November, 1923 209-A

Colorado Agricultural College
EXTENSION SERVICE
Fort Collins, Colorado

EXHIBITING AT FAIRS

By WALDO KIDDER and J. D. MARSHALL

CO-OPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS, COLORADO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CO-OPERATING

Distributed in Furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914

EXHIBITING AT FAIRS

By WALDO KIDDER *and* J. D. MARSHALL

Primarily, fairs are held for the purpose of showing the improvement made during the current year in the products of the community and in encouraging greater effort toward the higher production of better-quality crops of the prevailing standard varieties. By offering prizes on the best standard varieties grown in the community, the fair encourages farmers to try to grow the best of that variety. By so doing, the farmer not only improves his crops, but also improves the crops grown in the following years by those who plant his seed.

Standardization—By showing at fairs, the farmer gets a better idea of what constitutes the best in the field crops as we "learn by doing", and if the farmer is an exhibitor, he watches the judging with greater interest and learns far more quickly the points of excellence in the various products.

Besides, the fair is a sort of an informal convention where topics of mutual interest are discussed. Here the wheat grower meets with wheat growers and gets new ideas about methods of growing wheat.

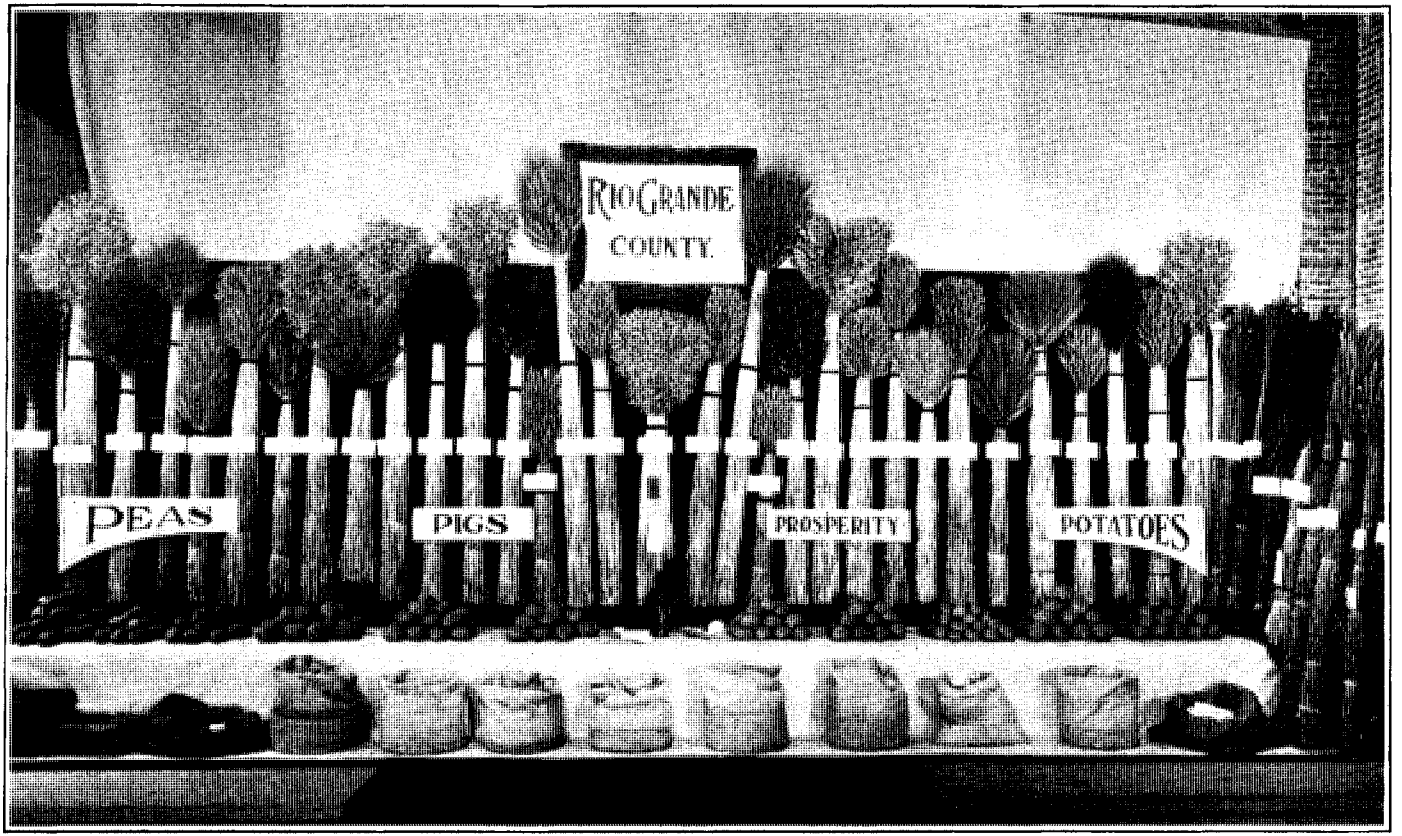
The fair stimulates pride in good farming. The farmer who has pride in his work, makes a much better living and therefore is a better citizen. It will also stimulate pride in the community and county.

