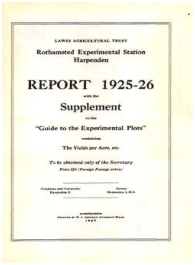
Report 1925-26 With the Supplement to the Guide to the Experimental Plots



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INTRODUCTION

The Rothamsted Experimental Station was founded in 1843 by the late Sir J. B. Lawes, with whom was associated Sir J. B. Gilbert for a period of nearly 60 years. Lawes died in 1900 and Gilbert in 1901; they were succeeded by Sir A. D. Hall from 1902 to 1912, when the present Director, Sir E. J. Russell, was appointed.

For many years the work was maintained entirely at the expense of Sir J. B. Lawes, at first by direct payment, and from 1899 onwards out of an income of £2,400 arising from the endowment fund of £100,000 given by him to the Lawes Agricultural Trust. In 1904 the Society for extending the Rothamsted Experiments was instituted for the purpose of providing funds for expansion. In 1906 Mr. J. F. Mason built the Bacteriological Laboratory; in 1907 the Goldsmiths' Company generously provided a further endowment of £10,000, the income of which is to be devoted to the investigation of the soil, thus raising the total income of the Station to £2,800. In 1911 the Development Commissioners made their first grant to the Station. Since then Government grants have been made annually, and for the year 1925-26 the Ministry of Agriculture has made a grant of £27,156 for the work of the Station. Viscount Elveden, M.P., has generously borne the cost of a chemist for studying farmyard manure since 1913 and has recently provided funds for the fitting up of a laboratory workshop, while Lady Ludlow, Sir Otto Beit, Mr. Robert Mond, Mr. T. H. Riches, Mr. and Mrs. D. MacAlister and other donors have from time to time generously provided funds for special apparatus and equipment. Nitram, Ltd., and the Fertiliser Manufacturers' Association jointly defray the cost of a Guide Demonstrator for the field plots, and in addition provide considerable funds for the extension of the work; the Chilean Nitrate Committee, the Potash Syndicate, Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co., Fertilizer Sales, and other firms, also give substantial assistance. The result is that the Station is able to deal with problems affecting modern farming in a far more complete manner than would otherwise be possible.

The laboratories have been entirely rebuilt in recent years. The main block was opened in 1919, and is devoted to the study of soil and plant nutrition problems; a new block has been erected for plant pathology at a cost of £21,135 provided by the Ministry of Agriculture out of the Development Fund.

Perhaps even more important has been the reorganisation of the work of the Station so as to keep it in touch with modern conditions of agriculture on the one side and

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of science on the other. This was completed in the laboratories in 1922, on the Farm in 1924, and on the field plots in 1926, when the field laboratory was erected and the new methods of field experiment were adopted. Finally, in 1926 the International Education Board, Rockefeller Foundation, generously gave a grant of £2,000 for the completion of the glass-houses provided the remaining £1,000 needed should be obtained; this was done with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture and of the Society for Extending the Rothamsted Experiments. The equipment of the Station is now exceptionally good.

The Library is steadily growing and now contains some 20,000 volumes dealing with agriculture and cognate subjects. The Catalogue of the old printed books on agriculture has been published, and every effort is made to obtain any that we do not possess. A collection is also being made of prints of farm animals, of old letters on agriculture, and farm account books. Many of these lie in farmhouses, unused and inaccessible, not in themselves valuable, but often of great help to students of agricultural history and economics when brought together as we are doing. Gifts of books and documents to the Library will be greatly appreciated.

The extension of the experiments to various outside centres in Great Britain, begun in 1921, has proved so advantageous that it has been developed, thanks to the grants of the Royal Agricultural Society and the co-operation of the Institute of Brewing. Not only is useful information spread among farmers, but the Station itself gains considerably by this closer association with practical men. As part of this extension the Station has now, with the consent of His Grace the Duke of Bedford, taken over from Dr. J. A. Voelcker the lease of the Woburn Experimental Farm, so that this now becomes a part of the Rothamsted organisation, allowing us to make experiments simultaneously on a light and on a heavy soil; a very advantageous arrangement.

The activities of Rothamsted, however, are not confined to the British Islands, but are gradually spreading out to the Empire and other countries abroad. The International Education Board sends workers from all parts of the world to study in these laboratories. The Empire Cotton Growing Corporation has since 1923 made a grant of £1,000 per annum for the development of investigations in Soil Physics, while the Empire Marketing Board has recently invited the co-operation of the Station in solving certain agricultural problems of great importance to the Empire. This side of the work is almost certain to develop.

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