

PLANTING, BLOCKING, AND THINNING
COLORADO

by E. M. Mervine

A plan somewhat similar to that followed last year is being used this year. Plots were planted with the single seed planter and with the standard planter each using different rates of seeding. All of these plots will be thinned in various manners, some with the ordinary hand thinners, some with the long handled hoe only, some with the cotton chopper set to thin without any subsequent hand work, and some with the cotton chopper followed with long handled hoe work, and some with cross blocking equipment. These plots are being replicated so that statistical results may be measured.

Planting conditions have been rather discouraging, so after the first plantings were made and the seeds germinated in spots only, a second set of plots were planted and after a long dry spell when none of these grew, a third field was laid out for mechanical thinning operations only. Now that we have had rain it will be possible for us to get some results on all three of the plot series.

No results are as yet obtainable on any of these plots.

Some observations may be in order. One farmer to whom I loaned the single seed planter with the expectation of his planting a strip only through his field planted his entire forty-one acres. Since his land was marginal land it was with some fear that we went to his field to make stand counts. He planted nine pounds of seed to the acre and his stand averaged 45%, that is 45% of the inches of row contained beet seedlings. One-third of them were singles. This field thus offered an ideal set up for long handled hoe thinning eliminating stoop labor.

Another observation was that a large acreage planted with the single seed planter with the expectation that no stoop labor would be used planted seventeen pounds to the acre and the field looked as if every germ made a plant. The stand was very dense and as the long handled hoe thinners worked they followed too close to their former training of leaving a block of beets every ten inches of row. The results are first that a large percentage of the blocks contain multiples and second that with these multiples the total population of beets per acre is probably too high.

In making plans for the elimination of stoop labor this year we have arbitrarily set the following rule for procedure. We will first set our mechanical equipment to leave blocks as small as possible with the objective of leaving as many single beets as possible and when this is followed with the long handled hoe that the final stand of beets shall be not to exceed 120 beets per one hundred feet of row. The method of figuring the number of beets is again arbitrarily fixed to be the number of singles plus two for every multiple even though it might have more than two beets. To illustrate, the number of remaining beets would be called 100 if there were sixty singles and twenty blocks that have two or more beets.