Help this movement along. Exhibit this year, but have pride enough to exhibit only the best you have. Some suggestions on the preparation of exhibits are given in the following pages.

Lack of standardization in farm products causes some of the greatest marketing costs that the present-day farmer has to meet. The fair can play a considerable part in getting the farmers of a community, county or state to standardize on a few standard market varieties and so reduce this loss to a considerable degree. The old type of prize for the biggest ear of corn, or potato, or cabbage, is going out of style as are most freak prizes. Nearly everyone knows that the market demand is for quality and not extreme size, and that freaks have little economical market value.

Some Fundamental Information for the Exhibitor—The work necessary for prize-winning exhibits starts months before the fair. The first essential for a prize-winning exhibit is to have the highest quality of produce from which to select a sample to be shown. This will necessitate the best of care in the selection of seed, culture of the crop and harvesting.

The second fundamental point is that the exhibitor become thoroly acquainted with the premium list and that he make and enter his exhibits according to what is asked for in the premium list. If the premium list calls for a peck of wheat, exhibit a peck of wheat. If a three-inch sheaf of small



A good display, showing good arrangement and quality of products. Rio Grande County display, State Seed Show, 1923.

grain is called for, show a three-inch sheaf. If three pumpkins are asked for, show three. It is always well to take more than enough to the fair, so if some get damaged or lost in shipment, there will be sufficient to make the exhibit as called for.

The third point to be fixed firmly in mind before getting exhibits together is to know the variety type and standards for each variety and to know what constitutes excellence in each. Then select as nearly to this as possible. To know these points, takes considerable study and observation. It is perhaps best done at the fairs watching the judge as he places the different classes.

In this connection, it might be well to give an idea of the points that are considered in judging exhibits of agricultural products. These are:

Trueness to type;
Quality of exhibit;
Uniformity of the exhibit; and
Arrangement of the exhibit.

The ultimate purpose of agricultural products is for consumption, either directly or indirectly, by people. This will demand that market quality be given prime consideration. In this connection, note that extreme size alone does not constitute excellence as in many instances the housewife wants medium or small-sized products rather than the large ones, as they are of better quality. All exhibits should be selected according to market standards with due regard for the requirements as stated above.

After the prospective exhibitor has raised good quality produce, knows what is required to make a good exhibit, and has firmly fixed in his mind the ideals for which he is selecting, the next job is to spend enough time in the gathering and selection of his exhibit to be able to show as nearly what he considers ideal as possible.

Preparing Sheaves of Small Grains—The time to select small grains for sheaf display is before the crop is fully mature. The yellow ripe, or hard dough stage, is the best time. Some exhibitors make the selection about two days before the crop is ready to harvest.

It is a good plan to select more plants than are actually needed, as this provides for a better selection.

The plants are usually cut with a sickle. They should be cut close to the ground so as to show the full and actual length of the straw.

Two methods of selection are used. One may go thru the field and cut only those plants that have good quality, or a small patch may be cut. It is then sorted over and the good material saved. This is the more common method and is the more practical. Regardless of where selection is made, take only those plants that are true to the variety, have good color, stiff and long straw, true-to-type and well-filled heads free from disease.

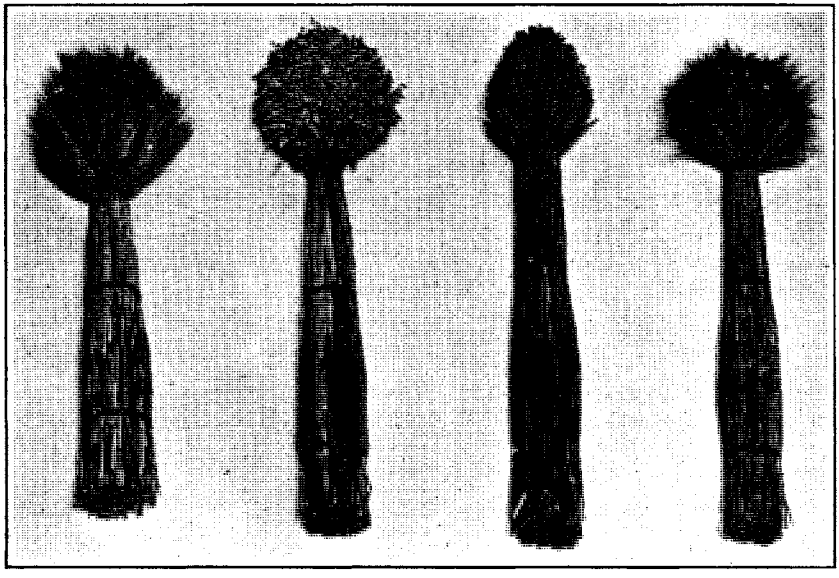
After the crop is cut, it should be cured at once. This is done by spreading it out on the ground or on a floor, or preferably on a tin roof, exposing it to the sunshine for a couple of days. This dries it out and gives it better color. Should rain threaten, the crop should be covered with a can-

vas or taken indoors, as wetting of the grain, followed by sunshine, will bleach it.

