

Father, sons mesh their talents on farm

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**
For the Capital Press

Duane Eder considers himself a first-generation farmer in a land of third- and fourth-generation farmers. He and his brothers started farming in 1973.

“We started out with basically nothing and just built it up,” Eder said. “We did a lot of custom work — combining, trucking, spraying, corn picking — and that gave a cash flow to get the farm started.”

The four brothers have since split into their own farms but still work together in many ways.

Duane and sons Scott and Brian farm about 700 acres



Left to right, Scott, Duane and Brian Eder at their shop. Eder Brothers Farms grow grass seed and row crops in the Silverton, Ore., area.

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in the Silverton, Ore., area as Eder Brothers. They have a diversified rotation.

Two-thirds of the property is in rye grass and tall fescue seed. These crops are part of

a steady rotation of onions, green beans, cauliflower, cucumbers for seed, green peas and hazelnuts.

“If you grow only one crop and that thing goes south for a while you have all your eggs in one basket,” he said, “and good rotation helps us with a lot of things; weed and disease control, fertility, keeping good organic matter in the soil.”

For some crops such as grass seed, with the roots and the sod and the straw a lot of material goes back into the soil, he said.

Other crops, such as onions, “you take a lot of tonnage

off but there’s not much that goes back in the soil. And you do cover crops, usually oats, in winter to hold the soil down and put back in also.”

Row-cropping takes more equipment than less diversified operations but the farm’s location makes it worthwhile.

“We’re kind of a unique area,” Eder said. “We have no rocks on the valley floor where we farm; the soil is mostly flat. We have Willamette and Amity soils, which drain well and grow good crops. We have surface water out of the Pudding River and wells to water with.”

Eder and his sons have es-

tablished a nice mesh of talents and the farm’s running well, he said.

Brian takes care of the crew and most of the crops. Duane grows the cauliflower, onions, does the spraying and oversees the office. Scott manages the shop, fertilizing and some of the planting.

“It all overlaps a little bit and we can do each other’s jobs somewhat; it’s a good fit,” Duane Eder said. “The boys do a good job and we really learn from each other. They’re not afraid to take on projects or take over when I’m not there.”

With each year “the boys,” all in their early 30s, assume more responsibility and call less and less when Dad’s away. Duane looks forward to a role of just being around to help out where needed.

“If I’m away, I don’t have to worry,” he said. “The boys are around, and it’s their turn.”

Farming is a good way of life, but there’s no escaping the long hours.

“I’ve always enjoyed it but it’s tough when you get married and have a family because it’s hard on the family, too,” he said. “It’s a good way of life but to get anywhere you’ve got to put in the hours.”

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