

--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Weather's turning warmer, people are moving out their lawn furniture, getting their lawns cut and catching up on their spring gardening chores. It used to be this was the time of year that people moved out their porch furniture. Whatever happened to that formerly important part of the house — the front porch?

The porch or veranda was the center of family life not so long ago — particularly in the rural communities and on the farm. Then people used to sit in their porch wicker chairs, porch swings or rustic cane-bottom chairs and watch people strolling by. That was when the Sunday or evening walk, like the Sunday drive was much more of a custom than it is now.

Then a quick glance at the front porch of a home would reveal whether the family was "at home" and the neighbors or visitors would come calling. A tall, cold glass of lemonade or something stronger was always handy — or perhaps a freezer full of "cranked up" ice-cream. New people in town, the minister's sermon, recent travels of friends plus gossip always provided lively conversation.

During one such front porch scene a small boy used to listen with rapt attention as his grandmother and an old crony from the D.A.R. thumped their canes on the porch floor punctuating their remarks about the "Barn Broomer." ("Barn" was considered approaching bad language for ladies in those days.)

One old neighbor lady from a quarter mile away had an uncanny sense, almost approaching witchcraft, when it came to arriving precisely when an apple pie would be lifted from the oven, or a plate of fudge would be just spread on a plate to cool. The same small boy could imagine her sticking her head out of her window, her long nose twitching to pick up an odor of something good cooking, then in his mind's eye see her attired in her long black coat and floppy brimmed hat come snuffling and shuffling up the hill.

The front porch on the farmhouse probably was enclosed to make a farmer's study so he could keep up with all the government forms which have been piling up on him in increasing numbers in recent years, not to mention multitudinous records needed for taxes and unemployment compensation for the hired hand or hands. The new type of "budget home" built to keep up with the great population increase quickly lopped off the porch in house plans. So, except for a few old homes the front porch is now an almost forgotten part of the American home scene.

Speaking of taxes, we heard a county official remark recently, "The biggest bargain we ever get is taxes." Whether you agree with this or not, you will have to admit that few farmers really make any effort to understand how the appraisals of their properties are made. County Assessor Ray Schumacher has attended recently a school in Corvallis along with County Commissioner Chester Wendt and a few members of the assessor's office. That's how the subject came up.

When an appraisal is made of farm land four chief factors are considered — soil types and ratings, topography, improvements and buildings. Land classes or ratings include eight, Class I tillable land, Class II tillable land, Class III tillable land, Class IV tillable land, Class V marginal land, Class VI non-tillable land, Class VII non-tillable land and Class VIII non-tillable land.

Various factors are noted in each rating and include soil types to be considered in estimating the taxable value of the land. These factors may refer to the lay of land, drainage, depth of soil types of crops produced and many other details too numerous to mention here.

For the appraisers marginal land is considered that land which is generally suited to grazing or forestry use with "very little limitation." However, on some years a crop may be grown. There are three classes of non-tillable land — Classes VI, VII, and VIII.

The first class is not suited to cultivation though it may make good pasture with careful management through limited use. It will be susceptible to erosion or unprotected slopes. Class VII is not suited to cultivation though it is suited to grass with very careful management or suited for trees. This is shallow soil and on relatively steep slopes. It would be extremely susceptible to erosion. The majority of Jackson county's timber and range land is in this classification. Class VIII non-tillable land would not be suited to cultivation, grazing or forestry. However it could be used for wild life refuge or for watershed protection.

We asked if the appraisers knew enough about livestock to fairly appraise their value and were told that only the average value is figured. Naturally, most farmers report their livestock as being of grade quality or below grade. Apparently, many farmers are confused on how their property should be fairly appraised. Many experts are. However, farmland is appraised on what it is capable of producing and this related to its actual worth, not what it is producing at the market value.

A series of hearings in Portland before the Interstate Commerce Commission are expected to end today (Wednesday) on additional reductions in freight rates for shipment of meat products from the midwest to the Pacific Coast. Livestock men here as well as the meat packers and processors are watching with interest.

Head of a Tacoma meat packing company said Monday the rate war between rail and motor carriers has made it impossible to bring in live hogs to the Pacific Northwest, slaughter them and remain competitive with the decreased meats shipped in at lower rates from the midwest. He and other packers of the region want shipment of both live and dressed meat on an equitable basis.

Meat cutters and butchers complain that it has affected employment of their union members. In the state of Washington alone employment is slaughter and meat packing has dropped 15 per cent between 1935 and the end of 1935. Both the union people and the packing and slaughterhouse men want the ICC to step in and halt the rate cutting war between truck and railroad transportation.

