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Woburn Farm Report

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WOBURN FARM

REPORT BY J. R. MOFFATT, 1934

The effect of the drought during the year 1933-34 was less marked than one would expect on the light Woburn soil. The grassland remained more fresh than in the previous year, although little growth took place during the summer, and hay crops were light. The early autumn rain brought on a fresh growth of young grass which was palatable to stock. The part of Warren field which was sown down to grass in 1933 was patched in the spring, and, considering the two exceptionally dry years, the seeds have taken well. The clover in the six course rotation failed completely, and the top end of Series D clover in Stackyard field had to be patched after harvest.

The season proved favourable to barley but very unfavourable to wheat. The average yield of the barley in the six course rotation was over 4 cwt. per acre above the three year average, and Series C barley also yielded well. The mean yield of wheat on the rotation was only 4.6 cwt. per acre, which is very poor when compared with the Rothamsted figure of 28.6 cwt. per acre for a similar experiment. The experiment on the time of applying nitrogen gave a mean yield of under 12 cwt. per acre, but in spite of this low yield there was no response to dressings of 1.5 cwt. per acre of sulphate of ammonia. The wheat in Series A of Stackyard field failed miserably.

The root crops did excellently. The average yield per acre of washed beet from the experiment was over 18 tons, with a sugar content of over 17 per cent. Kleinwanzleben "E" seed was used this year for the first time and sowing took place rather earlier than in previous years. The Kuhn variety was maintained on the six course rotation, and although growth was slower than the Kleinwanzleben "E," the mean yield of all plots was over 3 tons per acre above the average.

Swedes on Series C of Stackyard field yielded well, although many of the roots were attacked by club root (*Plasmodiophora Brassicae*).

Kale in Lansome field was sown in alternate strips on ridges and flat, but flea beetle attack necessitated re-drilling some strips on each method. The crop yielded well.

The carrot experiment gave a very high yield of large and well-shaped roots, but unfortunately there was no immediate sale for them, and while in the clamp they were attacked by Sclerotinia Rot and Soft Rot, and became unfit for human consumption.

Potatoes looked healthy and clean throughout the year and yielded well.

Livestock

In the autumn of 1933, 88 ewes were put to the tup. Of the 85 that lambed, 54 produced doubles, 30 produced singles, but only one set of triplets was born. Neighbouring farmers also reported a scarcity of triplets. Ewe losses were smaller than usual, and there was only one

barren ewe. The ewes were wintered off the farm for about two months and so returned to fresh grass before lambing. The lambs did well and were sold throughout the summer and autumn.

Fifty Scotch half-bred gimmers were purchased in the autumn of 1934, to replace the culled ewes of the past two seasons. Fifteen of these were exchanged for a similar number of Rothamsted bred half-bred gimmers, so that the two different types could be compared at each farm.

Pigs have done well, and the number sold was slightly above last year's figure. The bacon factory grading returns are given on page 82. Two Large White in-pig gilts were purchased from a well-known herd in the autumn of 1934, and it is hoped to use them as the foundation stock of a Large White herd.

At the Smithfield Club's Fat Stock Show in December, 1933, we were successful in obtaining the first prize for the cross-bred lamb carcass with a Southdown-Halfbred cross, and a highly commended award for a pig carcass of 100 to 160 lb. live weight. At the Bedfordshire Show in July we secured two first prizes for fat lambs and gilts, and were placed second for breeding ewes, and a sow and litter.