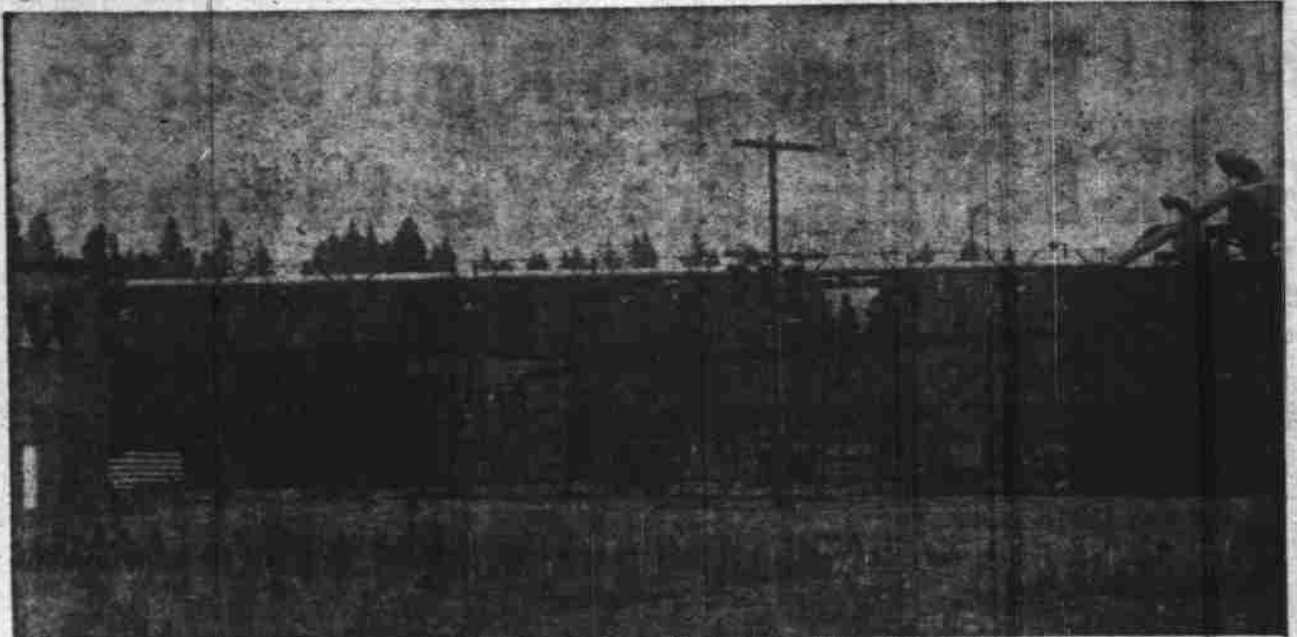


Willamette Valley Farmer

News and Views of Farm and Garden — BY LILLIE L. MADSEN



Exterior view of a portion of the Santiam flax plant shows large pipes through which dust is sucked away from all buildings and dumped at a central point. The "collector" was manufactured in Silverton.



Scrutching machine at the Santiam flax plant near Jefferson. The machine, made at Oregon City, is considered to be as good as any in the world.

Flax Industry of Valley to Depend for Success on Kind Of Fiber Produced After War

French Born Expert Shows Reporter Through Modern Santiam Plant at Jefferson; Co-op Looks to Future

Life or death of the Oregon flax industry after the war will depend on good or bad flax grown. If flax will give a good percentage of good fiber, it will pay out here in the Willamette valley. If the flax is poor, it won't pay out anywhere, not—contrary to general opinion—even in Europe.

These are the beliefs of Alfred Lentschner, who has first hand knowledge of the flax industry in Europe. He owned and operated a plant in France until it was confiscated by the Germans during their early capture of territory in France. He is now manager of the Santiam flax plant near Jefferson.

There is no reason, in Lentschner's opinion why the Willamette valley cannot compete with European flax. Europeans are, of course, he explains, generations ahead in flax knowledge. But Americans, if they will, can profit by the experiments carried on over these generations of time. Add this to the knowledge of flax being gained here together with modern machinery, and America has a good chance to compete.

While there is some very good flax machinery in Belgium and France, Lentschner told our party while we were being shown through the Santiam plant, there is no more efficient or better made machinery than that being made right here in Oregon.

