

FARM NEWS

County Agent's Office

Studies Give Tips to Aid Reseeding of Wheat

By N. C. ANDERSON

Columbia Basin county agents, meeting with experiment station and extension crop specialists last week, discussed and reviewed long-time results of several cropping practices which might be used as recommendations for those who are reseeding flood or freeze damaged wheat.

Conclusive long-time results "guarantee" a better yield from Gaines and other winter varieties than spring wheat seeded prior to February 15. There is a period of time between February 15 and March 7 when it is anyone's guess whether winter or spring wheat will out-yield the other, depending entirely on weather conditions.

After March 7, there is a definite advantage in yields of spring wheat over winter. The period February 15 to March 7 is dependent upon "vernalization" of the winter variety which determines whether it will head. The vernalization process involves exposing the kernel to freezing temperatures after it has swelled or sprouted. Spring wheat varieties do not need to go through this vernalization process.

Others are asking about how to determine when it will pay to leave a stand or reseed. Washington State University has done some work in comparing damaged stands and have found that if there are two healthy plants per square foot there is no advantage of seeding spring wheat. The healthy plants must show no appreciable winter injury.

Gaines has been found to do exceptionally well with such a small population per square foot since it has a tremendous ability to stool and produce many heads from one plant. It appears in the case of wheat that if covered deep with silt that if the seedling gets through and is green for two or three days it will make it.

We continue to have questions on spring seed and while there seems to be an adequate supply in the Pacific Northwest, again we emphasize to match the quality of seed purchased. There is

a considerable difference in tolerances for noxious weeds. For instance, the state of Idaho allows wild oats in certified seed. Some experience of our ranchers would indicate that wild oats is a weed to watch out for here. There are considerable quantities of Marfed seed still available in the state of Washington. While we recommend it, we find in checking the last 5-year average of spring wheat varieties seeded at the Moro station was 27.4, Marfed 25.7, Federation 24.4 bushels per acre.

February-Seeded Hudson Barley Eyed

For those who have been asking about the probable yield of Hudson barley seeded this month, there is little experience available as this variety is relatively new to the Columbia Basin. At the Moro station, 1963 yields of Hudson seeded on February 2 was 46.2 bushels; Flynn 38.8; Olympia 39.4; and Alpine 35.9.

For those who are concerned with the loss of nitrogen from the heavy rainfall and washing, there is indication that especially those who made late applications of nitrogen to their fields might have lost a considerable amount. The Moro experiment station is running soil samples at this time to determine the nitrogen level. There has been considerable leaching on sandy soils and the amount of nitrogen which might be left in the soil can depend on the amount of moisture in the soil at the time of the application.

Dry soils and late applications could have had an effect on the nitrogen which might not have converted from ammonia to nitrates, fixing it in the soils. If there is question about the supply of nitrogen, it might be profitable practice to apply liquid or dry fertilizer to stimulate small weak plants. Urea and ammonium nitrate can be dribbled on in water or dry fertilizers applied. Growers are cautioned against using shank applicators for applying fertilizers if stands are weak and sparse as there is some further loss of plants by tearing out.

Conservation Practices Help Stop Soil Erosion

Reports from throughout the Columbia Basin indicate that conservation practices definitely aided in preventing soil erosion, but one practice in most cases was inadequate. Stubble mulch, while doing an excellent job, did not stop erosion alone. Diversion ditches look real good and where diversion ditches, stubble mulch, strip cropping and sod waterways were used in a complete conservation program. By comparison, black fallow was hard hit in most areas. Caution is given on filling in deep washes at this time, especially in the higher rainfall areas with shallower and steeper soils. Experience in these areas indicate that there can be considerable run-off in the months ahead which could easily wash away loose "fill" soil. Many wait until harvest time in this higher rainfall area before filling in ditches in order to get across with the combine in the harvest operation.

Blow Control District Schedules Meeting

The annual meeting of the Lexington Blow Control district, oldest of conservation districts in the state of Oregon, is scheduled for Tuesday evening, February 23. The meeting will be held at the Fred Nelson ranch home, north of Lexington, beginning at 8:00 p.m. Regular business of the annual meeting will be conducted and all persons lo-

cated within the district boundary lines are invited to attend.

