

# FARM

## Research Results Reported At Beef Cattle Field Day

Range and cropland improvements, plus improved livestock management can add up to three times the beef output on a given land area, an Oregon State University researcher revealed recently.

W. A. Sawyer, superintendent of the Squaw Butte Experiment Station, reported to more than 200 ranchers and beef cattle industry personnel attending the station's annual field day.

"Such practice as seeding range to crested wheatgrass, spraying to control sagebrush, use of feed supplements, and fertilizing to boost meadow hay yields have more than tripled saleable beef production on the Station during the past 15 years with no increase in land area," Sawyer said.

R. J. Raleigh, OSU animal nutritionist, reported that supplementing cattle on the range can provide ranchers a good return. "Our studies," he said, "show that with supplemental feeding of barley and cottonseed meal, yearling steers can be brought to acceptable slaughter grade right on the range for total feed costs of less than 9¢ per pound."

Results of a fall calving program, now being studied at the Station, were discussed by H. A. Turner, assistant animal scientist. "Fall calving," he said, "looks extremely promising for ranchers. Half of the Station herd is now on this program, and we have found that the higher weaning weights of fall calves more than pay for the extra feed required."

Raleigh also discussed the relative merits of alfalfa and meadow hay, and indicated that alfalfa hay appears to have some advantages—particularly with animals under production pressure. "However," he noted, "alfalfa can cause severe bloat problems. And although a sure way to prevent bloating has not yet been developed, we have found that it helps greatly to make sure that animals have a good supply of feed available at all times."

During the field day, ranchers also toured Section 5, wintering quarters for the Station's experimental beef herd. Among the topics discussed by OSU researchers during the tour were: creep feed for fall calves; protein and energy requirements for fall-calving cows; the relative value of grain and hay in relation to size of animal; the results of several digestibility studies; and the use of biuret and urea to replace protein in the growing ration.

Ranchers can obtain a detailed report on much of the research now in progress at the Squaw Butte Station from the Station headquarters in Burns.

## Forest Service Prepares to Sell Additional Timber

Pacific Northwest Region National Forests will sell an additional 410 million board feet of timber in the next 14 months, if Congress approves money for expanded timber harvest on federal lands.

Regional Forester Charles A. Connaughton said the expanded program will be launched as soon as there is reasonable indication Congress will approve supplemental funds to process and administer timber sales over and above regular programs.

The White House has announced that President Nixon is asking Congress for sufficient money to cut an additional 1.1 billion board feet of timber from federal lands during the next 15 months in a move to increase timber supplies and ease rising lumber prices. Agriculture Secretary Clifford Hardin said the bulk of 910 million board feet additional cut assigned to the Forest Service would come from the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regions.

National Forests in Oregon and Washington would be called upon to sell an additional 64 million board feet by the end of Fiscal Year 1969 (June 30), and an additional 346 million board feet in Fiscal Year 1970, Regional Forester Connaughton reported. Additional sales would largely involve salvage and thinning sales. The expanded sale program would affect all National Forests in the Region, except the Siuslaw National Forest, where the regular timber sale program already includes salvage and thinning sales.

Quotas are being assigned to the National Forests, with the reservation that necessary additional money and manpower will be forthcoming, Connaughton said. Quota for the Umatilla National Forest for the balance of 1969 is 5,800,000 board feet, and for 1970, 26,000,000 board feet.

## Higher Meat Price, Stabilized Wheat Seen This Year

Higher meat prices and stabilized prices for wheat products can be expected this year, says S. C. Marks, Oregon State University Extension economist.

In general, Marks says, cattle ranchers will continue to get better prices than they did last year and meat will be costlier for both the processor and the housewife.

But he expects the lower wheat prices will help stabilize the cost of bread.

He says that meat animals will continue to trade well because of the strong demand for meat at the supermarket. And there is only a slight possibility of some respite from the higher meat prices later this spring as farmers market seasonally more cattle but fewer hogs.

Beef Demand Off

Beef steaks and roasts are short of the strong demand even though the nation's farmers have more beef cattle than ever before. But Oregon is producing less beef, due to last year's severe drought, he noted. Oregon's cattle population dropped slightly last year after holding stable during the preceding two years. The state's cattle population was estimated at 1,577,000 head. There was a one per cent decrease in beef cattle and a three per cent drop in dairy cattle.

