

Root-Plowing, Reseeding Demonstration Set

Giant Machine Cuts Roots; Blows Seed Over Area

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

It happened in Texas! It could happen here!

Root-plowing and reseeded in south Texas turned hundreds of acres of what was once only spiny trees and cactus to lush pasture-land.

Clem Ault, conservationist of the Rogue Soil Conservation district, and a group of ranchers think it might be done here. Foresters of this area think that with some modifications the same program might put productive trees on a scrub brush land.

The instrument for this is a huge Caterpillar D-8 tractor with a giant root-plow. The machine and attachment weigh an estimated 55,000 pounds and the plow alone about 4,500 pounds. Caterpillar Tractor company has donated both for a demonstration in the Applegate area. A public demonstration has been set for 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 10 at Bill Pittcock's Humbug creek ranch in the Applegate. Slices off Brush

This root-plow can bite a few inches to 36 inches into the soil, neatly slicing off the brush and tree roots as the large front bulldozer blade batters the trees and brush to the ground.

At the same time the exhaust from the tractor blows the grass seed through a pipe from a rear-mount metal hopper. The feather light seed drifts over the brush-strewn hillside. The vigorous grasses should quickly overcome the plowed brush.

The Jackson County Stockman's association, which is co-sponsoring the experiment, hopes that once grass is established former worthless brushland will graze a sleek, fat steer to every 2½ acres in a few months. A complete brush and scrub tree kill may require spraying later, however.

Group Sees Demonstration

Recently a group of Applegate ranchers and representatives of the bureau of land management, soil conservation service and the Caterpillar Tractor company watched a pre-demonstration run on 400 acres of O and C land in the Applegate.

The steel monster of a tractor lumbered up a 50 per cent grade on its metal tracks, then pivoted to the side. Acting like



BITING THROUGH - This 4,500 pound root plow manufactured by the Fleco Corporation, Jacksonville, Fla., slices into the ground and through brush roots during a pre-demonstration run on O and C land in the Applegate. At one time the plow, manufactured for the Caterpillar Tractor company, razored through an 18-inch tree base.

a battering ram, the large dozer blade knocked down oak, laurel, madrona and manzanita.

Operator Bob Ackerman yanked a lever and the steel plow dropped and bit into the hillside soil. Churning through the ground it sliced through and flung aside rootless brush and trees. A thin cloud of seed drifted down over the holes torn in the ground.

Reaching the end of a row, the tractor swung around and roared back again tumbling all trees and brush before it. During an open field demonstration the plow blade bit through a stump about 18 inches in diameter and tossed it to one side. Close examination of the stump showed the blade has razored smoothly through it.

Convinces Rancher

"That convinced me!" one rugged "show me" type rancher commented.

The agricultural experts headed by Ault, a veteran farm advisor of eight years in the Rogue River valley, think a grass mixture of alta fescue,

sub clover, or wheat grass and bulbous blue grass and sub clover or lotus might be used, depending on the location and soil. However, Ault pointed out the program will require further study.

Chief aim of the ranchers now is to work the costs down to a contracted cost of \$10 an acre. Actual operational costs in south Texas were estimated at \$4.50 an acre. Estimated costs of running the tractor including depreciation, insurance and taxes are \$13.50 an hour. This tractor and root-plow which was used in Texas has total horse-power of 150 and 125 at the draw-bar.

Big Problem

Foresters say the big problem in planting trees is the difficulty in planting them firmly and quickly. However, most of the valley soils pack down and the brush would both shade and feed the trees as mulch. A similar operation on a much smaller scale and with less efficient equipment was tried in the Klamath Falls area. There the once-brush-covered land was made 95 per cent plantable.

Following the pre-demonstration trial run, Armin Richter, Applegate rancher and contractor, pointed out a three mile long brush fence on the O and C land.

This, he said, will keep the cattle away from the seeded area until it is ready for grazing. A dozer had simply piled the brush into a thick impenetrable barrier. Estimated cost is \$1,000 which Richter said is probably the cheapest type of fence available.

C. W. Jensen, chairman of the Rogue soil conservation district, co-sponsor of the demonstration, has invited all interested persons to attend next Thursday's demonstration.

Experimental Stage

The root-plowing and reseeded program is still in the experimental stage, the soil district conservationist emphasized. It's still a question whether crowns of the bushes with roots chopped off might grow again.

A report on the machine's pre-demonstration run was made by Richter during the recent forestry advisory council's field day. Representatives of various government agencies said this program might be an answer to one of their problems.

This comparatively new

type of equipment might make it possible to develop grasslands in forests and on terrain which would not be suitable for recreation or trees, Richter pointed out. He estimated 40,000 acres of such land exists in Jackson county. By root-plowing and reseeded former brush land it might be possible to remove livestock from areas used for forests, recreation and flood control.

