



Dream Realized; Routledge Now Has Model Northwest Turkey Ranch, Hatchery

This is the second of two articles telling the story of George Routledge, his turkey hatchery and farm and his firm belief that turkey raising may, in time, become Douglas county's number one industry.

By WARREN MACK
News-Review Staff Writer

George L. Routledge realized a lifelong ambition in 1945 when he bought land he now operates near the Garden Valley district northwest of Roseburg. He had visions of being the owner of a model turkey ranch and hatchery—one that would attract poultry experts from all over the country, would give him an opportunity to improve turkey raising methods and would offer the chance to do something constructive for the Roseburg community he has come to love.

He paid no attention to scoffing oldtimers who laughed at the idea of raising turkeys on land covered with scrub oak and slash. With his experience and background, all George needed was cheap land (preferably logged over timber land), proper drainage, natural rain shelters and the kind of climate noted in Douglas county. The oldtimers stopped scoffing when they saw for themselves that the Routledge farm was the best of its kind in the county and derision changed to respect when the farm was classed as one of the finest in Oregon.

Acres Told
Routledge now has 185 acres devoted almost exclusively to raising turkeys and their eggs. Forty acres on the west side of the county road extending to the Umpqua river bank include three brooder and pullet ranges, brooder yards and a field—all crammed to the hilt with turkeys in varying stages of development.

Home for the newly-born birds is the 10,000 capacity brooder house, measuring 340 by 25 feet. It is equipped with 31 oil and gas stoves, with a constant temperature guaranteed by thermostats. Automatic water fountains assure an adequate and fresh supply of water, both in the brooder and on all ranges. Cleanliness of the brooder is an outstanding feature, with little of the smell from droppings present. Routledge admits being something of a pioneer in the use of wood slat flooring, a type of flooring which does away with contamination and greatly reduces cleaning time and expense.

Hatchery Large
Attached to the comfortable living quarters, and nearly twice their size, are the incubator and hatchery rooms and a small office. Two, 35,000-capacity and six, 4,000-capacity incubators operating on a 28-day basis prepare the eggs for the next step. Eggs are then put in the six, 4,000-capacity hatchers and "come to life" in two to three days.

After the birds have left the brooder and two of the three west side ranges, they are moved across the road to the hillside range and breeder yards, their last stay on the Routledge farm. The remainder of the 145 acres on the east side of the road is being developed as fitting habitation for more turkeys. One well is dug and another is in the process and carpenters are completing a barn and feed sheds.

When information for this article was being gathered, the Routledge farm had as tenants nearly 25,000 turkeys, ranging from two-week-old Broad Breasted Beltsville Whites to three-month-old Broad Breasted Bronze birds. But George declared this was something of a slack period and suggested a different time when brooder, ranges and hillside were literally swarming with turkeys, was quite a sight to see.

To the uninitiated, one of the most amazing things about the farm is that it employs only five people and those five do every job there is to be done on the ranch. George's son, Walden, and the hired man, Herb Finch, do most of the manual labor and the routine chores. His daughter, Helen Routledge Sparks, and Mrs. Finch handle the bookkeeping, serve as cashiers and take

charge of the hatchery. George says he just "putters around, keeping fingers in everything," but it is he who keeps the smoothly-functioning organization operating in the proper channels. He also oversees the inoculations, arranges for shipments and dreams up the little twists which have made the Routledge farm a model in the Northwest.

An important sidelight is the raising of cattle on the ranch. It is done on a modest scale but George prides the farm for being able to support 15 head of registered Galloway cows and 13 calves, in addition to that thousands of turkeys raised each year. His formula goes something like this:

First, the cattle are allowed to eat their fill in the high grass land. The turkeys follow the cows and gobble up the short, green grass the cows left behind. At the same time, the land is fertilized by tons of turkey droppings so that by the time the cows return a year later, a luxuriant crop of green, belly-high grass awaits them. Then the process is repeated.

Has Solution

Routledge is convinced he owns land in the "best damned turkey country in the world." His answer to the question, what to do when Douglas county timber is gone, is best illustrated by his own success. To him, there is no other solution than to raise turkeys on the hilly, logged-over land.

"Because of our climate, we have none of the diseases, airborne germs, heat and dust that plague those poor fellows in California," he declared. "Our birds are healthier and their eggs are the best."

Proof that turkey raising is big business can be gained from the annual Routledge feed bill—\$100,000. It can also be noted by the number of orders for turkey eggs that George has to turn down each year. The reason he had to say no to a recent request for 10,000 eggs weekly is lack of transportation.

Cites Air Needs

Routledge is outspoken in his campaign for air transportation and an airport which Roseburg is in the process of acquiring. His conversations are sprinkled with allusions to the people who think an airport is a luxury instead of a necessity to an ever-growing community. He is convinced that his own business would be three times its present size if Roseburg could have air freight. He hates to fill orders for thousands of eggs by trucking them to Medford or Eugene before being able to fly them out. Shipping poultry any distance by rail is out of the question, Routledge says, "because the birds would starve to death before they left the depot."

