

Farm & Garden --- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

What makes a qualified irrigation district manager? We were hurrying down one of the courthouse corridors on our newsgathering beat when someone pounced on us with that question. "Well, what does?" she insisted. "Do you know?"

She was referring to our column when we mentioned the widespread notice the Eagle Point irrigation district had acquired during its series of public hearings. We noted then that the irrigation district is going to have a tough time obtaining another qualified irrigation district manager. And they are, according to men in the irrigation field who should know.

But what makes a qualified irrigation district manager? This is important right now since Eagle Point district is or soon will be pondering that question when it plans to hire a new manager when the present one retires. Applegate people will want to know since they will have to form an irrigation district to buy water when the Applegate dam goes in some time in the future.

"Ninety per cent of it is public relations or getting along with people," one irrigation district manager said. He should know since he and his fellows have been able to keep out of any public controversies for some time now. "Public relations is important in this business," he emphasized. "A manager should have at least a smattering of engineering and a good practical approach to district problems. Next, agricultural knowledge is important. He must be an administrator and a bookkeeper, also."

However, our friend is more likely to believe a federal official. We like the speech given to the Oregon Reclamation Congress in Madras on Nov. 6, 1958. G. G. Stamm, chief of the division of irrigation of the Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D.C., runs through a typical 12-month period in an irrigation district manager's life then sums up his qualifications.

"He is plagued with problems around the calendar. He is expected to foretell the weather, control floods, preserve fish, conserve water, expand ditch capacities, and work miracles in providing better water service at lower costs. He must be a good technician, a good administrator, a prophet and a diplomat."

"He is usually underpaid, overworked, underappreciated, and overcriticized. He inherits all the unsolved problems of project design and construction. He does not share in the spectacular and glorious aspects of construction, yet I want to emphasize that without him the reclamation program would fall flat on its face."

Concluding his talk, Stamm suggested things an irrigation district manager might do to ease his burden.

"When he finds it necessary to shut off the streamflow, he should let the people know by one means or another what he is doing and why it is necessary. Through public information channels (such as the newspaper) he should inform the people living adjacent to the streams below the reservoirs of the maximum flows that might be expected and should repeatedly caution them against encroachment on the channel with bridges, fences, building or any other structures which might reduce the channel capacity or be subjected to flooding."

"The irrigation managers and their boards might encourage the farmers to get and keep their fields well watered before the expected hot summer season to reduce the intensity of the peak season demand. Board members should be taken on a trip over the project works and distribution facilities once or twice a year to keep them acquainted with problems contributing to farmer complaints and situations contributing to increased operation costs. Finally, he should develop an immunity to ulcers."

Main job of the irrigation district manager is to deliver water to the farmers' headgates in the amounts and at the times required for successful crop production, the bureau of reclamation official reminded. Irrigation district managers "provide a far greater service than they get credit for in preserving fish, conserving water, controlling floods also," Stamm pointed out.

So, what does an irrigation district manager do during the 12 months? Starting about Oct. 1 to 15, he thinks about the irrigation water supply for the following year. Then, he must plan to fill the reservoir, or reservoirs serving his project. At the end of the irrigation season all reservoir release is cut off. And this usually brings complaints.

Also, the manager's job depends upon managing storable water flowing into the reservoir to fill the storage space. In no case in Oregon has any reservoir space been allocated to fish, Stamm said. Therefore, the manager has no right to pass storable water for fish. After the water is stored, then he can release it for fish and then only.

After storing water, in a few months the irrigation manager may have to release some to catch the runoff peak and control the streamflow below the reservoir. Flood control, specifically, is not one of his jobs. However, he feels an obligation to have as much flood control benefit as possible without reducing the water yield for irrigation. He also knows that he had better end up with a full reservoir or go looking for a new job. While he is doing this farmers may argue that he is passing much needed irrigation water, and flood control people that he is not allowing enough space in the reservoir or reservoirs for flood control.

During the critical period of May or June he has to gamble on the weather. It may turn hot for two weeks instead of one. Then, the manager is caught late in the filling season without enough space to catch the peak runoff, or an unseasonable rain may cause more water to be passed than the channel below the reservoir can carry without flooding.

