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"NOTES BY THE WAYSIDE"— Soil Erosion and Replenishment Of Willamette Valley Discussed

By John J. Inskeep, County Farm Agent

We spent Wednesday of last week looking over a proposed new range pasture research project to be conducted by the Oregon experiment station at Corvallis where a few suggestions were offered by request.

Among topics discussed were the benefits derived from use of limestone and phosphate fertilizers in establishing Alta fescue and sub-clover

pastures. This brought to mind the tremendous eventual need for limestone in the Willamette valley, if we continue to farm these lands. Certainly the day is upon us when we must replenish our soil minerals including phosphates, and eventually potash as well as limestone.

The way we see it, about two million acres in this valley will soon be needing two tons of limestone per acre or a total of four million tons. This is a staggering figure and difficult to comprehend. Let us put it this way: four million tons would require 80,000 cars of fifty tons each or 800 trains of 100 cars each.

We have no reason to brag when we note that our soil losses from sheet and gully erosion have not been too terrific in the Willamette valley as a whole. We speak in comparisons for we hear that this winter the Palouse country and portions of eastern Oregon's Columbia basin wheat country has suffered the most tremendous gully erosion damage ever experienced in that area. This, in spite of all our mechanical but puny efforts at erosion control.

What Does It Mean?
What does it mean? Well, for our two bits worth it means that unless immediate new research brings forth some new and better method of erosion control wheat will be forced out by erosion and replaced by grass and grass will not grow as well on eroded as on deep virgin soils.

If we have learned one thing in 27 years of effort as a county agent it was that Mother Nature rewards those who help her and exacts severe penalties from those who cross her path. Referring again to this erosion problem it would seem in elemental terms that soil erosion is largely a matter of soil fertility and proper crop adaptation.

We cross Mother Nature's straight and narrow path when we continue to take humus and minerals from her soil without replacement and, at the same time, grow crops which require man-made terraces and ditches to prevent erosion. The point is that when soils are properly mineralized and planted to crops best adapted to a given area, erosion is held to a minimum.

Point Illustrated
Here is a case to illustrate the point. A little over a year ago we had the pleasure of inspecting the farm of 78-year-old I. J. Dorsey of Opelika, Alabama. His farm is typical of the hilly cotton country in that state. He formerly had from 65 to 70 cotton share croppers. "Neither of us made any money," said Uncle Ike. "In 1935 I owed \$35,000. My land was washing away and we did considerable terracing for erosion control. Even with the coming of better times I saw that I was farming the wrong way and I changed systems at 70 years of age."

Uncle Ike's steep slopes are now in pasture. He hires two full farm hands. He is out of debt and has money in the bank. He raises Angus cattle and hogs on his pastures and, with his hills properly seeded, he finds terraces no longer necessary. His turf grasses do the business. Row crop farming is rapidly being relegated to the delta lands. Our permanent pastures

are doing the business in Clackamas county also, are they not?

Now to get back to Oregon from Alabama. We looked over Gene Hubbard's Hampshire sheep spread while at Corvallis, and observed someone with an airplane nitrating whiteland ryegrass pastures wet enough to bog a jack-snipe. We didn't stop to inquire the price but Chris Dopple tells us that he arranged for plane-fertilizing of several of his fields near Molalla last week at a cost of about a dollar an acre. So now its farming with airplanes for getting the job done on time in spite of wet soil, and at comparatively low cost. What next?

Rodent War Declared
The first guns in Clackamas county's war against moles, gophers, rats and diggers will be heard next Monday when a series of trapping and poisoning demonstrations conducted jointly by the Clackamas county extension service and the U. S. fish and wildlife service begins.

The demonstration nearest Sandy will be on Wednesday, April 14, at 1:30 p. m. Rats will be given a working over on the F. W. Lehman farm opposite Ken Hall's, four miles out of Oregon City on Rosemont road.

Garlough will demonstrate various methods of trapping and poisoning farm pests which have given so much trouble. Demonstrations are open to the general public.

Meeting of Independent Lumbermen Is Scheduled

Invitations to independent loggers and lumbermen in Western Oregon and Washington to attend a two-day Oregon-Washington sawmill conference and machinery exposition in Portland April 30 and May 1 will soon be mailed by Western Forest Industries association.

Last year the association staged two separate conferences at Eugene and Centralia, Washington. Both attracted heavy and widely diversified attendance.

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At Lusted— Pair From South Visits Home Here

LUSTED — Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Harper, of El Segundo, California, have been spending several days at the Charles R. Dyer home.

The Harpers are enroute to Howard, South Dakota, and after visiting there, will return to their home in El Segundo.

Dr. and Mrs. Walter A. Thompson, of Portland, were week-end callers at the Lawrence Griffith home. The Thompsons recently purchased acreage along the Sandy river.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Cifu, of Portland, were Saturday guests at the L. A. Davies home.

The Ladies Aid Society of Pleasant Home Baptist church will meet today, Thursday, at 2 p. m. at the home of Mrs. Amy Altman, on Altman road. Mr. and Mrs. Vern Wasson recently completed the addition of a new kitchen and bath room to

their home on Section Line road.

On Monday evening, April 5, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Brooks, entertained a group of young people at their home on Proctor avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Wolfe and daughter, Judy, of Bend, were recent guests at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Smith.

April 15 Is Deadline for Certifying Berry Plants

Strawberry plant growers have but a short time to make application for plant certification for 1948, Leon Garolan, assistant county agent, said this week. Applications are available from the county agent office and should be on file in that office by April 15. No applications will be accepted after May 1.

"The need for disease-free strawberry plants is still great, and, incidentally, certified plants are again short in supply," Mr. Garolan said.

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