REPORT ON WEED WORK.

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Weeds, both native and introduced, have been spreading rapidly over our state. Many of the plants we now call weeds were not so until the land came under cultivation. Many native plants of no agricultural importance were as well able to take advantage of the new conditions as the cultivated and useful crops and multiplied rapidly under the new environment. While many of these native plants have proved troublesome, using soil moisture and fertility which the grain crop needed, it still remains true that our most noxious weeds have been introduced either from some foreign country or from some other state.

Among the introduced weeds which have become troublesome in Wisconsin are the following: Canada thistle, Quack-grass, Wild Mustard, Dodder, Perennial Sow Thistle, Toadflax, or Snapdragons, Corn cockle, Night flowering catchfly, Buckhorn or English Plantain, Russian Thistle, Wild oats, Green and Yellow Foxtail and many others.

This list is a formidable one and when we consider that the larger number of these have been introduced in seeds purchased from outside the state, it seems that quick action of some sort should be taken. Only as farmers cooperate in this matter can much be done, and no farmer would hesitate to aid in the work if he realized the yearly loss caused by weeds.

In an attempt to secure information concerning the number and distribution of weeds in the state, report blanks were sent to 245 members of this Association, situated in 57 counties of the state.

The questions, with a summary of the replies received, and some comments on the same are given herewith. The results while somewhat incomplete, are still very interesting and draw
attention in a graphic way to the need of attention to the weed problem.

1. Have you weeds on your farm? Affirmative 213 and negative 23.

2. What are the most common and troublesome weeds?

The following table gives these answers in a summarized form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weed</th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Persons reporting</th>
<th>Average area per farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada thistle</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quack grass</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dock</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sow thistle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ox-eye daisy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reports show that these weeds are well distributed throughout the state. Some areas are however, infected most with a certain kind of weed. Canada thistle and quack grass, are most thickly scattered on the eastern part of the state. Mustard seems most prevalent in the southwestern part, and in the Lake Shore counties in the eastern part.

The fact that there are 98 farms with an average of nine acres each of Canada thistles, certainly indicates that the time has arrived for something to be done to prevent their spread.

When it is realized that these reports come from a comparatively small number of the total number of farms in the state and also from some of the more progressive farmers, it seems that farmers must get together and aid one another in this work.

3. What per cent of pasture is spoiled by weeds?

The maximum answer to this question was 50%, and the average 9%. The weeds in the pasture are confined to certain classes. Many of those growing in fields are killed by grazing and tramping.

4. What methods of eradication have you used?

The answers to this question were somewhat unsatisfactory. Some of the methods reported were burning, salting, digging, smothering and pulling. Out of the 245 reporting 108 reported that they were successful in killing their weeds and 59 partially, and 29 not successful.
5. What was the cost of killing the weeds?

In summarizing the answers to this question it was found that the total cost with the 245 farmers was $5,471.78, and the average $33.77.

In answer to a question regarding the amount of total taxes on the 245 farms it was found that it was $10,684.61 or $68.05 each on an average. The cost of eradicating the weeds on these farms so far as it was possible to accomplish this end was therefore over one-half the amount of taxes paid. This cost included only the work of cutting, digging, smothering, etc., and does not take into account the cultivation necessary to keep down weeds in corn, sugar beets and other cultivated crops. Had the cost of cultivation been included the tax of weed eradication would have equalled or exceeded the property tax about which farmers are wont to complain.

The next question—What do you consider land infested with Canada thistle, quack grass, sow thistle, and wild mustard worth when clean land is worth $100 per acre?

The average of the answers to this was $54.88. On an average therefore, a depreciation of nearly 50%. This illustrates the need of at once taking means to prevent the further spread of these noxious weeds. No farmer can afford to thus lose one half the money value of his farm.

The last question was—Would you be willing to help enforce a strict weed and seed law?

Out of the 245 persons reporting, 218 were willing to aid. Another indication that farmers are awakening to the need of fighting weeds.

At the last session of the Legislature a weed law was passed for the purpose of providing for a test of all agricultural seeds sold in the state. In accordance with this law 665 samples of seeds were last year tested by the Department of Agronomy. The law was, however, framed hastily and consequently falls short of the demands of the situation. In view of the needs of the work and the danger threatening the agricultural interests of the State from the spread of weeds, the legislature should at once provide for a more efficient law and means for carrying on that work.