After the irrigation season is well underway, the water users have been notified of water charges and paid them. Then often they complain of increased operation and upkeep costs. Farmers don't realize that due to modernized equipment actual costs may be no more than those, say in 1940, and perhaps even less. In fact, a modern mechanized operation is probably performing the water service job more efficiently and saving money.

Next, a prolonged hot spell during the summer brings more demand than water. Too often, a break occurs in the main canal and all deliveries are cut off for 36 hours. Farmers blame lack of maintenance for inability to meet peak season demand or think the canal break is due to negligence.

A farmer friend who read this commented, "Be sure to tell 'em you can't dig ditches by the rule book."

Although the 4-H and FFA fair finished up Saturday county 4-H agents were still busy Monday cleaning up, making a final check on buildings and collecting the large pile of personal articles 4-H members left in the dormitories. FFA advisors or vo-ag instructors were busy, too. One vo-ag instructor stopped off the street from us to deliver a heavy hoist. Being a neighborly sort of town, the truck had hardly stopped before neighbors ambled over to hoist the heavy equipment out of the truck.

The fair left a lot of people tired. One thing, people pulling in opposite directions in the school district consolidation hassle in the Phoenix and Talent areas found they could actually enjoy each other's company if they didn't talk about schools.

A lot of people helped out at the fair without compensation. Deaver Tractor and Implement company donated a



RADAR TRAILER—This OSC trailer is moved up to Roxy Ann butte or over to an Ashland location when hail researchers are notified of a thunder storm approaching the Rogue River valley. The trailer and equipment is manned by OSC students who use a movie camera attached to a radar scope to record radar's probe of the storm center. This and other data will help scientists determine what causes hail. The information will be used to alleviate or prevent hail damage to valley pears. This is sometimes the hail storm season for the area. Hail collectors and orchardists who wish to report storms are to call Jud Parsons, local head of the research program, at SPring 3-1060. This is a new number for Parsons' office.



INSIDE RADAR UNIT—This picture shows the inside of the mobile radar unit when it was on Roxy Ann butte one day last week. The butt end of the radar antenna can be seen in the center of the picture. The scope to which a movie camera is attached is at the left foreground. This is outmoded combat aircraft equipment purchased by Oregon State college. It is used to probe the center of thunder storms to determine what happens to precipitation within a cloud before hail forms. It is part of a hail research program sponsored jointly by Oregon State college and the Medford Pear Shippers' association.

Roseburg Explosion Concerns Farmers

By EUGENE WINTERS
County Extension Agent

The recent disaster in Roseburg is causing some unnecessary concern about the use of ammonium nitrate fertilizer. Ammonium nitrate alone will neither burn nor explode but it is used in various forms and in various combinations to make dynamite and other explosives.

The cargo in the truck which exploded at Roseburg was two tons of 40 per cent dynamite and four and one-half tons of a prepared mixture composed of ammonium nitrate, nut hulls and diesel oil. Diesel oil, as a separate material, is much more dangerous than fertilizer-grade ammonium nitrate, since it is both flammable and explosive. Still, we store, handle, use and burn diesel oil without any particular concern, though we have learned to treat it with a certain respect.

This does not mean that ammonium nitrate should not be treated with equal respect. If it is mixed with an organic matter, it can become part of an explosive material. Any storage place should be kept clean and free from both dirt

and loose ammonium nitrate. Chaff, feed, sulfur, oil and molasses are especially dangerous. Any material from broken or leaking bags should be swept up and removed from the premises. Burn bags

A couple of years ago Oregon State college unintentionally conducted an experiment on the safety of fertilizer-grade ammonium nitrate. A fire leveled the fertilizer storage shed. Several tons of ammonium nitrate were in side. There was no explosion and for other than the fact that the covers on the outside bags were burned off, the ammonium nitrate was not harmed.

There is no need to be alarmed over the nitrate stored on the farm. Neither is there reason to be concerned over the thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate that are moving by rail and by truck and which are stored in warehouses everywhere to be ready for use on Oregon farms.

Ammonium nitrate is one of the safest articles of commerce. There have been nearly 10 million tons shipped in the last 10 to 12 years with an enviable safety record.

tractor with blade for clean-up day before the fair and a tractor for the tractor driving contest. The same company was also a big bidder during the livestock auction. Kogap Lumber Industries kept the fairgrounds sprinkled. Herb's Garage, Eagle Point; Hubbard-Wray company, Medford; McCormick Farm Equipment store, Medford; Valley Equipment company, Medford, and Eatherton Engine and Equipment company, Medford, all furnished tractors for the 4-H tractor driving contest.