Another practice that is followed is to hang the grain, head downward, in a shady place until it is dried out. This is the safer method of the two, as there is no danger of the grain becoming over-bleached.

After curing, the grain should be made into sheaves. The best-looking sheaves are made by using molds which may be home-made or else they can be purchased on the market. As a rule, the smaller exhibitor will use a home-made one.

The majority of successful exhibitors make the final selection of the product as they make up the sheaf, special emphasis being placed on uniformity.



Sheaf exhibits of grain should show excellent quality of product and be arranged attractively.

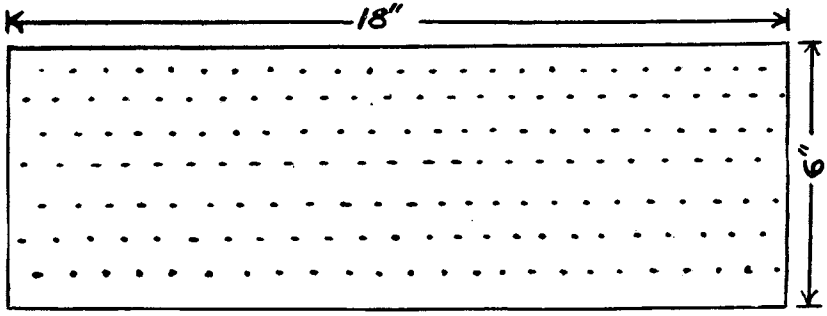
A home-made mold to shape up sheaves may be made out of two-by-eight inch material. Cut two pieces of the two by eights about eight inches long. With a circular saw or extended bit, cut a hole four inches in diameter in one of the blocks, so the edge comes to within a quarter of an inch of one edge of the block. In the other block the hole should be two and one-half inches in diameter and should come to within one-fourth inch of the top of the block and be two inches from one side. At the top, saw thru to meet this hole, leaving an opening of three-fourth inch. Drill a three-eighths-inch hole thru the block from top to bottom on the edge. Then cut thru the side of the block to meet the circle. Place a ten-inch by one-fourth-inch bolt thru this hole with nut on top. This makes blocks with two circles which

have small openings at the top to put the straws in. As the sheaf is made up, the sides can be loosened or taken apart, and the sheaf taken out of the mold.

To keep the blocks in an upright position, nail a one-by-six-inch piece—eight inches long on bottom of each block. In using these blocks, the grain to be made in the sheaf has been thoroly cured and is stripped of leaves as put into the sheaf. With the mold, the heads can be laid in evenly to make a smooth, round or oval bundle. As soon as sheaf is made it is tied before taking from mold, then removed and trimmed.

Leaves may or may not be removed. Their removal adds to the appearance. Some only remove the blade. Others only remove the outside leaves in the sheaf.

To aid in the quick removal of leaves, a home-made device is used. It is made out of a one-by-six material about 18 inches long. Nails should be driven thru the board in a diagonal direction, being about three-fourths-inches apart and extending about an inch and a half thru the board.



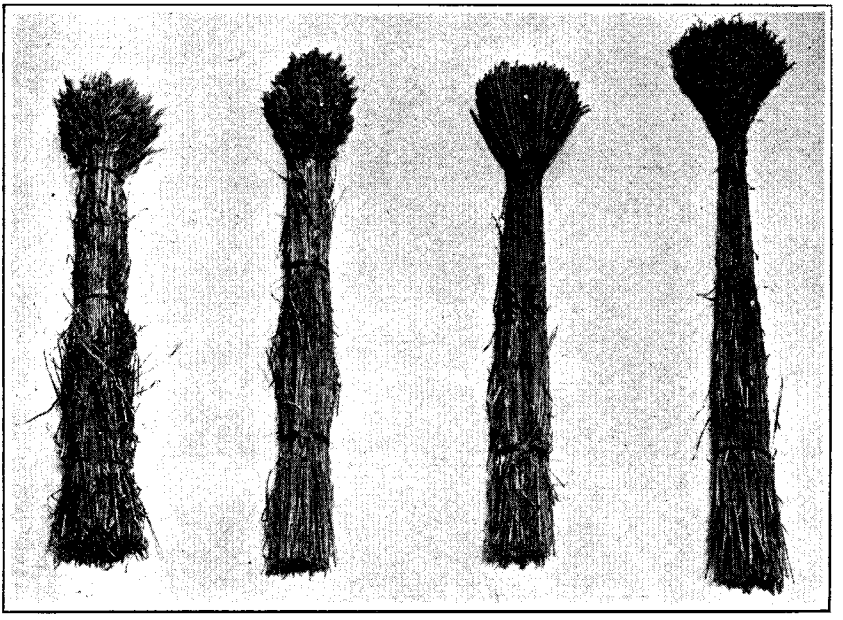
Home-Made Device for Removing Leaves.