On the other hand Harold J. Turner, manager of the Oregon Railroad association, testified Monday that all the railroads have competitive rates that will give them a chance to carry meat. Railroad reports show that the 1935 movement of fresh meat to the west coast by railroad has dropped from 10 to 20 per cent of what it had been a year earlier.

Erysipelas Discovered In Oregon Poultry

Salem — Twenty-five cases of erysipelas in poultry and another 10 cases in swine show up on the February diagnoses of diseases in Oregon livestock reported to the state department of agriculture.

Brucellosis testing that month disclosed 348 reactors in 12 herds, bringing the incidence in the first two months of this year to 617 cattle in 191 herds.

In sheep, many cases of ovine keratitis and of infectious keratitis were reported in cattle.

Cautions on Fertilization

Clifford B. Cordy, county horticultural agent, today cautioned pear growers on application of fertilizer.

Do not apply any fertilizer to orchards where blight was a problem last year until after the principal period of blight infection is past (early May), he warned. Fertilization does not increase the number of infections but it does favor a more rapid growth of blight cankers.

Also, do not apply any fertilizer to blocks where quick decline has been a problem,

Farm and Garden

Forage Plant Testing May Increase Range Land Value

By H. H. WHITE
Superintendent Southern Oregon Branch Experiment Station

Six years testing of a wide variety of forage plants under dryland conditions indicate that some will survive and increase the grazing value of many acres of low range lands which at present produce only low quality squirrel grass.

The search for forage plants adapted to these lands was initiated in 1932 under a cooperative agreement between the Southern Oregon branch Experiment station, the soil conservation districts and the extension services of Jackson and Josephine counties.

In the spring of 1933 — varieties and species of forage plants from many states and some foreign countries were planted on the experimental

farm west of Talent. The soil on which they were planted is a shallow phase of gravelly clay loam similar in many respects to some of the soils in the Camp White area north of Medford.

This area has received no irrigation since the summer of 1932. This was an endurance test to determine which, if any, of the varieties or species could survive the adverse condition and treatment given and yet produce sufficient amounts of forage to justify time and expense of seedling on low producing range lands.

Outstanding grasses include (1) tall wheat grass (Agropyron elongatum) which has done well in comparison with other grasses especially in the late summer; (2) intermediate

wheat grass (Agropyron intermedium) has maintained a good stand and fairly good production; (3) Alta fescue (Festuca elatior) was best with strong regrowth after clipping. Reeds Canary grass (Phalaris arundinacea), usually considered adapted to wet lands, made a good showing despite the very dry conditions.

A Harding grass (Phalaris tuberosa) strain from Australia produced heavy amounts of forage and merits further study. Broadleaf strains of birds-foot trefoil were more promising than any of the alfalfas or clovers. Subclover, white clover, and rose clover did not persist beyond the second year. Cicer milkvetch and flat pea produced heavy amounts of forage after the second year. Perennial burnet did well, produced an abundance of seed and volunteered readily.

In the spring of 1936 four additional tests were established on drylands, one on the Birdseye farm near Rogue River, one on the Dotts ranch at the foot of Sexton Mountain, one on the Waldron ranch near Cave Junction, and the fourth on the Ray Ryan ranch in Sams Valley. These sites were selected as being representative of a considerable area of similar lands. The Waldron and Ryan sites are very wet in the winter and exceedingly dry during the summer. Soils on the Waldron site have a low calcium content and a high magnesium content due to parent serpentine rock material on the hills above. Despite these adverse conditions some of the entries have survived and are making a good showing. Of course, they do not perform as well as would be expected on favorable soils under irrigation but they are much superior to the annual types of squirrel grasses presently growing on similar lands.

Soil fumigation and fumigation of nursery shipments have been tried, but so far a complete kill has not been achieved. Dr. Harold J. Jensen, OSC nematologist with the Oregon group at the three-state conference, said he considered soil fumigation excellent which kills 90 per cent of the nematodes.

On the Ryan ranch, clay abode soil of the climax series, the best performers have been Alta fescue, Sunol grass, timothy, meadow fescue, and Southern Oregon lotus.

On the Waldron trial at Cave Junction Reeds Canary grass has been outstanding with intermediate and amure wheatgrasses, Alta fescue, Harding grass and meadow foxtail showing up favorably.

On the Dotts ranch Sunol grass, Alta fescue, Reeds Canary, and Akarora orchard grass have the lead. Granger lotus has done well and alfalfa fairly well.

