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"Notes by the Wayside"

Most Profitable Time Nears to Cut Fescue, Sub Clover for Hay

By John J. Inskeep, County Farm Agent
The average "city slicker" thinks that cutting grass for hay is pretty old business and he may be right, taking the country as a whole. He would also be right were he to assume that grass hay is not the best hay, taking the country as a whole. The reasons are that improperly raised grass makes poor hay when cut at any stage, that many growers

cut their grass at the wrong time for best results even were it good to begin with.

Here in Clackamas county we have largely depended on alfalfa, clover, oats and vetch and just plain oats for hay, mostly the latter two. Last fall excessive rainfall prevented usual planting of oats and vetch and oats. Consequently we will, for the first time, cut a large acreage of grass and clover mixture, meaning alta fescue and sub clover—for hay, or else. In fact, we are lucky to have a large acreage of alta and sub clover hay to fall back on because it is good forage to begin with.

Hay Cutting Time?

The question, then of proper time for cutting alta fescue for hay is an important one. The last issue of "The Grazier," an interesting circular pertaining to forage crops and similar agronomic problems, edited largely by Oregon's Extension Agronomist, E. R. Jack-

man, contains interesting information on this subject taken from a recent Michigan experiment. Results of this experiment indicate that grass hay contains more pounds of protein per acre when cut at the long grass stage than at any other time. The "long grass" stage refers to the stage of growth just prior to heading.

Protein Determines Quality
As every dairyman knows, the quality of hay is measured by its protein content. Protein remains high from the "long grass" stage until blooming stage, after which protein content declines very rapidly.

This experiment conforms pretty well to others of a like measure. What it means is that alta fescue and sub clover should be cut for hay any time during the next two weeks when, and if, weather permits.

Beef Poundage per Acre
How many pounds of beef can be made per acre with Clackamas county grassland farming? Vic Sipe, who lives between Damascus and Boring, says that he is making close to 500 pounds per acre per year. He should know for he has had considerable experience pasturing whiteface steers. It should be remembered, however, that Vic fertilizes heavily and has ideal pasture. No such gains can be expected from common unimproved non-mineralized pastures. We still have some of them.

Orchard Cover Crops
We made it clear to those who attended the fruit growers cover crop tour last week that we are not recommending use of permanent sub clover cover crops in orchards. However this practice looks so good that we do recommend it for trial, especially on orchard land subject to erosion. Vic Love of Damascus planted seven rows of his peach orchard to sub clover two years ago. Says Vic: "I figured if it killed the trees I could afford to lose them on the steep slope where the clover was planted. But they still look fine. I can go into this portion of the orchard any time during the winter with my spraying and, it appears to me, that my soil

retains more summer moisture here than where I clean cultivate."

Filbert Cover Crop Trials
Seventeen different types of cover cropping were inspected on the Earl Jones filbert planting at Damascus. Outstanding was the effect of applications of phosphate fertilizers at cover crop planting time. Demonstrations of his orchard will become more valuable as time goes on. Earl is making a real contribution to the industry by going to the expense and trouble of conducting these trials.

For two years Veryl Mumpower of Carver has discontinued summer cultivation in his filbert planting. This orchard is planted to sub clover and pastured with sheep. Veryl discus his orchard in August and floats with a home-made harrow which packs as it levels the ground. The young clover plants have started to grow when the nuts are picked and serve to keep pickers out of the mud.

Old timer Ed Ott of Sunnyside says he looked Veryl's orchard over last summer and that the nuts were of good size and that a normal yield was apparent. Allen Joy of Redland and Major W. C. Hanna of Stafford also gave this planting careful scrutiny. Hanna says that he has not experienced heavy erosion in his planting but that continuous cultivation keeps moving his soil downhill. He expects to plant a portion of his orchard for trial.

Planting a Lawn?
Last February when we wrote

"So You Want to Plant a Lawn," our new lawn grass circular, we wondered whether or not it would be popular. The original supply of 300 copies has been depleted and we are running off another batch.

This mimeographed circular describes simple methods of lawn planting, suggests best lawn grass seeds for use here and care of lawns after they have become established.

Farm Inflation Note

A letter from A. G. Brown, director, agricultural commission of the American Bankers Assn., informs us that "Farm land prices reached the 1920 boom peak as of March 1, 1948." He adds, "This situation deserves the continued attention of all of us. It augurs trouble ahead for those who disregard the present inflationary situation."

We wouldn't know, for the situation is not quite parallel to the 1920 situation. This time many farmers have paid cash for land purchased. However the man was has assumed a mortgage for as much as land has been worth in ordinary times is due for some hard sledding when and if a recession comes. That's for sure, and there are those who have

done that very thing because, as they have said, "I can't find anything for less."

A recent analysis of U. S. Navy personnel figures shows that over 46 percent of the present regular navy officers are former enlisted men.

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