Good Machinery

"Some of the most perfect flax machinery I have ever seen," he explained, "has come right out of Oregon City. It is perfect."

The most convenient way of arranging the plant, the most modern machinery with every labor-saving device and the newest processing methods are very important, the manager believes. But he adds that most important of all, is the growth of good flax.

"Not only the grower, but the processor must learn that it doesn't pay to run through poor flax," the French-born manager said. "The grower should find out first if he has flax ground. If he hasn't then he should grow grass or sheep or anything else, but no flax. Then he must learn to understand flax, have his ground in good shape, as free from weeds as possible, and harvest it when it is convenient for the flax and not just for himself. It is better to pull it on the green side than the over-ripe side. Over-ripe flax does not clean properly and loses weight. As a result the fiber does not clean properly and therefore is placed in grade B, which means less money. It isn't necessary to have flax 36 or even 34 inches long. Very often flax which is 28 inches long will be richer in fiber than longer flax, but it is definitely not a paying proposition to

process flax under 30 inches. The farmer who produces better flax will always obtain more money than someone who produces more flax. It is double the cost to run through poor flax."

In the Santiam co-operative, the grower is paid for the quality he grows. "He can't produce a poor grade of flax and horn in on the profits of his neighbors," Lentschner insisted.

Proud of Plant

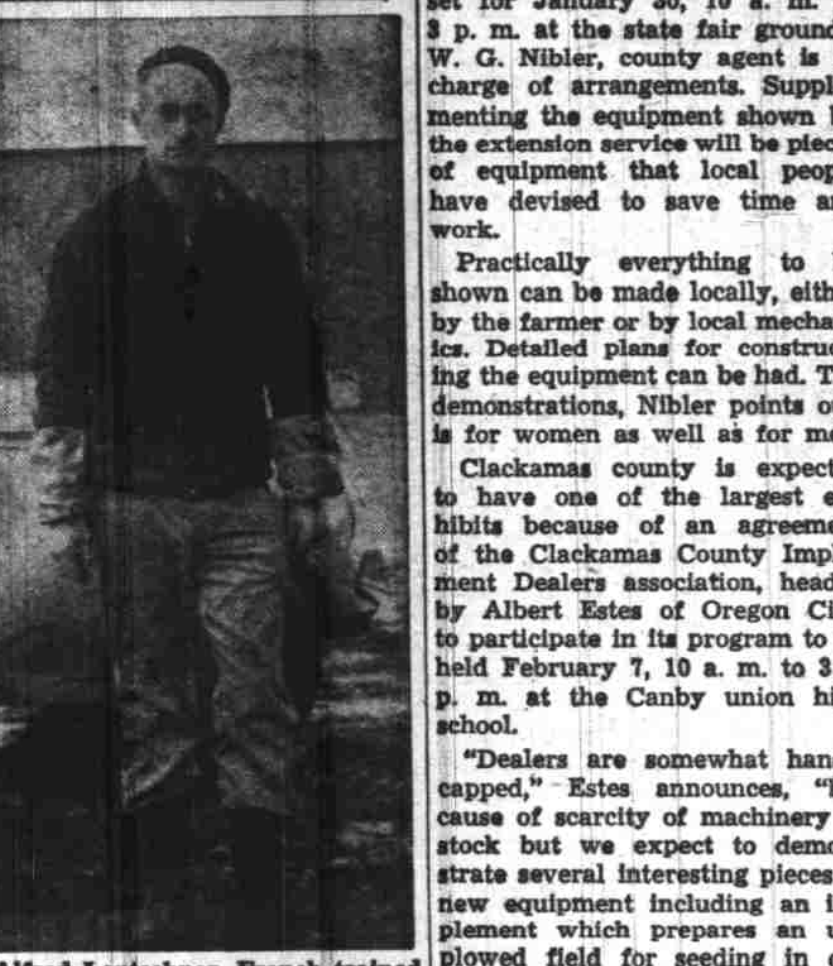
The 100 Santiam flax plant stockholders are proud of their plant and their product, according to Harry Asbahr, secretary. It is, he reports, one of the most modern flax plants in the valley.

