

NOTES BY THE WAYSIDE

The following information written by Oregon State College Soil Conservationist Arthur King is both timely and self-explanatory.

"The recent disaster in Roseburg is causing unnecessary concern about the use of ammonium nitrate, one of the most popular and economical used by Oregon Farmers. Many news stories could have left the impression that it was ammonium nitrate alone that caused the gigantic explosion, though, with due credit to the press, most news stories emphasized that it was an explosive mixture of ammonium nitrate and diesel oil that caused the damage.

"Ammonium nitrate alone will neither burn nor explode, but it is used in various forms and in various combinations to make dynamite and other explosives. Ammonium nitrate serves as a source of oxygen in an explosive mixture. Sodium chlorate, potassium nitrate and sodium nitrate are other common materials that could serve the same purpose. The other half of the mixture must be burnable (combustible) material, usually made up of carbon, hydrogen, or possibly sulfur in various combinations.

"Several years ago, ammonium nitrate was blamed for the explosion that leveled Texas City, Texas. But here

again, the ammonium nitrate had been mixed with a waxy material somewhat similar to diesel oil, and which provided the carbon and hydrogen to make up the other end of the explosive mixture.

"There is no need to be alarmed over the nitrate that might be stored on the farm. Neither is there reason to be concerned over the thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate that are moving by rail and by truck and which are stored in warehouses everywhere to be ready for use on Oregon farms.

"A couple of years ago, we unintentionally conducted an experiment on the safety of fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate. A fire leveled our fertilizer storage shed on the campus. Several tons of ammonium nitrate were inside. There was no explosion, and for other than the fact that the covers on the outside bags were burned off, the ammonium nitrate was not harmed.

"With the Roseburg disaster, diesel oil was an equal partner in crime with the ammonium nitrate. As a separate material, diesel oil is much more dangerous than fertilizer grade ammonium nitrate, since it is both flammable and explosive. Still, we store, handle, use and burn diesel oil without any particular concern, though we have learned to treat it with a certain respect.

"This does not mean that ammonium nitrate should not be treated with equal respect. Remember that if it is mixed with an organic material, it can become a part of an explosive material. Dirty warehouse could, in reality become dynamite. Any storage place should be kept clean and free from both dirt and loose ammonium nitrate. Chaff, feed, sulfur, oil, and molasses are especially dangerous. Any material with broken or leaking bags should be swept up and removed from the premises. Burn bags as they are emptied.

A prominent forester, who recently visited our office made this observation, "I recently saw a planting of pines in one of the Southern States. Every other row consisted of planted seed in place. After 10 years the trees from seed were double the size of those transplanted."

When asked for an explanation he replied, "When you transplant you are sure to disturb the root system and

to lose a number of feeder roots. I suppose this may explain what happened."

This is not to suggest that we plant fir seed in place, at least until research points the way. But it is often possible to scarify the land in question so that natural seeding can take place. This is especially desirable in a year when the seed cone set is heavy. Such is the case this year. But time is short. Fir cones will soon be shedding seeds at lower elevations.

On our last little visit with Louie, our old fishing and hunting companion from out Molalla way, we found him emerging from his timber tract. As usual he wore his old red, paraffin coated hat and in his mouth was an over-worked corn-cob pipe. His frayed trousers ended downward between his knees and his feet were in his 4 wheel drive pickup, grinning from ear to ear.

Louie is a crusty individual so we wondered about his apparent joviality. "Howdy," he shouted, "You are just the one I wanted to see. Look at what I have in the pickup." We looked, full expecting to see a dead bear or something. Instead there were twenty well filled gunny sacks.

"What do you have in there, Louie?" we asked somewhat suspiciously.

"Fir cones. Good well seeded fir cones."

"Now, Louie," we remonstrated, we know very well you are an excellent specimen of manhood but still you have no business climbing tall trees picking cones."

"Well now, partner, the woman has gone to town as usual so let's have a bite to eat, after which I will give you a lesson in practical forestry. Climb in."

We rolled along the old familiar and beautiful countryside silent like, each enjoying the company of the other. There really wasn't anything to say. That is there wasn't until we reached the orchard. There Louie stopped and dug into the well tilled earth. Presently he produced a well filled glass jug.

"Nothing like a little year old sweet cider for thirsty people before a meal," he reminded us.

And we agreed up to a point, but we were not too sure of the sweetness of his product and told him so.

"Well," he said, with a shy wink, "It tastes sweet to me."

For lunch we had country ham—Louie cures his own—buttermilk, fresh home made bread and apple sauce. We

ate in haste relishing the thought of an afternoon in the woods. Louie then picked up his double barrel shotgun provided himself with shells. "Just thought we might twig a few pigeons while we are waiting."

