

Oregon Agricultural College is the Friend of the Farmer

Page of News Notes and Interesting Articles Specially Written by College Experts For This Newspaper.



View of Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis, Oregon, the Sole Aim of Which Is to Aid Agriculturists.

The following valuable article on selecting and handling loganberries, is contributed specially for Farm and Home Magazine Section by C. I. Lewis, horticulturist at Oregon Agricultural College.

AN INVESTIGATION will show that many of the inferior dried and evaporated loganberries are due to one or all of three causes: poor selection of the fruit and careless harvesting methods; rough handling in removing the fruit from the field to the evaporator, and unskillful methods employed in evaporation. Too much stress cannot be placed on the question of harvesting. Early in our investigations we soon determined that harvesting alone was responsible for many of the poor berries that were being evaporated. It is only by very careful handling and correct knowledge of the proper berries to pick that one can deliver to the evaporator a product that is desirable for evaporating. In addition to careless handling in the field many berries are ruined in being transported from the field to the evaporator.

The best berries to select for evaporating purposes are firm ripe berries. Care should be taken, however, not to pick these berries too soon. If they are light colored or very bright colored and hard, they do not make a very satisfactory product. It is true a very pretty product can be manufactured, one which is very attractive, but the fruit is too tart and it also loses too much weight when in this condition. During the early part of the season growers need to be unusually cautious not to pick the berries too green. The berries are apt to ripen slowly and a grower has a tendency to become more anxious to remove the fruit and to start the evaporator. The presence of large amounts of this unripe fruit is probably partially responsible for the greater loss in weight through the evaporation process during the early part of the season than is experienced during the latter part; though, possibly, the fact that there is apt to be a little less moisture in the ground at the end of the season may be responsible for some of the difference in moisture content of the fruit. The berries which are over-ripe should not be used for evaporating purposes. Such berries can be utilized for juices, syrups, jams, and jells.

Cost of Picking.

The picking is done mostly by women, girls and school boys, the average price being one cent per pound. Some growers practice giving five-sixths of a cent early in the season and pay about one and one-fourth cents when the picking becomes poor in the latter part of the season. It is, at times, hard to get really first class work done by the class of people who present themselves to our growers. The system of paying by the piece encourages the pickers to be very careless and if this system is maintained it is absolutely necessary that careful supervision be employed. A check system of some nature so that the grower can check up on his pickers would be very advisable whether they pick by the piece or by the day. This is the only way he can keep out undesirable fruit, stems, leaves, etc. Up to the present time the growers have had very little difficulty in securing pickers. Good camping facilities should be furnished, and whole families will move to the loganberry district and enjoy an outing, and at the same time the young people can earn money for school books, and other necessities. Owners of

isolated patches, small in area, may have some trouble in securing proper help for picking.

The method used in handling pickers by one of the most successful loganberry growers in the state may be of interest to our readers. This man has 85 acres and estimates that it is necessary to have 400 to 500 pickers to handle the crop. He is putting in a model camp ground with electric lights and sanitary surroundings. He also provides watchman both night and day. Under his present arrangement he is able to secure more pickers than he can use.

He requires pickers to sign a written contract that they will stay with him throughout the season and will work eight hours a day if required. He pays the pickers one cent a hallock, but at the end of the season gives a bonus of one-fourth cent a hallock to all those who have done first class work.

He keeps field inspectors that he pays \$2.00 a day. It is the duty of these inspectors to see that the work is carefully done. They also keep check of the men and the amount of fruit which each picker handles. If it is necessary for an inspector to speak more than three times to any picker because of carelessness or unsatisfactory work, the picker is discharged. Each picker has a small book in which he keeps account of the number of hallocks picked. This is checked on a tally sheet kept by the owner. The daily balance is drawn each night. By such a system it is possible to pay off the four or five hundred pickers within two hours.

Methods of a Grower.

This grower provides canvas rest rooms. Canvas is stretched so as to provide shade. This is very necessary for the women pickers and where whole families come there is a place for the children to play.

He sees to it that store keepers in the vicinity charge no extra prices to pickers for food products. The same is true of milk or any food product the campers need.

The fruit is picked for canning purposes and shipped in cattle cars, the shipping being done at night. The fruit then arrives in the morning in Portland in very good condition. Of course, it is necessary that the cattle cars be very thoroughly cleaned before loading but these cars afford ventilation that it is impossible to secure with ordinary cars.