Angus Cow Reared On Synthetic Diet

An Angus cow that hasn't had a mouthful of natural feed since she was weaned more than two years ago recently gave birth to a normal calf at the USDA's research farm at Beltsville, Md. Agricultural Research Service scientists fed the cow a chemically-pure diet containing urea, a non-protein, organic compound made synthetically, as its only source of dietary nitrogen. Other ingredients in her diet were corn starch, corn sugar, wood pulp, corn oil, minerals and vitamins.

The test animal, which now weighs 930 pounds, has an identical twin sister that also recently gave birth to a heifer calf. This twin, now weighing 1,030 pounds, was raised on a diet of natural feeds. The twins were started on test when they were six months old. Each weighed 290 pounds at that time. The experiment, conducted by ARS animal husbandmen, is the first in a series designed to obtain information on the nutritional needs of ruminant animals for growth, reproduction and lactation.

Conservation Meeting Attracts Good Interest

There was a good attendance and much interest in the annual meeting of the Heppner Soil and Water Conservation district held last week at the Lexington Grange hall. Chairman Kenneth Turner reported 279 acres of contour strip cropping established this year; 693 acres of field strip cropping; 305 acres of wind strip cropping; 120,630 linear feet of diversions; 206 acres of land leveling; 26 stock ponds, seven farm ponds, 13 erosion control dams and seven springs developed; 15,330 linear feet of irrigation ditches, 9570 feet of channel change and clearance; three large irrigation structures and 207 acres of brush control work.

W. C. Rosewall was reelected to a 4-year term as district supervisor. Verle Kaiser, agronomist with the Soil Conservation Service, gave an interesting illustrated discussion on erosion control in wheat lands, stating that erosion is a major concern in 51 of 73 soil conservation districts where grain, fallow and stubble mulch are most commonly used.

He pointed out that no one practice is completely effective and it was important to keep in mind practices that would reduce or eliminate run-off by keeping soil surface in a condition to withstand this. Special emphasis was given on terraces, diversions and sod-waterways with an opportunity to use all three in conservation practice in Morrow county.

The effectiveness of terraces or diversions were illustrated by showing a full-length slope is open to 100% erosion but could be reduced to 25% erosion by cutting the slope in two with such a terrace. By cutting the slope, a third erosion could be reduced to 11%, and in one-fourth to 6%. Diversion ditches in the Heppner district in the past year cost approximately \$175 per mile for installation. The full text of Kaiser's talk is expected to be made available to all soil conservation district cooperators in the very near future.

Mapping Hazards Caused by Floods Getting Underway

Mapping of hazards to agricultural land posed by flood-damaged stream channels and river banks is being carried out on an emergency basis by the Oregon State University Cooperative Extension Service, in cooperation with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and the Soil Conservation Service, according to Gene M. Lear, associate director for the Extension Service.

The urgent necessity for an immediate inventory of log jams, gravel bars and slides that are obstructing stream flow, as well as damage to flood control structures such as dikes, revetments and levees is pointed up by the fact that spring run-off on some Eastern Oregon streams starts in late February.

Unless hazardous areas are identified and immediate steps taken to alleviate the emergency conditions, streams swollen from spring run-off could take an even greater toll of farmlands, which have already suffered extreme losses through erosion or silting in many areas.

The speed with which the damage mapping operation is being carried out is made possible only by the fact that all three agencies concerned have field staffs throughout the state, who can physically pinpoint the stream and river hazards, points out Lear. The Extension Service for example, maintains an office and staff member in each county of the state in cooperation with the county court. Each staff member is familiar with conditions in his own county.

Agriculture has already suffered an estimated \$75 million in damages from the December and January floods, said Lear. With rivers choked from debris deposited by the floods, and soil already soaked to capacity, spring run-off could send damages soaring higher, with an even greater loss to Oregon's second ranking industry.

Landowners who know of emergency stream or river conditions in their own area are urged to contact their county extension office immediately.

