

Krebs Chosen Livestock Men of the Year

TV has for one of its favorite programs "Family Affairs". Morrow County is blessed with a goodly number of operations that are family affairs. Among them is Krebs Bros Inc., which were named last week as Morrow County's 1970 Livestock Grower of the Year.

There is a long history in Morrow County now into the 4th generation of raising sheep, hay, cattle and grain.

It started when George U. Krebs who had a dairy ranch in Troutdale came to Morrow County in 1913. He settled on the Gorley Ranch on Skinner Creek. He moved his family up in March, 1914. His family included Margaret Hurst, now of Arlington and Lena Sonnerfeldt, now of Portland. The three sons, George, John and Henry tell of their first night in Morrow County, spent in a livestock car at Heppner Jet. Sharing the car with them was a team of horses and a milk cow.

The family moved to lower Willow Creek in April, 1919 when they bought the 3600 acre ranch at Cecil. This was a half interest purchased from Art Minor who was at that time one

of the bigger land owners in Morrow County.

It was initially a hay ranch. Alfalfa grew shoulder high with flood irrigation, three cuttings if they had enough water. Haying operations required a crew of 9 or 10 in those days with horse power, dump rake, buck rake and stackers. The loaf-of-bread shaped stacks thickly dotted the bottom land up and down Willow Creek. Chow time, then as now, was 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. Mrs. Krebs held full sway in the ranch house, still standing. Her meals were cooked on a wood-burning stove.

In the earlier days the hay was sold to Minor and Thompson who wintered sheep in the area. Hay prices fluctuated as high as \$40 a ton depending on the severity of the winter.

Krebs Bros.
Krebs Bros. came into being in 1922 when George, John and Henry bought into the business and bought out Minor. Then began their sheep operations that have grown to become one of the biggest range operations in the state.

For the next seven years they trailed their ewes to the Blue Mountains for summer range on

privately owned land up Skinner Creek. Up in June and back in November. These were the days when the sheep dogs were valuable contributors to the sheep herders.

The Krebs' continued to add to their acreage with additional parcels of land.

Since 1929, they have taken the sheep to Montana for the summer. The range was excellent and cheap on the Blackfoot Indian reservation. The lamb market was in Chicago and St. Paul. From Montana, they were halfway to market. They continued to ship the ewes by rail to their summer range. The freight has gone up over 300 per cent from the \$60 a car cost in 1929.

Their Families

All three of the Krebs brothers had a son and daughter. George who married Roxy Van Scholack had Marion, now of Crescent City and Margaret, (Mrs. Don) Evans of Heppner. John married Mabel Semmerfeldt and they had Dick of Cecil and Donna Sherrell of Hermiston. Henry married Annie Lowe and they had Henry of Ione and Carleen (Mrs. Jim) West of Ione.

Young Henry has seen only

one summer in Oregon since 1929. When he came out of the Army he had never seen a combine operating in Morrow County. So that summer he came back for wheat harvest and worked for Marion Weatherford.

In 1941 the Krebs Bros. (still George, John and Henry) were in range trouble. They had leased 41 sections south of Boardman on what is now the bombing range. The government took the land for the bombing range. The Krebs' had 6000 sheep lambing and no range land. This was the year they bought the Smythe Ranch at Arlington.

People have marveled at the smooth working operations of the three brothers. Henry has said "If you work real hard and stay busy, you can't get mad at anybody". John says "If one guy's mad, the other one shuts up". These are two clues to the secret of their serene operations.

George moved to Portland in 1942 but continues as a partner. About 10 years later John and Henry both moved to Arlington. They both continue to drive out to the ranch daily. They check fences and cattle as they come

and go. They frequently stop to put cattle back inside the fence.

In 1948 Marion, Henry and Dick bought into the business to become the 3rd generation in the rapidly expanding ranch operations. In 1951, diversification continued when they plowed 2000 acres of range land and started growing wheat. From necessity, they added cattle that year, too. They custom harvest their wheat.

In 1952 the boys bought out Marion. He is now a shopping center developer and presently working on one in Medford.

The Krebs' have had sheep every year since 1922 except for a brief time in 1946-47. That winter they sold every sheep they owned. They couldn't stand it and within two weeks, they called Harold Cohn of Heppner and were back in the sheep business.

Sheep Shearing

Sheep shearing methods have changed from hand clippers to electric clippers. Shearing time used to be April and May. Now they shear in January. They like the earlier time because it makes it lots easier lambing and a cleaner wool clip. Because of the earlier shearing date,

thicker embs are used which leave more wool on the sheep.

The Krebs' raise a Rambouillet-Columbia cross with Suffolk bucks. They buy replacements from McCarty on Butter Creek.

Surprised

When Dick Krebs heard of their selection as Livestock Grower of the Year he voiced his surprise with "Did I understand you right?"

