

Sawdust Gets Recognition for Use as Mulch

By LILLIE L. MADSEN
Farm Editor, The Statesman

While sawdust has been used with considerable satisfaction as a mulch in recent years, here in the Willamette Valley as well as elsewhere, official recognition of it as such did not come until Monday.

A report from Dr. W. B. Bollen, Oregon State College soil bacteriologist, reported that information on experiments conducted on sawdust by the research specialists at the Oregon forest products laboratory "have been conducted sufficiently long to establish the value of sawdust as a mulch."

When using Douglas fir sawdust as a mulch, sufficient nitrogen should be added to the soil to hasten decomposition of the sawdust and to keep growing plants healthy, was one of the statements. This has been realized by a number of sawdust users for some time.

Not Fertilizer
Sawdust, like other mulches, such as straw and peat moss, is not a fertilizer, Dr. Bollen emphasized in his Monday statement. As a mulch, however, sawdust helps to maintain soil moisture, to keep down weeds and to retard erosion. Upon complete decomposition, all mulches add to the humus supply.

Rate of decomposition of any mulch depends upon the nitrogen supply in the material itself and the soil in which it is placed. Nitrogen is added to get rapid decomposition and to prevent nitrogen starvation of plants — which may occur when sawdust is used without adding nitrogen.

Between 5 and 10 pounds of ammonium sulphate, a nitrogen-containing fertilizer, should be applied to the soil for each ton of sawdust at the time of mulching, Dr. Bollen recommended. At the beginning of the second year of decay, about one-half this amount of fertilizer is needed.

Easy to Handle
A sawdust mulch is easier to handle than other kinds, is usually easier to obtain at less cost and should last 10 years, Dr. Bollen said. A sawdust mulch from two to four inches deep is often recommended for orchards and berry fields.

Dr. Bollen reported that the products laboratory found that Douglas fir sawdust, which contains a higher-than-average percentage of bark are believed responsible for the low decomposition rate.

Another series of greenhouse tests in connection with the soil

Valuation of County Utility Property Cut

Assessed valuation on Marion County's public utility properties was sliced 4 per cent this year by the State Tax Commission, with the result that the county will have \$353,400 less in that class of property to tax.

But County Assessor R. (Tad) Shelton said Monday the county won't feel the loss as valuation of other classes of property is considerably higher this year.

"We can already see an increase of \$6,700,000 in assessed valuations, with our work far from finished," said the assessor. He added that increases affect just about all kinds of property (other than utilities, which the state determines). And inventories of personal property are much larger this year, Shelton reported.

The utilities' full cash value in Marion County is nearly \$1½ million higher this year, by state tax department computation, but the percentage used to determine the assessed value was lowered by the state from 41 to 37 per cent for Marion County.

Most counties were given a lower percentage, but the gain in actual value of utility properties made up the difference in many of the counties, the state figures show.

In Marion County the full value of utilities is shown at \$23,898,239 now, compared with \$22,510,775 last year, with assessed value at \$8,876,018 compared with last year's \$9,229,418.

Assessed value comparisons in some of the other counties: Polk — \$2,029,699 now, \$2,048,506 last year; Yamhill — \$2,401,231 now, \$2,490,116 last year; Linn — \$6,228,618 now, \$6,544,419 last year; Multnomah — \$86,606,733 now, \$83,294,712 last year; Douglas — \$16,847,091 now, \$15,264,935 last year; Klamath — \$16,417,407 now, \$17,356,607 last year; Clackamas — \$14,175,003 now, \$14,862,443 last year.

CRUSHED BY LOG
SEASIDE (AP)—Maurice A. Cothren, 32, Seaside, was fatally crushed under a rolling log Monday. He was working for the Crown Zellerbach Corporation in the Elk Creek region when the mishap occurred.

Lumber, paper, iron and other-type mills line both shores of the Yalu River at the facing cities of Antung, Manchuria, and Sinuiju, Korea.

bacteriological studies on other types of sawdust has been launched by Dr. Bollen. This new project should be completed in about four months, he added.

Weight Record For One Litter Of Pigs Broken

SPRING GROVE, Minn. (AP)—A world's weight record for a single litter of pigs 180 days old was claimed Monday by Edwin Luehr and his son-in-law, Lawrence Meyer, Spring Grove.