To use the board, nail it to a table or other level surface. To strip the straw, draw it thru the nails at right angles to the edge of the board. Wetting the straw with a damp cloth will prevent it from breaking. This device will remove most of the leaves and sheath. The remainder may be removed by hand.

In making the sheaf, the heads should be even and straight. The sheaf should be bound in three places. The bottom band should be real tight; the middle one—snug; while the top one should be rather loose. This will keep the heads from breaking so easily, and hold them in place. The binding may be done with tape, ribbon or raffia, colored to suit. Usually, the binding material should be one-half inch in diameter. Following the binding, the butts or bottom of the bundle should be trimmed to make the stalks uniform in length.

After the sheaves are made they should be hung downward in a dry, well-ventilated room. They may be covered to prevent them from becoming dusty.

Just before placing sheaves on display at a fair, they should be mounted on a narrow panel made out of "compo" or building board, or ordinary matting of suitable color. The panel should be four feet long and six inches wide. A hole about one-quarter inch in diameter should be made in the center of the panel, two inches from the top, in order to suspend the panel on the wall. When mounted in this way, it will be possible for an attendant to take the sample down so that it may be taken to a central stand for judging.



Sheaves of forage should be leafy, fine-stemmed and show excellent quality. They should be made up attractively.

Preparing Sheaf Exhibits of Grasses—As grasses and other forage crops of a similar nature will be judged largely according to their feeding value, their selection should be made at a time when they show their greatest feeding value. This is usually after they have become completely headed out and are starting to bloom.

In selecting, consider length of stalk and large amount of leaf surface. Other things being equal, a leafy plant will have a greater feeding value than a less leafy one. Coarse stalks are very undesirable. The entire length of the stalk should be shown. Therefore, cut the plant close to the ground.

As soon as the plants are cut, they should be immediately sorted in the field to eliminate the poorer plants. Some put them into small bundles, tied loosely, and then hang them head downward in a dark, cool room to cure, and put them into the sheaf afterwards. Others take the crop to a well-

ventilated, dark room and spread it out thinly on the floor or on boards until it is thoroly cured, after which it is dampened and made into sheaves, and bound just like the grains.

Forage crops, like grasses or alfalfa, must be kept in a darkened room or they will bleach and lose their desirable green color. Care must be exercised in handling as the leaves are brittle and readily drop off.

After the sheaves are made, they may be hung up, head downward, in a dark room. If one doesn't have a dark room, it is a good plan to wrap up the sheaves in paper, which will keep out the light and dust and hold them in shape.

Before shipping and exhibiting grass sheaves, they should be dampened. This is done by sprinkling a floor, leaving the bundles on it over night. They should be wrapped next morning for shipment.

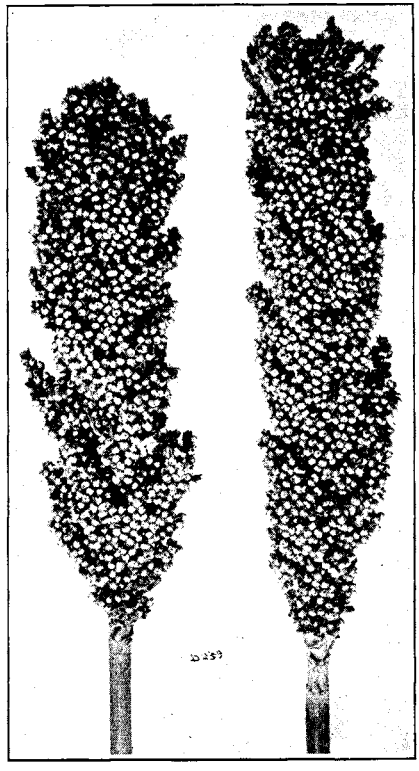
Corn for Forage—In selecting corn for forage—that is, when the exhibit calls for the stalk with the ear attached—the stalk should be of good size, full of broad leaves and have one good ear. A substantial stalk indicates good silage value. The tallest stalk without other qualifications will not win a prize.

The best time to select is when the husks are turning yellow, the ear is mature, and the leaves are still green.

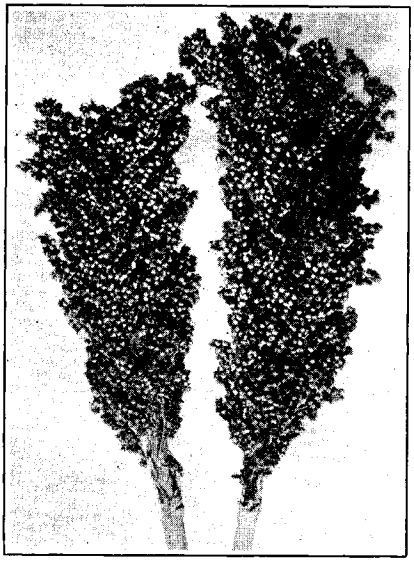
Preparation of Sorghum and Other Coarse Forage for Exhibit—The sorghums that are grown in Colorado are raised mainly for their forage value. They do not have value as seed crops and so an exhibit should show as much as possible the best forage value and with a good set of seed. With this in view, the plants should be selected between the soft and the hard-dough stage.