By this time my curiosity was thoroughly aroused but, knowing Louie, I kept my tongue.

We soon found ourselves sitting comfortably on a partially rotted fir log. Back of us stood stately 60 year old fir second growth. In front grew thickets of Cascara trees laden with luscious black berries—the best of band tail pigeon feed. Louie shot three or four which flew over inspecting the area.

Presently, we hear a thump among the firs, followed by another and then another. "Now," said Louie, "just follow me and I will show you how to make money gathering cones."

He went directly to the steadily occurring thumping noises. And there under a vigorous fir we found the ground littered with fresh cones cut and dropped by a red squirrel. In fact he paid us not the slightest attention and dropped a fresh cone each three seconds as we stood and watched.

We fell to and in short order picked up 8 bushels of cones worth \$2.50 a bushel. But then we got to thinking.

"Louie," we asked, "the cone buyers want cones only with good viable seeds. How do you know these are any good?"

"Well, you may think you know cones but you evidently don't know squirrels. No red squirrel is foolish enough to cut cones filled with blank seed. Furthermore, they leave newly cut cones on the ground to dry and cure before storing. This prevents spoilage in the stored cache."

The reader can place his own interpretation upon the ethics of robbers and squirrels for profit. Fortunately or unfortunately, it is a common practice, we are told.

Taxpayers look at the record \$9 billion of crop surpluses and decry the federal subsidies which encourage more surpluses. Farmers look at the higher prices and shorter hours of nonfarm producers and point to the 15 per cent decline in farm income since 1958.

Actually only one-fifth of the farmers grow crops which come under the price-support program, and a fraction of that fifth—the big, mechanized growers with low production costs—get most of the subsidies.

In today's economy farmers often work under two disadvantages in relation to other producers. They are subject to vagaries of the weather; and they cannot control prices by controlling supplies. Moreover, in the last few years better seed, fertilizers, and machines have revolutionized many phases of farming. On the farm the average productivity has increased more than in the factory. This has left a surplus both of land and labor.

These surpluses—land, labor, and the crops they produce—constitute the farm problem. In one sense it is a political problem. For politicians do not relish telling farmers that there are too many farmers. Millions have had such a hard time they have moved off the land. Today it is estimated that 1,200,000 are barely scratching out a living.

To deal with this labor surplus logically and humanely as a welfare problem Congress has put forward one relatively small effort—the rural development program. It seeks to help farmers find new jobs off the farm. It should be pushed harder.

Through acreage controls and the soil bank Congress sought to reduce the land surplus. (It's politically safer to tell acres that they are not needed.) But with extra fertilizer and work devoted to their best land farmers increased production in the face of acreage cuts.

Congress, under the urging of Secretary Benson, has also tried reducing the level of price supports. It tried it with corn this year. But farmers made up for the price cut by boosting acreage and production. Even so, this was a move in the right direction and on longer trial may prove useful.

But the truth is that one segment of American agriculture has gone a long way toward socialization. It is subsidized and controlled—but the controls are ineffective. Some folk are advocating direct payments to farmers to produce—the Brannan Plan. Others suggest it would be more logical to make farms

a public utility, giving each a franchise to supply a given proportion of what could be consumed.

A more reasonable answer—and one in line with American practice in other cases of economic change—would be to face the hard fact that prices will have to fall if surpluses are to be effectively curbed. Government could meet directly as a welfare problem whatever hardship resulted. This might well be more humane and cheaper than the present encouragement of surpluses by a system which gives little aid to farmers needing help the most and millions to beg growers who need no subsidizing.

So far we have seen no politician willing to put solutions in these terms in his 1960 program. But discontents with present dodging and floundering are rising. If not met more frankly, they could produce some surplus politicians.

Kitchen Trick

A Persian Drink—In Teheran this drink, called Sekanjanbeeh, is served with ice. Combine 1 pound sugar with 4 cups water and heat to boiling point. Add 6 sprigs fresh mint and 1/4 cup white vinegar. Boil until syrup is slightly thickened. Remove mint sprigs. Pour syrup into bottles; seal. When ready to serve, put 2 tablespoons of the syrup into each glass of water.

YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY

Question: I married some time ago and haven't changed my name on my social security card. Should my employer report my name as shown on my card or as I now sign it?

Answer: Employers should always report your wages under the name shown on your social security card. You should have your name on your card changed to agree with your present name. Forms for that purpose may be obtained at your Post Office or at any Social Security Office.

Question: What is the least amount a 65 year old person can receive as a social security retirement payment? What is the most?

