

# --- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE GOWLEY  
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Barbershop comments should be taken always, as a friend of ours says — "with a large box of salt." And we like to hear barber shop talk regardless of the truth of it.

One such comment was, "If a fellow wants to really get ahead he should go to Alaska and get himself a homestead. Wouldn't pay for old fellows like us to do it though. Takes someone who is in his 20's. Yup, that's a young man's deal!"

We don't agree with that kind of talk. Life for an Alaskan farmer is plenty rugged and requires the strength and toughness noted in the young. However, such pioneering isn't only for the young.

Recently, we finished reading a story in "The Farm," a quarterly publication on agriculture. This article was about a young stockman from Nebraska and his family's experiences in founding a stock ranch near the Mt. McKinley National park and not far from Nenana.

The young ex-Nebraskan figured that to become a successful beef grower he had to develop a breed of cattle particularly suited to stand both Alaska's 40 below zero weather and the swarms of large, fierce biting mosquitoes. He purchased from South Dakota 54 head, 11 purebred Scotch Highlanders, and 43 crosses, Highlander-Longhorn, Highlander-Herford and Highlander-Shorthorn.

The herd made it through the winter without severe losses and most of it survived the fatal attraction of the railroad tracks, bone-freezing winters and hungry Eskimos. The purebred Scotch Highlanders seemed best suited to Alaska. They were good foragers and had long shaggy hair to withstand both the cold and mosquitoes.

The young farmer quickly discovered his stock burned up a lot of hay in fighting the 40 below cold. During such cold weather he had to provide four times as much hay as he would during milder weather. He also discovered those feeding on wild cranberry and other native plants got their vitamins and did better. Oat-vetch-pea hay provided the best nourishment during the winter when the stock couldn't reach the wild plant life, the Alaskan discovered.

To pull through financially, the young rancher's wife had to take a job in Fairbanks. The young farmer advises anyone interested in this frontier farming to give Alaska a trial before definitely deciding to farm there.

This Alaskan rancher has a 20-year lease. He must run 50 cattle the first year, 150 the third year and 500 the fifth year. Lease costs the first three years will cost him \$400 total. After that he will be charged 60 cents a head a year. Under the lease terms, he can grow anything on the land, but can only beef off of it. According to the revised homestead regulations no homesteads can be established on leased land. Also, he cannot purchase land within the lease, and cannot homestead himself. Although Alaska only produces about 5 per cent of the food it eats, many Alaskans believe that the new state can be self-sustaining only in beef.

This pioneering isn't limited to Alaska nor to young men. The other day we dug out a clipping of a feature story we had written some time ago. This was about how a 60-year-old man and his family dug and scraped a farm out of rugged timber country in the Pacific Northwest. When he was through he had a total of 716 acres of farm land and was grazing an average of 300 head of "feeder" cattle.

To do it he and his two sons put in from 14 to 16 hours a day. They started in 1947 with 320 acres. Three bulldozers running from dawn to dark cleared 160 acres that first year of 1947. Approximately 120 acres produced flax that first year.

The farmer and his wife lived in a little granary shack then. In the fall of the same year they moved into the ramshackle farm house which they bought with the land. They redecorated it inside and out and moved in. Gradually more land was added.

This pioneering rancher firmly believes in the basic practices of crop rotation and proper fertilization. His thick stand of clover is proof of his practices. Those in the business who know, say that without this practice the clover will completely disappear in 10 years — unless phosphorous is added.

This spry old farmer was housing his cattle in open sided sheds made of peeled poles covered with aluminum when last visited.

"I know a man gets pretty lazy when he gets old like me, then he just has to sit down and figure a little before he starts workin'. Sometimes it saves a lot of work. Like I peeled all of those poles by using my tractor. Took me just an hour," the veteran farmer said.

To feed the wintering cattle two 600 ton capacity ensilage pits were used. Corn ensilage was preferred. To supplement silage, cattle were fed two pounds per head a day of supplement "G," which is a mixed feed containing dehydrated grass, molasses and minerals.

Besides the beef, from 90-100 acres of cannery corn was raised on the ranch, plus 30 acres of field corn. This produced about 10 tons of corn an acre.

Believing that diversification of crops also pays off, the veteran farmer had a 200 acre tree farm, also. The trees were thinned according to recommendations of the forester attached to the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. The far-seeing farmer believes this is the future of forestry.