As far as Routledge is concerned, no business in the world beats turkey raising and no land is better fitted than Douglas county. But utilization of the logged-off timber land will never expand to its fullest extent until cargo planes can fly eggs and pullets to markets which now are clamoring for them. And until that happens, the turkey business will remain what it is—a vocation well down the list of those which enrich Douglas county and a business followed by only a few hardy souls like George L. Routledge, who know that hard work, combined with a good mind and general know-how, still pays off in dollars and cents.

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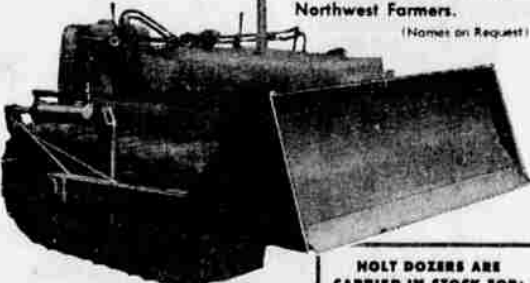
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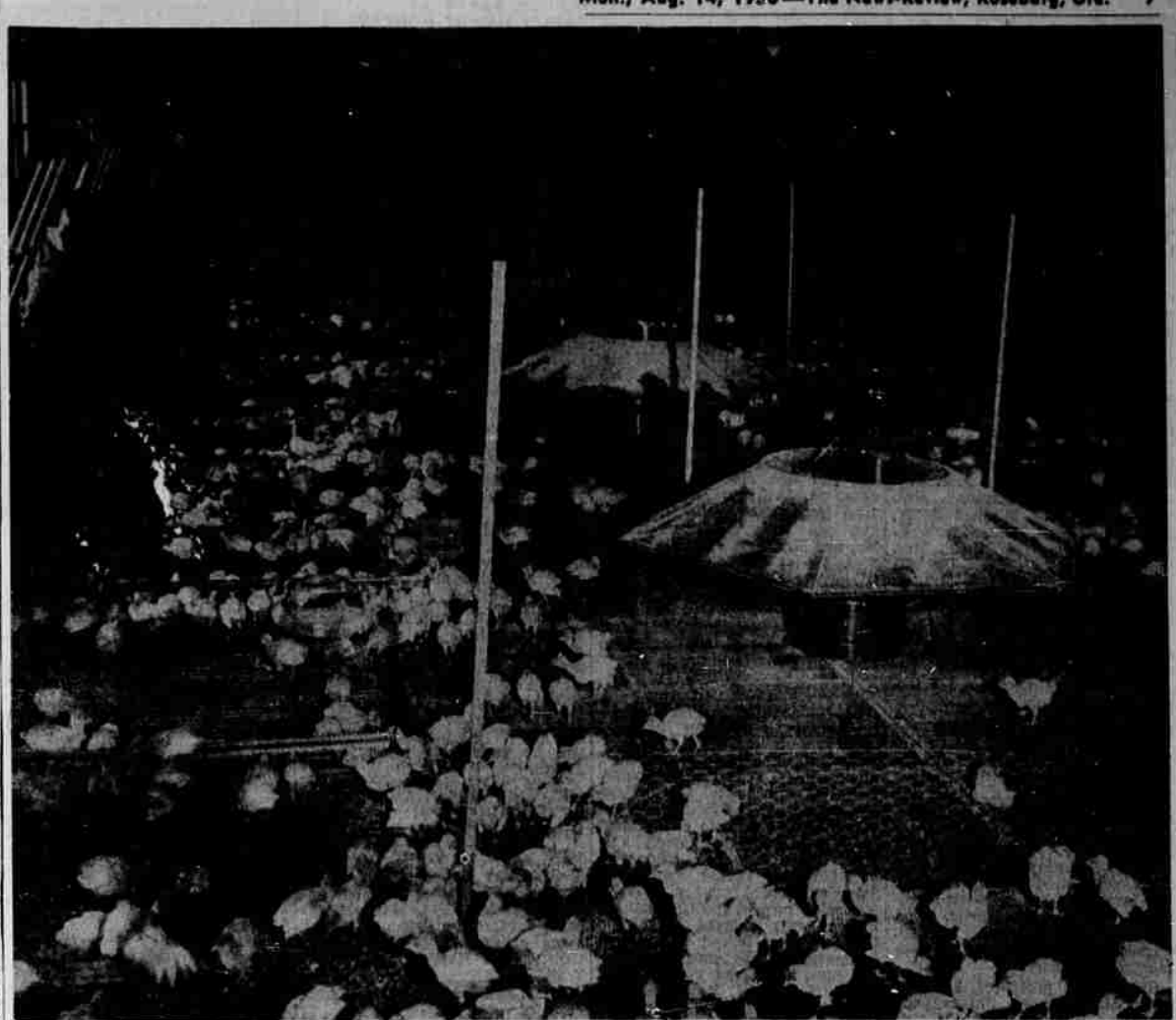
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MODERN EQUIPMENT, the best available, is used exclusively throughout the hatchery, brooder house and on the ranges at the Routledge Hatchery and Turkey farm. Above photo shows a portion of the 340-by-25-foot brooder house, inhabited at the moment by 4,000 birds. Wood slat floors avoid litter, contamination, result in better quality birds. Brooder is heated by 31 oil and gas stoves. Picture at upper left shows Routledge and

his daughter, Mrs. Helen Routledge Sparks, examining one of the trays in the 35,000-capacity incubators. Photo at lower left sees Mrs. Sparks check a hatchery for cleanliness. The hatchery and incubating plant easily classify as among the largest and most modern in the state, with 40,000 eggs handled weekly. (Staff Photos)

West's Lamb Crop Smallest On Record

DENVER — (AP) — The 1950 western lamb crop is the smallest on record, the U.S. Agriculture department's bureau of economics reported.