Results of these trials are encouraging. Based on their own observations some ranchers and stockmen already are seeding limited areas with grasses and legumes that look good to them in the test areas. This is good for it will give opportunity to observe results on more soil types and under a wider range of conditions.

The experiment station is now preparing for some rather extensive trials involving several of the grazing or creeping types of alfalfas. These trials will involve about 10 acres each and are to be grazed by cattle or sheep. Anyone in Jackson or Josephine County having open dryland which can be prepared for a seedbed and would like to cooperate in this kind of an undertaking should send a card or letter to H. H. White, Superintendent, Southern Oregon experiment station, Medford, Ore.

Washington — (UPI) — The Agriculture Department today picked broiler-fryers as the leader of its plentiful food list for May.

These young chickens are due to be so plentiful in May and so reasonable in price that the department's institute of home economics suggests them as the buy of the month for the main dish at the family table.

Washington — (UPI) — The Agriculture Department reported today turkey farm sales in 1935 of 77,000,000 birds weighing 1,316,000,000 pounds brought cash receipts of \$314 million.

The department said California retained its position as the leading turkey producing state with 13,600,000 turkeys raised.

Other heavy producing states, in order, were Minnesota, 10,500,000; Iowa, 6,800,000; Virginia, 6,500,000; Texas, 2,700,000; Ohio, 2,200,000; Missouri, 2,100,000; and Indiana, 2,000,000. These eight states accounted for 64 per cent of the turkeys raised in 1935.

Washington — (UPI) — The expanding broiler industry in the Southeast has benefited directly corn belt farmers and operators of barges on inland waterways, according to the Agriculture Department.

Broiler operators buy surplus corn from the corn belt and barges transport it.

Washington — (UPI) — The Agriculture Department said today monthly egg production throughout 1935 is likely to exceed 1934, even if hatchings this spring are reduced as much as 5 per cent from last spring.

Egg prices will continue below 1935 for some months, the department said, because of the large supplies in prospect.

Nematodes Stop Plant People, Meeting Called

Salem — Oregon and Washington plant officials and nurserymen are exploring with California officials some way of easing restrictions placed on shipments of Northwest fruit tree seedlings into California.

The problem stems from California's rejection of some seedling shipments because of nematodes, microscopic insect pests that live in the soil and in plant tissues. Growers, faced with possible rejections, hope some procedure can be worked out so they may continue to supply the needs of California orchardists. In the meantime, some of them are looking to other states for new market outlets.

California nurseries are operating under the same tight requirements made of other states, according to Frank McKennon, Oregon director of agriculture. He said three Northwest nurseries grow most of the fruit tree seedlings produced in the United States and are heavy shippers to California.

McKennon was instrumental in arranging a recent meeting of the Northwest group in Klamath Falls with California officials, who reported some California orchardists are being forced into new lands because of state development. In a move to protect these new lands, some county agricultural commissioners have instituted a close check of all seedling stock, regardless of origin. They have set up laboratories to process roots for nematode presence.

The Pacific Northwest presentation will be reported at a meeting in Sacramento April 14 called by the California Department of Agriculture at the request of California nurserymen.

California state officials and county agriculture commissioners have been making a fairly complete survey of the nematode situation there, but this was not completed at time of the Klamath Falls conference.

Soil fumigation and fumigation of nursery shipments have been tried, but so far a complete kill has not been achieved. Dr. Harold J. Jensen, OSC nematologist with the Oregon group at the three-state conference, said he considered soil fumigation excellent which kills 90 per cent of the nematodes.

Spray Suggested For Scab Control

Spray notices for controlling scab on fruit trees have been mailed out, according to Clifford B. Cordy, county horticultural agent.

An examination of leaves by Ian McSwan, plant pathologist, Oregon State college, has revealed that scab spores are being released, Cordy said. Samples of leaves from Jackson county trees had been sent to OSC by the county extension office.

The scab winters over in fallen leaves. These bodies mature and release spores in spring. Spores have been observed to be discharging last week end, but have not been doing so in full force, Cordy said. Those orchardists with scab trouble in the past are urged to obtain a spray notice from the county extension office.

Nails, wire and other bits of scrap metal are real killers when they find their way inside animals through forage.

Winter rains, muddy barnyards and pastures can mean "foot rot" for cows. Organisms causing foot rot in cattle live best in wet, muddy areas.

Extension service assistance to 11-million farm families set a new record in 1935.

One Hundred Years Fail To Slow Farm Production

Salem — Over 100 years of farming have not slowed down the productive ability of soils on Century Farms in Jackson, Linn and Multnomah counties.

