SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1918

R. A. MOORE, Madison

Members of the Executive Board of the Wisconsin Experiment Association:

It certainly is a great pleasure for me to appear before you at this annual meeting. It has been the pleasure of your Secretary to watch the growth of the Wisconsin Experiment Association with a great deal of interest, and to see it grow from a few members, looking out upon the horizon of advancement to see what was best to do, to a great working organization which makes its influence felt around the entire world. The great good that the Experiment Association has done in the way of growing and disseminating the pure bred seed grains has been worth untold millions to the state of Wisconsin and our country in general. It is the fond hope of your Secretary that this good work will still continue and that the Experiment Association will become more firmly established in the hearts and minds of the people of our state. There is a great work to perform, and we know the members of the Association are equal to the occasion.

We have had untold difficulties to surmount during the past two years. A large number of our members went into the country's service, and many others who would have come to the College of Agriculture and united with the Association also were taken from us. This has somewhat thinned our ranks, but with the return of our members there is no reason why the Association will not flourish as never before.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership, notwithstanding the inroads made upon the same through the exigencies of war, has maintained itself very nicely, and at the close of 1918 we had a total of 1082 paid up members. There are nearly as many more whose membership fee has merely lapsed, so that we can estimate our membership at practically 2,000.
COUNTY ORDERS

The County Orders of the Experiment Association are established in 55 counties, and for many years have carried on exceedingly good work. During the past two years, with so many war measures on foot, there seems to be a waning of enthusiasm and active effort on the part of the County Orders. Surely there must be new life thrown into our County Order system in order to maintain it at the high standard it has previously held. Every member of the Association should throw his zeal and energy in behalf of the County Order. Find out immediately the officers and make helpful suggestions to them in regard to holding meetings and carrying on work for the year. Spring will soon be with us, and we desire to get busy upon the various lines of effort at the earliest opportunity. One of the special lines of effort for every County Order to take up is the holding of an annual meeting together with a grain show. This has helped to maintain the high standards of pure bred seeds to a greater extent than any other one factor. The keeping of a good grain exhibit at the Courthouse or in any public place where farmers can see the same, and the names of growers who have seed for sale, helps wonderfully. The taking of an exhibit to the State Fair also has been of great value, and it is hoped that the County Orders will again keep in close touch with the Commissioner of Agriculture and again exhibit at the State Fair.

The Jackson County Order has made a movement which could be carried out by other counties to good advantage. Jackson County has started the work of putting up corn curing buildings for the purpose of fire drying seed corn. This means wherever a corn curing building is put up corn will be cured in it from year to year, and Jackson County will soon become known far and near as one of the leading seed corn counties. This work should be emphasized and farmers encouraged as there is always a good demand for well cured seed corn. No seed corn should be put on the market unless it is properly fire dried.

Kenosha County also is putting forth efforts in the same direction but having each corn curing house serve several farmers, and we look forward to having several central drying houses for corn erected in Kenosha County the coming year. The Secretaries of the County Orders in many counties have also advocated
the putting up of grain storage buildings and many good gran-
aries and facilities for handling pure bred seed grains on many
of the seed farms. Fanning mills and grain graders have been
put on seed grain farms.

Burnett County has put forth special efforts in the way of
the dissemination of Wisconsin pedigree rye, and this work has
been carried on to such an extent that nearly every farm in the
county has the pedigreed rye placed upon it. Burnett County
is going to be in a position to furnish rye to practically one-
fourth of our entire state. It is sincerely hoped that other
secretaries will take hold of work that will be of immense value
to the farmers and push it to the utmost extent. Several of the
County Orders have pushed very strenuously the growing of soy
beans which means so much to people in the sandy regions of
the state.

La Crosse County has led the state in its wide dissemination
of pure bred seed. Farmers have been brought to feel that it is
a disgrace to any longer grow the scrub grains upon their farms
and the beautiful pedigree grains are grown everywhere.