See Hope in Program

Veteran Applegate cattlemen hope this new program will make it possible to return their area to early day status when 8,000 to 9,000 head of cattle were grazed in the mountains instead of the estimated 500 head now.

Overgrazing started 30 years ago ruined good grass land and allowed it to be covered by weeds and brush. In the early days, too, electric storms set fire to much of the brush burning it off. The more frequent summer rains then aided the grass.

Farmers, ranchers and Indians, free of restricting gov-



FILLS SEED BOX - Bob Ackerman, demonstration Caterpillar tractor operator, fills the seed box to the rear of the tractor. The seed slides into a pipe as a third of the exhaust is diverted through the pipe and blows the seeds to the rear of the tractor. The seed floats into the holes cut by the plow. This operation has been used successfully in Colorado, New Mexico and northern California, Caterpillar company representatives said.



PUSHES THROUGH - The giant D-8 Caterpillar tractor pushes down some brush with its giant blade on O and C land in the Applegate area. A giant root-plow attached to back slices through the brush roots. Much of the time the tractor operated on a 50 per cent grade - a grade few cars can pull up.

Boston Doctor Starts OSC Department

Corvallis - A few saucepans and a sewing machine in an upstairs room was the laboratory that greeted a young Boston doctor who came to Oregon State college 70 years ago to conduct first classes in home economics.

Dr. Margaret Snell, first head of household economy and hygiene, taught cooking and sewing to her 24 students in 1889, and established the first major foothold for the education of Oregon women. With this move, homemaking gained status and the value of improving family living was recognized.

"When you educate a man, you educate an individual. But when you educate a woman, the welfare of the family is secured," Miss Snell believed.

Prepare for Marriage

In the early days, girls prepared themselves largely for marriage and motherhood. They learned how to cook, sew, keep a tidy house, make hats and weave. Miss Snell added "polish" to a young lady's training by hanging reproductions of old masters on the classroom walls and quoted Shakespeare and Emerson to her students as they sewed.

The motive behind home economics training - improved family life - has not changed with the times - it's the times that have changed, observed Dr. Miriam Scholl, now dean of home economics at OSC. Fifty years ago a homemaker devoted almost all her time to cooking and sewing, soap making, food preservation, washing and cleaning, gardening and buttermaking.

Although girls still learn to sew and cook, they learn more about how to buy, more about human behavior and growth, and how to make decisions for themselves. And more than ever they're leaders in their communities.

Opportunities of Jobs

Opportunities of jobs outside the home have increased far beyond the supply of trained home economists to fill them, Dean Scholl said. Although five out of six

home economics graduates marry, many of them work in home economics jobs before they marry or resume work sometime after they are married.

Homemaking education is now offered to grade schoolers and grandmothers in and

out of the classroom. It's common practice in many schools to offer homemaking in the elementary grades in addition to high school.

A total of 21,500 Oregon youngsters are enrolled in home economics 4H clubs, and 4078 teenagers are mem-

bers of Future Homemakers of America (FHA) clubs. Last year nearly 20,000 homemakers joined extension sponsored homemaking clubs.

Home economics research, which draws heavily on all areas of science, has also contributed to family welfare

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through the years, Dean Scholl pointed out. However, she said, "A shortage of graduate students to do research is always with us." OSC's home economics graduate program rates high among other schools across the country.

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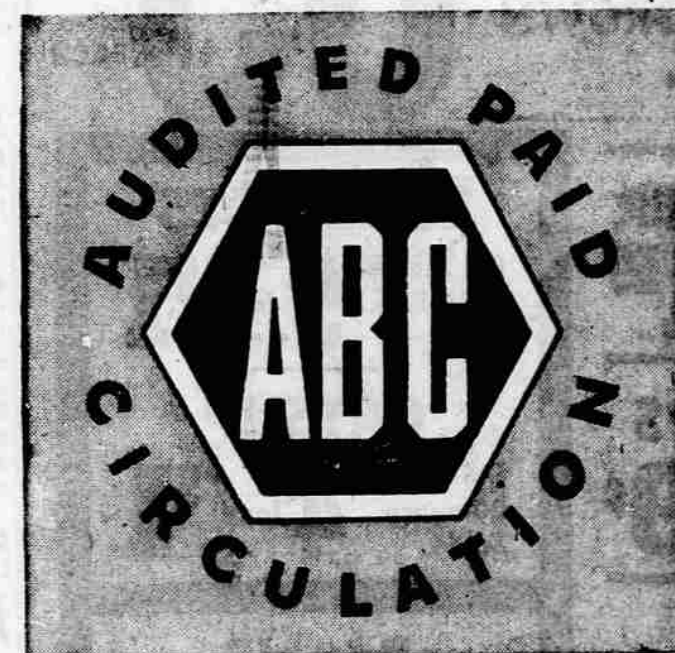
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