

# --- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY  
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

A short time ago we quoted some eminent agricultural authorities saying agriculture's public relations program is sorely in need of improving. One point made was that there are not enough articles in the popular magazines on the economic plight of the farmer and his contributions to society. Everybody can relax temporarily because we have discovered many such articles recently.

Even the Saturday Evening Post, which does not usually run farm articles came out with a story in April, "The Farmer's Side of the Case," by Mary Conger. She and her husband, Carl, run a dairy farm on 720 acres in southeastern Kansas. Conger was born and raised in the area, received a college degree in scientific agriculture and was a county agent for a number of years. So, he could not be classed as a marginal operator, and certainly has a good basis for success. But, like so many other farmers, particularly dairymen, the Congers have been caught in the cost-price squeeze and it's getting tighter all the time.

The Congers have a herd of 200 registered Holsteins, 100 cows and 100 heifers—which they report are "considerably above average in production." They produce Grade A milk. The farm's gross income ranks in the upper 3 per cent of the U. S. farms. It was also reported "adequately capitalized and highly mechanical for large-volume production."

The Congers state that their farm has made little if any profit since 1952. Including such farm bad years as 1955, the Congers had accumulated \$7,000 in unpaid bills by 1958. Last year they "just about broke even."

In her story, Mrs. Conger reports that the Kansas Farm Management association showed that 1958 returns from member farms were the best in 11 years due to bumper crop weather and a peak in the cattle and hogs price cycle. The labor-and-management earnings per association farmer were \$1,120—even less than the skilled labor receives in 1955, the poorest year, the net labor loss per farm for all association members in the state was \$938. In other words these high rated farmers worked all year but received nothing for their labor, and accumulated debts besides.

Mrs. Conger points out that the big subsidy in the United States agricultural picture is not what the government pays the farmer in price-support program, but the unpaid and underpaid labor the farmer contributes to food production.

Orchard labor doesn't receive adequate returns for its labor, either. Orchard labor receives \$1.10 an hour compared to \$3 an hour for industrial labor. Orchardists are in the same position as many other farmers. Too often their labor and management is merely donated. Loan institutions insist that growers taking out loans pay 20 per cent on their overhead costs each year. However, few growers outside the large ones can do it. One packing house spokesman figures production costs for the company's five orchards amount to \$100,000 a year. This includes picking, hauling and interest.

Look at the overall fruit picture in the Rogue River valley. Each year during recent years there has been a big problem of some kind. Two preceding years in a row hail hit the pear crop hard. Last year the pears wouldn't size. A dry summer and fall with a big wind caused a large pear drop. Then as the pears started dropping off the trees the growers couldn't get enough pickers quickly enough.

This year the area was hit by five hail storms. Growers predict it won't cause culls, but there will be fruit marking. How this affects the overall fruit quality remains to be seen. This year, too, the growers had to convert 20 per cent of their orchard heaters, according to the agreement the great majority of growers made with the townstalk. Are pear prices keeping up with the rising costs? Of course they aren't!

Friend Keith Hockersmith, a fieldman for a local feed company, handed us a speech given by George B. Blair, president of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. The talk, entitled "The Farmer in The Market Place," follows along the same theme as the Saturday Evening Post articles.—Compared to industry net income, the farmer is taking a beating.

"I would remind you that, at a time when corporate profits are at record levels and personal disposable income at an all-time high, when Gross National Product continues to increase and the dollar volume of our manufacturing, distributive, and service businesses goes up, year after year, income of farmers continues a downward trend and has reached a 20-year low," the farmer cooperative official said setting the background of the problem.

"The problems we face and the job we have to do is not made any easier by the public opinion and the bad press for agriculture that we see in newspaper articles, letters to the editors, radio programs, slanted editorials, and public pronouncements of high officials and responsible farm leaders," Blair continued.

Is agriculture important to only 13 per cent of our population? Farmers today have much more help from city workers in getting the job done than the hired man on the farm 100 years ago. This help is called "agri-business." And that is defined as—"The sum total of all operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies, production operations on the farm; and the storage, processing, and distribution of farm commodities made up from them."

And this is for the Medford Chamber of Commerce which hasn't yet recognized that the farmers are the local businessmen's best customers.

