

OREGONIAN LIVESTOCK INTERESTS

Eastern Part of the State the Home of the Speed Horse—New Methods for Beef Production—A Hog-Producing State.

By James Withycombe, Vice-Director of Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis.

THE Cascade Range divides the state into two grand physical divisions, known as Eastern and Western Oregon. The former is largely a semi-arid district, but also contains a large area of very fertile soil, mainly of volcanic origin.

This physical division of the state necessitates the adoption of systems in accordance with the existing conditions. For example, the popular method for growing stock in Western Oregon would, in a measure, be almost totally inapplicable to the industry in Eastern Oregon.

The Early History of the Industry.

The first cattle were probably brought to this Oregon country by the Hudson's Bay Company about the beginning of the nineteenth century. The great influx of livestock into the state, however, occurred in the years 1837 and 1843, aggregating several thousand head of horses, cattle and sheep.

There are but few sections where there are surer or larger returns from capital invested in the stock industry under competent supervision than is found in the grazing districts of the Columbia River Basin. Upon a large area of this basin the land is covered with a growth of alfalfa, which is grown in abundance.

The changed conditions which are met with new methods. The day of winter feed, direct from the range, is gone forever and the practical systems of yard or stall feeding must be resorted to.

The Horsebreeding Industry.

Oregon is noted for her superior horses far and near, and the two prominent factors which contributed to the building up of this reputation are as follows:

First, the considerable enterprise of the first settlers of this state in bringing with them the best stock they were able to secure.

Second, the unsurpassed soil and climatic conditions which rendered possible the highest physical development of the horse. Because of the spirit of securing the best, so well marked in the early settlers, which has ever since been characteristic of the horsefancier of this state, now we can perhaps boast of having horses which are as well bred and good individuals as can be found anywhere.

Eastern Oregon is pre-eminently the home of the speed horse, because the peculiar contour of this section, its vegetation and pure air combine to produce values of marvelous powers of endurance.

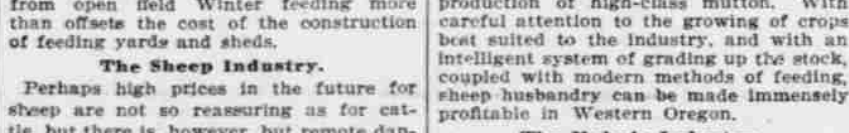
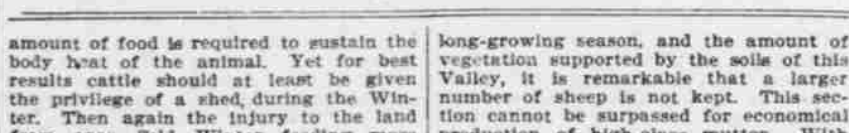
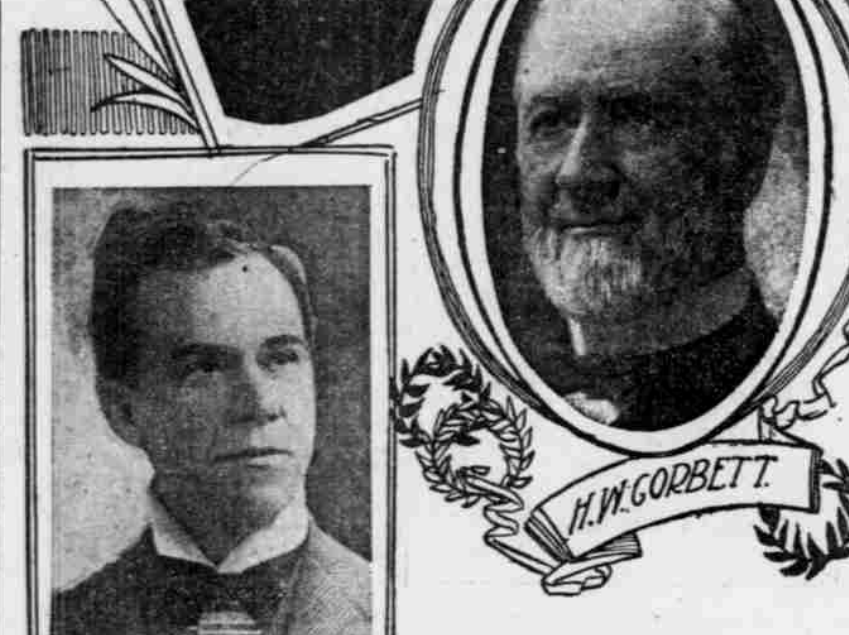
Horses wintering over the hills and down in the valleys, feeding upon the most nutritious grasses known, develop wonderful lung power and the very best of limbs and feet.

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stantly increasing local consumption of mutton, a high-class article can bear the cost of transportation to distant markets and bring satisfactory returns to the producer.



OREGON COMMISSIONERS

amount of food is required to sustain the body heat of the animal. Yet for best results cattle should at least be given the privilege of a shed, during the Winter. Then again the injury to the land from open field Winter feeding more than offsets the cost of the construction of feeding yards and sheds.

