

Farmer at Hordville Raises Certified Seed

By JACK BAILEY

HORDVILLE — What started out as a hobby for John Veburg, Hordville farmer, 30 years ago has turned into a lucrative business. It is the raising of certified milo and oats seed.

The hobby developed with his farming operation. When not active farming he operated a clover huller. This was back in 1920.

In 1930, when the bottom was dropping out of farming, Mr. Veburg harvested 2,500 bushels of the finest alfalfa seed that ever went through his huller. This convinced him farmers should plant the best grade of seed possible and their return would be much greater.

the rows of male seed while the wide belt of six rows of white are the white or fertile seed. The brown pollinate with the white to produce next year's brown hybrid milo.

To raise certified seed a farmer faces numerous inspections, must have his crop a certain distance from other fields of milo and wait until tests are made on his hybrid seed to see if it is pure.

Planted in Mexico

The tests start in November when samples of the seed are taken from the field and sent to Tampico, Mexico, where it is planted. By February it is possible to tell if the seed is pure then Mr. Veburg is notified he can put the seed on the market.

"It is impossible for use to produce enough to supply the demand," Mr. Veburg said. "And each year the demand is getting heavier for more and more farmers are turning to milo.

"I believe in the next few years it will surpass corn production. The farmer is not troubled with corn borer or root worm. They have also found milo has 90 per cent the quality of corn in the fattening of cattle and compares favorably with corn in fattening hogs."

Mr. Veburg, a member of the old school of farming, feels farmers would benefit greatly if each year they would plow under a certain amount of their land each year after planting it to a grass crop.

"I do not feel that commercial fertilizer alone can continue to build up land planted to one crop for years. The farmer must put back into the soil that which he has taken out and this can only be done by plowing under a grass or legume crop."

The Veburgs are the parents of four children in addition to Richard who farms the home place. Conrad lives in California; Ronald in Hastings; Mrs. Kenneth Clayton near Hordville and Mrs. Milton Anderson in Davenport, Ia.

He joined the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association and began using nothing but the best seed on his land and urged neighboring farmers to do likewise. Not only that, he began experimenting with a new crop in this area called milo. It wasn't long until other farmers in the area were doing likewise.

Each year he experimented further with hybrids and the straight variety hoping to develop bigger and better heads with greater production.

Started Seed Firm

By 1940 he was so successful with the raising of milo seed that he moved to town and opened the Veburg Seed Company while his son Richard carried on the farming operation. Mr. Veburg, however kept his hand in the production of hybrid corn and milo and high quality of seed oats.

Today his business has grown until he sells all the seed he raises and a great deal more. Since 1950 he has been exhibiting at the State Fair and two years exhibited at the International Livestock Show in Chicago.

His record in these exhibitions is something he is mighty proud of and he keeps the string of ribbons he has won on display in his seed store for all to see. Below is his record:

1954 — Fourth at State Fair and fifth at International.

1955 — Second at International Livestock Show.

1956 — Fourth at State Fair; fourth at International Show.

1957 — First at State Fair.

1958 — First and second at State Fair.

1959 — Grand Champion at State Fair.

1960 — First at State Fair.

Mr. Veburg buys all his seed from the university's agronomy farms. Each year he tries to raise around 55 acres of milo divided into two kinds of hybrid and one variety of straight milo.

Most to Wholesalers

Most of Mr. Veburg's seed production goes to wholesalers through out the state and Kansas with a small percentage of it being sold to dealers in nearby communities.

"Producing fine seed is a challenge," Mr. Veburg said. "Once it gets hold of you it never lets go. There is a lot of satisfaction too, in producing top quality seed."

Mr. Veburg's milo fields are a delight to see. He has one field of dryland milo which he expects to average 100 bushels to the acre. The land was ready to be irrigated but he felt it would mature faster if additional water was not added.

He has another field of hybrid milo which presents an unusual pattern of white and brown as one looks over the field. The narrow brown thread through the field are



Photo by Jack Bailey

SEED GROWER—John Veburg, Hordville farmer and seed man, examines a head of milo in one of his certified seed acreages north of Hordville. Mr. Veburg says he is unable to raise enough certified seed to supply the demand.



Photo by Jack Bailey

DRYLAND MILO—Looking down two rows of plain milo on the John Veburg farm. The field, levelled for irrigation, was never watered. It is expected to yield 100 bushels to the acre.