Sheep and lambs are scarce in Oregon this year, Marks points out in the circular because their number has been declining steadily during the past 38 years. Lambs are so scarce that prices of Oregon slaughter and feeder lambs now are higher than at any time since 1951. The local market situation was aggravated in Oregon by the heavy losses of lambs during January's heavy snowfall. Nearly 38,000 sheep and lambs died from exposure and starvation, it is estimated. Stock sheep now number only 483,000 head. This is a 99-year low and 3 per cent less than a year ago. Stock sheep in the United States are more scarce now than at any previous time since records were started 102 years ago.

Pork to be Plentiful

Hog prices usually decline from late winter to mid-spring, Marks said, but this year at least appears to be an exception, despite the fact farmers are sending 4 to 5 per cent more hogs to packing plants this year. However, if farmers continue to increase hog production as they have each year since 1965 pork will become increasingly more plentiful this fall.

If this happens and hog-feed price ratios become less favorable, there may be only a small increase in the market supply of hogs a year from now.

Wheat surpluses are building up again, Marks says, thanks to the three consecutive record world bread grain crops. The increased production exceeds effective demand and exporting countries have engaged in another wheat price war. Current cash wheat prices are 4 to 5 cents below the minimum specified in the International Grains Arrangement that went into effect last July.

Northwest growers will harvest less wheat acreage this year, Marks said, following the national trend. But this will not solve the wheat export problem unless foreign wheat output is brought into balance with effective demand.

Copies of the Outlook circular are available at County Extension offices.

## Packwood Sponsors Irrigation Bill

Senator Bob Packwood has announced co-sponsorship of a bill which will change a 67-year-old law "that is out of step with the times."

The bill, Packwood said, would increase from 160 to 640, the number of acres for which a farmer may obtain irrigation water under a reclamation law passed in 1902.

"The 160-acre limitation is unrealistic, uneconomic, unjust and obsolete today," Packwood said. "The original 160-acre limitation was enacted 67 years ago in an apparent effort to follow the philosophy of the Homestead Act. That Act was designed to encourage family settlement on public lands."

"But times have changed dramatically since then. In fact, the acreage limitation which was intended to provide certain benefits for the so-called family size farm is now having just the opposite effect in many cases. Today it forces individual farmers to engage in limited operations which, in the world of today's modern agriculture are inefficient and uneconomic, perpetuate subsistence farming, and impede businesslike growth."

"Because of the heavy need for capital investment for costly machinery and the increased costs of farm labor, the cost per acre of operating a farm unit of 160 acres is much higher than for larger units."

"The result is that the costs to the small farmer are higher, and he, in turn must pass along these increases to the consumer."

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## Equation Predicts Beef Cutability Near Actual Yield

A new, more precise equation for predicting the "cutability" of beef carcasses has been worked out by researchers at the Oregon State University meat science laboratory.

W. H. Kennick reports that the equation will predict within only 2.3 per cent the actual yield of trimmed retail cuts from 95 out of 100 beef carcasses. Prediction methods presently in use come within about 5 per cent of actual yield.

Among other things, the new equation will help the beef cattle industry produce animals with carcasses of superior cutability.

"This is beneficial all the way from the cattle ranch to the dining table," Kennick points out. "It not only costs more to produce and market a 'wastey' animal. It also costs more to purchase the retail cuts such as an animal yield."

In most cases, the beef carcasses used to develop present prediction methods were quite variable in weight and finish. "However," Kennick notes, "it seemed likely that the influence of various carcass characteristics upon cutability would be different with more uniform groups of cattle, such as are being marketed today."

To work out the new equation, the OSU researchers used 44 highly uniform steers that had been finished out to an average slaughter weight of 1,050 pounds. Following slaughter and proper aging, the left side of each carcass was cut into trimmed retail cuts.

Kennick explains, "The information obtained on 18 major variables of each steer—for instance cold carcass weight, fat thickness and rib-eye area—was then fed into a computer. Next, what is known as a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was run on all this information."

