

# --- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY  
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Economics is something few of us spend much time thinking about. This field of facts and figures can be interesting and is vital to every one of us.

We think of economics in a very personal way, but then only fleetingly as we pay our taxes, pay our bills and try to squeeze more out of the family budget. And then its either angrily or dejectedly.

In one family, we know, everybody moves into the farthest corner of the house as Dad starts working on his income tax and finally swears through the family budget. One night a young nephew visited during this unhappy period.

"What's Uncle Nels doing?" he asked his aunt. "What's he mean by D—national economy?"

"Your uncle is working on his taxes and the family budget, dear," the aunt explained.

"But, does he have to be so noisy about it?" asked the little nephew.

Maybe that's our trouble. We aren't noisy enough to the right people about economics as it affects us. Economics as we see it is a large rough millstone on which we lay our wallets. How thin that pocketbook is crushed depends on the pressure built up behind the many little cogwheels which move the grinding stone down over the other stone. This pressure on our pocketbooks, on the economy, may be brought by higher taxes in answer to demands for more government services, trade abroad and general business conditions in the United States, to mention a few factors. If we're lucky, when the stones of national economy stop grinding, we may each come out with "one thin dime."

Now the farmer as one part of this national economy is facing a serious situation. U. S. News and World Report this week reports farm prices are sinking, farm purchasing power is the lowest since 1940. This in spite of government subsidies of some basic crops. Farm population is declining, but even though there are fewer of them to "split the pot," the national average income for the farmer may be \$2,476 by the end of this year compared to the all-time high of \$3,065 in 1948. The experts, according to U. S. News and World Report, say the worst may be yet to come.

The point is, what affects the farmer also affects every one of us. The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco has an interesting booklet out entitled, "Agriculture and Recent Economic Conditions."

This booklet explains how as industry and cities expand, agriculture's share of the nation's total population, labor force, output and income decline. However, the economic bond between city and countryside is strengthened as this change occurs. This is true whether the farms provide the city's food, or to open wider markets. The city also give the rural people a wider choice of jobs.

It's true that agriculture doesn't contribute as large a share now to the over-all production in the United States as in the days when the farmer produced his crops, then took them to market to sell them. However, much more is involved in producing the farm crop now. Chemicals are used for weed-killers, fertilizers and heavy machinery for producing and harvesting the crop. So agriculture through its demand for more scientific and economical methods of production still has as strong an influence on the national economy.

A number of people may think that as general business goes, so goes agriculture. Economists note that farm prices and incomes have been moving contrary to fluctuations in the general economy since early 1954.

Farmers watch the livestock cycles to determine whether they will end up in the red or black at the end of the season. Farmland values continue to rise even when farm prices and incomes have been declining. This latter trend may be due to the steady growth of suburban areas around the larger cities. If you have been following the county's attempt to control county land uses through zoning and subdivision regulations, you probably noticed some farmers have been active in these new developments.

Like the banker the farmer's lot seems to more generally improve during a business recession. This may be because the recession lowers the costs of his equipment and other production charges while the nation continues to eat. Even during a depression the people must eat. Another interesting point made by the agricultural economists is that during 1956-57 export shipments hit record levels, but did not raise farm income much.

Tariffs protect this country's farmers against cheaper corn or wheat shipped in here. Federal farm price support programs eliminate the need for competing in world markets. Oregon wheat does have fairly new markets abroad. But these markets for our surplus wheat were not developed under competitive fire.

Modern farming costs are much higher than in the general horse-drawn plow days so the farmer's stakes are tremendous in what one farmer told us "is the biggest gambling game in the world."

What do we do with all this stuff the farmer is producing? A future population explosion may take care of this surplus. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the farmer contributed 65 per cent of the total value of raw material production in the United States in 1952. This share of his contribution to raw materials has dropped little since 1919.

While people were worried about the business recession it was the farmer with his increasing shipment and storage of goods who helped considerably toward the recovery in 1958, economists noted. Farm goods are heavy, bulky goods so their shipment keeps the rail, truck and ocean vessels active.

While missiles with atomic warheads and heavy flying artillery in the form of jet fighters and bombers tightens this nation's defenses, they indirectly take a bite out of the farm economy. Why? It would take a good many rifle companies to make up the firepower of one atomic cannon or missile. Yet the greater number of personnel required by rifle companies ate more food produced on farms than do the comparatively few members of a missile crew. So reason the economists.

