

EDITORIAL

AN OPINION ON TREFOIL SEED PROTECTION

J. S. BUBAR

Department of Plant Science, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro,
Nova Scotia, Canada.

A recurring opinion, expressed in the second Lotus Newsletter, is that farmer utilization of L. corniculatus in North America is severely restricted by seed supply and the resultant high cost of the seed that is available. In drier climatic areas, where seed set on solid stands is relatively high, harvested yields are frequently low due to seed shattering. In more humid areas little seed shattering may occur but lush vegetative growth seems to prevent satisfactory flowering and seed set. One attempt at field scale production in Nova Scotia of the Leo variety resulted in an excellent seed set in the first production year (1970) on a stand that was seeded very thinly in 1969. Estimated yields were 500 lbs/acre but the farmer was afraid of shattering losses, so he cut the crop too soon and found that most of the seed shrivelled and was lost during seed cleaning. In 1971, the vegetative growth was very dense and very few pods were found at harvest time. In contrast, cultivated rows in research plots had excellent seed sets in both years and very little seed shattering was observed on plants that were left unharvested. Seed yield estimates on cultivated rows spaced at 30 inches grown at Macdonald College were 900 lbs/acre in one year and 1000 lbs/acre in the next year. My observation in Nova Scotia is that seed sets equal to that at Macdonald College are possible but our higher humidity should lead to less shattering losses. This leads me to the opinion that the best hope we have to obtain adequate seed supplies of the crop is through production on cultivated rows under humid climatic conditions.