

The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

ORCHARD AND DAIRY THE RECOURSE

OREGON FARMERS, especially those of the Willamette valley, are about up against a proposition which, in a few years, will force a solution.

Grain raising has been the chief industry on the part of the Oregon agriculturist, almost, since the territory became the state of Oregon. So long as farm lands were worth but \$20 to \$30 per acre and the average price of wheat ranged about 80 cents per bushel, grain raising was profitable. But continuous cropping of wheat has reduced the yield per acre, the average price per bushel is somewhat lower and the land has become valued at \$100 per acre or more, a different condition has arisen. Whereas the wheat farmer of a few years ago was able to put away a nice profit each year, he now finds himself on the loss side of the ledger oftener than on the profit side. Too often does the grain raiser find that he has worked a year for practically nothing, to say nothing about interest for the use of his land. The result is that the average Willamette wheat farmer finds that he is up against it. His mortgage is growing larger with the coming of years. The hope for a good year fails to materialize and, to meet the mortgage and other increased expenses, he is forced to consider something besides the raising of wheat to get him out of his difficulties.

He is brought squarely up against the question: What crop can he raise which will produce a larger per cent. of profit?

The Hood river and Rogue river sections claim to be getting very profitable returns from lands valued at three or four times what Willamette valley lands are valued at, and their attention is given exclusively to apple and pear culture. By giving their orchards scientific attention, the orchardists of these sections are reaping a splendid profit. But to bring about these profitable returns, these orchardists are compelled to go to the expense of

irrigation and they find that this additional cost means the difference between abundant success and a flat failure. They find that, by judicious advertising, the Hood and Rogue river orchards have become famous all over the world.

Now the hill lands bordering the Willamette valley have been demonstrated to be ideal for the production of apples, and while apple culture is fairly successful in the valley proper, it does not come up to the success of the hill lands. Nor is irrigation in either the valley or the hill lands necessary. Science has demonstrated that a constant surface culture will retain moisture at the top of the ground during the driest of years; also that fruit raised without artificial moisture is better flavored, more highly colored and altogether more desirable than fruit raised when irrigation is employed.

Eastern Linn county possesses hill lands in abundance which are ideal for apple culture. Within a few miles of Scio, there are thousands of acres of land which, with equal care, would excel either Hood or Rogue river. All that is necessary is for the owners of these valuable lands to plant them in commercial orchard trees and give them the care that Hood and Rogue river orchardists are compelled to give. The returns are sure to surpass those of these famed apple growing sections.

Another industry, to which a majority of both hill and valley farmers are now turning their attention, is the dairy. It has become an established fact that the dairyman, who has used care in the selection of his herd and cares for it properly, is absolutely sure of a profitable return therefrom. True, some farmers who have tried the dairy business, have failed to make good; but the fault was their own. They did not have proper dairy cows, else they did not give them the care that a profitable dairy herd requires. Other farmers, who have selected their herds judiciously and care for them in an intelligent manner, have a growing bank account.

Evidently, fruit and the dairy are to become the leading industries of the Willamette valley. It has been demonstrated that lands valued at \$200 to \$300 per acre can be made to yield a profit in these lines, while grain raising is sure to prove absolute loss. Because the farm can be converted into a dairy more readily than into an orchard, is the reason that the dairy has taken the lead. Though the dairy is a sure road to competence, a bearing orchard of commercial apple trees is, even, more profitable. Nor is there any reason why our Willamette valley farmers, especially those who have hill lands, may not carry on both the orchard and dairy. He is sure to be successful if he looks after matters with any degree of care.

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