The co-op was started in the spring of 1943. During 1944, the plant has been developed at a cost of \$210,000. Operation began in the fall of 1944. Flax was taken from around 800 acres. By February 15 of this year, the officers, headed by Arthur Page, Jefferson, president, hope to have between 1200 and 1500 acres contracted for the 1945 crop.

The Santiam co-operative, in working principal is patterned after walnut, fruit and dairy co-operatives, Asbahr explained. Each man's product is kept separate until it is completely processed and graded. He is then paid according to quality as well as quantity. This, he reported, is not as difficult as it might appear. The separate crops are weighed in before they go through the desecders and then weigh in again afterwards. They are packed in the four 250-foot long sheds. Each lot is numbered. Each shed will hold 750 tons. Unlike many of the sheds, these are entirely enclosed. This not only prevents the seed on the outside bundles from shattering but it also lessens the fire hazard.

A huge storage tank, provides 1700 gallons of hot water for the retting "baths". The usual overhead sprinkling system is not used here. Pipes, covered, bring the water into the tanks. Because the water cools down too much, closed tanks will be used as soon as they can be installed.

A new Canadian \$12,000 tow machine has been ordered and



Alfred Lentschner, French trained manager of the Santiam flax plant has first hand knowledge of the flax industry.

hopes are to have it installed before April. In the meantime, tow is being baled in a modern hay baler. These bales are stored until the new machine is set up. Lentschner reports that the co-op hopes to develop a market for cleaned tow as this would materially reduce the cost of operating the plant.

The "dust-collector" is an interesting item. By means of a suction system, dust is collected in all the buildings and dumped at a central point. At present it is being burned in the huge furnaces. Lentschner said that he was very proud of this Oregon-made "dust remover". The visitors admitted to the plant thoroughly enjoy it.

All the fiber processed so far has been sold. No deliveries have been refused and no lower grades placed by spinning mills has had to be accepted.

Want to Grow More

Because of the small tonnage—900 tons pulled flax—received in 1944, the plant will have no flax on hand by July 1 and will have to start desecding the 1945 crop in order to have enough retted straw on hand to scutch during the winter months. It is usually better, Lentschner said, if the flax remains in the sheds several months before it is desecded or retted. This is why the extra effort is being put forth to have more flax grown during the coming season.

Asbahr reports that it is well to consider the postwar era, when a payroll in the community will be important.

"When the war is over and young men are returning home," he said, "a payroll hiring from 30 to 70 men, according to the season, will do much to answer Jefferson's particular postwar problem."

C. C. Wright Heads Yamhill Committee On Mexican Labor

Members of the Yamhill county farm labor association which was organized in 1944 to arrange for the importation of Mexican labor elected to its board of directors at a recent meeting C. C. Wright, chairman; Keith Coburn, vice chairman; Glen Macy, secretary, and other board members, U. S. Alderman, Ersel Cudeer, Jake Tompkins, Jr., John Dixon, E. S. Strothers, L. A. White and Oliver Schrepel.

Growers who are interested in obtaining Mexican help are asked to contact the farm labor office and place their orders with W. D. Bleitz, farm labor assistant.

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Acceptance or rejection of a machined part in a war industry rests on interchangeability. It was in this way the Marines on Wake Island were able to create a few formidable fighting planes from the wreckage of those previously damaged. The folks who make these parts cannot guess — THEY HAVE TO KNOW.

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Ranch Ramblings

By Rural Reporter

Something somewhat more than just "cows" is the three head of cattle which William Schwartz added to his herd this week. These three Jerseys are the stuff that ancestors are made of. Bill Schwartz has about 20 head which he is milking now. He is building up a splendid herd of registered Jerseys and the new additions, which, by the way, were procured by M. G. Gunderson, well-known Jersey man, are to be used as foundation stock for herd improvement. The Schwartzes are illustrating just what can be done with old buildings if the doing is done correctly. About eight years ago Schwartz came from Nebraska and bought the old English place on the Abiqua between Silverton and Mt. Angel. The buildings have been remodelled, the lawn is being laid out in proper form and the place is irrigated. Some truck gardening was done at first, but now the Schwartzes are turning their attention chiefly to dairying. Ladino clover is growing under irrigation where truck formerly grew. And cows are grazing where before people were picking tomatoes and pulling carrots.