There are two points which should be observed by the pickers. The first is that the berry is not pulled straight out from the stem, but should be picked with a slight twist of the wrist, which pulls the berry to one side. In doing this less pressure is used and there is less tendency to break off stems and leaves with the fruit. Second, many pickers have a tendency to hold too many berries at one time in the hand. The berry will soften and melt down very rapidly when held in the warm hand. Again the berries are so soft that where a number are held together in the hand they bruise easily and the juice begins to leak. These bruised berries are very unattractive and give the carrier a messy appearance. In some cases we found the berries arrived at some of the evaporators in such a miserable condition that we realized at once that something was wrong in the methods of field handling. Investigations showed that the time of picking was a very important factor; that the best berries which were arriving at the evaporators were picked in the cool of the day. It is the general practice of the larger growers to pick a part of their field every day, working every day until noon, while in some cases they continue and work until four in the afternoon. Others pick every third

day but work all day. The time and amount of picking is controlled to a certain degree by the capacity of the evaporator. Berries picked early in the morning will not only dry heavier than those picked at noon or late in the afternoon, but they also retain their form better. This latter fact is perhaps more important than the gain in weight, the loss of form and melting down of the berries being responsible for much of the drip which takes place. The berries become warm in the afternoon and when placed on the trays begin to drip badly. This drip consists of a heavy syrup, rich in sugar, and its loss is very serious. Not only is there a loss in weight but this drip tends to caramelize and char on the trays and is responsible for much of the unattractive burnt fruit which is found on the market. If possible we should urge the growers to pick the fruit by ten in the morning and under no circumstances to pick in the warm hours of the afternoon.

SILO INFORMATION IN DEMAND.

JUDGED by the number of requests for information on silos, they are about the most popular of all subjects that are engaging the attention of Oregon farmers and dairymen. Although the subject is comparatively new in Oregon, almost 700 farmers have already sent in requests to the extension division of the Agricultural College for the bulletin that is still on the press on silos and ensilage. The fact indicates a very deep and unusual interest in the construction and use of silos in connection with dairying and other branches of farm operation.

The use of silos is one of the means by which producers hope to cheapen the cost of farm animal production and at the same time utilize field products. Ensilage furnishes abundant and wholesome succulents at the season of the year when they are almost or altogether unobtainable otherwise. Farmers are fast coming to believe that a silo will enable them to save the hay crop and utilize many farm products that now are wasted.

This belief and interest have been aroused within the last six months. Previous to the operation of the dairy demonstration train by the extension division and the Southern Pacific Railway Company, the word silo was scarcely heard outside the college and extension lecture rooms. During this demonstration service the great value of silos both in saving crops and cheapening meat and dairy products was thoroughly demonstrated. Follow up work has been pursued steadily since that time by the extension division and by the leading agricultural journals of the state. As one result of this campaign a great many farmers of the Willamette valley have already announced their intention to build silos during the present summer.

BEST CROPS FOR CANNING.

IN SELECTING crops for the use of association growers it is necessary to plant only such varieties as can be handled most successfully by the association, according to Professor C. I. Lewis, horticulturist at the Agricultural College. When it has been ascertained that a reasonable, steady and profitable market exists for certain varieties, it is necessary before making selection of these to consider whether they are entirely adapted to conditions of soil, climate and the time at the disposal of the grower. It is always best to select those crops that fit in best with the farming routine, provided of course they are acceptable from all other considerations.

The canning qualities of fruits and vegetables are of prime importance. Many fruits excellent for home use and for local market are sometimes too soft or unattractive otherwise to be shipped

any distance and have very little value for canning purposes owing to the fact that they become colorless or mushy in the can. It is not possible to put up a uniform pack at any cannery unless growers produce stock of the same kind and varieties. Should each farmer bring in the variety that he may choose to grow without reference to the selection made by other growers that will supply the cannery, the association cannot put out uniform products. The best way to secure quality and uniformity in the pack is for the association either to buy seeds and plants for the grower or issue a list of desirable products specifying what varieties should be grown. Ordinarily it is better for the association to do the purchasing because better prices can be secured by buying in large lots.

Another reason why it is necessary to ascertain the crops to be grown before installing machinery is that by this means only machinery that will be in demand will be purchased. Unless beans and cherries are grown to advantage in the association territory it is a heavy and useless expense to install bean cutters and cherry pitters.

Another point to be considered in choosing the crops is that canneries to be profitable should be run for as many months during the year as possible. Overhead charges of interest on the investment, insurance, depreciation, and other expenses continue whether the factory is in operation or not. Hence, varieties should be selected with a view to supply products from as early in the spring as they can be grown until late in the fall when stored products may be cared for.

MIDGE MENACES CLOVER.

THE clover seed crop is being menaced in many parts of Oregon by the clover seed midge, according to Professor A. L. Lovett, assistant entomologist at the Agricultural College. While the midge renders the crop which it attacks practically worthless for seed, it does not damage the crop very much for hay, and farmers are urgently advised to cut their midge infested clover for hay even though they expected to harvest it for seed. Evidences of the work of the midge are plain to those who understand the nature of the damage done by it. Clover heads that are infested by midge start to blossom out but fail to open fully. Instead they take on a brownish color and remain at half blossom. When this appearance is noted a careful examination of some of the brownish half-blown heads should be made and if the midge is present the entire crop should be cut at once for hay. This not only saves the crop but it also destroys the insect before it reaches the reproductive stages, thus tending to prevent a recurrence of the attack. Control measures for this year are powerless to save the crop. Farmers should co-operate in this in order to prevent propagation of next year's crop of midge.

The average age of the 1914 class at the Oregon Agricultural College is 22.4 years. In numbers the class represented a 40 per cent increase over the class of last year.

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