Only fine-stemmed, leafy plants should be selected. They should be free from disease. After cutting the plants, they should be cured in a dark dry place that has good ventilation. When thoroly cured, the forage should be made into sheaves of about six inches in diameter. These bundles should be tied in four or five places, with string or ribbon. The butt end of the sheaves should be trimmed evenly to make a good-appearing exhibit.

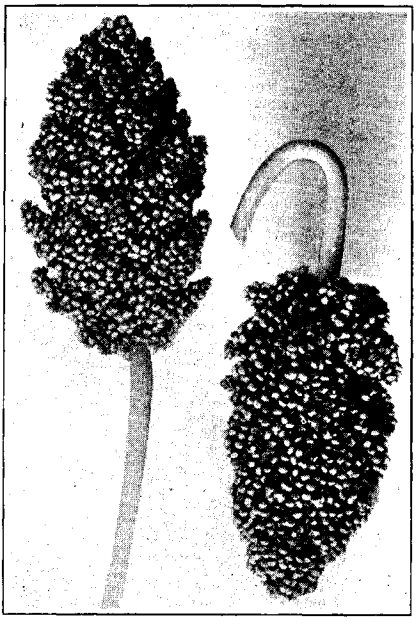
With a crop like soy beans, peas or vetch, the vines should be cut or



Good Heads of Blackhull Kafir.
The heads are well filled, tight, characteristic of good heads and are of the right type.
—Courtesy Kansas Experiment Station.



Poor Heads of Blackhull Kafir.
They are of an undesirable type, being loose and open.
—Courtesy Kansas Experiment Station.



Typical Heads of Dwarf Milo.
Erect and recurved heads are shown. Both heads are well filled, carrying a good yield of grain.
—Courtesy Kansas Experiment Station.

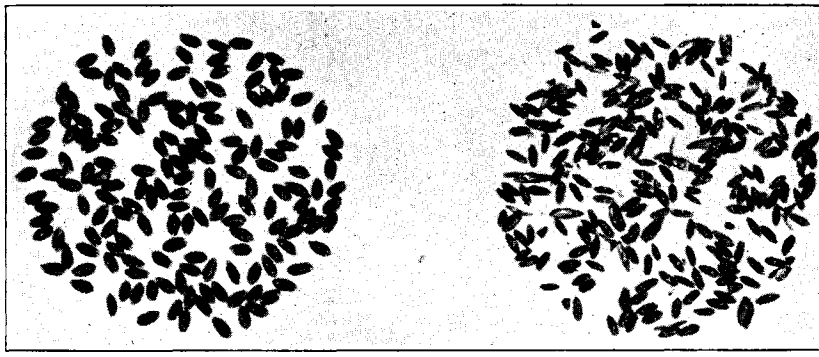
pulled while the leaves are still green and the seed is hard. They should be bound in very loose bundles and cured in a dark, dry place. When thoroly dry, these strings can be pulled together and the sheaf made up ready to show. With this class of exhibits, the purpose is to show a maximum of good forage and a good yield of ripe seed.

Preparing Thrashed Grains—Small grains are raised for milling purposes, feed and seed. Wheat is raised largely for milling and seed. The same holds true of rye. Oats is used extensively for feeding and seed; likewise, barley.

All of these products are judged largely from the above standpoints. They are usually exhibited in containers of one peck. Smaller samples encourage hand-picking and too much artificial cleaning. It is desirable to grade all samples of small grain with a fanning mill or by winnowing in strong wind, as it gives a more uniform product.

Small grains are judged according to their variety characteristics, quality, purity, freedom from disease, and foreign material, such as broken stems, dirt, etc.

Grains for thrashed samples should be cut just as they are ripe; cured either in capped shock, stack or in the shade where there is good circulation of air. Grain should cure in the straw for two or three weeks before thrashing. This permits more complete filling of the grain. Thrashing by hand prevents cracking of grain, all of which cannot be removed successfully by grading. After thrashing, grain should be run over a grader once or twice, using lots of wind to remove light kernels and impurities.



Thrashed Grains.
The sample on the left is the best. The grains are plumper, of the same size and the sample is clean.

Wheat, which is judged largely from the miller's standpoint, should not weigh less than sixty (60) pounds to the bushel. The kernels should be plump, uniform in size, bright in color and absolutely free from smut. Hard wheats should be relatively free from yellowberry. The sample should be free from cracked berries and foreign material.

Oats are exhibited in the same way as wheat. Weight is desirable, as it indicates good feeding value. The color should be bright and the grain should be plump and uniform in size. The sample should be free from disease and impurities.

Barley is exhibited like oats. Here again, weight is a factor. Color is of prime importance in barley. The grains should be uniform in size and shape and be free from disease and impurities.

