

# Willamette Valley Farmer

News and Views of Farm and Garden

## Unusual Ranching

### Mushrooms Produced in Quantity At Modern Valley Plant

By LILLIE L. MADSEN  
Statesman Farm Editor

We had always been led to believe that farming was as open as a book. But we discovered that in this, as in some other things, we could be wrong. We found a man whose farm is entirely under cover and who keeps his work in the dark. With a little lamp fastened to his cap, the farmer himself doesn't look like a farmer, but a miner. However, he insists that this light is actually as much a part of his equipment as a tractor is of the grain farmer's.

This rather unusual ranching began in 1936, when Mr. and Mrs. Roland West came to Salem from Santa Cruz, Calif., and bought a run-down poultry farm a few miles out on the penitentiary road.

Now instead of the original good building, a hen house, there are six completed houses and a seventh under construction. Instead of the ordinary old fashioned farm house that was on the place there is now a ranch house similar to those pictured in the slick-paper garden magazines, and Mrs. West explains it is "really the same house, only different."

Most surprising of all: instead of chickens there are mushrooms—4000 pounds a month. While we, as a child, believed everything our Bible school teacher told us, yet we wanted an explanation for the Biblical miracles. Therefore, the manna which we were told just came from heaven with no work attached, we decided must be mushrooms.

But Mr. West says this can't be so. There is lots of work attached to growing mushrooms. The Wests have studied the business and had experience before coming to the Willamette valley.

In growing mushrooms commercially and profitably there must first be a mushroom house, according to Mr. West. The mushroom houses on West's ranch are made with flat beds about eight inches deep, about four feet wide, accessible from aisles on both sides. The beds are arranged in tiers, about 5 1/2 feet apart, with tiers of boardwalks to make picking possible on the higher "shelves."

Oat and wheat straw and stable manure, helped along by chemicals, are composted—a process taking from 18 to 20 days and done in an open-sided compost house. Filling one of the mushroom houses with compost is a full day's work for two men.

Prior to 1903 no commercial mushroom spawn had been developed in the United States, the larger part of the spawn used, being brick spawn imported from England. Now spawn is produced

in the east by at least one company or laboratory, Mr. West told us.

When the spawn, or cultures arrives, it is inserted from one to two inches below the surface of the compost. This is done by holding it with one hand while pressing the compost firmly about it with the other hand. In about ten days, the new growth appears around each piece of spawn. At this stage, the "casing" of loamy screened soil is applied evenly to a depth of 1 1/2 inches. It is firmed as applied.