In its booklet, the San Francisco bank points out that the long history of federal farm help programs shows political interests are trying to keep the family farm producing and alive economically. Scientific help has been provided the farmers too small to run their own laboratory tests or to hire it done. Now various companies such as chemical and feed companies also provide this help.

At the same time the government realized the farmer's higher cost of operation required a better money-borrowing system. People talk of taking out an FHA loan for building or buying a house without thinking much about it today. However, this type of loan was pioneered by the federal government for the farmer.

People talk of the dwindling farm labor force required. According to economists the number of persons employed in agriculture still topped the total number of wage and salary workers in mining, contract construction and finance combined. About one person in eight still lives on a farm.

Industry is using more and more water. However, almost half of total water withdrawals in the United States are for irrigation.

Further illustrations of how the farmer influences our economy: Between 1929 and 1949, the proportion of total electricity sales that went to farm consumers about tripled. There were over 12.1 million motor vehicles of all types on farms at the end of 1957 compared with a total registration of private passenger cars numbering 35.7 million.

## State Farm Land Values Continue Steady Climb

Corvallis - Oregon farm land values went up 2 per cent from March to July of this year and now stand 5 per cent higher than a year ago, reports Mrs. Elvera Horrell, extension agricultural economist at Oregon State college.

Nationally, farm land values rose one per cent during the same period and now are up 6 per cent over a year earlier, Mrs. Horrell found as she studied reports from the U.S. department of agriculture.

Price tags on farm lands have been showing an almost steady rise since 1942, Mrs. Horrell continued. On the national scene, this upward trend has wavered only twice in this 17-year period.

From 1942 to 1951, farm income went up faster than farm land values. As a result, in 1948, land was relatively low in relation to income from farm lands. Then came the Korean war, and land values started to climb again, 1952 Turning Point.

The year 1952 also marked a turning point. Both farm income and farm land values went down. But while farm income continued down through 1957, land values turned upward again in 1954. By early 1955, previous farm land values had been passed and each year since has set a new high, she reported.

For a while, farm land remained in scarce supply. However, observers now feel the gap between incomes from farm land and farm land values has been more than closed, Mrs. Horrell reports. From here on out, the observers think the trend in value of farm land will again be closely linked to expected income from that land.

An exception, she pointed out, can be found in farm land bought for urban or industrial development. And many people still look on land as a security against changes in purchasing power of their savings.

## Incentive Price For Shorn Wool Set at 62 Cents

The incentive price of shorn wool in the national wool program will continue next year at 62 cents a pound, the same as for the first five years of the program, according to Harry Martin, Jackson County A.S.C. office manager. The price is for the 1960 marketing year, which begins next April 1.

Payments to growers will be figured in the same manner as this year, Martin said. Each producer will receive a shorn wool payment which is equal to a percentage of his return from wool sales. The percentage will be the amount necessary to raise the national average price received by 11 producers for shorn wool up to 62 cents a pound.

The purpose of that method of payment is to encourage growers to do the best possible job of marketing, since the grower who receives most for his wool will also receive the highest payment under the program.

In addition to the payment for shorn wool, payments will be made to each producer who sells lambs that have never been shorn. This payment will be at a rate per hundred-weight of live animals which is comparable with the incentive payment per pound of shorn wool.

Payments Reported  
For the 1958 marketing year, the payment rate for shorn wool was 70.3 percent, or \$70.30 for every \$100 received from the sale of shorn wool. The payment rate on unshorn lambs was \$1.02 per hundredweight of live lambs marketed.

The wool program is conducted under the National Wool Act as a means of bringing the country's wool production up to 300 million pounds a year. The incentive price is set at a level designed to encourage this goal, based on cost conditions affecting sheep production.

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## Eight Farmers Seek Contracts

A total of eight farmers in Jackson county have filed applications for contracts in the soil bank Conservation reserve beginning in 1960, A.S.C. Chairman Don Nichols announced today.

Of the applications filed, six call for the retirement of whole farms from crop production and the remaining two are for less than whole farm acreage. The total acreage included in the applications is 451 acres.