"In recent years, in the United States, the estimated annual total value of agricultural goods and services added to the economy is \$75 billion. Farmers and ranchers purchase \$16.4 billion worth of farm supplies—machinery and equipment, fuels and oil, feeds, fertilizers, credit, insurance, etc. They combine these with basic resources and produce products valued at \$29.5 billion—adding \$13.1 billion to the products they purchase. After processors and distributors finish with this \$29.5 billion of products they are sold wholesale for \$75 billion," Blair stated.

This means that farm supplies make up 22 per cent of the total wholesale value of farm products, production makes up 17 per cent and processing and distribution make up 61 per cent, the farmer co-op council president noted.

The agricultural industry employs approximately 40 per cent of the total labor force in the United States, considerably more than the 13 per cent directly working in farming, Blair pointed out. Ten per cent producing and distributing farm supplies and 17 per cent in processing and distributing farm products.

"Farmers and ranchers are some of the biggest customers of American industry. There are 12 million tractors, cars and trucks on U. S. farms. Agriculture buys more petroleum products than any other industry. Farmers provide a market for 6.5 million tons of finished steel annually. Rubber used on farms would put tires on all the cars produced in the U. S. last year. Agriculture consumes 50 million tons of chemicals each year. Sixteen per cent of gross freight revenues are from agricultural products," Blair repeated.

But what about these subsidies?—According to a report from the house committee on agriculture on June 25, 1958, the farm price support losses from 1933 to 1958—for 25 years—cost the taxpayers \$5,174 million, Blair noted.

However, the house appropriations committee reports: mail subsidies for 10 years from 1946-56, \$4,986 million; business reconversion payments, \$43,262 million; subsidies to airlines, 1938-1957, \$614 million; and subsidies to maritime organizations, 1938-57, \$3,500 million, Blair quoted.

So what about these subsidies to farmers?  
"If the cotton farmer gave his cotton away a \$4 board-

cloth shirt would still cost \$3.72 and a \$9 cotton dress would still cost \$8.66," Blair said.

"Even if a wheat farmer gave away his wheat a loaf of 20-cent bread would cost 17 cents. The retailer would gross as much on a loaf of bread in a few hours as the farmer did in a year for the wheat going into that bread, Blair pointed out. And the baker and wholesaler (not including milling of the wheat or transportation and other processing) would gross almost four times as much as the farmer.

So what about farm efficiency?  
"Between 1950-1958, output per farm worker increased 26 per cent, but per capita farm income dropped from \$983 to \$967 and per capita income for work done on the farm dropped from \$751 to \$658. Almost a third of the farmer's income now is for work done off the farm," the co-op council president continued.

"During 1958, farm families operating the nation's 2,213,000 commercial farms received an average income of \$5,415 while the average income of all non-farm families—including those on skid row and public relief was \$6,900," he added.

"Moreover, farmers, who are the employers or electors of all so-called farm spokesmen have the right and duty to demand they truly speak for them and to object vigorously when they do not do so," Blair reminds. And this is a good sharp point during an election year. Let's load the state legislature with people who show they have an interest in the farmer's welfare.



UNCLE DAN SEZ:  
Wal, I ain't bin over 't the coffee shop kitty-corner from the courthouse yet to get the news first hand from all them lawyer fellows. If all them judges and lawyers ever quit drinking coffee I swear South America would go broke.

I see by the papers (This ain't been confirmed at the coffee shop yet.) where them Congressmen is still talkin' about reducin' taxes. This is normal for Congress in election year. It's hard to believe that this nation was founded to get away from taxation and today that's about all we got. The American Revolution started over one tax and now we got enough of 'em to keep a revolution goin' 'til the end of time. Two lawyers I know have got their heads together again so we might expect anything—even a revolution, any day now.

Don't get to town much as I used to. Used to bring my eggs into town. But in this hot weather while waitin' for them dang traffic signals all my eggs would probably hatch. Wuz walkin' across the street the other day with an ex-mayor and complainin' about the fool traffic system they have in town. He said it's a good system. Set it up when he wuz mayor. But dang! Even he got tired of waitin' for the light to say "walk" and walked across the street before the light changed.

## GARDENING TIPS

By DON BERRY  
County Extension Agent  
REPLANT RHUBARB

If yields have been declining and stalks are becoming weak and spindly, chances are the crowns are crowding.

Plan to replant some of your acreage early next spring. Ploy out the crowns, select the best ones, and divide them into pieces having at least one strong bud.