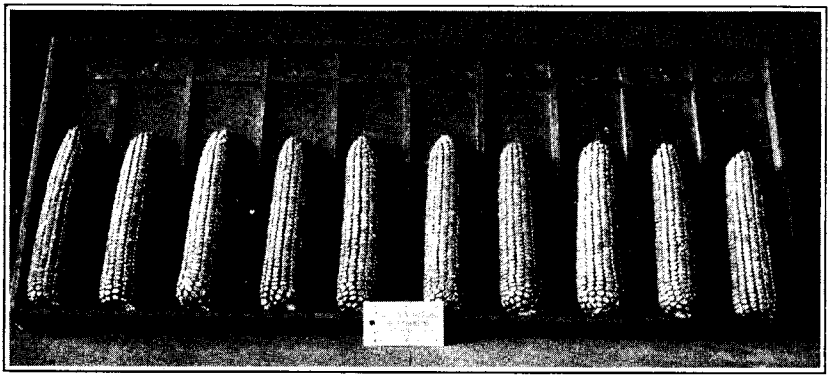
Rye is judged very much like wheat. The legal weight is fifty-six (56) pounds. Here again, the sample should be pure, uniform in size, shape, color and be of good texture. It must be free from disease and foreign material.

Selection of Ear Corn for Exhibit—The general rule for the gathering of corn for exhibit is to let it get mature and then pick and store in a warm, dry place, separating the ears so there is good circulation of air around each ear. Then, when the corn is thoroly dry, select the best ear, that is, the one that most nearly approaches the type of the variety that is to be shown. Use this as a pattern or type ear and pick the other nine ears to match it as nearly as possible. In selecting the corn it is desirable to take into consideration the standards for the type being shown. For convenience, we have attached a table of these standards of Colorado corn.

In this connection keep in mind that the corn must be thoroly mature and sound. It must have a good ear and a good kernel. It is usually permissible to take out one kernel from each ear to study the kind of kernel. The kernel should be of medium depth and in dent corn have a fairly smooth dent. It should be full and of rectangular shape and with no chaff or excessive starchiness. The cobs should be of uniform color; and if in a yellow corn, should be a deep red or if in a white corn, a clear white. Do not show mixed corn. There are some varieties that deviate from the above rule, hav-

STANDARDS FOR SOME OF THE LEADING VARIETIES OF COLORADO CORN

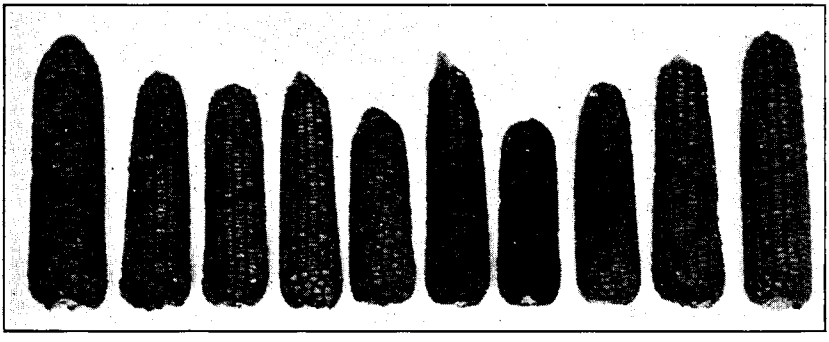
		Reid's Yellow Dent	Iowa Silver Mine	Minnesota 13	Swadley Dent	White Australian
Ear	Shape	Cylindrical	Cylindrical	Slightly tapering	Cylindrical	Cylindrical
	Length	8 in.—9½ in.	8 in.—9½ in.	7 in.—8½ in.	7 in—8½ in.	8 in.—9 in.
	Circumference	6¾ in.—7½ in.	6¾ in—7½ in.	6 in.—7 in.	5 in.—6½ in.	5 in.—6 in.
Kernel	Color	Yellow	Clear White	Clear yellow	Yellow body	White
	Shape	Rectangular	Deep	Medium	Whitecap	Round and
		Deep	Rectangular	Rectangular	Sq. to round	Flinty
	Indentation	Fairly	Fairly	Fairly	Smooth Dent	None
		Smooth	Smooth	Smooth		
Rows	Number	18-20	18—	16—	12-14	10-12
	Space between rows	Fairly close	Fairly close	Fairly close	Fairly close	Open at top
Butt	Shape	Rounded	Slightly rounded	Slightly rounded	Rounded	Moderately round.
	Rows	Straight	Straight	Straight	Straight	Nearly as Uniform as in middle of ear.
	Kernels	Uniform	Uniform	Uniform	Uniform	
Tip	Rows	Straight	Straight	Straight	Straight	Straight
	Kernels	Even and large	Uniform with rest of ear	Even and fairly large	Even and fairly large	Even and fairly large
Shank	Diameter	¾ inch	¾ inch	½ in.—¾ in.	¾ inch	¾ inch--1 in.
Cob	Color	Dark Red	White	Dark red	White	White
	Diameter	1¼ in.—1½ in.	1¼ in.—1½ in.	⅞ in.—1¼ in.	¾ in.—1¼ in.	¾ in.—1¼ in.



