

FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS AN ACRE PROFIT IN BROCCOLI

This Was Extreme, Unusual and from a Very Small Acreage, in the Roseburg District; But It Shows What May Be Done with All Conditions Right

Editor Statesman: The editor has asked me to write something about methods, markets and profits connected with the broccoli industry of southern Oregon. I have been interested in and taken quite an active part in the industry since its beginning in the Umpqua valley—some eight years ago—and feel safe in claiming that I am commencing to understand a few of the factors which are required in making of this crop a commercial success.

Good, well-drained soil is the first essential in the opinion of most growers, but my opinion is that good seed should take precedence over all, for without a proved strain of seed success will be very uncertain. The first crops produced here were from imported seed and for several years growers were led to believe that Oregon grown seed was worthless. During the war this imported seed declined so in quality that numerous growers were forced to grow their own seed and the result has been some excellent strains of broccoli. During 1919 I put out 23 acres of broccoli and, not anticipating my requirements, was compelled to buy seed from several sources. The crop which is now being harvested shows a wide variation in product—ranging all the way from the worthless trash from some strains to perfect heads from my own select seed and that of one other careful grower. During the summer 1919 we saved quite a patch of our finest heads especially for seed and harvested a liberal crop from it, pricing it so highly that we sent it over to our bankers for safe keeping. We expect to plant about the same acreage this season as last, and it is certainly a pleasure to be able to eliminate this risk in getting pure seed of high quality. Since it requires 5000 plants to set an acre, so small a proportion as ten per cent of bad plants will make a difference of approximately 30 crates at harvest time—not to mention the labor of planting and cultivating a worthless portion of the crop.

It pays to thoroughly prepare the land for the crop. My plowing and harrowing last season were done with tractor and the work is far superior to horse-drawn implements. Prior to the bad weather of mid-December we had the most promising crop ever grown in this section.

I believe in early setting for the following reasons: More moisture is available for the plant in establishing itself; the plant has more time in which to develop a hard, woody stalk with which to protect itself during periods like the one mentioned. My crops were among the earliest to be set last season and I suf-

fered less frost damage than any grower I have talked with.

Since growing and setting the plants and cultivating them is knowledge possessed by every person who has grown cabbage, cauliflower and similar crops, I shall not go into details, merely mentioning that we plant seed beds in April and start setting the plants in the field the middle of June.

Now as to markets and profits. While the majority of Roseburg growers belong to a fruit union and market their crops through that organization, I have always managed to sell f. o. b. on a cash basis at satisfactory prices and expect to continue on those lines, as I believe it is better than to risk delays in transit and fluctuations in prices upon receipt of the goods in market. I must admit that it is quite a handicap to buy crates and other supplies independently—also to load cars with only a few, small independent growers assisting you, but I believe the cash plan is the better one. And evidently union members are of same opinion, as it is currently reported that they have sold the present crop for cash instead of shipping on commission as formerly.

Profits depend upon the man, the seed, the soil, the weather and the market. Results in the past show returns from less than zero to about \$400 per acre—the latter being extreme, unusual and from a very small acreage, the work all being done without help outside the family. Experienced growers with best of land and small acreage clear around \$200 in average seasons. In larger crops where home labor cuts, but little figure in keeping down expenses profits are less.

Concerning the success of the crop in other sections, I have but little information upon which to base an opinion. Professor A. C. B. Bouquet of the O. A. C. has given the broccoli industry much attention and study and his opinion should be worth while.

But since some small successes have been reported, I see no reason why larger ones are not possible. If you have some good, fertile, well-drained soil and think you would like this broccoli business, my suggestion is: Get some good seed and try it out. If it proves a success and your neighbors will join with you in producing 30 or 40 acres so you can conveniently load cars, it will be easy to sell for cash at home. My buyer has never been able to get as many cars as he desired. The Roseburg section has adopted the standard pony crate, finding it much better than the old style which was not a

standard package. The price on this package this season ranges from \$1 for the low quality to \$1.75 for the best, all f. o. b. Roseburg. Before the freeze in December the yield was estimated at 75 cars, but the present prospect is for less than half that number. Most of the local growers intend to put in their usual acreage this season, hoping that the weather man will be in a kinder mood next winter.