Other people who helped where it counted were Home Appliance furnishing two refrigerators for the food booth and stoves for the home economics activities, Leonard Electric company providing a freezer for freezing exhibits, Croskell Hardware, Central Point, providing air conditioner, Central Point Cleaners furnishing clothing exhibits and Singer Sewing company providing sewing machines.

There are probably a lot more companies and people who helped out and I'm sure both FFA and 4-H groups appreciate their help. We're sorry if you were overlooked and extend the appreciation for the 4-H and FFA members and leaders.

Oregon Farmers Shift Cropland

Corvallis — Over one-sixth of the farmers in Oregon took advantage of cost-sharing opportunities offered by the agricultural conservation program (ACP) last year as they shifted cropland into grass and trees, according to the state agricultural stabilization and conservation (ASC) office in Portland.

Nearly 6,500 farmers over the state took part in the 1958 ACP, the report indicated. These farmers put up over \$2 million as they matched money from the Federal Government to carry out conservation practices on their farms.

Under the 1958 ACP, Oregon farmers planted over 33,000 acres of permanent cover on land taken out of crop production, used rotation cover crops on another 19,000 acres, reorganized irrigation systems serving over 63,000 acres, planted trees on 1,500 acres of farmland, and built 160 irrigation dams. Additional thousands of crop acres were shifted from soil depleting to soil conserving uses under ACP, the report added.

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Farm Notes

Washington—UPI—The Agriculture department offered today to buy from farmers ready to cook frozen turkeys and frozen pork for the national school lunch program.

The department said that frozen turkeys and pork made a big hit with the children and school lunch supervisors last year.

Frozen turkeys must be prepared according to specifications to be released later this week. Turkeys should weigh between 18 and 24 pounds. Initial offers, either by letter or telegram, must be filed by Sept. 8. Acceptance will be made by telegram filed by Sept. 11. Deliveries are to be between Sept. 28 to Oct. 24.

Washington—UPI—Alaska's congressional delegation says the Army will start serving fresh milk to troops in Alaska as soon as existing contracts for "recombined" milk expire.

Under the new policy, the reconstituted product made from dried milk, will be used only when fresh grade A milk is not available.

Washington—UPI—Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) has urged Congress to put the nation's farm surpluses to "wholesome use" through an expanded program of overseas sales in exchange for foreign currencies.

"With this food," he told the Senate Monday, "we will first relieve hunger, and then set in motion programs that will help remove the conditions which produced it: Poverty, illiteracy, disease and ignorance."

Washington—UPI—The Agriculture department estimated there were 8,500,000 farm workers, during the week ended July 25, 4 per cent less than a year earlier and 8 per cent fewer than average.

The department said the downturn contrasted with a rising trend in most years reflected the characteristics of the 1959 crop-weather pattern.

Good weather for haying and small grain harvest over wide areas and notable instances of early maturity and quick harvest of fruits and vegetables moved the usual July work peak ahead.

Washington—UPI—Agriculture department scientists have discovered that DDT may lose its effectiveness in water.

The finding may explain the unpredictable results that mosquito control workers have been getting after applying DDT to ponds, lakes and similar insect-breeding areas.

The scientists are considering field tests to find out if they should change their methods of applying the insecticide.

Washington—UPI—Labor Secretary James P. Mitchell has scheduled public hearings Sept. 10 and 11 on his proposals to amend the regulations covering migrant farm workers.

Mitchell's new rules would prevent any tax-supported facility from hiring migratory workers at less than prevailing wages. The proposals also would bar the facilities from providing poorer working conditions or inferior transportation.

Washington—UPI—Milk production in the first seven months of this year was 600 million pounds below the same period in 1958, the agriculture department said today.

Milk cows produced about 11 billion pounds through July of this year. The daily July output amounted to about 2½ pounds per cow, the lowest ever recorded for that month.

Washington—UPI—The House agriculture committee has ignored administration objections and approved a bill to bolster sagging hog incomes with a 150 million dollar subsidy program.