In this type of analysis, the computer chooses the variable with the greatest amount of influence on what is to be predicted and develops an equation based on that variable.

Then, in succession, each progressively less influential variable is considered, until all the variables are accounted for. "Without the computer," Kennick notes, "it would have been virtually impossible to make the many millions of calculations involved in developing the equation."

After studying the results of this analysis, the OSU researchers chose six variables which would be the easiest and most practical to obtain in a typical carcass evaluation. These included cold carcass weight, conformation score, rib-eye area, fat thickness, round weight and flank weight. From a further computer analysis of these variables, the new cutability equation was achieved.

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## CROP-WEATHER SUMMARY

Morrow County

(For week ending April 25, 1969)

Soil moisture supply adequate. Plowing for summer fallow 50% completed. Spotty growth in grain in some areas but outlook generally favorable. Calving and lambing nearly completed. Most livestock turned out. Some annual grasses heading. Perennial grasses progressing. Stock water excellent.

Jack Melland traveled to La Grande early this week for meetings on Monday and Tuesday with the Oregon State Game Commission.

## Meeting Slated By Recovery, Inc.

The public is invited to attend a Recovery, Inc., Demonstration Panel on Saturday, May 3, at 7 p.m., to be held in the parish hall of St. Mary's Church, 800 S. E. Court, Pendleton.

Recovery, Inc., is a non-profit organization which offers a proven system of self-help aftercare to prevent chronicity in nervous patients and relapses in former mental patients.

The national organization of Recovery, Inc., is in its 32nd year and, at present, there are 17 groups throughout the state of Oregon.

The Pendleton group was formed in January of this year and meets each Tuesday at the Pendleton Neighborhood Center at S. W. 5th & Dorion. For more information write Recovery, Inc., 316 N. W. 7th, Pendleton, or call Joan Pfaff 276-0829.

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## Prices of Cattle Moving Upward

At the beginning of 1969, it was predicted that prices of cattle would continue about the same as the year previous. What this prediction meant to the producer was again, another year of little or no profit. However, the "prophecy of no profit" were, thank goodness, in error. Prices of cattle in Oregon and throughout the nation continued to move upward starting in February and as of April 7, Chicago steer price was topping out at \$35, the highest price in the cattle business since the early 1950's.

Commenting on the current market trend, Denny Jones, Oregon Cattlemen's Association president, "Today's cattle price is very heartening to many producers who have been losing money on their operation for well over a decade. The consumer should understand that today's beef prices are not high. They reflect a proper and well adjusted profit range for the cattle producer and feeder. It's about time that those of us in the cattle business start realizing a fair profit margin for a commodity so essential and so much in demand for the consuming public, as is beef."

The OCA indicated that one of the reasons the market is being pushed upward is the growing scarcity of replacements and the realization that the recent hard winter has resulted in a high feeder death loss as well as losses in cattle weights, which will be hard to regain. However, all indications are that the beef boom, in current high prices and consumer demand, will continue.

## Light Wheat Crop Forecast in Valley, May Cut State Yield

An Oregon winter wheat crop of 25,542,000 bushels is forecast as of April 1, according to the Oregon Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. A crop this size compares with 28,706,000 bushels of winter wheat produced in 1967. Acreage seeded last fall was 21 percent below a year earlier.

Moisture conditions are good throughout the state. Winter loss has been at a minimum in eastern areas. However stands are only fair in many Willamette Valley areas, due in part to excess winter moisture. Some re-seeding in this section has been necessary. Development was retarded earlier, but recent warm temperatures have stimulated growth.

This April 1 forecast is based on grower reports on the condition of the crop as of that date. Condition was reported at 91, 4 points above April 1 last year. The highest condition was reported from eastern Oregon counties and the lowest from Willamette Valley areas.

The winter wheat crop in the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington and Idaho) is forecast at 158,558,000 bushels, compared with 180,446,000 bushels in 1968.

The U. S. winter wheat crop is forecast at 1,139,825,000 bushels, down 7 percent from the 1,228,638,000 produced in 1968. Kansas, with an increase of 28,375,000 bushels over 1968, is the only "major" wheat state with an increase in production forecast this year.

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