The Sheep Industry. Perhaps high prices in the future for sheep are not so reassuring as for cattle, but there is, however, but remote danger of prices descending so low that good margins will be secured by those who follow the industry intelligently.

The Angora goat-breeding industry is capable of expansion within the borders of this state. Two millions of these animals can easily be maintained a large portion of the year upon a class of feed which annually goes to waste, namely, the leaves of different varieties of trees and shrubs which grow upon our hills and mountain slopes.

It is not uncommon for yearlings of these breeds, coming direct from the field, without grain feeding, to weigh from 200 to 250 pounds. This is a very limited market for the flesh of these animals at present, but with well fattened goats of the future it is scarcely to be feared that remunerative markets for this meat will not be found.

On the other hand, the farmer desires to carry the maximum number of sheep his land will support, then Winter feeding, with clover hay, silage and grain can be practiced. Thus the crops of a few acres can be made to support a good-sized flock of sheep. Aside from the advantage of the large crops of nutritious food, the farmer can engage in this industry without tying up any of his capital in buildings, as the mutton breeds of sheep do best in our mild climate when fed in the open field or lot.

Western Oregon Conditions for Stockraising. Agricultural conditions in Western Oregon are in many respects radically different from those found in the eastern and southern portions of the state. Here we have a climate of rather pronounced humidity, a soil adapted to a variety of crops, hence mixed farming is more generally practiced.

The comparatively large herds of cattle are usually found on land which is too poor to cultivate, but the scanty, unproductive herbage of these unimproved pastures will satisfy the owners for a price of but few cents per acre. It is the owners who reclaim these lands by systems of underdrainage. Beefraising in this section of the state will be largely relegated to the small farms, and constitute an important part of an intensified system of husbandry.

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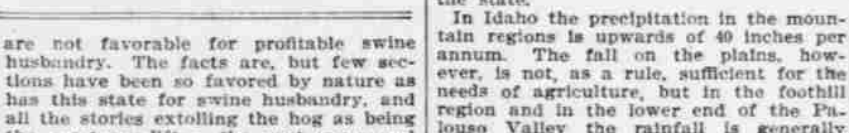
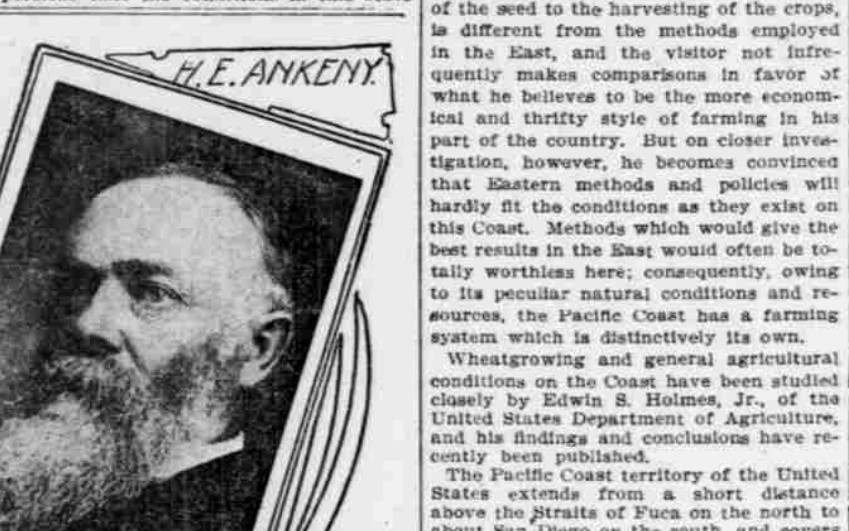
The principal wheat district of Oregon is situated in the country west of the Cascade Mountains and eastward from Wasco County to Union, covering six of the northern counties of the state. In the Willamette Valley, and, in fact, in all of the territory of Oregon west of the Cascades, conditions are not materially different from those in California.

At large proportion of the more common varieties peculiar to this district are of the club wheat group, so called on account of the peculiar club-like formation of the head. Red chaff and Foise are the principal varieties grown in the Palouse bluestem in Washington and Idaho. The ability of club wheats to hold the grain and prevent shelling makes them especially desirable in this region, particularly during dry Summers, where the grain, after becoming fully ripe, is frequently left standing in the field for 30 to 60 days before being harvested.

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half industry in these sections to destroy the shrubs by overstocking the land, but rather endeavor to preserve it through judicious pasturing. These lands, which are regarded as being of little value, can, with goats, be transformed into revenue-producing property. The climatic and mountainous conditions of this section of the state are ideal for the production of a fine quality of mohair and with patient endeavor and by intelligently utilizing the opportunities presented, the industry will prove very profitable to those who are engaged in it.



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On the eastern slope of the Cascades the fall is about 20 inches, and over the greater portion of the plateau region of Central and Eastern Oregon the average is between 10 and 15 inches, rising to about 20 inches in the southeastern corner of the state.