FOSTER BUTNER,
Roseburg, Ore., March 29, 1920.

BROCCOLI GROWING IN GENERAL (Continued from page 1)

broccoli figuring on the latter to carry me through with green food after the kale was gone.

But we are wandering away somewhat from the intended discussion of the crop at this time of the year. This is harvesting season and up to the present time the weather has been very favorable for the harvesting of the heads. One disagreeable thing about broccoli harvesting in many springs is the tramping of the ground while it is quite waterlogged from the winter's rains and this is hard on most any soil except the lighter sandy loams. But this year the soil is unusually dry and it looks as if the walking on the ground at cutting time is going to do less harm than usual.

While broccoli is a hardy vegetable and stands lots of cold weather the heads will not stand to be frozen in the field when they have formed nor will they stand abuse by careless and dirty handling in cutting, packing or otherwise. Here is a high class and high-priced vegetable for which on eastern markets as high as 40 cents is paid for a head. On the local markets of the Northwest one might consider 25 to 35 cents a good price for a No. 1 head. If the grower is going to get his top price, therefore, it is necessary that the handling be careful and such as to eliminate bruises and blemishes. And yet, just the same, there are hundreds of broccoli heads that are handled as if they were onions or bricks. Some of the methods which were used by growers, most of them foreigners, last year in and around Portland in handling the heads after cutting was a crime and a distinct loss to the industry because a lot of the stuff was being shipped out as Oregon broccoli that was not worthy of the name. The Douglas county growers have prided themselves on a distinctly good and uniform pack and it is a shame for it to be spoiled by the poor stuff from other sections, for in the East and Middle West it is all sold as Oregon broccoli.

The point that I am trying to make is that this vegetable, because of its worth and scarcity in other parts of the country, is deserving of the greatest care when it comes to everything connected with the harvesting and marketing of the crop. **Cut the Heads Before They Get Over-Ripe.**

There is a tendency among some to leave the heads in the field too long before they are cut. This is done, some say, to let the head get larger before it is cut. In many cases this is a fallacy. The head will not get larger but will be getting riper which means that the curd is beginning to separate and when this happens the head will not have the carrying ability that it has when the curd is absolutely solid and shows no sign of dividing. I have seen so many crates of stuff that was overripe that I feel that this is one thing that must be corrected to get the greatest value out of the crop if it is to be shipped a long distance.

The older the heads the quicker the curd will shrink and the greater the shrinkage. It would be better to cut a head a little under-sized and have the curd perfectly solid and white than to leave it to go a little longer so that it was larger and yet not so solid. I have conducted bonafide tests along this line with actual weighings of all kinds of heads and the above is a summary in a nutshell.

A large sharp butcher knife is used in severing the head from the plant so as to leave enough leaves on to form a good jacket. Enough of the top part of the leaves of the jacket should be left on also to fully protect the head as it goes from the field to the packing shed. Growers vary in the kind of a crate in which to have the heads hauled in, some using the old-fashioned two-dozen crates, and others the flat crates as is used for marketing a crop. Care should be taken in going over the field not to miss any heads that are in the right condition to be cut as they would be too old the next time of cutting.

Following the hauling of the heads to the packing house they should be trimmed at each end so as to get each approximately the same length in order to have a pack in the crate that is uniform in height. Here's where there is often some braising of the top part of the head and it has to be cut off. About 50 per cent of the straw must be added, as the broccoli leaves contain too much water to be placed in a silo alone.

This year, owing to the drought last summer, Douglas county will only produce in the neighborhood of 40 cars of this vegetable. Two years ago we marketed 90 cars and the distributors at that time told me that they could have as easily marketed 1000 cars.

