

--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Two big problems face this area's pear growers. These are pear decline and the threatened union organization of pickers. Both of these topics were on the program of last week's Oregon State Horticultural Society meeting in Corvallis. However, the panel talks on labor unions and seasonal agricultural labor drew many pear growers away from the panel on pear decline. And this problem naturally affects all of Oregon agriculture - and possibly all of U.S. agriculture.

All of the U.S., because in Corvallis Thursday the head of the Agriculture Workers Organizing committee, Norman Smith, declared it is his organization's aim to organize agricultural workers all over the U.S. as quickly as possible.

We were unable to attend the panel discussion, but a couple of people who did kindly took notes for us. We did hear Bruce Sanborne, San Francisco lawyer representing the Di Gorgio Orchards of northern and central California, relate harvest labor problems in California from the grower's view.

The San Francisco attorney urged Oregon growers to join with the California growers to fight the labor threat. "State legislation may be the answer, but it is not the ultimate answer," Sanborne pointed out. "It is more of a federal problem and federal protection is needed."

Primarily, the growers need a reasonable definition of a "labor dispute," the attorney emphasized. The California labor department will not route pickers to ranchers who have pickets around their properties. This, even though union organizers have merely set pickets without attempting any negotiations. This union tactic is merely to force the rancher to deal with the union committee and hire union workers.

Outlining his recommendations to growers, the attorney suggested: (1) legislation to protect the growers at harvest time, (2) judicial interpretation of labor regulations and particularly of the definition of labor dispute, and (3) change in government regulations.

Orchardists cannot receive Mexican National pickers while they are picketed, Sanborne explained. Since this Mexican National program is a federal one the problem must be referred back to Washington, D.C. Until this past year, agriculture has been exempt from labor regulations applying to industry. It was clearly the intent of Congress that farming be exempt from these labor regulations since agriculture is operated under conditions entirely different from industrial production.

Agriculture produces a perishable product which must be sold during the year. Market conditions dictate the prices received. Growers can't tack on increased operation and labor costs. They can't even establish or demand prices to recoup losses. Market prices fluctuate from hour to hour. Its markets are fiercely competitive strictly governed by the law of supply and demand. Farms can't be shut down during labor negotiations.

"This is not a case of more pay, more workers. Growers are always short of pickers and California growers already pay among the highest wages," Sanborne pointed out. "The tactics of organized labor to force the farmer to negotiate or lose his crops and possibly his trees is like telling a factory owner he must negotiate or lose his factory. Crops must be harvested at their peak of quality, if they are not the farmer loses the chance to earn anything further from them the rest of the year."

Sanborne took a sharp cut at California Gov. Pat Brown and "a favorable political climate for labor." Brown's policies are unsympathetic to agriculture, the attorney asserted.

When growers protested actions of the state department of labor in refusing to refer workers to picketed ranches, and protested that office's interpretation of "labor dispute," the office head told the growers to take a case to court and get a court ruling in their favor, the San Francisco attorney related. The growers took two cases to court and received favorable decisions from both. The court ruled that the Wagner-Kaiser act was not being followed and ordered the state labor office to cease its policy, the attorney said.

When the labor office still refused to comply the growers appealed the cases to higher court. The labor department refused to follow the previous ruling during the interim period. "All we asked was that the pickers be allowed to decide for themselves," Sanborne said.

Sanborne noted that growers have a big stake in their trees. It takes five years before a peach tree produces and about 15 before a pear tree hits full production. Regardless of how poor the crop is the trees must still be pruned, thinned, irrigated, sprayed and cultivated.

Celery growers in the Oxnard-Ventura area lost \$30,000 worth of celery because of picketing. A cherry grower lost \$288,400. An estimated 300 tons of freestone peaches were lost, or \$12,000 due to union action. Di Gorgio ranches near Marysville lost \$100,000. "The power to strike in agriculture is the power to destroy," the attorney insisted.

