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Grassland Experiments

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GRASSLAND EXPERIMENTS

As in previous years, a number of grassland experiments have been carried out in different parts of the country to compare the values of the different types of basic slag now available or likely to become so, and also to study the effects of an even cheaper material, mineral phosphate. These experiments are carried out under the ægis of the Ministry of Agriculture Basic Slag Committee, and at the request of the slag makers and largely at their expense; they are being continued and extended to include certain new types of slag resulting from changes in the method of steel making. The result has been to prove the general superiority of high soluble basic slag over other forms, although the low soluble slag and the mineral phosphate both have value in certain conditions which are gradually being discovered. Already these investigations have had the very useful result of increasing the proportion of the agriculturally effective slags as against those of less agricultural value: this is shown by the following figures of deliveries of ground basic slag in Great Britain:—

	Deliveries, Tons			Percentage of Total Deliveries	
	High Soluble (80% or more)	Low Soluble	Total	High Soluble (80% or more)	Low Soluble
1924-1925 ..	126,025	117,514	243,539	51.8	48.2
1929-1930 ..	222,342	83,407	305,749	72.7	27.3
1934-1935 ..	203,070	77,353	280,423	72.4	27.6

The new medium soluble slags, however, present special difficulties in that they show greater differences in effect than can be accounted for by their solubility in citric acid. With the taking over of a considerable area of additional grassland in 1934, it has become possible to arrange for grassland experiments to be made at Rothamsted also, and plans for these are being worked out. An investigation is being undertaken at the request of the Royal Agricultural Society to ascertain the effect on grassland of feeding cake to the animals grazing there: in particular to discover how far any improvement effected can be related to the composition of the cake and how long such improvement lasts. Unfortunately it has not yet been found possible to design a completely satisfactory grazing experiment: the older types of experiment do not satisfy modern statistical tests. An attempt is being made this year to overcome the difficulty by fencing off small areas within the grazed plots for short periods and weighing and analysing the herbage produced.

ARABLE CROPS.

SUGAR BEET. These experiments are carried out under the ægis of the Sugar Beet Research and Education Committee of the Sugar Beet factories and the Ministry of Agriculture.