Answer: The least an individual who files a claim for benefits at age 65 or older can receive \$33 per month. The most an individual can receive (not counting 1959 earnings if over \$4200) is \$116 per month.

Question: What happens to my social security tax money I paid into the fund if I die before retirement age and I have no dependents?

Answer: Whoever pays your burial expenses would receive a lump sum death payment not to exceed \$225. The remainder of your tax money would remain in the fund to pay those individuals who live longer than normal or those who are left as survivors at young age. Social Security payments are insurance payments. They are paid to individuals who meet the requirements set by law.

Question: I have a maid in my employ. Yesterday she filed a claim for social security benefits. Do I now stop holding out the social security tax?

Answer: No. You should hold out the tax because the work is covered by Social Security. It does not matter whether the person performing the work is young or old; receiving social security benefits or not. If the work is covered the tax is payable.

Question: Early in 1958 my child who has been disabled since before her 18th birthday was denied social security benefits because she was not dependent on me for at least one-half her support. Has that changed?

Answer: Yes, it has changed. In most cases a child is found to be dependent on her father even though he may not actually be applying one-half his support. This is also true in some cases between a child and his mother if the mother worked steadily up to the time she filed a claim for benefits for your disabled child.

Question: I notice that my name is misspelled on my social security card. Is it all right if I correct it in ink?

Answer: No. Although your card would then be correct, it would no longer agree with our record in Baltimore. You should stop at a social security office or obtain a "Request for Change in Social Security Records" card from your local Post Office.

Question: I am 65 this year. If I retire after I earn \$4800 this year will I receive \$127 per month for myself? I had

\$4200 each year from 1955 through 1958?

Answer: No, one year of \$4800 along with your years of \$4200 would provide a benefit of \$119 per month. This is the first year you could pay the social security tax on \$4800. You would have to pay the tax on many years of \$4800 to receive the \$127 amount.

Question: I have an old family Bible showing my date of birth but the writing is very faint. Should I write over the entry with my pen to make it more clear?

Answer: No. Writing over an old record usually destroys its value as evidence of age. No change should be made in a record unless the change is made by the person who made the original entries on the record.

Question: I'll be 65 in 1960. Will my social security retirement benefit be based on my two best years since 1950?

Answer: No, for those reaching 65 in 1959, the benefit is usually figured on the three best years since 1950. For those, like you, who reach 65 in 1960, the benefit will usually be based on the four best years since 1950. For those reaching 65 in 1961, the benefit will usually be based on the five best years since 1950, etc. If you have not worked after 1950, your benefit is figured on your earnings from 1937 to the year of retirement after dropping out the five lowest years of earnings.

Question: I am 52 years old and am receiving monthly social security benefits because I am severely disabled. Are there any benefits possible for my two children who are 13 and 15 years of age?

Answer: Yes, there are benefits payable to your children under age 18. You should bring the children's birth certificates and file a claim for them right away. If your wife is living with your children she may also be eligible for benefits.

Question: What information

will I need to bring with me when I file a claim for social security retirement benefits?

Answer: You should bring your social security card, proof of your age, the amount of your earnings from January 1 of the present year to date, the date of your spouse's birth.

QUESTION: When is the quarterly tax report of wages due for domestic help I had in July, August, and September 1959?

ANSWER: The quarterly tax report of wages paid domestic help in July, August and September, 1959 along with the tax money should be filed with the Director of Internal Revenue in October, 1959. If you wish more information please write to the Social Security Administration, 926 S. W. 4th Ave., Portland and request booklet No. 21, "Do You Have A Maid?"

QUESTION: I will reach retirement age in June of 1963. How many quarters of coverage will I need to receive benefits then?

ANSWER: You will need 24 quarters of coverage. If you wish more information about quarters of coverage please write to the Social Security Administration, 926 S. W. 4th Ave., Portland, Oregon and request booklet No. 33e, "Social Security."

QUESTION: I am a woman 61 years of age. My husband will be age 65 next year and I plan on filing for benefits when he does. I have never worked in Social Security covered employment. Should I apply for a social security card before I file?

ANSWER: No. You need a social security card only when you work in a job covered by Social Security. You do not need a card if you have not or do not plan to perform such work. However, women who do have cards should bring them along when they file for benefits even though they have worked little or not at all in covered employment.

