

REPORT OF DEMONSTRATIONS USING DISEASE-FREE WESTERN-GROWN SNAPBEAN SEED

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Fifty demonstrations in five counties were set up using seed of the Giant Stringless Green Pod, Bountiful, Black Valentine, and Tendergreen varieties of beans. The Southern States Cooperative obtained sufficient seed beans from Yuba County, California, to supply each cooperator for a limited garden test. A few demonstrations were on a large enough scale to be termed semi-commercial. As a rule the seed was planted adjacent to beans from home grown seed and/or from commercial sources. In a few demonstrations, plantings were isolated from other beans.

Visits by the Extension Plant Pathologist and County Agents during the growing season gave a good cross-section of opinion from cooperators. Some of the reports include statements such as follows:

"...You could tell to the row which were Western-grown seed. They were larger and healthier looking. Two rows in my garden were planted at the same time and the Western beans were 5 to 6 inches tall while the beans from home-grown seed were just coming through the ground. From my observation I don't think there is any question about the superior quality of these beans!" "...These beans produced the largest, healthiest vines I have ever seen. They out-yielded neighbors beans 4 to 1." "...Western seed grew much larger and sturdier plants, and therefore gave a greater yield than home-grown seed. Farmers want Western-grown seed next year. They produce about 30% more yield." "...In the early stages Western grown seed looked more promising. But after a rain, the varieties from home-grown seed came out and yielded as well as those from Western-grown seeds." "...I didn't see any difference between Western-grown bean seeds and seed from other sources." "...The Western-grown seed was much better. Heavier yield." "...Western-grown seed produced more beans. They were planted side by side with home-grown beans. Western-grown seed proved to be the best."

Summary:

In general, it might be stated that Western-grown seed produced larger yields and the plants were more free of disease than those from home-grown sources. However, the commercial seed, purchased from reliable seed dealers and which was probably Western-grown, produced about as well as the Western-grown seed used in this demonstration. In several cases where anthracnose and bacterial spot were observed in beans from Western-grown seed, the infection was found to have originated in the planting from home-grown seed nearby. When beans from Western-grown seed were isolated from other beans, they remained entirely free of anthracnose, but some mosaic was observed.

The conclusions that might be drawn from these demonstrations are: (1) Only Western-grown seed should be planted in Virginia. (2) There is great danger of anthracnose and bacterial spot if home-grown seed is planted. (3) The quality of most of the commercial bean seed sold in Virginia last season by reliable dealers was good and probably was grown in the West.

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