Nichols said the applications now will be analyzed and a physical check will be made of the land offered for the program. Farmers whose applications can be accepted will be notified when their contracts are ready for signature at the county A.S.C. office. Farmers also will be notified in cases where applications cannot be accepted, usually because of insufficient funds.

A farmer who signs a conservation reserve contract undertakes to keep specified cropland on his farm out of production and under conservation practices for a period of up to 10 years and to reduce his acreage of harvested crops by a corresponding amount. In return, the farmer earns an annual rental payment and receives a share of the cost of the conservation practices.

## Four Grants for Teacher Program Received by OSC

Corvallis—A fourth quarter-million-dollar grant has been given Oregon State college by the National Science Foundation to help spearhead the special U.S. program of training for high school science and mathematics teachers.

Receipt of the new grant of \$290,300 was announced by President A. L. Strand.

The grant will be used in 1960-61 to support a fourth academic-year institute for 48 selected teachers from throughout the nation. The academic-year institute program was started by NSF in 1956 to help teachers improve their subject matter knowledge, to upgrade science and math training in U.S. high schools, and to increase the nation's supply of top quality scientists and teachers.

OSC was one of only 16 colleges picked to start the training in 1956 and has been on the select list each year since then. Next year, 33 colleges will offer the institutes for some 1600 teachers.

Director of Program  
Dr. Stanley E. Williamson, head of science education, is director of the program at OSC.

Each of the high school teachers selected to attend one of the institutes will receive \$3,000 plus allowances for dependents, books and travel. Teachers are enrolled in the graduate school at OSC and nine special courses have been organized for them.

Teachers must have taught for at least three years before they are eligible to apply for the training.

Information about the institute program and the colleges giving the training will be made available to all U.S. high school science and mathematics teachers, Williamson said. Interested teachers may then apply directly to the college they wish to attend. Each college selects its assigned number of teachers.

OSC is the only northwest school on the list again next year. Fourteen of this year's 50 teachers at OSC are from Oregon high schools with 13 other states represented.

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## FARM NOTES

Washington—UPI—The agriculture department predicts that meat production will go up in 1960 to an all-time high of more than 28 billion pounds.

Production for this year is expected to total about 27,200,000,000 pounds.

There will be no new record next year in per capita supply, however. The population is bigger.

Washington—UPI—Scientists working for the agriculture department and the California experiment station have developed a new variety of oats.

The new plant is a red oat with short straw and is resistant to lodging and shattering. It is called "cut" and is adaptable for pasture and hay production.

Washington—UPI—Egg production has dropped faster than government experts expected.

The agriculture department had been predicting that production through the end of 1959 would continue above 1958 levels.

Washington—UPI—Sen. John F. Kennedy (D-Mass.), a Democratic presidential hopeful, has called for a self-governing price-control system for dairy products.

In outlining parts of his basic farm program before the National Milk Producers Federation convention Monday night, Kennedy also urged wider use of surplus foods at home and abroad.

## Livestock Men Of West Oregon To Meet Nov. 22

Corvallis - Livestock producers from 14 Western Oregon counties will meet in Eugene Nov. 22 to 24 for the 24th annual convention of the Western Oregon Livestock association.

Committee sessions will open the three-day meeting, which starts at 1 p.m. in the Eugene Hotel, reports association secretary Dean Fritschknecht, Oregon State college extension livestock specialist.

John Northam, Eugene, is president of the association which is made up of 14 county livestock associations and represents beef, sheep, and swine producers.

Committee sessions are scheduled for legislation and taxation, marketing, wildlife, livestock diseases and parasites, pastures and ranges, and resolutions. Committee actions will be reported at a general session the morning of Nov. 24.

A general assembly session formally opens the convention the morning of Nov. 23. Main speakers at the meeting will include Clarence Barton, state representative, Coos county, who will talk on property taxation. Income taxes will be discussed by William E. Bade, Salem, manager of the Oregon Tax Research Bureau.

Other program events include a talk by Dr. Jim Oldfield, OSC animal husbandman, who will discuss ways to prevent white muscle disease in cattle and sheep. A panel of the state's livestock men and animal scientists will discuss ways to handle feeder livestock.

The association will elect officers Nov. 23, and hold its annual banquet that night.