Mrs. H. Grimmer of Turner admits that 4 a. m. seemed sort of early when she first moved from Seattle to the farm but "now it isn't so bad." Mr. and Mrs. Grimmer and their son, Herman, are running a 129 acre farm near Turner and milking 50 cows—Holsteins. The Grimmers belong to the dairy co-op at Salem and take their milk in daily. Mrs. Grimmer's business is to have breakfast ready before the men start morning milking and other chores connected with 50 head of cattle. Chores start again at 4 in the afternoon. In spite of the early morning hour, Mrs. Grimmer says she likes farm life much better than she does city life. Having lived in the city long, or longer than in the country, she should be able to judge. The Grimmers moved to Turner from Keiser where they first tried farming, but found they needed a larger place.

A. G. Johnson was transacting farm business around Salem this past week. Johnson formerly farmed near Albany but for the past eight years has been farming at Junction City. Mrs. Johnson is the former Cora Berg, a sister of the Berg Brothers who are well known in the seed business at Canby. A score of years ago the Bergs were all at home in Barlow where they owned and farmed the old Barlow place.

Farm engineers tell us that most of the injuries sustained in tractor cranking could be avoided if four little rules were adhered to. These are, they say, 1, check to see that the tractor is out of gear; 2, be sure of a firm footing, spread sand, shies or socks on slippery ground before cranking; 3, grasp the crank with the thumb on the same side of the handle as the fingers; 4, keep the back nearly vertical and lifting with the legs, crank with short upward strokes. Do not "spin" it.

Three pruning demonstrations will be held in Marion county February 1 and 2 to show present trends in pruning and to assist orchardists with their individual problems. The announcement comes from Ben A. Newell, assistant county agent. C. B. Cordy, assistant county agent in Jackson county, will be on hand to do the pruning work.

The schedule includes February 1, 1:30 p. m. at the H. F. Butterfield orchard (Fair Oaks Bulb farm) at Woodburn. Here peaches and cherries will be pruned.

On February 2, at 10:30 apples, pears and cherries will be pruned at the Pete Saucy orchard at Salem, and in the afternoon at 1:30, peaches and cherries will be pruned at the Frank Felton orchard at Salem.

Farmers Will Make Report Of Programs

AAA Practices to Be Listed Before February 15 to Pay

Farmers who carried out production practices entitling them to payment under the 1944 AAA program must report their performances to the county AAA offices by February 15. The 1944 program closed December 31, and the performance report for the

Farm Bulletins

JANUARY 25—At Salem, Marion county's 1945 farm production goal conference. Plans will be made for acquainting each farmer in the county with national requirements. For county farm leaders and farm agency representatives.

January 27—At Salem, Oregon's Jersey Cattle club annual meeting.

January 30—At Dallas, Farm accounting meeting for Polk county farmers.

January 30 — At State Fair grounds, Marion county demonstration day. Farm machinery and household labor saving devices. For farmers and housewives. From 10 a. m. to 3 p. m.

February 1—At Dallas, Tree fruits and nuts meeting for Polk county farmers.

February 6—At Salem chamber of commerce rooms, 10 a. m. Marion county cherry growers. Latest information on sprays for leaf spot.

February 7—At Canby high school, 10 a. m. to 3:30 p. m. Clackamas county demonstration day for farmers and housewives.

February 14—At Rickreall, Polk county farm machinery day.

February 15—All counties. Final date for reporting performance under the 1944 agricultural conservation program. Report at county AAA office.

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county is about 85 per cent complete, with reports in from 1300 of the estimated 2000 farms performing practices.

Estimated earnings of Oregon farmers for farm and range improvements leading to increased wartime food production are considerably more than this state's share of the original \$300,000,000 appropriation for that purpose. Had it not been for the additional \$13,000,000 recently provided by congress, reduced payment rates would have been necessary.

There will be no more community meetings held to complete performance reports. Reports will have to be made now at AAA offices.

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Belt Dressing.....25c	19c	Signals.....13.95	8.45
White Sidelwall Cleaner.....39c	29c	Battery Fence Controller.....17.95	12.45
		Quart Thermos	
		Refill.....1.19	98c

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