Brown, St. Croix, Winnebago, Jefferson, and several other
counties have put forth active efforts in the way of pushing the
pure bred seed grain dissemination work. Their slogan has been
"Pure Bred Seeds for Every Farm." This certainly is com-
mendable, as the sooner we get the scrub grains kicked off the
farms and replaced by pure bred strains, the better it will be for
each and every farming community.

Seed Grain Canvassers

Each season sees the traveling salesman going about the coun-
try with fine samples of seed to show the various farmers and
induce them to purchase. In nearly every instance they have
nothing more than common, ordinary seeds to sell, which they
do sell at an enormous figure, often selling oats from $3 to $5
per bushel. Many of our farmers invest in them simply because
they do not really know the source of supply of our pedigreed
seeds. They also are not aware of the fact that most of the
Wisconsin pedigreed seeds have had from 15 to 18 years breed-
ing work placed upon them and are far superior to any seed
they possibly could purchase from a traveling agent. They
would also be able to get the seed at about one-third or one-
fourth what it would cost to secure seed from the traveling salesman. I feel that much more publicity should be given to the pure bred seed grain work, and especially where it can be obtained.

Seed Grain List

The Wisconsin Experiment Association published 5,000 lists showing where the pure bred seed grains could be secured. These lists were sent to the county agents in various states as well as our own, and to public places. This method of advertising is about the only method that is taken up by the Experiment Association. It seems to me it is about the only method that we can use as we are a state association and cannot advertise as an individual. I feel, however, that our growers should put forth much more effort in advertising than they do. In looking over a copy of one of our leading farm papers of Wisconsin I noticed about 100 animal ads while there were only two ads of pure bred seeds. It seems to me this is out of all proportion, and I think that the members of our Association should make it a point to do more or less advertising. Many of the members of the Association should become a regular correspondent for their home papers and often write up little articles concerning the pure bred seeds in comparison with common varieties. This would attract attention at home and be instrumental in bringing in a good many orders near home. Three or four lines of advertising in a good agricultural paper would certainly show results that would pay.

Seed Grain Inspection

During the summer and a portion of the fall considerable effort has been put forth in the way of inspecting the seed grains in the fields and again after threshing so that the grains could be looked at while in storage. I feel that much more of this work should be done than what we are doing at the present time. It seems to me that wherever we have county agents acting as secretaries and managers of the County Orders that the responsibility of doing considerable of this inspection work should fall upon them. They could then be the source of supply, keeping their good grain growers listed, and the state association could merely refer orders direct to them and they could become the intermediary between the purchaser and the seller. We feel
that the success of the putting of pure bred seeds on every farm in the various counties rests quite largely with the county agent who acts as manager of the county order. He could furnish the names of his growers to go into the state seed list.

**Contaminated Seed Grains**

Wisconsin has come through a trying period during the past year in the way of farm seeds. It was well that we had such an organization as the Wisconsin Experiment Association or we would have been in a very helpless condition. Members of the Association, notwithstanding the fact that 1917 was a poor year, had 75,000 bushels of pure bred corn which was sold for seed. This saved the day for Wisconsin and was one of the means of sending old Wisconsin forward to head the list in yield per acre of the corn growing states.

We did not fare quite so well when it came to supplying spring wheat. We desired to double our acreage, and in order to do this we had to secure some from outside sources. This wheat that was on the market as seed wheat was contaminated with mustard, wild oats, and quack grass. The Seed Inspector promptly prevented several carloads from coming in, and had other carloads rejected, so that on the whole very little contaminated seed was sown. We more than doubled our acreage, going from 146,000 acres in 1917 to 348,000 in 1918, which averaged 24.6 bushels per acre. This magnificent yield may be accounted for from the fact that over 50% of the crop was put in by using our improved Marquis seed wheat. Wisconsin will soon take her place as a wheat growing state.

**Field and Canning Peas**

Another line of work we should emphasize is the growing and dissemination of select varieties of field and canning peas. Professor Delwiche at the Branch Station farms has improved several varieties, and these should be grown especially in the north where disease and insect enemies are unknown. Pea canning factories should be invited to locate in this region as I feel sure that northern Wisconsin is to become in the future the canning center of Wisconsin.