Krebs Bros. incorporated in 1967. Officers are Henry, president; Dick, vice president and John W., secretary and treasurer. Henry is in charge of the sheep and Dick the ranching and cattle.

Operations continue hay, sheep, wheat and cattle. They feed out most of their own hay. Sell the wheat. Expansion continues. They now own more land in Gilliam County, Oregon and Glacier county, Montana than they do in Morrow county.

Their lease on the Indian reservation in Montana is made for five years. The price per acre has risen from 15c an acre to 1.00 an acre. While their fat lambs still go east, they are sold on the ranch. They have scales at the ranch and the buyers come there.

Henry tells about the spring the Kootenai river flooded. The sheep were held more than 36 hours at Missoula and had to be taken off the train for feed and water. School was let out so the kids could see the biggest band of sheep that had ever gone through Missoula.

They will come out of Montana with between 5800 to 5900 sheep this fall. The sheep seem to anticipate when shipping time approaches. In the spring they will flock in front of the shipping chutes to go to Montana and soon with the first flurries of snow they'll crowd the chutes to come back to Willow Creek.

Horse Shoe Dot is their brand. The sheep are branded with blue paint and the cattle the left shoulder.

Cattle
Right now they have about 175 head of cattle in the cow-calf operations. Their cattle will vary from 300 to 700 head. They buy calves in the fall, feed them through the winter and sell them in June.

They have drilled wells to

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KREBS FAMILY AFFAIR—here are members of the three generations of the Krebs' family who attended the Farm-City banquet Saturday night. Back row from left: Mrs. Henry Krebs, Henry Krebs, their daughter and son, Jane Krebs and Clint Krebs. Jeri Krebs stands next to her dad, Dick Krebs. 2nd row from left: Henry Krebs, Mrs. Henry Krebs, John Krebs, Mrs. John Krebs, Mrs. Henry (Evelyn) Krebs and Donna Sherrell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Krebs.



THE LUSH alfalfa field is scalloped on one side by Willow Creek. The windrows follow the same pattern for this picture at haying time.



HENRY KREBS holds the trophy in this picture. From left around him are members of his family who attended the Saturday night affair. Jane and Clint Krebs, Mrs. Henry (Dorothy) Krebs, Henry Krebs and Mrs. Henry Krebs.



JOHN KREBS, 2nd generation of the Krebs ranch, holds the trophy presented Saturday night. From left around him are other members of his family at the affair: Mrs. Dick (Evelyn) Krebs, Mrs. Richard (Donna) Sherrell, Dick Krebs, Jeri Krebs, Mrs. John Krebs.



THE THREE KREBS BROS. whose father first bought the land at Cecil. This picture was taken in 1950 when they were all in Montana. John, George and Henry. John and Henry live in Arlington and George lives in Portland.



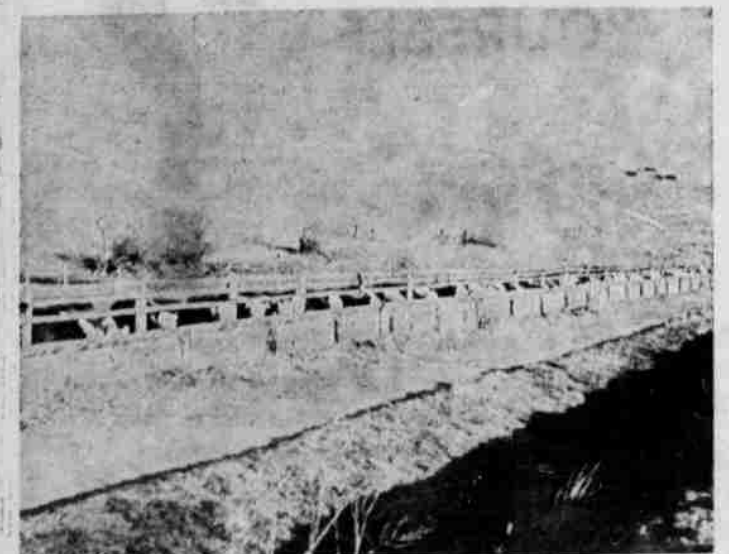
ASK ANY RANCHER: More business is transacted over the bed of a pickup than any other place! Here Dick and Henry Krebs have a conference. Rowdy, the Australian shepherd, is Dick's dog.



LIVESTOCK GROWERS OF THE YEAR were Krebs Bros. Henry Krebs and Dick Krebs stand before the Old Oregon Trail sign that is erected in front of the ranch house.



THE OLD OREGON TRAIL as it comes down into Willow Creek on the Krebs ranch. Following the long haul from Wells Spring, the green the pioneers saw when they came to Willow Creek must have been a welcome sight. The county road follows the old Oregon Trail as it leaves the other side of Willow Creek.



WINTER FEEDING Willow Creek style shows a small portion of the feed troughs.