

Farm Production Headed for Higher Levels

Oregon Agriculture Seen As One Giant Supermarket

Draw a line through Oregon agriculture and you come up with something resembling a modern supermarket.

From the rain-soaked cranberry bogs of the coastal belt to the high, dry rangelands of eastern Oregon, farmers produce more than 100 commodities on a commercial scale.

As Oregon reaches the century mark, this giant "supermarket" is pumping more than a half billion dollars of purchasing power into the state's economy each year. And experts say we haven't begun to reach full potential.

"Where are Oregon's key reservoirs for such future expansion? A prime example is the sprawling eastern Oregon range. Income from the more than 20 million acres of open range—roughly a dollar an acre from grazing—may double in the next quarter century, believes E. R. Jackman, veteran range crop management specialist at Oregon State college.

New chemicals to kill brush, and machines to seed the range are now available. Ranchers and CSC researchers are teaming up to give the range a badly-needed face-lifting.

Closely linked to the rangeland potential is stepped-up interest in livestock feeding in Oregon. Increased local production of feed grains and hay may reverse the practice of shipping large numbers of Oregon beef cattle out of state for finishing.

\$1 Billion More Meat Needed
Men close to the livestock picture estimate that farm sale of livestock in the Pacific Northwest will have to increase by more than \$1 billion by 1975 to meet fully West Coast consumer demands for meat. Value of production at the wholesale processing level is forecast at nearly \$1½ billion, adding millions in new payrolls for Oregon.

An even greater challenge in the livestock field is the need for local pork production. Oregon now ships in about two-thirds of its pork supplies, with the Portland market commanding the highest prices in the nation as a result of transportation costs.

A major step toward more Oregon-produced pork was taken recently with plans for an industry-sponsored swine-testing station near Hermiston. Designed to upgrade Oregon swine-breeding stock, the program has been approved by swine-growers, the Oregon Wheat Commission, and Oregon State College agricultural experiment station.

The station will be financed by the commission and will test about 250 hogs annually. OSC scientists will measure performance of animals consigned to the station by local swine breeders.

More Irrigation Essential
Another big potential for the state's agriculture is more and better irrigation. Oregon now has 1½ million acres of irrigated land. Another 1¼ million could be irrigated if available water resources were fully developed, say leading resource-planners.

Irrigation not only increases output per acre, it also helps the farmer raise different crops with a higher market value.

The area of land irrigated in Oregon increased 130,000 acres between 1949 and 1954. About half the increase was in the Willamette Valley. Statewide, most of the land that can be developed by individual or local irrigation enterprises has now been placed under irrigation, according to authorities. They add that any extensive future development must of necessity be keyed to multi-use water development projects.

Other major changes on the farm front point to increased efficiency to keep on top in a highly competitive industry. The picture, in dairying for example—fewer but larger dairy farms and plants.

The time may be close at hand when a dairy plant in one area may supply markets all over Oregon, predicts Dr. S. Kent Christiansen, Oregon State college agricultural economist.

Fewer, Bigger Dairies
Economic forces in years ahead may trim Oregon's present 5,000 commercial dairy farms to less than 1,000 farms supplying all dairy products needed in the state. Dairy plants appear headed the same direction. About one-fourth of the state's dairy plants went out of existence between 1945 and 1955 and the trend continues.

Such casualties of competition, efficiency, and capital have been hastened by new developments in transportation and marketing. This has helped dairy plants expand into

markets outside their immediate locality, Christiansen explains.

Modern agriculture is also bringing the farmer into closer linkage with the total food marketing process. The future points to farm production to meet specifications of giant supermarkets operating on lower "per unit profit" than the most efficient U. S. corporations of today.

Dr. G. Burton Wood, OSC agricultural economics department head, says supermarkets operating on the slim "unit mark-up" will be closely tuned to needs and preferences of food buyers. In turn, the markets will make rigid demands on farmers to produce what the market demands.

