

## Expert calls '86 a good year to choose seeds

ITHACA, NY — The annual scramble is on as the nation's farmers select seeds for spring planting, and the seed outlook is excellent.

Seed stocks for most grain and forage crops are plentiful, except for the newest varieties that are moving into production, according to a Cornell University field crops specialist.

"This is a good year to choose high performing varieties," says William O. Pardee, a professor and chairman of the Department of

Plant Breeding and Biometry in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell.

Stressing the importance of choosing top-quality varieties, Pardee urges farmers to look for varieties that have two features—the capacity to give high yields and the ability to withstand attacks by disease organisms and insect pests.

"Seed quality and performance are the key to profits," Pardee points out. "Top varieties can outyield poor ones by 20 to 30

percent, making good seed the best investment in any year. For small grains and alfalfa, look for certified seed, which is your assurance of quality."

As Pardee sees it, the outlook for the seed situation this spring, overall, is excellent. Here is the rundown:

**Corn**— plentiful, with a wide choice of top-performing varieties available, but some shortages are expected for new superior varieties that are selling fast and may run out soon.

**Oats**— plentiful for all of the top varieties, including Ogle and Porter.

**Spring barley**— adequate. Recommended are two Canadian varieties — Birka and Rodeo. Birka topped the 1985 field tests conducted by Cornell, with Rodeo close behind.

**Alfalfa**— adequate for most varieties, except for newest varieties, such as Oneida VR from Cornell. Varieties resistant to

several common diseases, such as Phytophthora root rot, Verticillium wilt, anthracnose, and Fusarium wilt, should be top choice.

Cornell's Oneida VR has high resistance to Verticillium, a new disease that has established a foothold in parts of New York and Pennsylvania in the past few years. Other Verticillium-resistant varieties include Excalibur (Agway); WL 316 and WL 320 (Beachley-Hardy); and 5444 (Pioneer).

Oneida VR also has resistance to anthracnose. Other varieties known to have resistance to this disease include Cornell's Saranac AR and Mohawk; WL 316 and WL 320 (Beachley-Hardy); Advantage (DeKalb); and Maxim and Emerald (Hoffman).

All of these varieties also have resistance to bacterial wilts, says Pardee.

**Birdsfoot trefoil**— adequate. The new variety to look for is Norcen,

which is the "best trefoil to come along in many years," says Pardee. Seed stocks for Viking are limited. Empire, Maitland, and Peak are other possible choices.

**Red clover**— adequate with good stocks for Arlington. Other improved varieties include Tristan, Reddy, Redmor, Mor-Red, Redland II, and Prosper I. All these varieties have resistance to the northern anthracnose disease.

**Timothy**— adequate for Climax but short for Champlain, also a Cornell variety.

**Brome**— short, particularly for Saratoga, the leading variety recommended for the Northeast.

Seed supplies for other forage crops such as orchardgrass and sorghum-sudangrass appear plentiful.

"Given the uncertain outlook for crop prices this year, emphasis should be on efficient production," Pardee stresses. "this means high-yielding varieties with strong insect and disease resistance."

## USDA proposes requirements for importing uncooked ham

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to establish requirements for the importation of prosciutto ham, a USDA official said today.

"Under current regulations, uncooked hams such as prosciutto are not allowed to be imported into the United States because of the danger of introducing foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever, hog cholera, and swine vesicular disease," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Hawkins said the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, an association of Italian producers of Parma ham, has developed strict processing procedures for ensuring that its prosciutto is disease-free. Swine are bred and raised especially for these hams. The meat is first treated with a low-salt solution, then aged for more than a year before it is ready for market as prosciutto.

"At the request of the Consorzio, the USDA tested these procedures

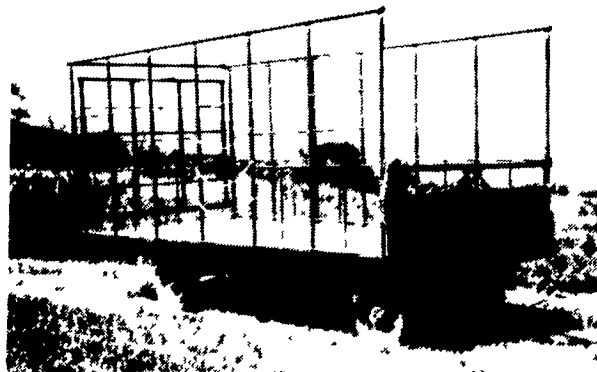
at its Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory," said Hawkins. "The results showed that the processing procedures used by the Italians were adequate to ensure that the prosciutto is free of exotic viruses of concern to us."

The USDA proposal would establish safeguards to ensure that the hams would come only from swine that are free of the specified diseases, and that the identity of the hams would be maintained from the time of slaughter through processing and importation.

The proposal also includes provisions to ensure that the hams would be processed only in establishments capable of meeting the proposed requirements and where the operators had agreed to comply with them.

Written comments on the proposal may be sent until April 21 to Thomas O. Gessel, Regulatory Coordination Staff, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA, Room 728, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

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