A Good Exhibit.
This is a good sample of corn . The ears are all of the same size and shape. The spacing is good and the kernels have the desired depth and shape.

ing colored cobs in white corn and white cobs in yellow corn. Be sure the color is uniform thruout.

If the fair at which you are to exhibit comes before the corn is thoroly mature, and the management does not allow the showing of last year's corn, a plan that has been worked by Mr. Warren Deming with good success may be used. Mr. Deming allows the corn to remain in the field up to a day or two before the fair. Then he snaps the corn, leaving the shucks on. The corn is taken to the fair in this condition, being sure that it is spread out so that it will not heat. Then, just before time to place it on exhibition, the corn is shucked and sorted. In this way, the moisture that is in the ear is kept evenly distributed thru the ear and shows as little sappiness as possible. With the use of this method, it will be necessary to bring to the fair more ears than are necessary to show to permit the selection of a prize-winning exhibit.



A Poor Exhibit.
The ears vary too much in size, shape and type. A sample like this rarely wins.

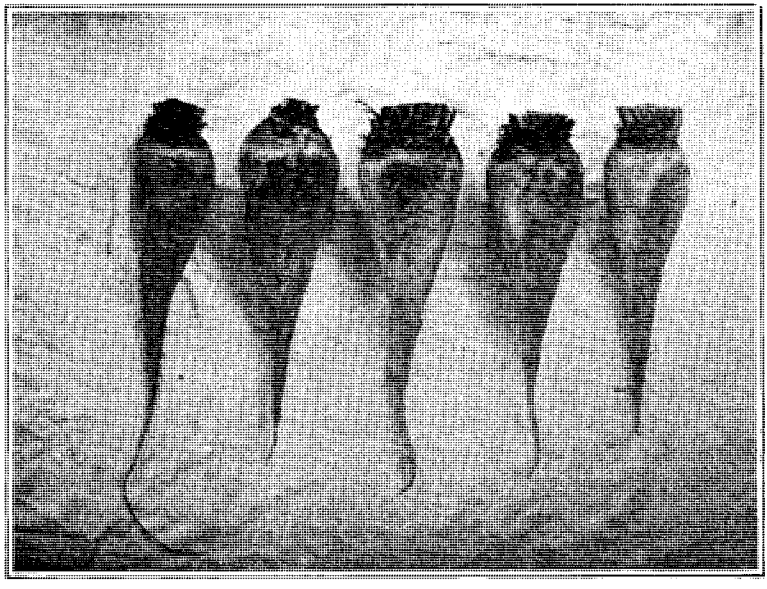
A plan on corn that is shown before it has an opportunity to dry out, is used by Mr. George Hofmann of Logan County. He lets the corn dry out as much as possible up to a few days before the fair, and then wraps each ear in newspaper. This permits the cob and grain to have the same amount of moisture and prevents showing sappiness.

In all corn-exhibition work, be sure that more ears are taken along than are necessary to show, so that if something happens to an ear, it can be replaced and so permit the exhibit to qualify.

The arrangement of the ears in the exhibit is important. If it is possible, all ears should be uniform—but they usually vary in length or otherwise. Place the ears so that the range of lengths is uniform, not with one short one next to a long one. This makes the ears appear better.

Preparation of Forage Seeds for Exhibit—In the preparation of the forage seeds for exhibit, it must be kept in mind that the seed should be mature, of good weight and color and true to type. In selecting seeds of these kinds—alfalfa, sweet clover, cane or sudan grass—it is well to let the seed mature well on the plant, but do not let it stand in the field under adverse conditions. When thoroly mature, sort out the plants that have the best seed and thrash it out by hand so there will be no broken seed. Then reclean several times, using a good, strong force of air in the cleaner. This will leave only the heaviest of the seed.

Preparation of Other Seeds for Exhibit—In preparing other seeds, as beans, peas, soy beans, etc., for exhibit, the best place to do the selecting is on the plants before they mature. Take the plants that show indications of having the best quality of seed and are free from disease. Harvest by hand when the seed is well matured, but before it is so ripe that it will shatter. Cure this seed rather quickly and keep it well protected from the elements. Thrash by hand so no seed will be split or broken. Then grade out in a good grader, leaving only the large, well-colored seed.



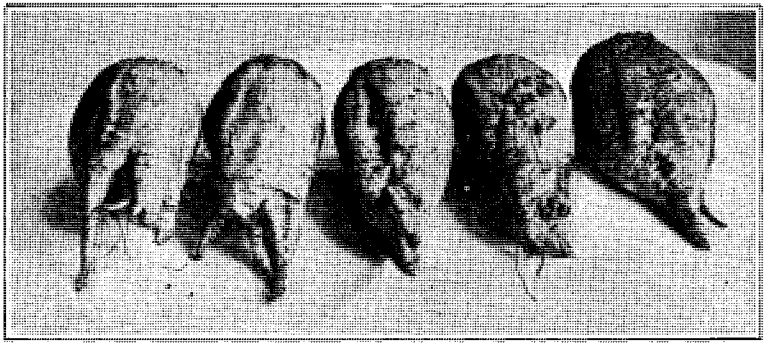
Prize Winning Beets.

