

Extension Notes:

Television viewing: A family affair

More people are beginning to question the use of television as a major source of stimulation, entertainment and information if, in exchange, it is creating a passive society, says Sue Gangler, Warm Springs Extension Agent.

Over the past two decades, television has made definite changes in how families spend their time. Perhaps it is not only the violence seen on television that affects individuals, but also the changes it has made in family relationships.

Rather than talking together and becoming actively involved with one another, many families spend silent hours gazing at television. In many ways they have become strangers who happen to live under the same roof.

Throwing away the television set is probably not an acceptable alternative, Sue points out, because that would deprive the family of television's many benefits.

A better way is to consciously incorporate television

viewing into the continuing process of learning, playing and interacting in the family. Parents, for instance, should try to be present and be involved with the children when they are watching television.

It is important for family members to do things together while watching television so that viewing requires the family to communicate and actively participate with one another, commented Sue.

Decisions about family ac-

tivities ultimately must come from within the home. When it comes to television, it is up to the family to decide how much time will be devoted to viewing, what programs will be watched, and whether or not viewing will be a matter of total concentration or combined with other activities.

These decisions are the family's province and government and the television industry can't be blamed for what people choose to watch, Sue concluded.

4-H for adults & teens

Want a satisfying outlet for your energies? Something to keep you off the streets and out of trouble? Look into being a 4-H Club Helper or Leader.

What's your favorite interest, sport, or hobby? Sharing it with others can be a very satisfying experience for you. And everyone has something special to teach others.

A 4-H Club is really all

about helping youth and families to learn their talents and to have a lot of fun together. 4-H Club meeting dates, times, and format are arranged around what is most comfortable for you, the leader.

Interested? Contact Sue Gangler or Clint Jacks at the Extension Service Office, 553-1161 ext. 46. We are located on the second floor old girl's dorm.

Decline in cattle numbers may boost prices

This winter's drought has brought a mixed bag of consequences to cattlemen across the country, according to Steve Marks, Oregon State University Extension economist.

"There is no doubt that the 1977 income of all beef producers will be affected adversely to some degree," he says.

But in the long run, the overall decline in total cattle numbers should bring cattle prices up.

Based on the distribution of the U.S. cattle herd among drought-affected areas, it is evident that nearly 91 million cattle, or almost 75 per cent of all cattle and calves on farms and ranches, are in geographic areas where pasture conditions are rated poor to fair.

Moreover, nearly four-fifths of all cattle outside feedlots are in drought areas. About 43 million head, or 35 per cent of the total cattle inventory affected, are on pastures rated "very poor." Twelve million head, or 10 per cent, are in "severe" drought areas.

"Because of the poor pasture conditions, more cattle are being moved into feedlots

and packing plants as beef producers reduce the size of their herds to balance numbers with available and expected forage supplies in the months ahead," says Marks.

The increased supply of beef on its way to market means continued depression in cattle prices. This, of course, means a bonanza for consumers, who will enjoy lower beef prices a while longer.

Complicating the low price picture for cattlemen is increased competition from cyclically large hog marketings and record supplies of poultry and dairy products.

The outlook for some cattlemen in the Northwest is somewhat brighter following the late winter rains and snowfall. Ranges and pastures west of the Cascades have been rejuvenated, and the mountain snowfall probably has stopped further deterioration in the below average outlook for summer stream flows.

On the other hand, the eastern portions of Oregon and Washington, and most of Idaho and Montana have critical

moisture shortages, Marks notes.

Late summer and fall cattle prices will be influenced largely by range and pasture feed conditions. Prices will remain low as long as range and pastureland remain poor, forcing cattlemen to market their beef.

In addition, feed prices and feedlot demand for feeder cattle will have an effect on cattle income.

"Some price improvement can be expected this summer when overall red meat supplies diminish," says Marks.

In spite of the poor short run outlook for beef producers, the drought is increasing the long run potential for a sustained cattle price rise. Total cattle numbers already have been reduced rather sharply in the past two years, dropping nearly 4 million head, or 3 per cent in 1975, and another 5 million head, or 4 per cent in 1976.

Given an added stimulus by the drought, this reduction will benefit cattlemen in the years ahead, even though the immediate future looks dim, Marks predicts.

An Extension-sponsored "awareness tour" of the reservation March 26 was colorfully narrated by Verbena Greene. "Beans" pointed out sites of old homesteads, offered legends behind the geology and explained local Indian traditions to interested people in the community.

Photo by Stowell

Lawn care in a drought year

Water your lawn now, it's important. With the lack of sufficient rainfall, most of our soils at Warm Springs are very dry. As warm weather approaches, lawn grasses will start to grow and there is little soil moisture available for that growth say Clint Jacks, Extension Agent.

After watering and when lawns green up, spread a light application of complete fertilizer containing nitrogen, phos-

phorus, and potassium. Use normal rate or less.

When water becomes limited it may be necessary to stop all applications of water to save it for domestic use. When that time occurs don't water lawns any more until fall or when water supply is again sufficient, lawns will survive all summer without water. It is better to let them dry up than to bring them in and out of dormancy by watering occasionally.

Conserve water with mulches

With limited water supplies in the offing, home gardeners can turn to a variety of mulches to conserve water.

Mulches reduce soil temperature, decrease surface moisture evaporation and weeds, and slow down the depletion of water in the upper 6-8 inches of soil.

Both in the garden and around shrubbery and flowers, mulches can reduce evaporation by as much as 70 percent.

Mulching materials may be classified as plastic film mulches and organic mulches.

Clear plastic film mulch should be used carefully. It increases soil temperatures which may kill plant roots or increase a plant's water needs. Also, weeds can become a problem.

Black plastic film mulch excludes sunlight and causes only a slight increase in soil temperature. Since light does not get through, weeds cannot grow underneath the plastic film.

Make sure the soil is watered before applying plastic mulch, unless there is a way to irrigate the plants after the mulch is down.

Organic mulches made up of small particles, such as sawdust, should be applied 1-2 inches deep to avoid compaction, which would prevent air exchange between the soil and the atmosphere.

Coarse or fluffy materials, such as bark chips, can be applied 3-4 inches thick.

Apply organic mulch evenly. Don't pack it around the stem or trunk of the plant. When the mulch is thoroughly wet, pull it back a few inches from the stem or trunk to allow air circulation around the base of the plant.

The following organic mulches, with Green's recommendations for use, are most commonly available to Oregon gardeners and landscapers.

Lawn Clippings. Use clippings as mulch only after they have become dry. Fresh grass clippings may mat down, produce heat during decomposition, and decrease air circulation to the soil. Do not use grass clippings if the lawn has been treated with a weed killer.

Leaves. Composted leaves are recommended. Non-composted leaves may compact and produce heat during decomposition.

Sawdust. Unleached red cedar sawdust reportedly contains phytotoxic materials. Other wood sawdust makes an effective mulch.

Pine needles. Pine needles are moderately acid and should be used as a mulch for acid-loving plants such as azaleas and blueberries.

Bark Chips. One of the most desirable of mulches, bark chips are long-lasting, not easily compacted, and attractive.

"A combination of black plastic film covered with up to 2 inches of organic material make one of the most effective mulches," Jacks says.



"Dad", you sure gave Ma a snow job!