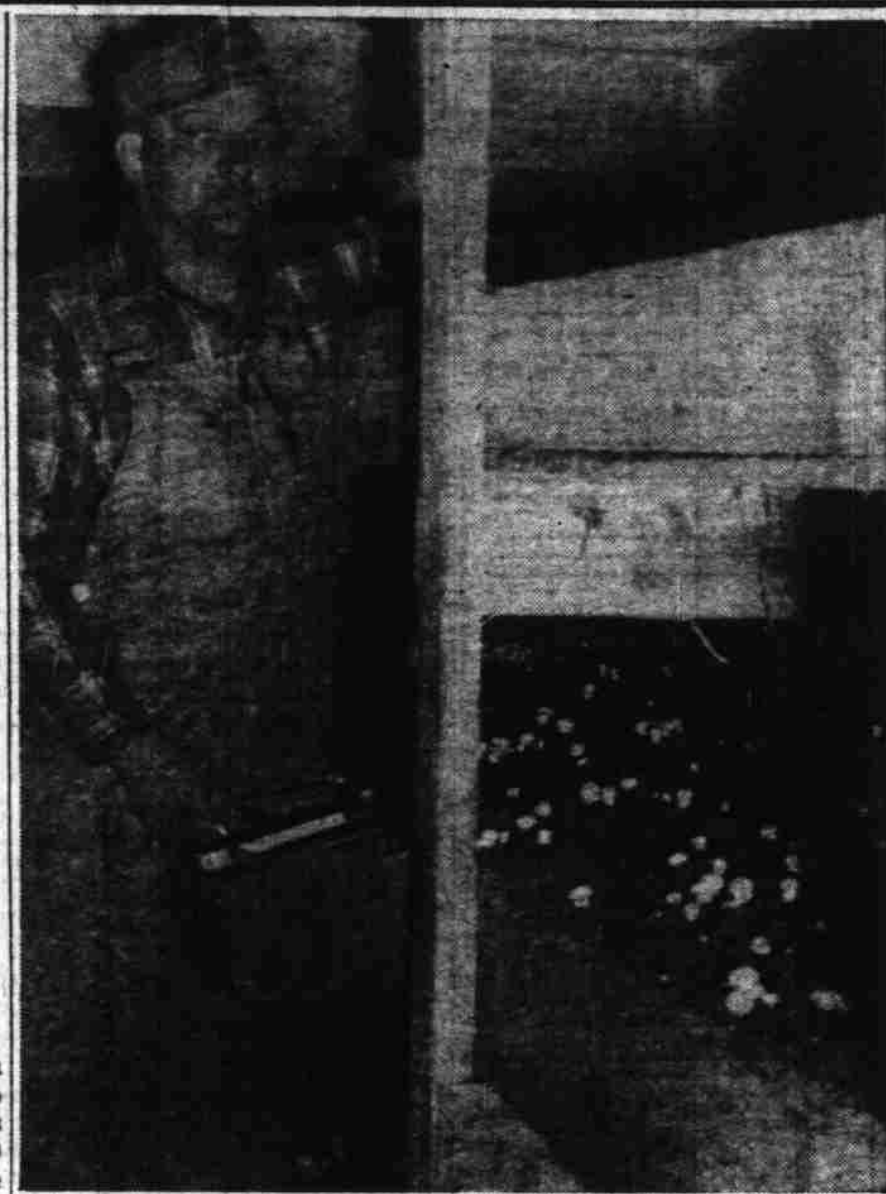
No further attention, other than sprinkling three times a week to maintain an even moisture, is needed. Usually it takes about 90 days from the time the beds are first begun until picking can be started.

Mr. West gave us a picking demonstration. He takes hold of the cap of the mushroom, twists it lightly, cutting the basal portion of the stem off which he drops into one little box, the mushroom goes into another. Both boxes are in a carrier fashioned after the strawberry carrier. Usually Mr. West picks his mushrooms when they range in size from a quarter to one half dollar. They are then termed "buttons." Picking is done every other day and a good picker can gather 100 pounds of mushrooms in four hours.

Jokingly we asked if there were ever any crop failures—feeling sure we knew the answer before we asked. But this was no joke to Mr. West.

"Unless," said he, "the greatest care is used at all times, the crop failure can be complete."

A little further conversation revealed that both pests and disease can enter this crop. There is a mushroom fly, we were told, which, unless controlled, produces maggots and makes the mushrooms unfit for sale. There are a number of diseases as well. Utmost sanitation, complete sterilization and care in preparing the beds must be maintained. When each crop is completely harvested, all the flats are emptied—quite a process in itself—and the entire house disinfected by using sul-



ROLAND WEST  
He farms in the dark

phur. This takes several days.

The Wests' first harvest of mushrooms in the Willamette valley was in 1937, when they sold nine pounds in one week. Now 4000 pounds are harvested each month. Of these approximately 300 pounds are sold fresh in Salem, Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. The remainder is canned for the navy. The Wests have their own cannery, white and sanitary looking as a medical laboratory.

Five people are employed by the Wests, and canning takes about four hours on picking days. When brought into the cannery, the buttons are run through a gradator, washed, blanched, run through the salt brine and into the pressure cooker.

