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Save Cotton Seed For 1945 Planting

By PAUL H. KIMS
Department of Agronomy
N. C. State College

Cotton will begin opening in a few weeks and so plans should be made to save an ample supply of good seed for planting next year's crop. Good stands and strong vigorous plants are necessary to obtain maximum yields, but to get these good stands the seed must be well matured, undamaged by weather conditions or storage, be free from disease, and germinate well.

The quality of this year's seed will depend on the weather conditions from the time the bolls start to open until the cotton is picked, and on the care during harvesting and storing of the seed cotton and the seed.

Injury to the germination of the seed may be caused by weather damage in the field or by heating of the seed cotton before ginning, or heating of the seed after ginning.

If cotton makes a large growth, the lower bolls will dry out very slowly after picking and will contain a high percentage of moisture when picked. To prevent the seed cotton from heating, and consequent damage to the seed it is advisable to sun or air the seed cotton for several days before ginning. If it is scolded in a well ventilated building and shaken up with a pitchfork each day, heating can be avoided. Green cotton packed in large bins will heat very quickly, and it takes very little heating to injure the germination.

Gins that are equipped with driers can gin damp or green cotton without injury to the fiber, but very little moisture is removed from the seed during the short time the seed cotton is passing through the drier. For this reason, it is very important that the seed be stored so that they will not heat. Bagging the seed at the gin, storing on a wooden floor in a well ventilated building, and setting the bags on end with plenty of air space between is the best method of handling seed.

Seed containing more than the normal amount of moisture will heat if it is stored in large piles.

It is usually preferable to save seed from the middle part of the plant as these seed usually contain less moisture than those from the lower bolls. Of course there is always the possibility that the middle crop may get weather damaged. But the seed from the top crop are usually light and immature.

To prevent mixing with other varieties at the public gin, it is necessary to drop the seed roll and clean the gin and conveyor thoroughly. The seed should be caught on the floor as it is almost impossible to clean most types of seed conveyors. However, in one variety communities or where special gin days are set aside, it is not necessary to clean the gin for each farm except where the seed are to be certified.

A very large percentage of this year's crop was planted with seed that were one or two years from the breeder. Farmers who have pure seed are advised to save a surplus, as they may have to plant over next year, and there is usually a fair to good demand for planting seed. If the seed are not used or sold they can be carried over, as the germination of one year old seed is practically as good provided they were stored in a dry place; furthermore, next year's seed crop may be of poorer quality than this year's seed.

A considerable acreage of this year's crop is eligible for certification. Cotton grown from seed of approved varieties obtained direct from the breeder is eligible for certification provided it meets the requirements, and cotton grown from certified seed can also be certified again this fall.

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State College Answers Timely Farm Questions

Q. How can I build an inexpensive, yet practical egg storage room?
A. Edward W. Glasener, assistant county agent in charge of poultry in Chatham County, reports that Palmer Fox of Siler City, Route 1, has dug a 10 by 12 foot cellar under his feed room. Fox has noted that whereas the temperatures ranged from 20 to 100 degrees during the year in the feed room, the temperatures in the egg cellar varied from 40 to 75 degrees. The difference between the high and low temperature in the cellar was 35 degrees as compared with 80 degrees in the feed room. “Fox realizes that keeping eggs as near 60 degrees as possible is essential for good hatching,” says Glasener.

Q. Can I gauge the fertility of soil by the weeds that are growing on it?
A. Yes, say specialists at State College. On poor land you will find such weeds as bear grass, bitterweed, bracted plantain, poverty grass, poverty cat grass, buckhorn, cinquefoil, golden rod, green brier, mistle, cowslip, daisy, pine weed, rabbit clover, rough buttonweed, card spur, sheep sorrel, and yellow weed.

Q. What are the best varieties of small grains for the upper Piedmont section of North Carolina?
A. We suggest that you write the N. C. Crop Improvement Association, State College, Raleigh for a copy of Agronomy Information Circular No. 128. This publication gives results of official variety tests on wheat, barley, and oats by the Agronomy Experiment station. The tests were conducted at Swannanoa, Greensboro, Fallston, Rocky Mount, Raeford, and Richlands.

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