgell and Mr. Ackerman.

## APPLIES FOR INJUNCTION.

Wants Railroads Prevented from Raising Passenger Rates.

Application for an injunction against the seven railways doing business in Nebraska has been filed with the Nebraska supreme court by Attorney General Willis E. Reed. The injunction is requested to prevent any action the railroads may be contemplating toward reverting to the three cent passenger fare in the state. The court has taken the application under consideration.

The application requests the injunction to cover three phases as follows:

1. That all railroads except the Missouri Pacific be enjoined from charging any rate for intrastate traffic other than two cents per mile or from filing any suit against the enforcement of the Nebraska two-cent fare law.

2. That the Missouri Pacific railroad company be enjoined from refusing to sell 1,000-mileage books for \$20, as is required by a state law independent of the regular two-cent fare act, which that company has temporarily enjoined the state from enforcing in its own case.

3. That the Missouri Pacific be restrained from discriminating in its rates within the state on the allegation that the company now charges two cents per mile, between points where there is competition and three cents where none exists.

The efforts of the attorney general to defeat the alleged intent of railroads to make rate raises means a renewal of the suits stated by former Attorney General W. T. Thompson after the 1907 2-cent fare law had been passed. Those suits were dismissed in federal court only a year ago and Mr. Reed says that it was the understanding that the roads accepted the 2-cent rate without equivocation.

### Roster of Civil War Veterans.

A record containing the names of more than 25,000 veterans of the civil war, living or deceased, whose homes were in Nebraska, has just been completed by the Grand Army of the Republic, Assistant Adjutant General A. M. Trimble says no other state has such a complete record. He believes it will be of great value for reference in years to come. The record was made by Mrs. Kate S. Millar, the daughter of a civil war veteran. The record is double indexed so that names may be easily found. The record shows the name, age, occupation, birthplace, date and place of muster into the service and final discharge, rank, company and regiment, the post, if the veteran is a member of a G. A. R. post, and residence.

### Organized Agriculture at Lincoln.

Organized agriculture opened its annual meetings at Lincoln Tuesday and in each and all of them was reflected the splendid prosperity with which Nebraska is blessed. The state agricultural board had its business meeting at the Commercial club building. The affair was well attended and plans were adopted looking to great things during the coming year in the state. A 1916 state fair is promised that will exceed all others in splendor and extent.

The horticulturists initiated one of the most promising programs they have ever outlined for their winter sessions. President Pollard paid particular attention, in his opening address, to the marvelous apple crop of the past year and asked the growers and consumers present to center their attention upon the marketing problem. A part of this, he pointed out, is to suggest and carry out some plan for getting the waste crop into consumers' hands. Thousands of bushels of apples rotted on the ground last year he said, because they couldn't be prepared for shipment and sent away while the better part of the crop was being attended to.

Secretary Mellor of the state agricultural board gave his usual interesting report on state fair activities.

Scabies inspection of 176,800 cattle of the state has been made by State Veterinarian J. S. Anderson and his departmental assistants since April 1, 1915, and 28,718 of the number have been found to be affected with the disease. A total of 45,000 was found to have been exposed, and 106,000 were said to have been free of the disease. All precautions have been taken by the department to treat the afflicted cattle and to prevent the spread of the disease.

The average profit of five demonstration plots planted to potatoes the past season in Box Butte county showed an estimated increased profit of \$26.90 an acre as compared with the proceeds from other fields planted with tubers affected with this disease.

Clean seed gave an average yield of 188.97 bushels an acre, while the seed affected with dry rot gave a yield of 112.09 bushels per acre, or a difference of 76.88 bushels in favor of the clean seed. The difference in yield at 35 cents per bushel gives an increase of \$26.90 per acre.

The demonstration was conducted co-operatively under the direction of the Box Butte county agricultural agent and the department of Agricultural botany of the college of agriculture.