This is a good sample as the beets are all of the same size and shape. The crown is small, which means a low tare and the beets are smooth. The beet is long enough to give good tonnage. The gradual tapering of the root is very desirable.

—Courtesy A. C. Maxon.

Preparation of Sugar-Beet Exhibits—The selection and preparation of sugar beets for exhibit is usually a difficult one, as at the time of the fairs, there are not many farmers who have commenced to dig their beets for the factory. This being the case, it takes a good deal of work and pains to get a good ten-beet exhibit. The best method of doing this is to go into the field with a shovel or tiling spade, examine the good, growthy plants to see if they have a good-shaped crown—that is, if the crown is neat, and will permit topping of the beet with but little waste. If the crown is good and the beet appears to weigh around the desired weight, dig down one side and pull it, taking care not to injure the beet.

Beets should be uniform in size, shape of crown, shape of root and color. The scale of weight is between one and a half and five pounds. Sometimes different weights are given in the catalog, in which case they should be observed. The shape of the beet is of prime importance. It should taper gradually and uniformly from the crown to the tip, without contraction or bulging; be slightly flattened on the side where the fine roots come out, show a slight twist not too deep. The crown should be small and oval with only a relatively small leaf-attachment area. Coarse roots are objectionable, as they hold dirt and increase the tare.



A Poor Exhibit.

Beets of this type are known as turnip shaped. The root tapers too rapidly. The crown is too broad,, which means that in topping a lot of the beet is removed. This increases the tare. All of the beets lack smoothness.

—Courtesy A. C. Maxon.

After selecting the best beets take them to the barn and wash the dirt off. Do not scrub or dig the dirt off, as this will cause the beets to turn black. After so preparing them cover with damp sacks until the show. It is usually better to top the beets as soon as they are selected, topping all the same just below leaf scar, and with the cut straight across the beet, not trying to trim to a conical crown. In showing the beets arrange them so the gradation in size is uniform. Remember, it is not always the largest beet that wins the prize. Turnip-shaped beets seldom win a prize.

Preparing Stock-Root Crops—All stock-root crops such as mangels, etc., should be selected for size, uniformity and smoothness. They are usually exhibited in lots of six; sometimes, only three are called for.

Dead leaves should be removed and the tops should be cut off, leaving two or three inches of the leaf stem. They should be washed just before being exhibited.

SHIPMENT OF FAIR EXHIBITS

In shipping exhibits to the fairs, sheaf exhibits, thrashed grain and corn or vegetable exhibits are usually shipped separately. A long packing case is used for the sheaf exhibits. The grain sheaves are wrapped in paper and packed using the grasses or dry forage sheaves to fill or "chink" in between and so make a solid pack. The case should be filled so full that it requires force to get the lid on the box. Using this method of packing, exhibits will usually reach the fair in good shape. With corn, the ears should be wrapped separately in newspapers and boxed or barreled tightly.

Thrashed grain exhibits should be shipped in double sacks or bags. In fact the express companies demand that two bags be used before they will accept the product for shipment. Sometimes thrashed samples are shipped in boxes, in which case the double bag or sack should be used.

Vegetable or root-crop exhibits are usually wrapped in damp sacks and shipped in boxes.

Arranging Community Exhibits—The prime purpose of a community exhibit is to show the system of farming of the community, the major crops and the minor crops being shown. Too often the prize has been placed on the number of varieties shown. A certain amount of variety is desirable but too much is just as undesirable. Always show to the best advantage the staple products of the community.

Community exhibits are judged in much the same manner as individual exhibits, so their selection should be made on the same basis. The number of crops shown—their economic importance—tastiness in arrangement and general appearance are also taken into consideration.

In making a community exhibit it is common practice to use the larger crops in the background, the smaller ones being placed in the foreground. Sometimes the most prominent crops are used as a central idea with the other crops grouped around them. The sheaf bundles are usually placed on the central back wall with the heavier forage on the side walls, thrashed grains, corn, vegetables and other products of importance being grouped in the central part.

Designs in letters made out of grains or vegetables may be worked out. Careful labeling of products is desirable. Avoid over-crowding as it detracts from an exhibit's appearance. Observe your competitor's exhibits. Study the winner's exhibit and you may find out how to make a better exhibit for the following year. It is thru doing and reasoning that one learns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writers take this means to thank Professor Alvin Kezer, Head of the Department of Agronomy, for valuable suggestions and criticisms in the preparation of this manuscript.

Credit is also due the Kansas Experiment Station and Mr. A. C. Maxson for furnishing part of the illustrative material.