Both Mr. and Mrs. West have made a thorough study of mushrooms. The type they grow is the so-called common variety with the uncommon sounding name—agaricus campestris. There are other edible varieties, but only the very experienced should ever attempt to gather mushrooms in the field. Otherwise, instead of edible ones, they may have some of the "toadstools." Frequently, the varieties resemble each other very much, as mushrooms cross, according to the Wests, and sometimes the poisonous ones take on

the appearance of the non-poisonous. But, those in the know, claim they can always spot the agaricus campestris in the field.

## Be Careful Of Tomatoes If Spraying

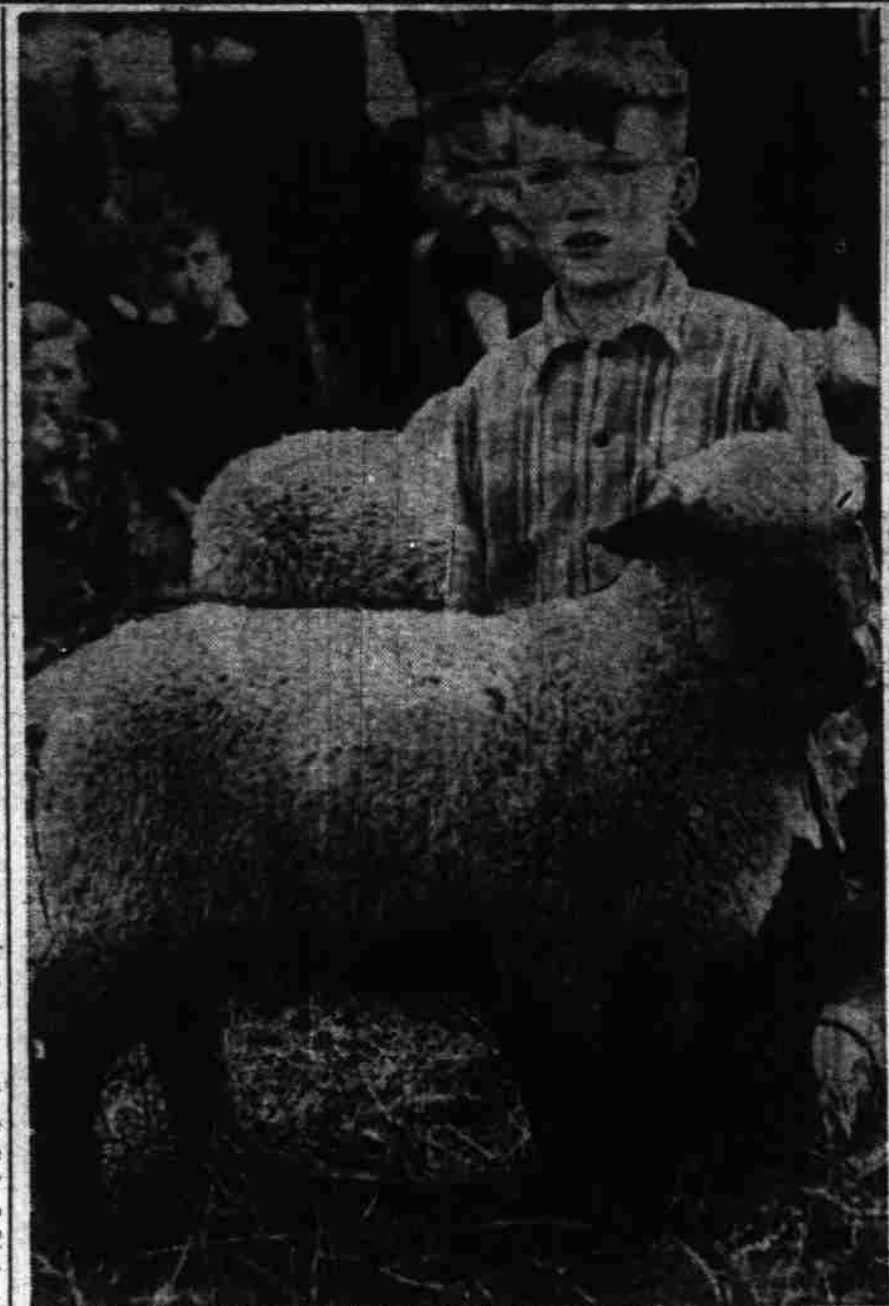
### Choose Sprays Which Do Not Injure Leaves