A special luncheon and business meeting has been scheduled for the ladies auxiliary to the association Nov. 23. The luncheon will feature an informal style show.

## Seed League Lists Plans For Yearly OSC Convention

Corvallis—Research dealing with varieties, weeds, diseases, cleaning and storage of Oregon's multi-million dollar seed growing industry will be reported at the Oregon Seed Growers League convention Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at Oregon State college.

A highlight of the meeting will be a talk on soils, crops and people of Russia by Dr. Wynne Thorne, director of the Utah State University agricultural experiment station, who recently toured that country.

Rex Warren, OSC extension farm crop specialist and League secretary, estimates 300 persons will attend the meeting. R. W. Schaad, La Grande, is chairman of the League.

Growers will have a chance to discuss their own problems during committee meetings on potatoes, certification and new varieties, seed commissions, cover crops and ryegrass, turf, forage grass, and legumes.

Meetings also are scheduled for the resolution and legislation committee and the Northwest chewings and red fescue association. Oregon's 40-year development of seed growing into an industry of national importance will be told by H. A. Scoth, OSC-USDA agronomist.

Special reports also will be given on crop estimates and outlook, production and use of dryland range grass in the Northwest, tariff commission hearings in Washington, D.C., seed growing in the future, and grasses used to plant American lawns.

Frank McKennon, Salem director of the state department of agriculture, will be one of the program speakers.

Main speaker for the banquet Tuesday evening will be Helmut Schreima of the OSC department of business administration, who will tell of his experiences in Europe from 1932 to 1945.

Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Before that it was Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory.

## Local SCS Man Tells Of Root Plow Work

Clem Ault, work unit conservationist with the Rogue soil conservation district here presented the history of root plowing and told of demonstrations conducted in Jackson county before Friday's annual convention of the Oregon Cattlemen's association in Portland.

Ault showed slides of work done to date in Jackson county and told of plans for the balance of field trials in the soil conservation district.

The slides showed shots of the public demonstration at the Bill Pittcock ranch on the Applegate. The soil conservation district manager told of the Caterpillar tractor company's cooperation in conducting the demonstration before the general public, ranchers, contractors and interested agency representatives.

General discussions at the cattlemen's convention ranged over a wide field of subjects from membership drive, to beef promotion, to hunter trespass. Observers reported practically everyone attending the convention enthusiastically participated in committee work.

Resolutions Given  
Among resolutions coming from the committee meeting

was one favoring continued multiple use of public land and rejection of the wilderness bill area. The stockmen also maintained their stand for a state sales tax to finance education. They urged that both the bureau of land management and the U.S. Forest Service be restrained from reducing the cattle grazing by more than 10 per cent on federal land in any one year.

Ranchers were concerned over the new BLM ruling that public lands shall be made available to all hunters and fishermen. This would give sportsmen trespass rights to several thousands of acres of land to allow them entrance on isolated acres of public land, an observer explained. Ranchers were afraid that once sportsmen enter the land en route to public land they will take advantage of the right to hunt over all the area—private and public. Ranchers discussed the possibility of public land transfers to eliminate isolated blocks.

Of the thousands of stockmen in Oregon, only a small percentage of the total number are members of the OCA and the national organization, it was pointed out. Baker is secretary and treasurer, respectively.

COMPLETES TRAINING  
Marine Pfc. Ronald W. Harrison, son of Mr. and Mrs. William O. Harrison, 3360 Lone Pine rd., is scheduled to complete four weeks of individual combat training Monday at the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

members and Jackson county second, it was reported.

An observer reported feeling ran pretty high among the cattlemen against hunters trespassing on private land, damaging property and shooting stock.

The ranchers were interested also in the new access road building program which would benefit sportsman, rancher and logger.

Cattlemen attending the convention were urged to promote their own product through nation-wide voluntary assessments of so much money per head of cattle.

Approximately 300 cattlemen saw Kent Magruder, of Clatskanie, reelected OCA president, Irvin Mann Jr., of Stanfield, renamed first vice president and heard the naming of five new second vice presidents including Clarence Chase, Eugene; Howard Otley, Burns; Larry Williams, Canyon City; Ben Smith, Redmond, and William Marshall, Klamath Falls. Cecil Edwards and Jerry Brees were kept as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

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