Workshop Studies Basics In County Tax Evaluation

With an average attendance of 33 persons, 39 different individuals attended some or all of the Tax Shortcourse which was completed on February 3. Keen interest was shown by all attending and many who attended indicated the 16-hour workshop was of extreme value to them in a complete understanding of the basics in county property taxes.

It was designed to acquaint people and develop methods of creating a better understanding among our people of property tax problems and procedures for levying and budgeting tax money and possible foreseeable demands and conditions for the future. The tax course featured a number of individuals versed in the various aspects of determining property taxes, assessment, who is responsible, how property is appraised and assessed, ratio studies and the responsibilities of the various agencies in the taxing program.

M. D. Thomas, extension agricultural economist, OSU participated in all sessions while Harry Logan, Robyn Godwin and Bob Fielder of the State Tax Commission and David Potter, county school superintendent, participated in sessions relating to responsibilities of the tax commission, farm property appraisal and assessments, farm land classification, responsibility of the Tax Commission and sources and use of public school funds.

An indication of the reception of property taxes was given when a survey on "What Do You Think About Public Services and Taxes" was made with the group at the beginning of the shortcourse. Summarizing the class majorities it was found that most wanted the same public services at less cost, although in close second was more and/or better services at the same cost. Most all found that gasoline and miscellaneous sales tax were easiest to pay, although a few found Federal and State income taxes easier. Most all were agreed that property tax was most difficult to pay, but many indicated Federal income Tax was "tough" also.

In a question which asked if funds were not available and could not be obtained to maintain present local and state services, which would you reduce or eliminate, 17 said they would reduce education; 13 law

administration and enforcement, 10 public health, 12 recreation, 15 roads and highways, 18 welfare. On the other hand, three would eliminate education, four would eliminate law administration, five health, seven recreation, and two welfare.

A cross section of the thinking of these people on taxes was indicated in the answer of a question, "If more taxes were unavoidable, what would be your preference?" Twenty indicated a sales tax, and nine higher income taxes.

Another question, "Do you favor the use of more or less Federal funds, enrollees indicated less for education, less for welfare, less for highways, less for health, some for job training, less for urban and rural renewal, less for national defense, less for foreign assistance, less for law administration and enforcement, less for housing.

In another question, "Do you favor the use of more or less state and local funds, 16 wished more state funds would be used, 15 less local funds; in welfare, most asked that less state funds be used, also less local funds; in law enforcement, less state funds and the same local funds; in case of health, less state funds, less local funds; roads and streets, more state funds, more local funds; fire protection, less state funds, more local funds; and special services to the city and county, more state funds, less local funds.

The tax shortcourse was a result of planning from a steering committee who set up the program for the four-day sessions. Members of the steering committee were Paul Tews, Don McElligott, and Louis Carlson, Ione; Tad Miller, Paul Hisler, Heppner; and Norman Nelson, Lexington. Copies of the mimeographed materials which were used as a basis for the shortcourse in discussing subjects of the eight sessions are available at the extension office.



Blackhorse 4-H Club Meets at Robinsons

The February meeting of the Blackhorse 4-H Livestock club was held at the Don Robinson home on Sunday, February 7, with all members, except two, present.

A committee reported on several titles of books we could buy for the Esther Kirmis bookshelf at the library. After discussion, it was decided to let the committee choose which book to get. Don Robinson gave a talk on beef breeding projects. After

some recreation, Mrs. Robinson served refreshments of Valentine cake, Jell-O, punch and cocoa.

—Michelle Miller, reporter



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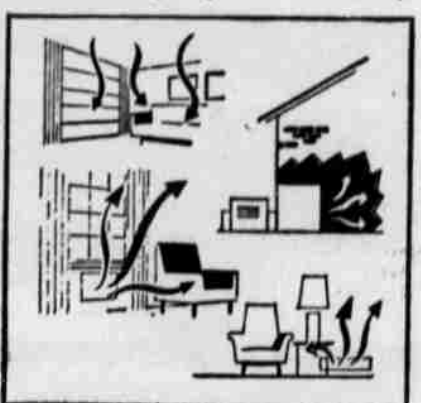


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