When replanting rhubarb, farmers should give some thought to trying a small patch of the forcing varieties of Victoria, Crimson Wine and German Wine. Crowns of these varieties may be grown for two years without any stalks being harvested then plowed out in mid-winter and forced into production by Christmas. Forcing is done in any weatherproof building that can be made completely dark inside and in which a temperature of 57 to 60 degrees can be maintained. Unused chicken houses, barns, sheds, cellars are suitable.

Remove seed stalks from rhubarb as soon as they develop. Because the seed stalk is hollow, slugs may get into the stump where the seed stalk was cut off and cause damage to the crown. Pay particular attention to slug control at this time of year.

CHECK ORNAMENTALS  
Now is a good time to check roses and other ornamentals for aphids.

Curled or crinkled leaves on trees and shrubs often indicate the presence of them. Fading, browning, or drying of needles on spruce trees is another sign of aphids.

Plant lice as they are often called are most effectively controlled when sprays are applied before these symptoms appear. While not as numerous as a year ago, aphids are again infesting a variety of plants. Controlling them while infestations are light is easiest.

The mere presence of aphids indicates it's time to spray for them.

Use either Malathion or Dioxinon, or insecticide combinations containing one of them.

Follow the directions on the label for rates of applications. Repeat as often as necessary.

LILAC BLIGHT  
Another good problem is Lilac blight. The wilting or browning of lilac blooms is usually caused by lilac blight.

On young shoots, dark black streaks may show or one entire side of the shoot may be darkened. Flower buds often become blackened and tips die back.

All affected parts of the plant should be pruned out and burned as soon as noticed. Adequate spacing and pruning of lilacs to provide good air circulation is helpful.

In the fall, before the rains begin, a copper spray is recommended for lilac blight. This spray is not effective when applied at any other season.

Lilac blight is more evident during rainy springs. The cool wet weather this spring has tended to aggravate the problem.

## ARS Reports on Pear Decline To Representative Porter

A letter to Eric Allen Jr., Mail Tribune managing editor from Congressman Charles O. Porter told of a formal request he had made to Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson for a report on the extent of pear decline damage and what is being done by his department and other agencies.

In his reply to Porter's letter, E. L. Peterson, assistant secretary of agriculture stated:  
"Pear decline was observed first in the state of Washington in 1946 and has increased in intensity since that time. The Agricultural Research Service of this department has been directing attention toward this problem from its fruit research headquarters in Wenatchee, Wash., since 1956. This research is cooperative with the Washington Agricultural Experiment station.

"Pear trees showing decline symptoms similar to those observed in Washington were noted in Oregon first in 1957 and in California in 1959. During recent years the agricultural experiment stations of Oregon and California have been giving attention to pear decline problems as they occur in those states to determine the cause.

"The department is currently spending \$20,000 on the research phases of the problem. We have the needed research authority and do not feel additional legislation is necessary."

The following is a condensation of a report by the Agricultural Research Service sent to Congressman Porter:

The term "pear decline" has been given to a devastating condition of trees observed in pear orchards in Washington over a period of years. Various causes have been ascribed such as nutrition, soil moisture, "water logging" of soil, rootstocks, winter injury, insects and diseases. The occurrence of trouble in orchards resulting in weak growth and lack of production did not follow any particular pattern that would confirm any of these various factors mentioned as causes of trouble. According to growers' reports, by the early 1950s the problem seemed to be increasing. Growers then requested a study.

In August 1955 a four-man research committee was appointed to make a field study. This committee surveyed pear decline in the Yakima and Wenatchee areas in Washington and reported its findings to Dr. M. T. Buchanan, director of the Washington Agricultural Experiment station.

A research program should be started to determine the cause of trouble, this group concluded.

Eight researchers of the Washington Agricultural Experiment station and the U. S. Department of Agriculture devoted some time to pear decline work.

Evidence pointed to a scion-rootstock relationship as a possible cause. Trees propagated on Japanese rootstocks appeared to be more seriously affected than trees on French seedlings or American variety seedlings such as Bartlett or Winter Nellis. Preliminary studies did not prove transmission of a virus although they recognized possibility of a virus. It seemed clear, however, that nutrition, cultural practices and sprays used to control insects and diseases were not causal factors.

Early in 1958 Congress appropriated \$6,250 in supplemental funds for pear decline studies. These funds paid for the services of Dr. Herman Schneider, plant pathologist. He is a recognized authority on the relationship of the woody plant anatomy to certain virus diseases. He was borrowed from the Agricultural Experiment station of the University of California at Riverside. The 1959 agriculture appropriation bill directed that \$20,000 be spent on decline research.