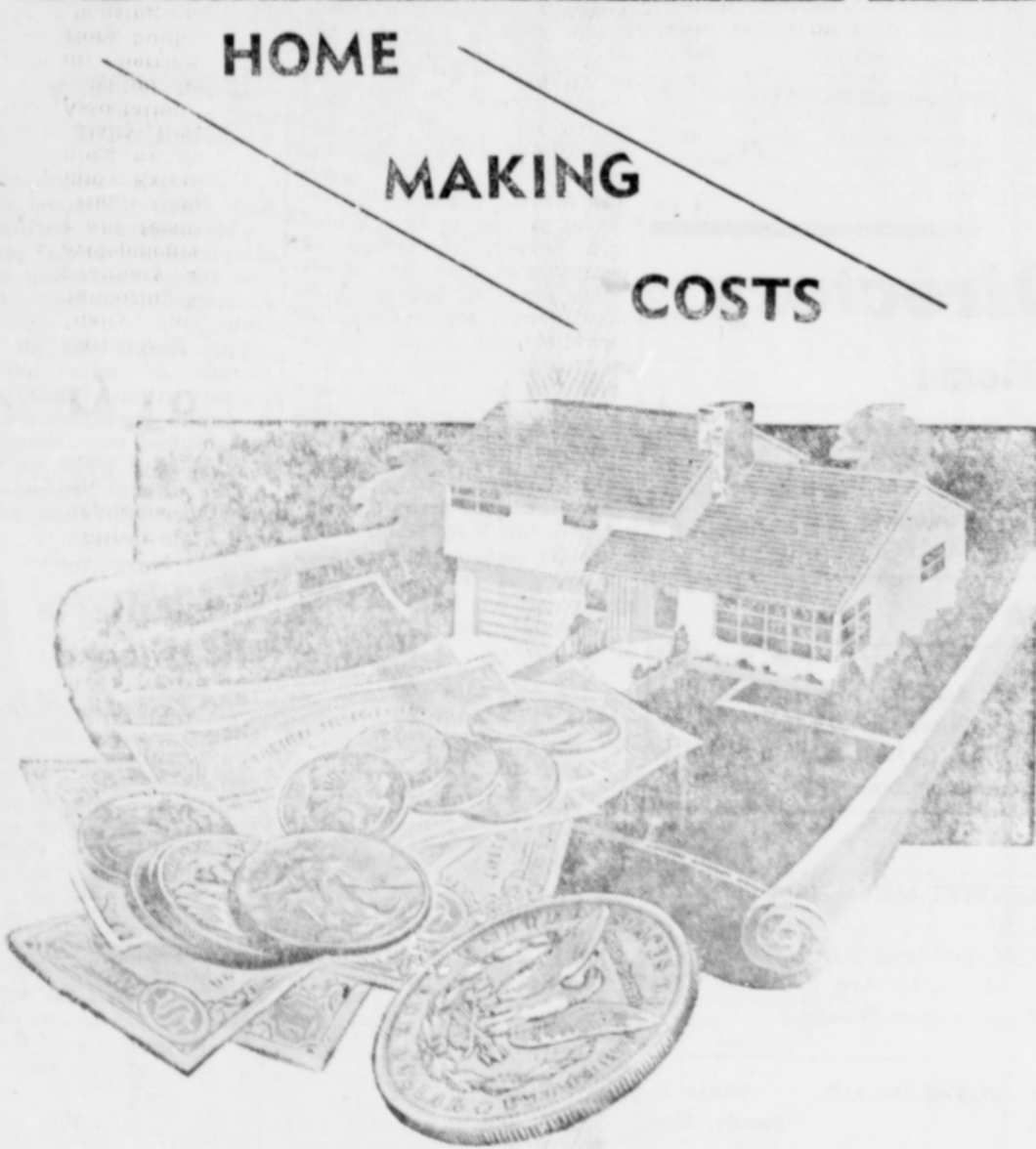
Dairy Tours

Two carloads of Clackamas county dairy farmers will visit neighboring Washington county January 26 to view new developments in cattle housing and feeding, according to Hugh Caton, Clackamas County Extension Agent.

Planned by the Directors of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, dairymen will see winter feedlot management, herringbone milking parlors, bunker silos, and loose housing systems for large herds.

Dairymen planning to make the tour are Verl Fleishman of Sandy, Albert Emert of Molalla, Paul Weber, John and Richard Gale, and Adin Hester of Canby, and Gordon Schoonover of Oregon City.

Cars will load at the County Agent's office, Oregon City, 9:30 am, January 26 and will return at 3:00 pm. Other interested persons are invited to attend.



HOME MAKING COSTS

WHERE DOES IT GO?

The answer is: all over town. First of course to the realtor and builder. But that's only the beginning! A home needs furniture, carpets, drapes, appliances—the list is almost endless. Yes, homemaking is important business, especially for Mr. and Mrs. Homemaker! That's why they take such care to get the most for the money they spend on every item. Best way to do this, they've found, is to study the ads in this paper carefully, compare values thoughtfully, then shop wisely on the basis of this sound buying information.

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