It appears unlikely that the

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ROGUE VALLEY PROVED SIRE SERVICE

County Beef Herds Rate High at Fair

Jackson county beef herds took their share of honors at the Siskiyou County fair in Yreka, Calif., last week.

Seven Oaks Hereford ranch, Central Point, had the champion senior yearling bull (Hereford) and the reserve champion junior yearling Hereford bull in the senior beef class.

Seven Oaks also took champion senior yearling bull (Hereford) and reserve champion junior yearling Hereford bull in the senior beef class.

A nearby rancher from Merrill, Ore., also did well. Norman Jacob, of Merrill, Ore., had a reserve champion junior yearling Hereford female and a reserve champion junior yearling Hereford female.

Nine herds of Herefords were entered in the fair. Five of the seven Oregon herds were from Jackson county.

Southern Oregon representatives also did well in the cutting horse competition. Miss Flex, owned by J. C. Stevenson, Klamath Falls, won the jack pot cutting horse contest. Baldy Brez, owned by Bob Mettler, Grants Pass, won the stock horse class taking a blue ribbon for its speed and hindness.

The performance of Jackson county beef animals in the Siskiyou County fair should prove to Jackson county they don't have to go out of the valley to buy good animals, a rancher pointed out.

Homeowners Told To Check Labels

Corvallis — Home owners putting in new lawns or re-seeding spots in old ones this fall will profit from shopping around when they buy grass seed.

Comparing labels on grass seed sacks is the way to insure buying the best product, notes Harold E. Fennell, Oregon State College extension seed certification specialist.

Whether you buy a 100-lb. sack of grass seed or just a handful from a bin, the law requires the dealer to label the seed for the buyer's protection. The label, or analysis tag, identifies important kinds of seed present and percentage of each. This information includes pure seed, other crop seed, weed seed and inert matter. The analysis tag also shows how much of the seed can be expected to grow.

In comparing seeds, look for the one with the highest percentage of pure seed, the highest germination (growth) rate, and the lowest percentage of weeds and other crop seeds. Inert matter (broken seeds, stones, sticks, etc.) won't hurt, but adds nothing, neither, so you don't want to pay for much of it, Fennell reminded.

Given a choice, livestock prefer baled hay to loose hay as feed, according to "Grassland News."

Purdue University animal scientists say good legume pasture is unexcelled for bred sows and gilts.

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to the following buyers of 4-H Livestock at the 4-H-FFA Fair. The youngsters in this group appreciate the support of these buyers.

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Faber's Feed	
Siskiyou Veterinarian	
Medford Feed & Seed	
Monarch Feed & Seed	



New SCS Postage Stamp Available

This is a black and white reproduction of the 4-cent soil conservation stamp now on sale at the post office here. The stamp, printed in three colors, went on sale yesterday (Aug. 26) in Rapid City, S. D., at the annual meeting of the Soil Conservation Society of America.

The stamp portrays a modern conservation farm, according to Elwood Abbott, chairman of the Sams Valley-Beagle Soil Conservation district. Grasses in the rolling pasture, foreground, prevent soil erosion and conserve moisture. Grazing is regulated to favor growth of the best forage grasses.

A farm pond, lower right, provides water for domestic and livestock use, for fire protection, for wildlife, and for recreation such as fishing, swimming and boating.

Contour stripcropping and rotation systems, left and right center, include grasses and cultivated crops in alternating bands. The grassed strips catch and hold soil that may move out of cultivated strips during rainstorms, and they increase moisture insoak.

Trees and shrubs control erosion, provide a home for wildlife, and protect the farmstead from the hot winds of summer and the cold winds of winter.

Conservation farming, as depicted in the stamp, gives assurance of a plentiful supply of food and other products of the land for the seven-eighths of our people who live in town, symbolized in upper right.

Ex-OSC Grid Star Top Dairy Checker

Salem — Joseph A. Gray, dairy specialist with the state department of agriculture, has been certified by the U. S. Public Health Service to conduct inspections of interstate milk shipments.

He is the third member of the department staff with this rating, according to O. K. Beals, foods and dairies division chief. Vergil Simmons of the dairy staff was certified by the federal office in 1952 and Alvin Tesdal, another specialist, was rated two years ago.

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