ARS also added services of two plant pathologists from Wenatchee, Wash. They were to study any possible association of virus diseases with the pear decline problem. A horticulturist was hired to study the relationship of rootstocks to pear decline. This work is needed for informing growers who are replanting on old orchard sites or planning new orchards.

So, members of the staff of the Washington Experiment station participated. The pear processing industry and the Washington State Fruit Commission contributed funds totaling \$10,000 a year. A tract of land was provided near Prosser, Wash. to be used largely for long-term experiments relating to the decline problem. These will include studies on rootstocks and the possible role of viruses in the decline problem.

Anatomical studies showed a plugging of conducting tissue of the stock-union

that interferes with movement of food materials from the tree top to the root. This would cause starvation and dying of roots and account for tree wilting seen in some orchards. So far, work to determine if a virus is present in decline-affected trees has shown only negative results.

In December the research team stated:  
"With the information now available, it appears clear that pear decline is a bud union disorder primarily owing to undesirable root-union combinations and contributed to by one or more factors. Physiological changes at the bud union result in weakening or death of the tops.

"Factors which may contribute to the expression of the disorder include one or more of the following: winter injury, periods of high summer temperatures, water logging of soil resulting in root injury, nematodes, harmful soil fungi, viruses and toxins secreted by insects.

"The practical solution for the grower is to plant pears on their own seedling roots or on French seedling roots. In Washington pears on Pyrus ussuriensis root or Pyrus serotina root should not be planted.

"Further information is needed on the most desirable root-top combinations, requiring development of a rapid method for determining desirable root-top combinations.

"Japanese pears were used extensively as root stock in the Pacific Northwest from World War I until about 1930 when French seedling stocks were not so readily available. It is not easy to tell on affected trees just what the root stock source is.

"The Fruit and Nut Crops branch of the Agricultural Research service plans to continue its research on pear decline in the fiscal year of 1961 on the basis of the \$20,000 for 1960 expenditures," the report concluded.

## Crater FHA Finish Year's Ag Projects

By DELMER SMITH  
Crater FFA Reporter  
Central Point — Crater chapter Future Farmers of America completed their school year projects as the school year ended.

Shop projects completed included work on 11 trailers, some farm equipment overhaul and various minor projects.

Those members who completed their projects worked on various chapter and school equipment. Several members applied a new coat of paint to the chapter school bus, Clayton Barry and Jim Walker installed a wiring system in the bus so an outside electrical current could be used.

The new wiring included three circuits servicing lights and outlets. This bus is used for an office at the annual Jackson county 4-H and FFA fair, for a concessions stand at the high school ballgames, and for transporting agriculture students on field trips.

Leon Sherman designed and constructed a collapsible bed for the bus for those who want to sleep in it during the county fair.

Howard Misner, Glen Jahneke, Bill Allen and Dennis Fisher constructed a large sign with the Crater chapter's name engraved on it. This sign is 4 feet high, 8 feet wide and will be mounted on two 15 foot high timbers. It will be erected in the center of the lawn at the front of the Crater high school vocational agriculture department classrooms. A planter constructed of granite and concrete will encircle the sign.

New chapter officers just completed sessions with outgoing officers so they may have a better understanding of their office duties.

The chapter tractor has been used in numerous jobs including some home project work, custom work and work on school property. Willie Debrick and Bruce Martin have been in charge of the custom and school work.

Classroom studies for Ag I students just completed included instruction in sheep and dairy production, Ag II, Ag III and Ag IV students just completed shop work.

Supervised home farm projects of Crater chapter members now include 43 dairy animals, 60 beef, 66 head of swine, 102 head of sheep, 288 chickens, 85 rabbits, 6 goats and 3 turkeys. Crop projects for the members this year total 519 acres.

## MARKET NEWS

Special Stocker and Feeder Cattle Auction—Friday, May 20, 1960  
Anderson, California

CATTLE: Salable 920, including around 400 calves. Around 85 per cent supply stocker and feeder cattle and calves, the remainder mainly slaughter cows. Auction active, slaughter cows fully steady to strong. Stocker and feeder classes steady to strong. Supply of northern California origin.