Neither sulphur sprays nor sulphur dusts should be used on tomatoes. Sprays and dusts in which copper is the active ingredient are preferred for use on tomatoes. Copper sprays or dusts, especially those containing lime, should not be applied to tomato foliage until really needed, since immature tomato plants are rather intolerant of such sprays and dusts. Yields and quality of tomatoes will be reduced if these control measures are applied while the plants are young. After the plants become mature and the crop is set there is much less danger of injury. As the tomatoes approach maturity the application of spray or dust which leaves a heavy deposit on the tomatoes may be objectionable. For this reason it is desirable to use materials which will reduce this residue to a minimum.

Bordeaux spray, if properly made and applied, is one of the most effective controls for late tomato blight. A solution of four pounds copper sulphate, two pounds lime and 100 gallons of water is the proper formula, according to Oregon State college.

If you prefer to dust instead of spray, copper-lime dust may be used. This may be purchased ready prepared from a dealer.

If the weather remains dry with no threat of rain, the first application may be delayed until about the first of September. It should be applied at that time, however, even if no rain has fallen.



Pictured above is Jerry Wipper of the Cloverdale 4H club, with the ewe that won grand champion of the fat lamb show in Turner on Saturday and also champion of the 4H club entree. The lamb was later sold at auction.

At the right is Edward Ahrens and his dog Pat, first place winner in the state dog trials in sheep herding before a crowd of several hundred at Turner on Saturday. (Statesman photos)

## Problems of Poultrymen Discussed

Poultry men are learning that a deficiency in vitamin-D is frequently the cause of soft shelled eggs in poultry houses. Should the hens be receiving plenty of oyster shell or limestone grit and still lay soft-shelled eggs, double the normal amount of vitamin D for flocks in confinement, is the new order. The double portion could be continued for about a month to learn whether the deficiency is the cause of the soft-shelled eggs.

If the hens still continue to lay soft shelled eggs after this or eggs with a poor shell texture, the cause may lie in the failure of the organs to produce the proper shell material and in such instances the hens should be disposed of.

Egg eating habits may be brought about by lack of sufficient shell or grit or vitamin D. Eggs on the floor of the laying house may also cause hens to develop this habit.



# JUNE FOOD FAVORITES

## MARION STREET MARKET

"NO POINTS REQUIRED ON ANY ITEM IN THIS AD" SHOP THE EASY WAY!

The "Easy Way" is the Marion Street "Market Way." The largest displays, wider selection of scarcest items, the savings you make, the ease in shopping, makes the "Marion Street Market Way" the ideal shopping way. Shop here for your June foods.