With our canneries, as I said before, there is no reason to expect an over production of this crop, and Oregon should be growing at least 5000 cars; shipping the best of it to eastern markets and canning the smaller and imperfect heads. The canneries, however, require a good head in order to place a good article upon the market.

When the growing of broccoli becomes more general, it means a lengthened period for our canneries to operate and also means that we have broadened the market or labor season for our farm help.

With the enormous acreage being planted in Oregon to small fruits and berries and the mighty host of hands it will soon require to gather these crops, it behooves us to broaden our reasonable work in order that we may give work over as long a period of the year as possible. Broccoli, however, requires relatively few people to handle the crop of four weeks. Five people can easily take care of the harvesting of five to 10 acres, as the plants head unevenly and the harvesting season extends over a period of about two weeks.

—DR. C. H. BAILEY.

(In a private letter to the editor, Dr. Bailey said: "For the past five or six years I have devoted a considerable part of my time in the culture of broccoli seed, with the result that last shipping season our broccoli packed out 95 per cent No. 1, the highest score of any one shipping through the local union. The crop netted us last year \$350 an acre." In a later private letter, Dr. Bailey confirms his statement as to the length of the broccoli harvest. He says: "While, even in a large acreage of broccoli may be gathered along for a period of three or four weeks, the main crop will be harvested in a period not to exceed two weeks."

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DR. BAILEY ON BROCCOLI (Continued from page 1)

that it is the best paying crop grown in Douglas county.

Even our prunes, notwithstanding the high prices of the past two or three years, can not compete with this crop as a money maker.

This year the entire output of the Umpqua valley has been sold to one New York firm for \$1.75 a crate f. o. b. Roseburg.

We have adopted the California pony crate as the one best adapted to this crop. This crate measures 18 by 24 inches and is 14 1/2 inches high, and from 8 to 20 heads are placed in a crate. All the green "jacket" surrounding the head is retained, in order not only to protect the "flower", but also because the green appearance of the leaves helps the retailer to dispose of the heads. People who are from the east can realize what it means for the housewife to see these green leaves when the snow is still on the ground and it helps to sell the product.

It seems to the writer that broccoli would be a great crop for the average dairyman to grow as part of his winter forage crop. The trimmings from the plant are richer in protein than kale and make almost as much feed per plant. Care must be taken, however, to feed these trimmings after milking, as too much broccoli will taint the milk. The dairyman also has the requisite manure to grow the crop successfully.

Experiments have been made with the trimmings as ensilage and it has been found that about 50 per cent of straw must be added, as the broccoli leaves contain too much water to be placed in a silo alone.

This year, owing to the drought last summer, Douglas county will only produce in the neighborhood of 40 cars of this vegetable. Two years ago we marketed 90 cars and the distributors at that time told me that they could have as easily marketed 1000 cars.

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LEADING OSWEGO GROWER ENCOURAGES (Continued from page 1)

place is too good for broccoli culture. The milder the climate the better. Frost is its worst enemy, especially if accompanied with a sharp wind which fractures the pith in the stem and impairs or ruins the crop, as the case may be.

"Dry feet" is a very essential thing for many reasons. The frost resisting qualities depend largely upon the vitality of the plants, if, as in loose, dry, mellow soil which contains much humus, the plants hold up far better in the cold rainy weather and are slowly growing a little or at least holding their own; whereas, on lower, tighter soil they become dormant. Some of the deeper roots may be injured or even killed by excessive moisture which weakens the plants, and they may be easily killed by a frost which would scarcely injure the other thrifty ones.

A south slope protected with timber for a wind break on east and north and of sufficient elevation to escape the spring frosts which injure heads that are out, is the most desirable place if dry enough.

On account of the great difference between individual heads, I have been experimenting for years on seed growing. First noting the kind of heads that are the nearest ideal, as well as of good keeping qualities and all that goes with perfect heads and plants, saving such for seed in the hope that I could finally eliminate the poorer ones and standardize them; but the process is very slow and tedious on account of the bi-annual nature and they have a most remarkable stubbornness for sporting back to their ancestors.