Stocker and Feeder Steers: Several loadlots and penlots Good and Choice 300-500 lb. calves \$28.00-30.75 including a 13 head lot at \$29.75, a 15 head lot 405 lbs. at \$30.00, a 26 head lot 489 lbs. at \$30.40; small lots Common and Medium 230-350 lbs. \$24.00-27.75. Few loads and lots Good and Choice 510-600 lb. calves and yearlings \$25.00-29.75, including 22 head 522 lbs. at \$29.75, small lots 620-770 lbs. \$24.00-25.40, 14 head lot 786 lbs. at \$25.40.

Stocker and Feeder Heifers: Few loads and lots Good and Choice 300-500 lb. calves \$25.00-26.00, including 67 head 448 lbs. at \$26.10, small lots Common and Medium 300-450 lbs. \$22.00-24.80. Small lots Medium and Good 500-600 lb. yearlings \$23.00-25.30, Common \$20.00-22.50.

Stock Cows: Individuals and small lots Common and Medium \$13.00-16.00; several lots \$13.00-16.00 per head. Several lots Medium and Good with young calves, side \$17.50-20.00 per pair. Slaughter cows: Small lot Commercial 1100 lbs. \$17.80 per cwt. Please Note: Another Special Stocker and Feeder Cattle Auction at Anderson, California, is scheduled on Friday, June 3, 1960.

Red Bluff Livestock Auction Report, Tuesday, May 24, 1960  
CATTLE: Salable 920, including 250 calves. Around 80 percent of supply stocker and feeder cattle and calves, the remainder mainly slaughter cows. Auction active, slaughter cows fully steady to strong. Stocker and feeder classes steady to strong. Supply of northern California origin.

## Irrigation Tips Given By Agent Gardening Set For FFA Project By Crater Boys

By C. B. CORDY  
County Horticultural Agent

Some orchards on shallow soils light soils and where heavy cover crops have been growing, can be irrigated to advantage as soon as the first cover spray has been completed. By using stream flow water, which will be available for another two weeks, the short storage water supplies will be conserved.

Irrigate in rills which are deep enough to confine the water and permit it to soak down into the soil but which are spaced far enough apart so all the soil surface will not be saturated. Two to four rills per row will be adequate.

Most sticky soils should be cultivated but not irrigated at this time.

The current rains may seem to make irrigating unnecessary at this time but actually the amount of water falling is not sufficient to wet the soil down into the root area. Irrigating during this type of weather is actually quite desirable as the surface mulch has been moistened by the rains and it requires less irrigation water to wet the remainder of the soil.

Members of The Green Hands who are planting garden this spring are: Richard Grisson, one acre of corn; Bob Marshall, tomatoes on 100 square feet of garden; Dan Mattson, one acre sweet corn; Joe Reeder, one-fourth acre corn; Bill Schwab, one-fourth acre garden corn and Earl White, a garden plot with corn, tomatoes, melons and other vegetables.

Chapter Farmers, second year students in agriculture, who will raise garden crops are: Billy Cooper, vegetable garden; Charles Shetrone, one fourth acre of corn; and Bill Weide with one half acre of garden.

The Agriculture III group includes some old time gardeners. These boys are Don Denning, one-half acre of truck garden; Dennis Fisher, one-eighth acre of garden; Wesley Kight, 100 tomato plants; Pete Melsted, one acre of corn; Dennis Samples, 1 1/2 acres of corn and Tom White, one acre of onions. Crater FFA boys who raise these crops are encouraged by their advisors to try to find a market for their garden crops before planting them.

It is best not to dig bulbs until the tops have died down. They should then be dug only if they become crowded and produce a few small flowers or need to be moved. Annual digging is not advisable.

Further information on bulbs is contained in the U. S. Department of Agriculture leaflet, "Spring-Flowering Bulbs," or "Flori-culture" pamphlet for local gardeners, both available at the Jackson county extension office in the county courthouse in Medford, Oregon.

Purdue University agronomists report that small grain varieties are valuable for pasture, hay silage or green chopped forage when properly managed.

Weedy Lawn? Call Rayspray SP 2-9279



## DON'T GAMBLE with your fruit profits

PEARS should be protected from attack by mites. This job can be turned over to KELTHANE—the extra-safe, easy-to-use miticide. An ideal time to clean out a mite potential is in the first cover spray. To clean out the tops of trees where spray rigs may not give good coverage, a KELTHANE 4 percent dust is effective. You'll like the safety and long-residual action of KELTHANE... plus its ability to control all species of mites which attack pears with a minimum number of applications. Ask your supplier for KELTHANE now.

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