This farmer had many rich accomplishments in his past but never liked to talk of it.

"Don't think about the past—sign's a man is getting old," the veteran farmer remarked, a grin creasing his ruddy,

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# Farm & Garden

weather beaten face. "It's the future that interests me!"

The lanky, plain-spoken old political warrior believes everyone can afford to devote a little time to the public service. He was a county commissioner for six years.

"You know, I think that's one reason why I liked this place so well when I bought it. Then, the only way you could get here was that shaky ferry across the river. Mighty peaceful after hearing all those complaints in the courthouse. 'Course now they have the new highway through. Gave 16 acres of my land for it."

This man had been representative in the state legislature, also. His aim was to put government on a business basis.

"Farming? It's a big gamble. Never paid much attention to betting on the horses. Why should I, when I can get my money's worth of worrying out of my crops. Bet on a horse and your worryin' is all over in a half hour. With farmin' it's different."

All of which is the long way around the barn to say that such pioneering requires a rugged constitution, shrewdness, inventiveness and lots of energy. And these qualities don't seem to be limited to any particular age bracket.

Late Monday Gov.-elect Mark Hatfield appointed Frank McKennon, director of the division of plant industry, as state director of agriculture. McKennon is a veteran of 23 years with the department.

Agricultural experts and political observers inform us this was a wise choice. McKennon is said to be well-liked by all segments of agriculture and by many of those who have had business with him. And what's even more important, observers predict he will represent all parts of the state's agricultural industry impartially.

McKennon's experience in the division of plant industry, a part of the state department of agriculture will give him the broad foundation of both technical and departmental knowledge needed. Robert Steward, whom he replaces, resigned effective Jan. 12. Steward was only in office for 1½ years much to the distress of the industry. Should this position be removed from political appointment? That's a question plenty of informed, misinformed and uninformed people will be kicking around during the new year. However, does anyone know of a bad state director of agriculture placed in office under the present system?

## State Turkey Men To Attend Meet

Corvallis—A delegation of 50 Oregon turkey producers, representing the Oregon Turkey Improvement association, will leave Portland Jan. 2 to attend the National Turkey Federation convention, Jan. 4 to 8 in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Oregon turkey association is taking along a booth to be exhibited at the convention, reports N. L. Bennion, Oregon State College extension poultryman and secretary of the association. The booth, with a theme, "Oregon, the Home of Foundation Breeding Stock," will explain the state's contribution to improving the turkey industry in the nation, he said.

Oregon's \$10 million-a-year turkey industry is famous for its production of broad-breasted bronze turkey eggs and poults, Bennion pointed out. About one-half of the eggs and poults produced in the state each year are sold to turkey growers over the nation.

Eight of the state's turkey producers are also taking along booths to set up at the national convention, Bennion added. These booths will feature exhibits of both live and dressed turkeys.

## Dairy Legislation Set For Talks

Corvallis — Legislation affecting Oregon's milk supply and economics and management of dairy operations will highlight the 65th annual meeting of the Oregon Dairymen's association, Jan. 7 and 8, at Gearhart.

Secretary Harold Ewalt, Oregon State college extension dairy specialist, says the meeting at the Gearhart hotel will run the gamut of problems facing dairymen including recommended changes in agricultural laws slated to go before the next legislature. Dairy sanitary laws, proposed reorganization of the state department of agriculture, and clarification of the laws on retail milk sales by "dairy breed names," will be investigated.

Oregon's milk pricing system and some resulting problems will be reviewed by Dr. S. Kent Christensen, OSC agricultural economist, who has recently completed several studies of the state's dairy business including comparative costs of serving milk and coffee in Oregon restaurants.

D. O. Noorlander, University of California veterinary department, will discuss mastitis control and proper use of milking machines. Other topics include Oregon's water resources for irrigation by Arthur S. King, OSC soil conservation specialist.

## 4-H Club News

**Happy Stitchers Sewing Club**  
The meeting of the Happy Stitchers on Dec. 30 was held in the home of our leader, Mrs. Arthur Becker. It lasted all day. All the members were present but one.

We finished our needle cases. Then we made wrist pouches, after that we had lunch.