<h3 style="text-align: center;">PEAS</h3> <p>Garden-sweet and tender. 24 No. 303 cans..... <b>\$2.65</b></p> <p>Rosedale sweet. 24 No. 2 cans..... <b>\$2.89</b></p> <p>Sunkist Early Garden. 24 No. 2 cans..... <b>\$3.55</b></p> <p>Bar None Dog Food, 12-oz..... <b>5¢</b></p> <p>Pure Lard, 4-lb. carton..... <b>73¢</b></p> <p>Porter's Frilllets, 1-lb. pkg..... <b>19¢</b></p> <p>Amazo Syrup, light or dark, 1 1/2-lb..... <b>13¢</b></p> <p>Sunkist Coffee, lb..... <b>25¢</b></p> <p>Clabber Girl Baking Powder..... <b>2 lbs. 19¢</b></p> <hr/> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Green Beans</h3> <p>Marion, 24 No. 303 cans..... <b>\$2.75</b></p> <p>Marion, 24 No. 2 cans..... <b>\$2.95</b></p> <p>Sunkist Early Garden Cut, 12 No. 303's in glass..... <b>\$1.65</b></p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Meat Department</h3> <p>Leg-o-Pork Roast, lb..... <b>33¢</b></p> <p>Pork Chops, lean end cuts, lb..... <b>30¢</b></p> <p>Grade A Bacon, not sliced, lb..... <b>35¢</b></p> <p>Leg Pork Steaks, lb..... <b>35¢</b></p> <hr/> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Fruit and Vegetable Specials</h3> <p>NEW PEAS No. 1 local..... <b>3 lbs. 25¢</b></p> <p>NEW SUPDS, Shafter Whites, U. S. No. 1..... <b>10 lbs. 39¢</b></p> <p>SUNKIST LEMONS 360's, dozen..... <b>23¢</b></p> <p>NEW VALENCIA ORANGES Lots of juice. Dozen..... <b>15¢</b></p> <hr/> <h3 style="text-align: center;">LOCKER CARTONS</h3> <p>Heavy waxed. <b>39¢</b> Qts. <b>49¢</b> Pts., doz..... doz.</p> <p>Economy Caps..... doz. <b>17¢</b></p> <p>Coffee Jar Lids No. 63, doz..... <b>10¢</b></p> <p>Atlas Jars Quarts..... doz. <b>73¢</b></p> <p>Bottle Caps..... gross <b>25¢</b></p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">CORN</h3> <p>Diamond "A" Whole Kernel. <b>\$3.75</b> 24 No. 2 cans.....</p> <p>Three Sisters Whole Kernel, <b>\$3.39</b> 24 No. 2 cans.....</p> <p>Sunkist Cream Style Golden Sweet, 24 No. 2 cans..... <b>\$3.25</b></p> <hr/> <h3 style="text-align: center;">CRISCO</h3> <p>no points..... <b>3 lbs. 68¢</b></p> <p>Swift's Prem, ready-to-eat meat <b>31¢</b> in glass. No points.....</p> <p>Snowdrift, <b>3 lbs. 68¢</b> no points.....</p> <p>Oxydol, package..... <b>21¢</b></p> <p>Maison Royal Imitation Vanilla, 8-oz..... <b>10¢</b></p> <p>Cheerios, package..... <b>10¢</b></p> <p>Quaker Puffed Wheat..... <b>3 for 25¢</b></p> <p>Silk Toilet Tissue..... <b>6 rolls 25¢</b></p> <p>Staley's Corn or Gloss Starch..... <b>2 for 15¢</b></p>
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# MARION STREET MARKET

NORTH COMMERCIAL AT MARION

## Ranch Ramblings

By Rural Reporter

Up in Clackamas county (or is it down, we always get our ups and downs confused) we found some corn being replanted. Clackamas, as we have indicated before, is a great corn growing country and they will grow corn there despite pheasants and a cold spring. Fiber flax is making good growth. And we found that a blueberry arboretum with plants from various parts of the United States had been established on the red soils experiment area at Oregon City. This is under supervision of County Agent J. J. Inskip. Eight named high bush varieties, most of which were developed at the New Jersey experiment station, in addition to native low bush seedlings from West Virginia have been obtained. A shipment of native bushes from Maine is expected in the near future. Carl Joehnk of Canby has provided plants from the Grays Harbor country. Although only a few successful commercial plantings of blueberries are to be found in western Oregon, Inskip finds great interest in this subject, he reports.

Tomatoes were still being set out in Linn county during the week and hops are reaching the wires. Tree fruits are very spotted but berries are more promising than they were earlier in the season. Pastures seem to like Polk county for they are doing very well over in that section. Strawberries were also looking good—very good to those of us who passed the strawberry fields on the other side of the fence.

