

More About Bromus Inermis.

D. A. Brodie, Puyallup Exp. Station.

Having noticed several articles in the RANCH AND RANGE of late regarding Bromus Inermis, or Russian forage grass, and as I consider the subject of forage plants of great importance, not only in Eastern Washington but in Western Washington as well, I wish to state briefly something of the experience of the experiment station workers along this line.

At the state experiment station at Pullman, which is a good representation of the wheat belt of Eastern Washington, Bromus Inermis has been tried and has proven highly satisfactory, so far. Hay has been cut which yielded 2 to 3 tons per acre on the driest portions. It has been successfully grown in Idaho on much the same kind of land, and from different portions of Eastern Washington to which seed was sent by the experiment station for trial, good results have been reported.

Seed from Pullman was tried at the Puyallup experiment station this year. It was sown about May 20th and made as good a growth as orchard grass sown at the same time and on the same land. Some of the same seed was tried on the farm of Mr. Geo. J. Dougherty, near Lakeview, in Pierce County. The land was high and dry and very gravelly, characteristic of the region extending south from Tacoma and Steilacoom for a distance of 30 or 40 miles. Here it was sown in May, came up and thrived well until the dry weather set in, when it stood still, starting into vigorous growth again as soon as the rains began in August.

Tall Meadow Oat grass (*Arrheratherum avenaceum*) growing alongside of the Bromus Inermis, was killed out completely with the dry weather, which was not the case on the bottom lands of the experiment station: here the growth of the oat grass was exceptionally good. This grass, however, is very subject to smut, more so on this side of the mountains than in Eastern Washington.

I may state further that among the other varieties tried here this season, English and Italian rye grass, *Bromus secalinus* and *Bromus hookerianus*, made excellent growths on both hill and bottom land. *Bromus secalinus* (cheat) is grown quite extensively in the Willamette Valley for hay. In many sections in the Eastern states this grass is considered a weed, as it is found almost everywhere that grain is grown. Several species of the native "bunch grass" of the Palouse country are also doing well here, as is also *Eleusine Coracana*, a grass imported from southern Asia by the United States department of agriculture.

The fact that Eastern Washington hay commands the highest price in the market all over the Puget Sound country is enough to make the subject of forage plants an important one in this section and it may be that from among the introduced plants we may find some which will supplant timothy and red clover. In other words—it is probable that we may find some grasses, with which we are as yet unfamiliar, which will be ready for haying later in the season, say from July 15th to Aug. 15th, when the season is well settled and hay can be properly cured. As it is now, timothy, orchard grass and red clover come in during the latter part of June and first half of July, a time usually very unfavorable for the proper curing of hay.

Bromus Inermis seed can be procured from the large seed firms in Seattle, Tacoma and Portland, and I

would recommend, especially to those living on the prairie in Pierce and Thurston counties, to give it a trial.

Some of the seeds mentioned in this article are not on the market, but may be procured in small quantities from the experiment stations free of charge by those willing to give them a fair trial and report the results.

Reports a week ago from Oregon said that in many sections mold was coming fast upon the hops, and every grower doing his utmost to hurry the harvest. No yard seems to have been exempt from mold. All had it in a more or less degree, according to lay of the land and proximity of forest trees. Those in the open were least affected, while those near the timber were badly scorched. Reports of seven growers who have completed picking were that 68 acres, yielding 4,364 boxes in 1898, yielded only 4,285 this year. This is a trifle over 4.20 bales, or 765 pounds, per acre. Indications, however, are that most yards will surpass last year's crop by about 10 per cent. It is safe to claim an average yield of 800 pounds per acre throughout the state. Growers are now acknowledging that they have been disappointed in yields expected in the light of actual results. As usual, the best results come from the smaller yards, where closer attention to cultivation and the prevention of disease and pests was possible.

The condition of the wheat that is now running out of the threshing machines is reported as being very good, and the yields per acre are large. Over on the Palouse the crop is safe from further rain, the harvests having had a long stretch of good harvest weather. It is estimated that fully 60 per cent of the wheat has been threshed, with very little cutting yet to be done. The yield is thought to be greater than during the past two seasons. The average for spring wheat so far threshed is 28 bushels, while fall-sown wheat is averaging between 35 and 38 bushels an acre. The best yield so far as heard from is 70 acres just south of Palouse, the yield being 5,000 bushels. Yields of 50 and 60 bushels an acre are common, even with spring wheat, while threshers in all parts state that 25 bushels an acre is the smallest that has been found. It is now estimated that about half the wheat so far threshed will grade as No. 1 or better.

Plums are commanding a good price down in Tacoma. Frank Alling, who has a good deal of them each season to place on the market, remarked the other day: "Last year I had hard work to get a cent a pound for plums. Now I cannot supply the demand at four cents. My apple crop is light, but I will have some fine Baldwins for Oriental shipment." Mr. Alling says he has raised this season some of the largest potatoes he ever saw, and they are of excellent quality.

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The biggest yield of hops reported in Oregon so far is that in the yards of Charles Davis, near Albany, the picking of which was completed a few days ago. From 21 3/4 acres actually containing hop hills there was picked 1,986 boxes that averaged 46 pounds dried, a total of over 91,000 pounds, or an average of over 4,100 pounds per acre. The land of the yard covers 30 acres, but there were several acres that were not cultivated and a number of hills that were missing. The hops have the advantage of being of first-class quality, without the trace of any mold.

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