After lunch we learned how to fold and store sweaters. We learned the parts of the sewing machine. Then we took a piece of tablet paper and without thread learned to sew straight lines. We were served cup cakes at the end of our meeting. Then our assistant leader, Mrs. Van Calhoun, took us home.

Cherylce Becker, Reporter.

**Stitch-in-Time Club**  
The Stitch-in-Time club met at Marcy Miller's and Molly Ely's houses to finish the needle cases. Around the outside of the needle cases, we put the blanket stitch. The next meeting will be held at Judy Dunlevy's to make pin cushions.

Joan Eslinger, Reporter.

**Sam's Thumpers**  
A bake sale will be held by Sam's Thumpers 4-H rabbit club some time in January or February at the Valley Locker, it was decided during a recent meeting.

Nancy Day will give a demonstration on how to feed rabbits during the next club meeting at the home of Daryl Zapell on Jan. 4.

Nancy Day, Reporter.



**EXAMINE GRASS SILAGE**—Carl "Jake" Jacobson, feed salesman for this area, left, and Bill Hubbard, Eagle Point, are shown analyzing some grass silage on the Hubbard farm. Jacobson and Nat Etzel, Eagle Point vocational agriculture instructor, have sampled about 35 samples of local and imported hay and local grown silage. These samples plus the analysis for moisture, crude protein, carotene and fiber will be presented at the fourth meeting of the winter adult course on livestock feeding at Eagle Point High school.

## How To Buy Best Hay Included In Course

How to get the best hay for the money is one of the things farmers will be taught while attending the winter adult course on livestock feeding starting Jan. 8 in the Eagle Point vocational agriculture building.

Class sessions start at 7:45 p.m. every Thursday. The fee for the 10-class sessions will include refreshments and a supplemental outline to be given of class notes later.

"Everyone buys hay on sight and we are going to try to make the farmers more conscious of analyzing hay that is purchased, especially since we import so much into this area," Etzel said.

Instructors for the course are Dr. Eugene Hanawalt, Central Point veterinarian; Dr. Keith Hockersmith, manager of the Grange Co-op, Central Point; Carl (Jake) Jacobson, General Mills, Inc., Medford; Earle Jossy, Jackson county agent, Medford; Paul Wilson, Albers Milling company, Medford; and Gene Winters, Jackson county agent, Medford.

**First Meeting Set**  
The first meeting, to be conducted by Hockersmith, will cover proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins. An explanation of what can be learned from the feed tags will be given also.

During the second and third meetings, Hockersmith will instruct on the use of feeding tables in Morrison's books on "Feeds and Feeding." These sessions will cover also practical purposes

in youth activities. More plans are to be made at the next regular meeting.

## Slug Control Studied At Oregon State College

Corvallis — Slugs, the repulsive and damaging pest of a wide variety of garden, truck and field crops in western Oregon, had a "big year" in 1958 because of favorable weather conditions in June, but a new control project at Oregon State college is aimed at reducing their numbers and damage in years ahead.

As part of the project, OSC entomologists are trying for the first time to raise slugs on an extensive scale inside the laboratory.

Raising the slugs "in captivity" will assure a constant supply of the pests throughout the year for chemical control tests and will also provide new information about the little-known biology of the pest.

Metoldehyde baits, dusts and sprays are now used for control of adult slugs, but other controls at other stages of development—such as in the egg stage—may be more effective, the OSC scientists believe.

Various new chemicals are being screened in an effort to find something that will be less expensive, longer lasting and even more effective than metoldehyde.

Cooperating on the project in the entomology department are Leon C. Terriere, H. H.

## Lodge To Be Dedicated At Bachelor Butte

Bend—UP—The James Egan Memorial lodge at the Bachelor Butte ski resort will be dedicated Saturday.

The lodge was named in honor of the man who was Deschutes National Forest supervisor for two years and was instrumental in establishing the ski area. His widow, now living in New Mexico, will be here for the ceremonies.

## JEWISH HISTORIAN DIES

New York (UPI)—Dr. Adolf Kohler, 79, widely-known rabbi and Jewish historian, died Monday night after a heart attack.

## EX-CONGRESSMAN DIES

Glendale, Calif. —(UPI)—Funeral services were held Monday for Thomas F. Ford, 85, Democratic congressman from 1932-42.

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