George Jackson was elected president and Wm. H. Smith re-elected secretary-treasurer of the State association of state farm managers at the recent annual session in Lincoln.

There were nearly 13,000 more farms worked by men who owned them in Nebraska in 1915, than there were in 1914.

## MAY FREE BELGIUM

KAISER TO PROPOSE PEACE HEARD IN WASHINGTON.

## WOULD EVACUATE THE COUNTRY

Understood That Germany Will Offer to Pay for Property Loss Caused by Occupation.

Washington, D. C.—Information has been received in diplomatic circles in Washington that Germany is considering making Belgium a proposal of separate peace. The evacuation of all Belgian territory would follow.

It is understood that the proposal, which will be made to King Albert by the military governor of Belgium, will include an offer to pay for the property damage caused by the German occupation.

The offer will probably be accepted, it was said by high officials.

The restoration of Belgium would leave the allies no room for protest, in the opinion of this authority, inasmuch as it has been this one point on which the allies have been most insistent as a condition of peace.

It can be stated authoritatively that the question of voluntarily withdrawing from all the occupied ports of Belgium on the one condition that Belgium first consents to conclude a separate peace with the central empires, is now being carefully considered in official circles in Berlin.

It is pointed out that the conclusion of such an arrangement would accrue to the advantage of Germany for the following reasons:

The conclusion of a separate peace with Germany would automatically divorce Belgium from the other allies.

The occupation by any of the allies of any part of Belgian territory would become a violation of neutrality, precisely comparable with the much-quoted violation of neutrality of which Germany has been declared guilty.

For the allies to commit such a breach of neutrality after having used it as an excuse for making war on Germany is too inconsistent to be possible.

With immunity from attack from that portion of her frontier facing Belgium, Germany would have for disposal elsewhere the vast army now actually in Belgium and in the trenches on the western portion of the battle line.

Inasmuch as Germany has never at any time had any intention of occupying Belgium permanently, her withdrawal now, instead of at the end of the war, could not fail to be of great advantage—not only because of the accompanying release of troops, but because of the world approval with which such a step would be met.

So far as paying the cost of the rehabilitation of Belgium is concerned, the amount involved is very much less than is popularly supposed, by far the greatest financial loss sustained by the Belgians having been due to the British sea blockade, which has absolutely prevented all Belgian industrial activity.

### Avalanche Kills Five.

Leavenworth, Wash.—Five passengers were killed by the avalanche that hurled the dining car and day coach of the Great Northern Spokane Owl train No. 25 from the mountain side into a ravine 300 feet below at Corea, Wash., forty miles from here, shortly before 7 a. m. January 22.

Five others, rescued from the ill-fated cars, are severely injured.

The train had been standing still almost an hour near the entrance to Horseshoe tunnel while workmen cleared the track of a previous small slide.

With a vast roar, the side of the mountain suddenly ripped loose, tons of snow and earth shot down, cut the two coaches from the rest of the train, and the next moment were heard the shrieks of men and women, some of them just awakened.

Four hundred feet of snowsheds, tracks and roadbed were torn away. The chair car and diner received the full force of the avalanche and were swept along with uprooted trees and rocks into the gulch at the bottom of the steep embankment.

A sleeping car was bowled off the track by the slide, but the couplings held, and it was saved from going over the brink.

### Robber Gets \$500 From Bank.

Los Angeles, Cal.—A lone highwayman robbed the Culver City Commercial and Savings bank of Culver City, near here, of \$500. He fled after locking the cashier in the vault.

### Five Negroes Lynched.

Sylvestre, Ga.—Five negroes were taken from the Worth county jail by a mob and strung up to one tree. The mob took a negro, bound with ropes, to the jail, saying they feared he would be lynched. When the sheriff admitted them he was overpowered.

### College Men for Military Training.

Hanover, N. H.—Six hundred Dartmouth college students at a mass meeting here, formed an organization to take up military drills and studies.