I have made considerable headway but would like to succeed much further. I have succeeded in getting out of 20 years of careful selection, a cabbage plant which in a field of six acres had not a single curd head. It will take a long time to get broccoli

MRS. WOODS WOULD NOT TAKE \$1000 FOR HER SAANEN NANNIE

She Has Been Visiting Down in California, Where Goats No Better Than Her Swiss Beauty Are Selling for \$1500 to \$2500 Each; and Worth It

Editor Statesman: I have seen your paper of March 11th and saw what you said about my goat, and others. Many thanks for the write-up.

Some people in Salem will think those prices staggering and untrue; and I did not consider my goat worth half that much before I came to California. But I have visited six goat farms; I have a few more to see yet of the best pure bred registered imported stock, and I have seen some here in Los Angeles that are wonders (in price, anyway) up to \$2500 each. One dose of Mr. Glari's herd, an imported doe, named Joy Bell, is valued at \$1500, which figures look large to us. But she had four kids a few days ago—three doe kids and one buck. Does sell for \$500 apiece at about three months old; the buck sells for \$250, which means \$1750 profit to the owner in one season. Besides the milk, and she gives two gallons a day.

So you can see she is worth \$1500.

I would not take the \$1000 for mine, after learning what I have here. I have not seen any better goats than mine—only they are the imported, with lists of blue ribbons and silver cups, while we can have just as good if we try to build up good stock.

I expect to keep some of the best stock obtainable; am buying some from these imported stocks, with wonderful milk records, registered pure breeds.

Some men here are selling goat milk in this city, doing a business of \$1200 a month, and I asked two of the best goat men here if one can get ready sale at such prices. They answered, "Can't fill my orders."

I saw one sale, one for \$500, one kid for \$300 to the same person; but from all I have seen, and I have seen all kinds here, I am very partial to the pure white Saanens. They have proved the largest milkers I have seen.