H. G. Zavoral, professor of animal husbandry, University of Minnesota, and Wayne Hanson, Houston County agricultural agent, were the official observers as the 18-pig litter owned by Luehr and Meyer was weighed at 4,992 pounds.

The old record of 4,419 pounds was set in 1951 by a litter of Iowa pigs. The average weight of the litter is 277.33 pounds, with the heaviest pig topping the scales at 342 pounds and the lightest at 226.

Zavoral said the litter also holds the world's record for a 56-day-old litter, with a total of 840 pounds, for an average weight of 46.66 pounds per pig.

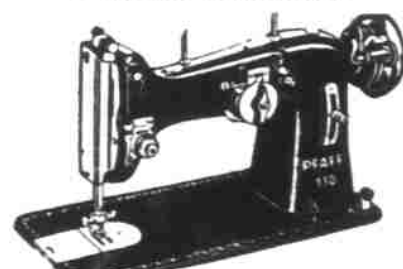
Luehr and Meyer report the litter's boar and sow were of farmers' hybrid stock.

STOCK SALE AUTHORIZED
WASHINGTON (AP)—The Power Commission Monday authorized Mountain States Power Co., Albany, Ore., to issue and sell through competitive bidding 200,000 shares of common stock of \$7.25 a share.

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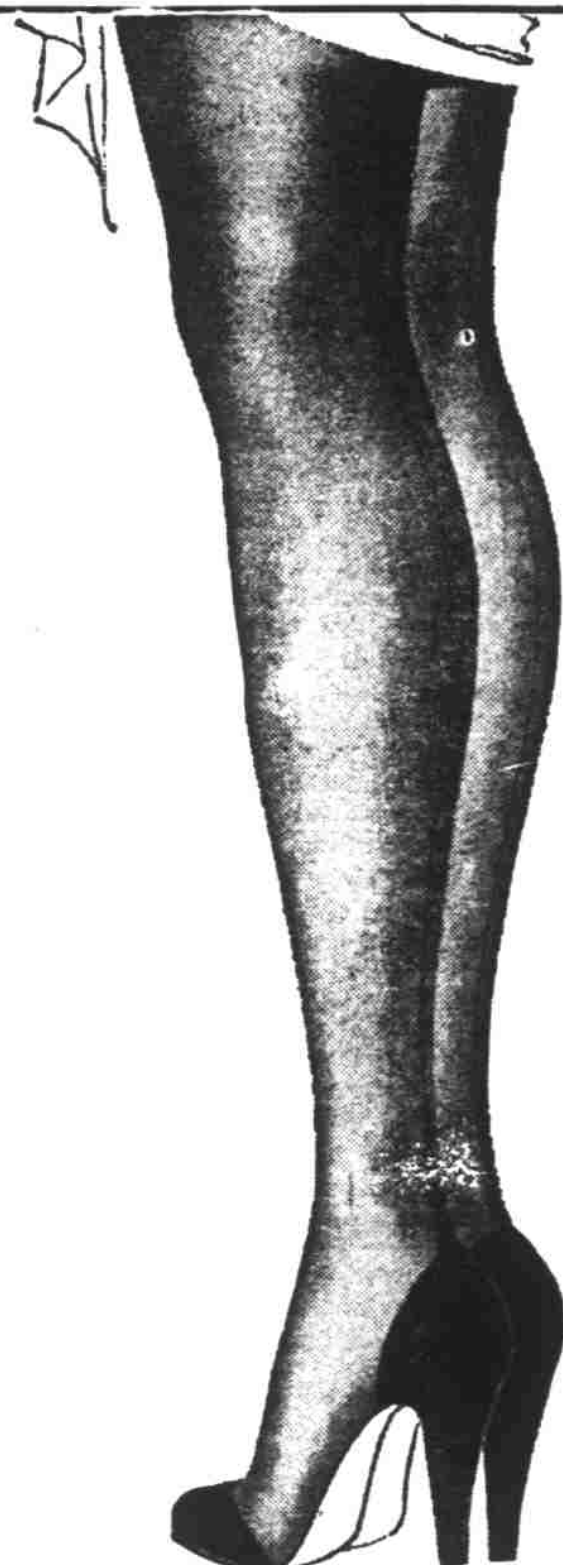
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