

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.

Seed Growers Take Over - With the help of the county agent, Jack Keenan, a Grant County Purebred Seed Growers Association was organized in 1925 whose purpose was to maintain a supply of purebred seed for sale. This Association served its purpose very well in the several years to follow in supplying Grant county farmers and out-of-county buyers with top quality purebred seed stock. For example, in 1927, the Association sold 500 bushels of certified seed corn to Grant county farmers and also shipped seed corn, barley and wheat to Pennsylvania, Iowa and Illinois. Also in this year, 236 bushels of pedigreed barley were secured from the Wisconsin Experiment Station for Grant county farmers.

The Grant County Seed Growers Association participated in exhibiting seed of various kinds at the "big shows" of the country such as State Fair and the International Grain Show. In 1929, the Association won first place in both yellow corn and in white corn at the International Grain Show held in Chicago. They also won seven firsts out of eight classes at the 1929 Wisconsin State Fair.

In 1930, the Association won first place at the International in yellow corn and placed second in the white corn class. At the 1930 State Fair firsts were received in both yellow and white corn as well as winning the corn "sweepstakes." In general, it was stated that the Grant County Seed Growers Association "won consistently in the big shows of the country in corn, small grain and clover seed."

Legume Production - Alfalfa as a hay crop and to a lesser extent as a pasture crop continued to receive a big push during the twenties. Much credit is due to L. F. Graber of the College of Agriculture for alfalfa promotion. E. R. McIntyre refers to Graber in his history of Wisconsin Extension as "Secretary of the Alfalfa Order and Extension promoter of the lucerne."

Acres of alfalfa in Grant county increased from 800 in 1923 to nearly 9,000 acres in 1932.

Other legume crops such as soybeans and sweet clover were also among the crops promoted for their particular usage. Soybean test plots were planted in 1925 on both the Matt Zenz farms of Lancaster and on the Grant County Farm. In 1932, about 12,000 bushels of soybeans were planted in Grant county to meet a hay emergency brought on by the previously dry season. Twenty trials on growing sweet clover were put on during the 1926 season to show its use in renovating bluegrass sod. White blossomed sweet clover was said to be superior to yellow blossomed because "yellow blossom blossoms too early, even though white is coarser." Sweet clover was also recommended for a green-manuring crop to be planted the year previous to growing corn.

In conjunction with the promotion of the growing of legumes, the county agent also became of service to legume growers by securing legume "inoculin" through the department of Bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin. In 1926, 11,000 such bottles of inoculin for use on alfalfa, clover and soybean seed were handled through the county agent's office.

Barley Promoted - The year 1927 witnessed the beginning of a drive for the promotion of barley in Grant county. Three reasons were enumerated at the time: (1) it was looked upon as a possible substitute for corn with the coming of the corn borer, (2) "the large

acreage of corn doesn't always mature due to seasonal conditions," (3) the introduction through the Wisconsin Experiment Station, at that time, of a new "smooth-awn" barley. By 1929, it was reported that the acreage of barley had been boosted by "100% in the past two years."