The records, the bureau added, date back to 1920.

However, it noted that the de-

cline — which started in 1942 — seems to be slowing down. It said the cut from last year "is the smallest decline" since the cut-down started eight years ago.

The lamb crop was estimated at 12,188,000 head this year compared to 12,241,000 head in 1949, in 13 western range sheep states.

Larger lamb crops than last are reported from Wyoming and Texas," the bureau said, "with

only small increases in Utah, Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Large reductions are indicated for Montana, South Dakota, New Mexico and Arizona, with small reductions in Colorado, California and Nevada.

It reported Texas has 3,416,000 head of lambs, Wyoming 1,255,000, California 1,186,000 and Montana 1,004,000.

INDICTED FOR MURDER

PORTLAND — (AP) — A Multnomah county grand jury has indicted William G. Jordan, 55, on a first degree murder charge stemming from the AFL Labor temple shooting of Joseph N. Taylor, 42, on Aug. 3.

Jordan, who is married to Taylor's former wife, asserted Taylor had threatened him several times.

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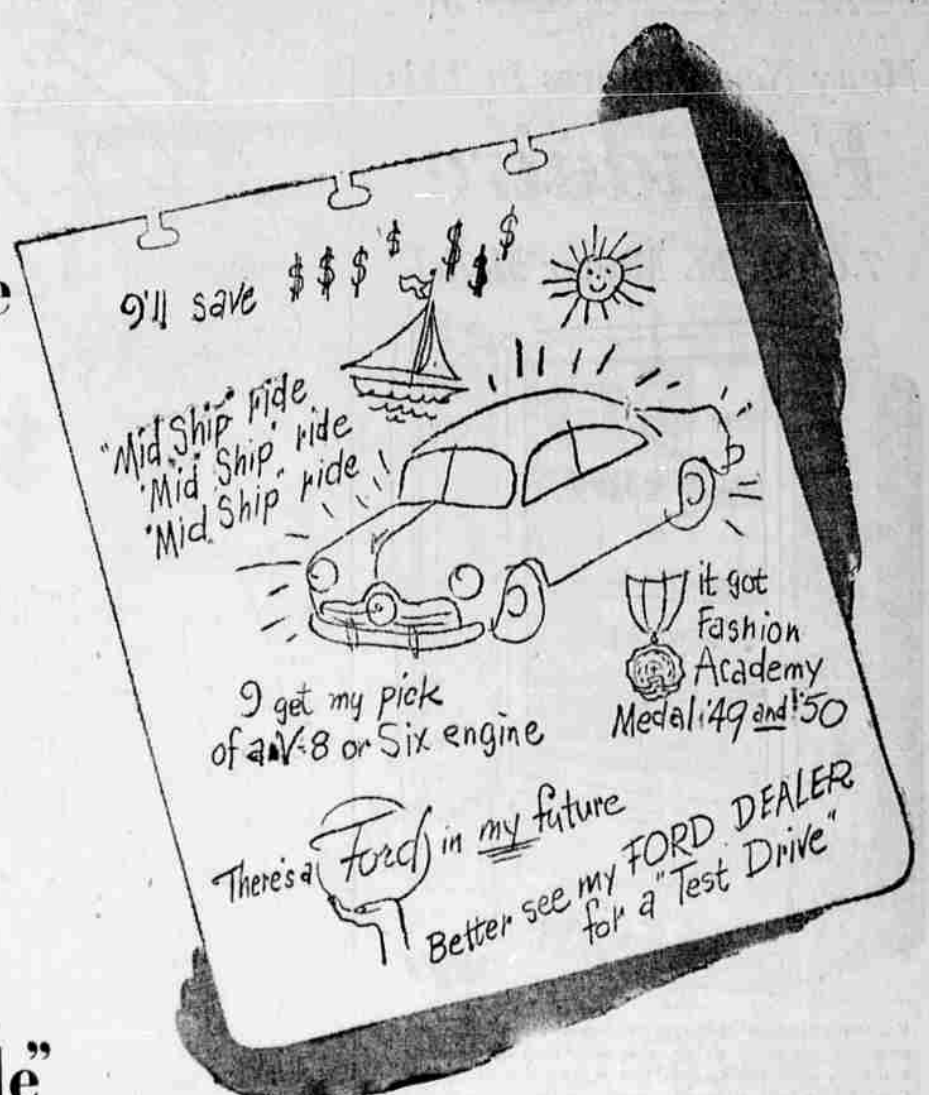
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