Sanborne admitted that he knew of only one case of attempted intimidation by the union. A group of union men charged into a ranch and scared the workers, he said. The man responsible for organizing this action is in jail, he said. Otherwise, pickets respected property lines and followed "an entirely peaceful policy." The growers early decided to follow the same policy, the attorney added.

In answer to questions, Sanborne said, so far the AWOC was able to organize less than 1 per cent of the farm labor force this year, but expects the AWOC efforts will continue.

Public relations are important, he said. As a result of fair treatment by the papers the public was more aware of the true situation. He advised growers attending the session to form committees and be sure their side is presented by press and television.

The organizing drive follows no pattern and hits both large and small grower, Sanborne said. A small grower signed up with the union after he had lost three olive crops.

Sanborne said the AWOC hasn't struck in Texas, Louisiana and other states using large numbers of migrant workers because California has a favorable political climate for its program and the other states do not. Another possible reason is that California workers can afford to pay higher dues, he added, in answer to a question.

The OSC home economics auditorium was packed with both vegetable and fruit growers during the panel on labor unions and seasonal agricultural labor.

Antagonism toward panel participant Norman Smith, AWOC head, was like an electric current running through the audience, an observer reported. However, in spite of this antagonistic feeling, Smith conducted himself "very well," our reporter commented. John Zuckerman, of the Council of California Growers, commented that he felt Smith is a dedicated man doing what he feels is right and the union men working with him are diligent and hard working men. However, he also pointed out that one of Smith's co-workers is now in jail for strike activity.

Smith didn't leave any illusions when he said, "We're going to stay with this job until it is done." Smith's appearance surprised many people. A large, portly man with ruddy complexion, mostly bald with fringes of gray hair and bespectacled, he resembled the local hardware merchant more than a driving union organizer.

He drew large guffaws from pear growers who have been hard-pressed in recent years when he commented, "I can't think people of the United States want yachts, swimming pools and winter vacations at the expense of some workers!"

Loud boos followed a remark that a union man is gen-

erally the best worker. Nobody could pin Smith down on what he would consider a fair wage. He did say that the AWOC was able to get an increase from 11 to 12 cents a crate at the end of the season for tomato pickers in California. Zuckerman, of the Council of Oregon Growers, said this is always true. Pickers always start low and raise their rates at the end of the season.

A Benton county public health nurse remarked that increased wages would not mean migrant workers would live any better. She told of how a family of four received \$100 from welfare and didn't show up for work for four days. Migrant workers are inclined not to spend their money wisely, she noted.

Zuckerman attacked Smith's remarks that the Mexican National program is controlling the labor market and is responsible for keeping wages of domestic workers down. Only 350 Mexican Nationals are employed in Oregon each year and represent about 2 per cent of the total labor force in California.

Although Smith said the union is "much concerned over the family farm," he admitted under the crossfire of questioning that the AWOC program is going to hurt the family farm.

Well, that's it. The pistol is cocked, aimed and the finger is on the trigger. Oregon is next. How effective pear industry public relations will be here in this crucial struggle will depend on how soon growers and packers as a whole completely drop the attitude, "It's none of your damned business!"

There are a few pear industry people here who have always been frank and open about what should be public information. (We admit there is some info which cannot be released without harming the industry), but they are too few, too few.

The wife sums up our attitude when she says, "You can't blame 'em about being cautious with their wages when it takes 15 years to put a pear tree in full production."

Hydrangea Tips Given Gardeners

By VERNON MARSHALL

November - Since I have several requests to write a few pointers on Hydrangeas, I will choose this month as starting month for this plant so that we may start at propagating period and carry you through the blooming period, including the coloring of the hydrangea blooms.

All Hydrangeas are beautiful and all are valuable to the florist whether you consider the old standby H. Otakusa, the many fine French sorts which have been introduced of late years and helped us out so much in overcoming the shortage of imported Easter stock, or the so-called hard sorts, H. paniculata grandiflora and H. arborescens grandiflora.

