

Grades of Tobacco Are Most Complex Of Any Agricultural Product

By Quentin W. Roop

Nowhere else in the marketing of agricultural products do you find as many grades as in the marketing of tobacco. To adequately classify the many variations of kind and quality, 2,683 Federal tobacco grades have been developed.

Established by the Tobacco Division of the Agricultural Marketing Service, these grades are applied to all tobacco sold at auction. This amounts to 95 percent of the U.S. crop.

Despite this common usage, Federal grades for tobacco are not always clearly understood by all who use them.

Tobacco grades are based, first of all, upon the U.S. standards, which are written descriptions of the physical properties and characteristics of tobacco. The Standards provide, basically, for major classes and types within which there are numerous grades.

There are six USDA classes for tobacco: Class 1—Flue-cured; Class 2—Fire-Cured, Class 3—Air-cured; Class 4—Cigar-filler; Class 5—Cigar-binder, and Class 6—Cigar-wrapper.

Within these classes, tobacco is identified by types, according to its characteristics and uses. Class 3 (Air-cured), for instance, has 5 types: Type 31, Burley, Type 32, Maryland Broadleaf; Type 35, One Sucker, Type 36, Green River; and Type 37, Virginia Sun-cured.

Tobacco grade is defined according to three factors: group, quality, and color.

Group is determined by the position of the leaf on the stalk and reflects the traditional farm method of priming, stripping, or sorting. Typical of these groups are those for Flue-cured tobacco. They include Leaf—leaves from the top of the stalk, Cutters—leaves from the mid-position of the stalk, and Lugs—leaves from the bottom of the plant.

Quality—the second factor of grade—is defined either as Choice, Fine, Good, Fair, Low, or Poor. Smoothness, oil, maturity, body, width, porosity, finish, and uniformity determine the quality designations.

Color is the third grade factor. Each quality of the Leaf, Cutter, and Lugs groups, for instance, is classified according to its particular color.



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Rank of nationally sold chicks in 1956-57 tests

(Based on income over feed cost except in N.Y.C. and Missouri)

Entry	Calif.	Mo.	N.Y.C.	Tenn.	Utah*	Avg. Rank
Kimber K-137	4	4	6	5	2	4.2
Strain A	3	10	—	10	1	6.0
Strain B	11	16	2	3	5†	7.3
Strain C	5	18	18	12	5	11.6
Strain D	—	6	24	—	10	13.3
Strain E	38	3	25	15	3	16.8
Strain F	23	20	—	7	18	17.0
Strain G	—	25	27	11	13	19.0

*Incomplete. †Average of 2 entries.

‡Income over feed and chick costs.

K-137 entries ranked **FIRST IN NET INCOME** among all nationally sold chicks entered in three or more of the above tests. The average net income from Kimberchiks was 58¢ higher than the average of all entries. Such consistent, profitable performance in a wide variety of environments should encourage you to order K-137 Kimberchiks this season.

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Chemical analyses of tobacco are currently being made by the Tobacco Division and a number of Federal State, and industry laboratories. Perhaps in the future, these may throw additional light on the relationship of grades to commercial utilization.

The first published report on this project, "The Chemical Composition of Representative Grades of the 1951 and 1952 Crops of Burley Tobacco," will be issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture within the next few

Rubber Bags Being Used to Ship Milk

A dairy cooperative in Portland Ore., recently began to ship milk

months.

Underway at present is a comprehensive correlation study which will relate the findings of chemists who analyzed representative grades of both Burley and Flue-cured tobaccos to the physical factors on which these grades were based.

between plants in large rubber bags.

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In addition to these three main factors of a grade, a fourth is used when tobacco has a peculiar characteristic not covered by the other grade specifications.

Within each of the 26 types of tobacco—group, quality, and color are highly variable. As a result, each type of tobacco has anywhere from 2 to 150 grades.

This system of standardization is one of the most elaborate used for agricultural products. It is made necessary not only because of the variable nature of tobacco, which is highly affected by soils, climatic conditions, and methods of curing, but also by the importance placed by industry on the differences between the various kinds and qualities of tobacco.

The standards are intended to provide a yardstick of quality, value, and usefulness in tobacco.

Since the value of a particular tobacco depends primarily upon its fitness for a specific use, it is imperative that the standards be kept flexible enough to reflect changes in the marketing pattern. With this in mind, the Tobacco Division from time to time makes changes in the standards.

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1 to 3



For every dollar invested in limestone, experiment stations conclude, three dollars are returned in increased crops. Sometimes the ratio climbs to one to 15.

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