**Young People’s Contest Work**

The Experiment Association is still interesting the young
people in this line of effort. Over 12,000 were engaged in corn work last year. The acre corn contest work will be especially emphasized this year. Corn and grain judging contests for the young people will be held at Madison at the time of the annual meeting next year.

**CORN GROWING CONTESTS FOR FARMERS**

Efforts will be put forth to interest farmers in increasing yields of pure bred corn per acre. Mr. Campion will have supervision of the work for the Association, and we look for good results. With the good work so well in hand there is no reason why 1919 should not be the banner year for the Wisconsin Experiment Association.

**DISSEMINATION OF SORGHUM SEED**

Owing to the sugar shortage of last year it was thought advisable to have two or three hundred of the members of the Association grow sorghum. The Association secured a supply of seed from one of the leading seed houses and made a dissemination of the same. Our growers carried out their tests very nicely, but unfortunately the seed secured was not pure and true to type. We find that it is necessary for Wisconsin to breed and disseminate her own seed. The Agronomy Department is now busily engaged, and has been during the past two years, in breeding sorghum seed that can be depended upon year after year in nearly all parts of Wisconsin. We desire to get a few growers of good sorghum seed, and will make another dissemination of seed the coming year.

**SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS**

From general observations made in past years we have found that our growers who specialize on one variety each of corn, oats, barley, wheat, etc., are more apt to keep the same pure and true to type than if they attempt to grow several varieties of corn and various grains. It is certainly very hard to grow several varieties of corn and keep them pure on a single farm, and we are up against nearly the same proposition when we attempt to do the same with oats, wheat, etc. We would, therefore, recommend to members of our Association that it would be well for them to specialize on a limited number of varieties. During the past three years the Agronomy Department has been
putting forth special efforts to improve those pedigreed varieties of seeds. Consequently it has now considerable quantity of what is known as select pedigreed barley, oats, corn, etc. This select strain has been taken and bred up from our older strains, and some were disseminated last year. More will be disseminated again this year so that members of the Experiment Association will have more highly bred strains of the same varieties than they have had in previous years.

**Correspondence**

I very much desire at this time to call the attention of the members of the Experiment Association to the desirability of answering promptly all correspondence. We have found in several instances after a member of this Association had sold his pure bred grains he would not take the trouble to answer the correspondence. We feel that although it requires postage stamps and some effort on the part of the member to answer correspondence, yet he would be further ahead in the end if he attended to such duties properly. A brotherly spirit should exist, and does exist, between members of the Wisconsin Experiment Association, and if members would answer correspondence and after their supply of seeds is exhausted would refer parties back to the Secretary of the state association, it would lead to some other of the members securing an order. We hope that this will be religiously attended to in the future and no party will hereafter complain of writing to members of our Association and not receiving a reply.

**Only Good Seed Should Be Shipped Out**

No member of the Experiment Association should ever be guilty of sending out any seeds that are not of good standard quality. A single shipment sent out by a member of the Association would hurt the honor and good name of possibly hundreds of our growers. We have been very much pleased in the past to receive so many complimentary letters concerning the quality of the seeds shipped out by our members. However, we have received a few letters and samples of seed that have been shipped in the past that were not complimentary to the members of our Association. Nearly all of our members wish to do good clean honest work, and where we have a few members of the Associa-
tion that try to live on the prestige of the Association we find it is an injury to all concerned. Going into the seed grain business is not an expensive proposition, but there is some machinery necessary, some buildings to put up, and a few things that are essential on every well regulated seed growing farm. For money invested I feel there is no safer or quicker proposition to realize on invested funds than in the seed grain business. It only takes a few dollars to get started, and when we conceive of the enormous supply that is taken annually from our state we find it is one of the lines of agriculture that brings in enormous sums to be distributed among a very large number of people.

We hope with the sending out of the advanced pedigreed grains, and with the many new lines of work which will be carried on this year that the work of the Experiment Association will be more interesting, instructive and more profitable than ever before.