Farmers who make the adjustment and use the most efficient technology and research findings have a bright future, believe agricultural leaders. Such adjustment may mean, for example, that a farmer concentrate entirely upon raising pullets for poultrymen or heifers for large super-efficient dairy farms.

This increased efficiency not only benefits the farmer, but enables those living off the farm to live better. Today, it takes only 20 minutes of labor to earn the money to buy a pound of rib roast—it took about 48 minutes a generation ago.

Other off-farm benefits of modern agriculture are the increases in related industries such as farm equipment, chemicals, fertilizers, containers, transportation, public services, and power.

Meat Packing To Expand
Even more allied industries, of the processing type, are needed if Oregon is to share fully in its increased farm efficiency, say the experts. More livestock feeding in the state could mean expansion of the meat packing and processing industry for distribution to rapidly-growing West Coast markets.

Canning and freezing of fruits and vegetables from more irrigated acres is another Oregon industry being eyed for expansion. Production of potato starch—used in pulp, paper and fibreboard manufacture—is another possibility.

Oregon farmers now spend \$200 million a year—one-third more than they did 10 years ago—for hired help, gas and oil, fertilizer, feed, seed, machinery repairs and similar expenses.

Fortunately, these new allied industries and other off-farm job opportunities are providing employment for man-and-woman power no longer needed on the farm. There are now four million fewer jobs on U. S. farms than 20 years ago, but there are 20 million more jobs off farms.

These trends of expanded agriculture and associated industries promise to pump still more farm money into the Oregon economy this Centennial year.

FOCAL COMMUNITY

Redmond Spokesman: "Redmond like many of Oregon's smaller cities and towns, bases its economy on farming and lumbering. It serves as a focal community for agriculturists, through its business houses, its schools, its churches, its civic and service groups. There is a friendliness, a neighborliness, in the small Oregon town which the metropolitan center never can offer."



FROM THE WIDE OPEN RANGE to the fertile valleys of Oregon will be found the beef cattle and dairy herds which have been important to the state's agricultural economy for over 100 years.

City-Built Line Netting Neat Profit

Oregon's history is dotted with attempts of communities to get themselves selected as a terminus of some important railroad line or to get the rail service that would build up industry. Portland is the only city that succeeded in such aims in anything like a big way; but Prineville, seat of Crook County government, has a proud, distinctive record of its own.

Left out of the plans of Col. T. Egerton Hogg's Oregon Pacific with its western end at now-forgotten Yaquina City, and by-passed by the Hill and Harriman interests in their fight for a route through central Oregon, Prineville built its own railroad to develop its own industries — lumbering and farming.

Even the construction of such a municipally owned line is less impressive than the fact that Prineville went on to make the road financially profitable as well

as a developer of industry. The line is 18 miles long. To build it the city issued bonds to the extent of \$385,000 in 1916, after a local corporation had asked in vain to be subsidized with terminal grounds, right-of-way and \$75,000 in cash. Altogether the city invested about half a million dollars in the line, a standard-gauge road with steel rails and second-hand rolling stock purchased at reasonable figures from other railroads.

The road had its ups and downs, what with the wearing out of old engines, cars, and track, damage by flood, and poor business in periods of depression. But, under the management of C. C. McGlenn, it has moved up into the black.

The Central Oregonian, Prineville paper, was able, a few weeks ago, to note the setting up of a reserve fund of \$100,000 to permit the line to operate after this year on a cash basis. From a deficit of \$67,847 in 1945, the City of Prineville Railway in the last year reported a net profit of \$167,000, the largest to date. Since June 30, 1949, the line has paid to the city \$792,000 to reduce taxes. This, the manager indicated, has meant an average tax reduction of 28 per cent to the business mer. of Prineville. In 1958 the sum paid in to offset taxes was reported at \$80,000. The City of Prineville Railway is a going concern.



FARM FLOCKS OF SHEEP are a familiar sight in the Willamette valley, and Douglas county tops the state in sheep numbers. Total sheep population is fairly well divided between eastern and western Oregon in recent years.

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