This is the finding in soil analyses completed on sampling on farms in the first three of 15 counties which received "Century Farm" honors in the program originated last year by the Oregon Historical Society and the State Department of Agriculture.

Tests completed so far compare favorably with the average test results from all soil laboratory analyses completed in the two counties. Comparable soil types were sampled on the oldest and newest soils on the Century Farms. The program was suggested by the extension service and supervised by A. S. King, soil specialist.

The Jackson county analyses on four farms indicate signs of passing years but not age in terms of producing ability, King said. For example, on one farm the pH was reduced from 7.1 to 6.8; phosphorus from 106 to 38 lbs. per acre; potash from 375 to 335 pounds; organic matter up slightly from 2.67 per cent to 3 per cent. On another farm, the pH dropped from 6.9 to 6.5, available phosphorus

from \$23 to 50 pounds, available potash from \$92 to 265 pounds, and organic matter from 8.4 per cent to 1.17 per cent.

Isolation Said Best for Alfalfa Seed Varieties

Alfalfa depends on bees to pollinate its flowers. This crop can become mixed through cross pollination too, stated Gene Winters, Jackson county extension agent.

Bees are necessary for pollination in alfalfa if seed is desired, he said. These bees are not careful to stay on one variety and would just as soon carry pollen from a poor variety and put it on a good one. Good isolation is one method that we have used in Jackson County to keep our certified alfalfa clean, said Winters. Isolation, as used in certification, is the minimum distance a field must be from another crop that could cause mixing.

Different legumes may be grown in adjoining fields, providing they will not normally cross with each other. The key to the problem is that no two different varieties of the same species or type of crop can be grown side by side or next to a unfertilized field of the variety in question. Certified seed grown under planting requirements like this will be clean and pure as to variety.

Each certification standard shows the minimum distance that must be kept in mind if the producer wants his field accepted for certification.

One Seed Variety Area Winters indicated that Jackson County is practically a one seed variety area. This is desirable in certification. If the county stays this way, the problem of locating new seed producing fields is much easier.

Seed certification is designed to maintain purity of variety. Oregon seed growers must understand the planting requirements in order to produce good clean seed, Winters advised. The various phases of the seed certification program are directed by the Oregon State college extension service. Oregon county agents are certification authorities in their respective counties. Information on any phase of this program is available in the Jackson county agent's office.

The 60th anniversary of Vardhus fortress in the town of Vardø in northern Norway will be marked next summer by special ceremonies. The Norwegian town has another old landmark, a church, that was built in 1307.

Of the 69 mountains in the U. S. — exclusive of Alaska — that have altitudes of 14,000 feet or more, 54 are in the Colorado Rockies.

Commenting on the Jackson county results, King said the reduction in pH is a logical result of use, though all samples still indicate a favorable soil reaction for crop production. Phosphorus and potash tests indicate only ability of soils to supply these necessary plant nutrients. Some of the tests show a not unusual need for applications of phosphorus and potassium carrying fertilizers. Both are commonly added in good farming operations, even on soils freshly farmed. The reduction in organic matter would be expected and could account for part of the reduction in available phosphorus and potash.

Ten farms in Linn county show little indication of reduction in either a soil reaction, available phosphorus, available potash or organic matter. "Without much question," King says, "this is a result of the type of farming generally followed in Linn county the past 20 or more years — farming built around grass seed production. Grass seed was the major crop on seven of these 10 farms, grass pasture on another, grain-clover seed rotation on another and strawberries, in good soil building rotation, on the tenth.

Most of these farmers credited use of nitrogen fertilizer for increased yields. Many of the tests on the 10 farms indicate a need for lime, phosphorus and potash should the cropping system change from grass to crops of more critical soil fertility needs.

Reveals Age On 12 other Linn county farms, the analyses reveal signs of age, or that grass land farming is a true "fountain of youth" for the soil, King reports. Here contrasting samples reveal little significant change in soil reaction or available phosphorus and potash, and adequately maintained or increased organic matter. Grass for seed or pasture was the predominant crop on 10 of the 12 farms.

While these tests results are favorable from a depletion standpoint, they do not mean soils are bursting with fertility; samples on all of these 12 farms indicated need for lime applications; available phosphorus was critically low on two farms. Eleven of the 12 farmers reported higher yields today than when they started farming. Yield improvement was credited to drainage, better equipment, weed control and fertilizers, especially nitrogen.

Soil tests on four Century Farms in Multnomah county — two on Sauvie Island and two near Gresham — showed results similar to the Linn county findings.

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