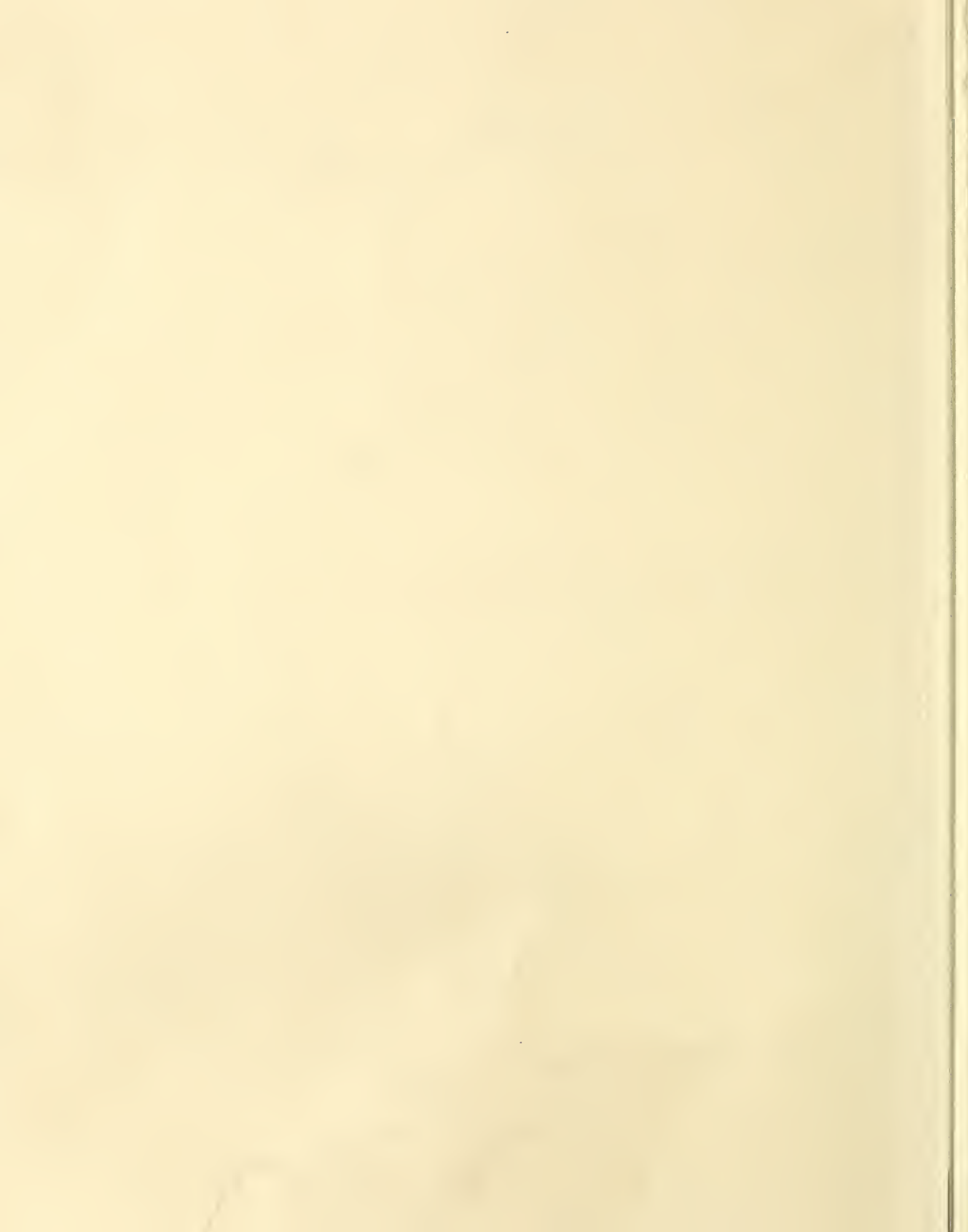


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Tuesday, May 14, 1940.

LAWN SEED

A radio talk prepared by J. R. Cavanagh, Associate Economics Writer, Washington, D. C., and delivered by J. R. Briggs, Western Radio Program Director, over KGO and associated stations of the Pacific Coast Blue Network, National Broadcasting Company.



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The Federal Seed Act regulates the handling of agricultural seed and vegetable seed -- when they are shipped in interstate commerce. But the Agricultural Marketing Service says the term "agricultural seed" includes lawn grass seed and lawn grass mixtures. So all lawn seed -- if it's shipped from one State to another -- comes under the Federal Seed Act. This is true of lawn grass seed in cartons as well as in bags.

If the seed is shipped in interstate commerce, every one of these packages must be properly labeled. Let's go over some of this labeling. Here's a label from a carton of mixed bluegrass, red top and white clover seed. It says, "65 percent Kentucky bluegrass." That means almost two-thirds of the seed is Kentucky bluegrass. It says, "20 percent red top" and "6 percent white clover." So the person who buys the seed knows he is getting 65 percent bluegrass, 20 percent red top, and 6 percent white clover seed.

But these percentages don't add up to 100. They add up to 91. The other 9 percent is the package is itemized on the label, too. It's shown as 2 percent crop seed, 6 percent inert matter such as chaff or trash, and 1 percent weeds. Also the label shows that the weeds run 180 seeds to the pound of sorrel, and 90 to the pound of buckhorn. These are "noxious" weed seed in some states, and if they are, the buyer is entitled to know he is getting them. Equally important, the label shows the percentage of germination of the three lawn grass seeds in the mixtures -- and the dates the germination tests were made. In other words, this label gives all the information any buyer needs if he is to know what he is buying.

The rules and regulations under the act require that these labels be on the sides or tops of the cartons. That's so they can be easily seen. And the labels must be printed or stamped on the cartons so they are easy to read. This means no more labels in fine print--the kind the buyer might not see readily. And it means no more labels on the bottoms of cartons where lots of folks never would see them.

What's the purpose of all of these requirements? Just this: so that any person who buys lawn grass seed that's been shipped in interstate commerce can easily see what he's buying. If the seed isn't shipped in interstate commerce, it doesn't come under the Federal law, and of course, the Federal Seed Act regulations cannot be applied. But on seed that is handled in interstate commerce, the proper labeling must be there to protect both seed dealers and others who want to know what they're buying or selling.

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But some folks may not know what they should buy. We'd suggest that they ask their county agent. The county agent can tell the kinds of lawn seed that are best for any area or for planting under special conditions. And he can tell how to read the seed labels so the buyer can know he is getting what he wants.