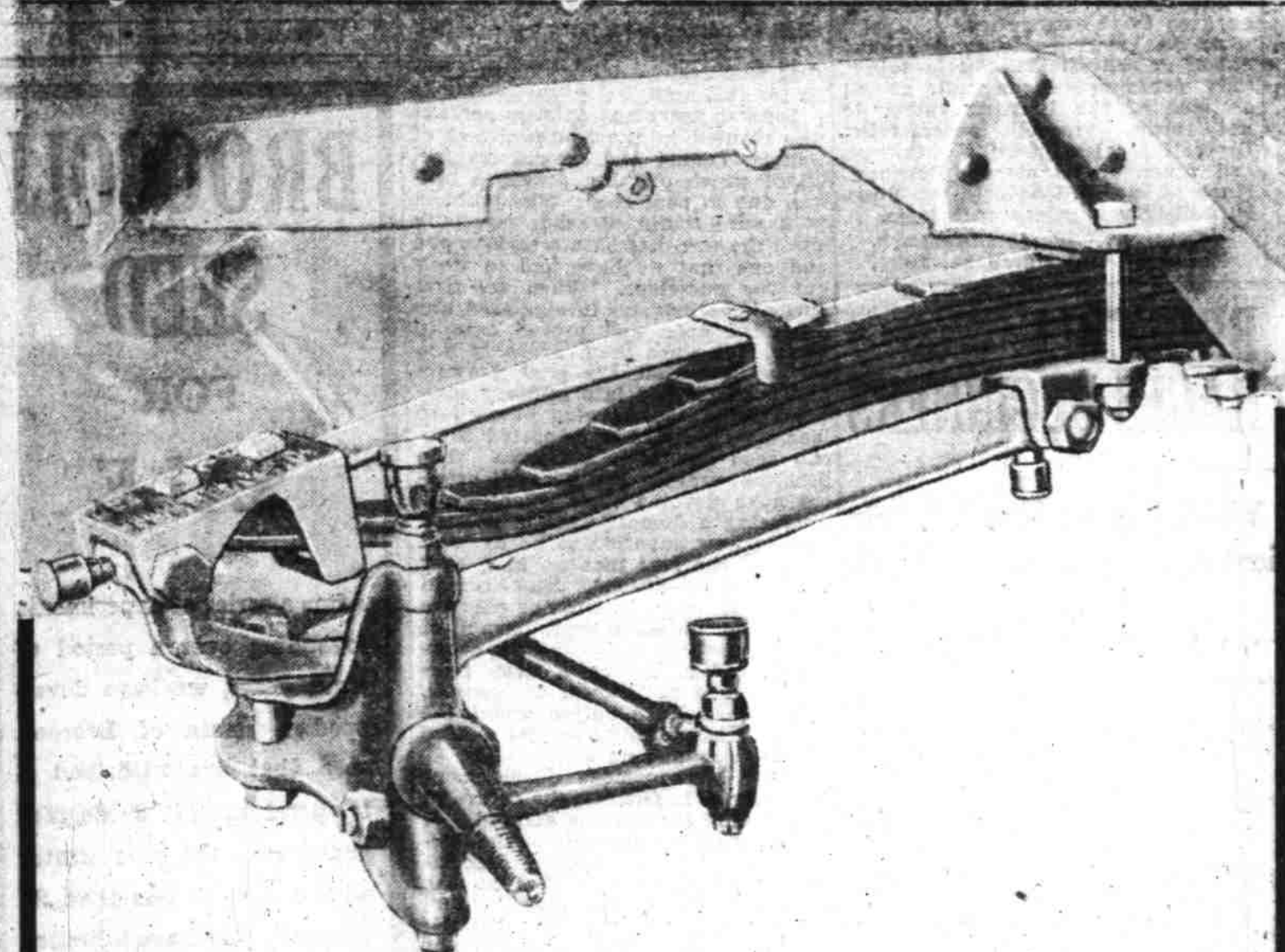
I have five or six copies of March 11 paper. I will be back in Salem in about two weeks more. Have visited 17 different towns and cities, and enjoyed my trip very much. You know we don't want to

get some germs into our system. I heard a real estate man lecture here yesterday. He says when the people come to California they get the germ of California fever and they always want to come back to California when they go away. Well, guess this is right, but I wish Oregon people would catch the germ of thrift and enterprise and do things like California does. It would be like California does.

We have got the land in Oregon, and if people would wake up to appreciate what they have, and work together for Oregon as they do here, more things would be accomplished there. I have visited two large sales of land; one in the foot hills for pretty homes, one at the harbor land sale. They take great crowds out in autos that hold 50 people, on the street car—special cars for this purpose. They serve free lunch, give free lecture on the improvements of the city and its possibilities, and many go out to these sales with no thought of buying; but before they return they buy lots of large figures, from \$50 to \$2500 per lot, where I was. I would like to see Salem work together better for uplift of Salem. Why can't the city have one certain day each week or month as they see best and do it, an auto or a few of them and show strangers out over our city and surrounding county and let the tourist see what Oregon has. It would be a good advertisement; and get up some good written (printed) advertisement and send east and educate people as to what is in Oregon, the same as California does. Land here sells from \$1000 to \$2000. If we had the get-up and move as they have here we could get prices to boost for good roads, look a loud, until they do wake up. The roads here will tempt any one to want to come here. I boost for Oregon everywhere I go. Salem is doing fine of late and making wonderful changes, and I am glad to see it. May the good work go on, until our home city is equal to any.

Yours for a bigger city, good roads, and improvements in every way.

—Mrs. B. M. Woods,
705 E. 42nd St., Los Angeles, Cal.
March 26, 1920.



Make Your Chevrolet 490 the Easiest Riding Car on Wheels

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We sell it on a positive guarantee and Chevrolet owners in Polk and Marion counties know whether our guarantee is good or not.

Salem Automobile Company

F. G. Delano, Salem
A. I. Eoff, Dallas

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