

Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration
Your Trusted Partner...Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

As Cooperative Extension marks 100 years of working for Wisconsin, the following is an excerpt from Cooperative Extension in Grant County – The First Forty Years by Wilfred Pierick, written in 1963.

Field Crops

"Our aim," stated Davies (county agricultural agent from 2/1919 to 9/1920), "is to produce more of the right crop on each acre."

As a result of a seed grain survey conducted in the spring of 1919 through the assistance of the country school teachers and the boys and girls of the schools, the county agent's office became a clearing house of information for the farmers who had seed grain to sell as well as for those who were in the market to buy. Farmers having a surplus of clover or timothy seed, some extra good oats or purebred seed corn to sell, to those wanting to buy Grimm alfalfa seed, soybeans, certified seed potatoes or seed oats with a "stiffer straw," were urged to correspond with the county agent.

During the year, the county agent secured 3,307 pounds of genuine Grimm alfalfa seed from reliable seedsmen at a saving in price of from ten cents to twenty-five cents per pound. The greatest value however, according to Davies, was "getting pure seed."

The county agent also ordered 170 bushels, or more than 10,000 pounds, of soybean seed during this first year. He also furnished inoculation for eighty-six farmers at the rate of twenty five cents per bottle per one-half bushel of seed.

According to Davies, L. F. Graber, University of Wisconsin Extension agronomist, recommended about this time, a hay seeding mixture of five pounds of timothy and fifteen pounds of alfalfa per acre. The reasons for seeding the timothy with the alfalfa were listed

as, (1) timothy prevents washing, (2) timothy fills in winterkilled spots and keeps out bluegrass, and (3) timothy grows better and when cut with alfalfa makes splendid hay.

The following Grant county farmers were listed in the report of Davies' as being alfalfa growers that year:

Henry Austin, Boscobel

Herb Goldman, Livingston

C. E. Tuffley, Boscobel

A. O. Oleson, Livingston

Wm. Frankenhoff, Boscobel

Dale Rundell, Livingston

O. P. Olson, Fennimore

Peter Kable, Platteville

Albert Brinkman, Lancaster

Benj. Kay, Platteville

Supt. Burris, County Farm

W. C. Hill, Platteville

F. J. Glanville, Lancaster

L. O. Spink, Platteville

Frank Smith, Lancaster

Charles Wilkins, Platteville

Matt Zenz, Lancaster

Jesse Williams, Lancaster

Allie Andrew, Livingston

The soybean was highly recommended at the time as a protein rich crop, either for hay or for seed. Soybeans were recommended with corn for silage purposes, or "if an early maturing bean is planted, excellent results are secured by turning hogs in to hog-off the crop." According to Davies, not "less than 3,500 acres" of soybeans were grown in the county, both for silage and for hogging-off.

In a two acre corn contest sponsored by the Wisconsin Experiment Association, the best yield secured in the county was on the John Morehouse farm in the town of South Lancaster. The yield was eighty-eight bushels per acre. The best yield in the state was 120 bushels grown by Joseph Schneider of Brown county.

Even at this time it was recognized that one of the main reasons for poor yields was low stalk population—too many missing hills and other hills with only one or two stalks. From actual counts made in the Morehouse field, the average number of stalks per hill was two and one-third.