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Increase Flax Acres and Yield: 7 Keys to Success

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Increase FLAX Acres and Yield

7 KEYS to Success

Control Weeds
Control Insects
Conserve Moisture
Use Choice Piece of Land
Adapt Seed Rate to Conditions
Use Adapted Disease Resistant Varieties
Seed Early to Fight Pigeon Grass; Later for Russian Thistles

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE, BROOKINGS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Market Outlook
The Commodity Credit Corporation will make loans to support flaxseed prices for the 1943 No. 1 flaxseed at least to the extent of $2.70 per bushel.

S. D. Flax Acreage Goal
The war government is asking South Dakota to plant 460,000 acres of flax for 1943. Last year South Dakota farmers produced about 9 per cent of the national production.

It is believed that we can attain this goal because the acreage suggested is 242,000 acres less than the 702,000 flax acreage harvested in South Dakota in 1930.

We are sure that the farmers of our state will respond and go all out in this vital victory program.

Fit Flax into Crop Rotation
Flax should follow a clean cultivated crop or a sod crop which is in the regular rotation. The soil should be fertile, the seed bed firm, the land well drained and free from weeds and grasshopper eggs. Flax is a good “nurse crop” for grasses and legumes in areas where moisture is fairly abundant.

Guard Against Weeds-Insects
WEEDS: Sow only cleaned seed. Intertilled crop land on which weeds have been thoroughly controlled by cultivation is ideal for flax. Where Russian thistles interfere, delayed seeding, allowing germination and destruction of young thistles before seeding is advisable. Delayed seeding is not effective against pigeon grass since this weed germinates only when soil is warm. Early seeding is defense against pigeon grass.

INSECTS: Look out for grasshoppers. Do not seed flax on land where grasshoppers will hatch out in large numbers. Protect crop with poison bait if emergency arises.

Prevent Diseases
WILT: Grow a wilt resistant variety such as Redwing, Biwing, Buda, or Bison.
RUST: Use rotation that avoids putting flax on same land two years in succession. Feed or plow under flax residues on which rust spores overwinter. Some yellow seeded varieties are resistant to rust. Redwing is less susceptible to rust than Bison.
HEAT CANKER: Caused by high temperatures at surface of soil. The stems are girdled and the plants break over. It may be controlled

Recommended Varieties
3. **Buda**: Matures later than Bison. Small seeded. Resistant to many races of rust. Susceptible to some races of rust. Yielding ability similar to Bison if conditions are favorable for late maturing. Oil quality very good.
5. **Yellow seeded flaxes**: These are represented by varieties like Viking, Bolleys Golden and Smoky Golden. Straw short, about three-fourths the height of Bison. Moderately resistant to rust. Very resistant to rust. Since they are poor weed fighters and sometimes grow too short to be harvested with binder, the yellow seeded flaxes should be grown only on weed free land where growing conditions are very favorable. Oil quality very good.
Best Rate of Seeding
Regulate drill to sow four seeds per inch
For small seed varieties: About 20 pounds per acre in limited rainfall areas; 28 pounds per acre in abundant rainfall areas.

For large seed varieties, such as Bison, increase the above rates by at least one-third. If you must sow late, on account of weeds or other causes, plant from one-third to one-fourth more seed per acre.

The above rate of seeding is for seed with germination of 95 percent or higher. Test all seed before planting.

somewhat by early seeding and securing a full stand which will shade the ground before hot weather hits in late June or early July.

PASMO: Attacks foliage and seed leaves and stems. It is carried on seed. Avoid introduction of infected seed into new territory.

SEED TREATMENT is often advisable to reduce damping-off and seed decay. Use some approved fungicide like ethyl mercury phosphate for control.

Guard Against Heat-Drought
Sow on land (1) where moisture has been conserved by timely tillage practices. (2) Sow field on contour to prevent water run-off. (3) Sow on field where weeds have been controlled the previous years.

Seed early: According to long time experimental records of the South Dakota Experiment Station, flax should, for the best results, be seeded not earlier than April 1 or later than April 15. Flax will stand freezing temperatures as low as 21 degrees to 23 degrees. Delayed seedings are more subject to damage by heat, grasshoppers and certain weeds like pigeon grass which germinate when soil is warm. (The kinds of weeds present in the field may determine seeding time somewhat as explained under the paragraph on weeds.)
Flax-Wheat Combination

If your flax ground is weedy it may pay to grow a flax-wheat combination. In such instances the wheat added substitutes a paying crop for harmful weeds.

Therefore only enough wheat should be added to flax to aid in the control of weeds.

The suggested rate of seeding in eastern South Dakota is the regular rate of flax per acre to 2 pecks of wheat. Mix wheat and flax and sow together not earlier than April 1 or later than April 15.

Use firm seed bed and avoid seeding deeper than 1 or 1 ½ inches.

(One advantage of using the flax-wheat combination is that wheat seedlings tend to open the crust of the soil and permit the flax to come through.)

Flax and wheat are easily separated if proper sieves are used. Any farm fanning mill with proper sieves will do a satisfactory job.

Harvesting Problems

Flax does not shatter or crinkle as easily as other grains and, unless grasshoppers interfere, may be left standing in the fields with little danger of loss in yield or quality until the seed is ripe enough to be stored safely. It is very important, however, that seed be dried out to 11 percent or less before harvesting with a combine. If green weeds are present, crop should be cut with a windrower, otherwise moisture in weeds will cause seed to spoil.

Flax which is uniform in height, and tall enough, may be harvested with the ordinary self-binder. The bundles should be shocked immediately so that seed bolls be kept off the ground.

Care after Harvesting

Take care not to crack or injure seed in threshing. Injured seed is more likely to cause trouble in heating. Reduce speed of machines handling flax seed to the minimum to prevent injury to seed coat.

Flax seed should not be stored until moisture content is 11 percent or less.

by U. J. NORGAARD, Extension Agronomist
Grow More Flax
To Meet War Needs

Our government needs flax. Every plane, every ship, every tank, every gun—everything produced to supply war needs takes paint. With the loss of some of our sources of raw materials for paint, flax is the vital product we can supply.

With a call for 10 percent increase in production of flax in 1943, South Dakota farmers must plan their farm acreage to meet this goal. A disease resistant variety of flax planted under right conditions on good land will help increase the production of those flax acres.

Keeping the war industries supplied with the flax they need gives farmers a chance to push production of vital war products.

This leaflet sent you by your County Extension Agent of the South Dakota Agricultural Extension Service discusses ways to “Increase Flax Acres and Yield” to meet increased war needs.