Prune and cherry crops will be light in Marion county. What early weather conditions didn't care for, recent winds took off. The past week was rather cold for corn and beans planted, causing them to get off to a poor start. We are still thinking about the very white woolly lamb which we saw down at the Turner show. We have never seen nearly so clean a lamb outside of the toy departments in larger stores. If all lambs are as white and woolly as Lambkin, owned and cared for by Phillip Jantze of Turner, we could certainly go in for lambs in a big way.

We found some hop growers in Marion county dusting their hops. Dusting of peas will soon get underway. Aphids were bothering the field peas in some locations.

Everywhere we traveled we found the farmers concerned with Canada thistle. And a right they

had to be, for we never seen as many Canada thistles any season as we saw this past week. Barnyards, fields, Victory gardens, rosebeds,— everywhere we looked there we found Canada thistle. We recalled when we were children there was for a time, a great fight against the thistle. In recent years this had somewhat subsided but this spring again there seems to be great concern.

We were told that there may be plenty of weed seed in relatively pure seed. Canada thistle has 395,000 (I wonder who counted them) seeds per pound. If one buys red clover seed 99 per cent pure, he is getting seed considered to be up to the commercial standard for good red clover. But if all of the 1 per cent of impurity should happen to be Canada thistle, and he plants 11 pounds of seed per acre, he is seeding almost exactly one Canada thistle seed on each square foot of his land. Jack Stump over near Monmouth tells that "we have tried several different ways of controlling Canada thistle and we have had good luck with all of them. Possibly the most satisfactory is the use of fresh horse manure, where the patches are small. The manure should be put on at least 2 feet deep and about 2 feet past the last thistle to allow for possible spread. This has always given 100% kill, but of course can only be used where very few plants appear."

Sodium chlorate spray, used 1 1/2 pounds to a gallon of water, is recommended both by Harry L. Robinson and Gustav Krause, both from Washington county. Robinson sows his field in oats and vetch, cuts this for hay and afterwards sprays, about September 1. He gives them two follow up sprays at four week intervals. Then he adds, "do not plow or work through them after spraying, and do not work within 10 feet of the patch sprayed. If you do they will come up very thick around the edge with a kill in the center of the patch. It would be better if you want 100% kill not to work the field the next spring, and go over it a couple of times and look for one that might come up. Before spraying them mow them off. Tall thistles take too much spray."

As we travel around the counties we feel sure that we will learn of other methods of killing the weed. The main idea is to get it killed.

## Tomato Diseases Incurable, But Preventable

Tomato streak and mosaic are two incurable tomato diseases and control can only be accomplished by prevention. Both are extremely infectious and can be carried from plant to plant by simply touching one plant, then another.

The use of tobacco about or near tomato seed beds during potting, transplanting or pruning should not be permitted. Tobacco users working with tomato plants must wash their hands thoroughly in strong soapy warm water before working with the plants. All potato plants and potato debris should be kept away from fields where tomatoes are grown.

## Truck Farm Crops On Increase

Some increase in Polk county's commercial truck acreage is anticipated this year by county agent, W. C. Leth. Last year, Polk county had a commercial truck crop acreage of approximately 675 acres, consisting primarily of beets, green corn, snap beans and asparagus.

The total acreage of truck crops in Oregon in 1943 was reported at 77,600 acres, an increase of 50 per cent over the previous year. The Willamette valley accounted for about 39 percent of the total truck crop acreage.

## Today's Garden

By LILLIE MADSEN

Turner's flower show, sponsored by the consolidated Turner Better Homes and Garden club and the Four Leaf Garden club in connection with the fat lamb show, was unusually attractive. Mrs. Stanley Riches proved conclusively how well the African violet started from a leaf. Her exceptionally healthy African violet, which she had started a short time ago was in full blossom.

Mrs. Elmer Ball had an unusually attractive bouquet of garden heliotrope and the wild astilbe. Mrs. Helen Rosensau had arranged a bouquet of double pyrethrum and blue and salmon lupines. Attracting considerable attention was a bouquet of red roses, Countess Traubrock from the Ahrens farm. The fragrance of these roses was also noticeable.