In Idaho the precipitation in the mountain regions is upwards of 40 inches per annum. The fall on the plains, however, is not, as a rule, sufficient for the needs of agriculture in the northern region and in the lower end of the Palouse Valley the rainfall is generally ample for the wheat crop.

The Pacific Coast wheat region embraces all of the wheat-producing lands of Oregon, California and Washington in the northern portion of Idaho, which is practically a continuation of the great Palouse Valley.

The area devoted to wheat in this region will doubtless be gradually curtailed by irrigation, which, although as yet undeveloped, is rapidly becoming an important factor in farming in this section of the country.

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Wheat Fields of Washington. Probably three-fourths of the entire area of the State of Washington is devoted to the cultivation of wheat. The western section of the state has the same general characteristics of soil and climate as the Willamette Valley of Oregon. The remainder of the state may be divided into three sections—the Big Bend country, which embraces that portion of the state immediately south of the big bend of the Columbia River, and is largely confined to Douglas, Lincoln and Adams Counties; the Walla Walla district, which is composed of Walla Walla and Columbia Counties; and the Palouse country, so named from a tribe of Indians that inhabited that region at an early time.

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FARMING IN THE NORTHWEST

Principal Wheat Belts of Oregon, Washington and Idaho—The Rainfall, Temperature and Agricultural Methods.

THE first impression of the Eastern observer of the farming methods in the Pacific Coast States is that there is a total difference between them and those to which he has been accustomed in the East. Everything relating to farming operations in this section from the sowing of the seed to the harvesting of the crop, is different from the methods employed in the East, and the visitor not infrequently makes comparisons in favor of what he believes to be the more economical and thrifty style of farming in his part of the country.

Northern Tier of Counties.

In the northern counties, where much of the wheat of the state is grown, the soil is a rich, sandy loam, blended with a trace of volcanic ash, easily cultivated and highly productive. Farms are large, often running into thousands of acres, and work in this section is done on a large scale as in California. Wasco County, the most western of this group, extends eastward about 65 miles from the Grand Canyon of the Columbia River. The soil yields well, holds water admirably, and is practically inexhaustible.

Continuous cropping has gone on for many years, wheat being raised each season on the same soil, and the soil is practically unknown. The ability of the soil to absorb and retain moisture has been amply demonstrated by the raising of heavy crops of wheat without a drop of rain from seed time to harvest.

On account of the low price of wheat, farmers of this section have found it profitable during the last few years to feed much of their wheat in the form of hay to stock, and market the stock. This plan, however, while it holds good when the price of wheat is low, is not followed every year, for the reason that when wheat is above that price it is more profitable to sell the grain than to cut it into hay. Farmers state that wheat can be grown in all this region for a trifling expense, some even claiming that it can be raised and sacked for 25 cents per bushel.

The largest compact wheat area in the state is probably to be found in Sherman County, and the average yield in this county for agriculture is probably 30 bushels per acre. The quality of the wheat grown in this county is also of the best, and not surpassed by that of any other portion of the state, and the four made in this region is in great demand, both locally and for export.

Union and Morrow Counties are also large producers of wheat, although in these counties much fertile land, easy of cultivation, is still awaiting the pleasure of the farmer.

Umatilla County is especially noted for its great production of wheat, the average yield being about 30 bushels per acre, and with most careful methods of cultivation it will be possible to largely increase this average. The farms here are also quite large, as is the case through all the northern section of Oregon, and all work is done on a large scale. The hay is cultivated generally on the hilly land, and often pays the small farmer much better than the grain.

Irrigation in this section is not only in Umatilla County, but through all of this region, and while it has not as yet had any appreciable effect on the area of wheat, it is undoubtedly having the tendency to make the land too valuable for planting of cereals, and as irrigation increases, its effect on the wheat area of the state will probably be considerable.

Union County is a fertile mountainous, and is famous as a wheat-producing section. The most important of its valleys is the Grand River, which is about 30 miles long and is wide and is well watered by a river of the same name. Climatic conditions are especially favorable to wheat cultivation, and irrigation is rapidly gaining a strong hold in several sections of this district, notably in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, where wheat is being abandoned more rapidly than in any other portion of this region.

The introduction of irrigation will probably be extended in time even to the great wheat valley of this region, where wheat has long been considered the only possible crop; but, as the more arid sections of the land will undoubtedly receive the first attention of the promoters of irrigation plants, it is not probable that the great wheat area of the Pacific Coast will be materially lessened by crop diversification for many years to come.

The varieties of wheat grown in this section are also entirely different from those of any other section of the country, their peculiar character being a white grain, with a soft and starchy constitution, such that even other wheats when imported for seed, although when originally planted were entirely different in character from those of native growth, lose their individuality in a season or two, and come to have practically all the characteristics of the standard soft, white wheat of this region. Other varieties, hard red wheat in particular, and in fact almost all of the hard wheat varieties, have been tried in this section, but it has been found that as soon as they become acclimated they partake largely of the characteristics of the native wheat of this section. The principal factor in producing good water, and a cool, refreshing atmosphere, which renders the hog less susceptible to disease.

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