Let's start with propagations - Any new growth (outside of the end or terminal bud of a plant) will prove useful for propagating. The cuttings will root easily under the same conditions as carnations. Often plants which for some reason don't set flower buds, have an abundance of growth along the stems, all good for the sand bench. Also plants with flower buds furnish fine shoots, suitable for cuttings, from the base. These with a little bottom heat and a house just a little above 50 degrees will root inside of a month.

When they are well rooted, pot up the cuttings into 2 1/2 inch pots and set them in a well drained sunny place in a 50 degree room. Soil should be good sandy loam mixed with 50 per cent peat. When well established, shift them into 3 1/2 inch pots and pinch. By the middle of May they most likely can be shifted again and go outdoors, where they are best plunged up to the rim of the pots into soil in five-foot wide beds or cold-frames.

Don't overlook good drainage in the bottom of the pots. Hydrangeas love moisture, but in poorly drained soil the plants will soon get yellow colored foliage. Early propagated stock and such as has made a good growth, may be pinched again, but don't do this after June. Allow plenty of space between the plants and shift them as necessary. During the hot summer months don't merely keep the soil in the pots from drying out, but spray the plants as well. To do this toward evening is of much benefit.

While early propagated stock will naturally make the largest plants and will need more pinching than plants rooted late, even cuttings rooted during May or June are well worth growing. These can be used for four-inch pot plants with one flower head, or they may be grown with two flower heads to the plant.

Still another way to plant three rooted cuttings into an eight-inch pot or even more into a four-inch pot and keep them shifted but not pinched back. From the end of September on, start keeping the plants on the dry side to gradually ripen the wood and place them in a deep cold-frame before heavy freezing occurs. Gradually the leaves will drop and by November or when touched by a light frost - your plants will be in a dormant state. From that time on up to the middle or end of December rest them.

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Food Processing Growth In State Ties Farm-City

Corvallis - A big jump in employment during the past 10 years in Oregon's food processing industries is building a stronger dollar-tie between the state's farms and cities, says an Oregon State College agricultural economist.

Sales of Oregon farm products last year totaled \$424 million. Another \$176 million value to these products was added at the first step in marketing, reported Mrs. Elvera Horrell, OSC extension agricultural economist.

The first marketing step which plays an important part in the economy of Oregon cities includes such examples as grain storage, processing fruits and vegetables, making butter and cheese, and bottling and delivering milk.

Total value of \$600 million in farm products after the first step in marketing is second only to forests as a source of primary income and is growing rapidly as Oregon processes more of its farm output, Mrs. Horrell said.

on the Hart Schneider turkey breeding program. "One inquiry came as far away as Happy Camp, Calif. All of this response is due to the article on the Mail Tribune farm page last Tuesday," Hart said. "We've never received as much response before, even from our extensive advertising."

GARDENING TIPS

By JOHN McLOUGHLIN
County Extension Agent
TREES

It is a good practice to stake or tie all newly transplanted trees larger than one inch diameter.

This will keep the trees in position until their roots are large enough to perform this function. The roots are usually sufficiently established to remove this support after two growing seasons.

The simplest type of bracing for small trees is a stake driven into the ground on the windward side of the tree. Two stakes on opposite sides of the tree or three stakes at equidistant intervals around the tree and united by cleats with the tree supported between make excellent supports.

Precautions against trunk injury are necessary when tying the tree. Use soft rope or burlap. Wire or hard rope may be used if you run it through rubber hooping placed around the tree. Leave a little play in the line. Street trees, especially those planted in a strip without curbing are best protected from cars and bikes with the three stake method.

ARBORVITAE
The second fall spray application for control of Berckman's Blight should be applied now.

This fungus attacks all oriental arborvitae. Golden arborvitae is the most susceptible of all. Considerable damage to oriental arborvitae has resulted in this area due to this disease. For control of Berckman's Blight remove all dead and dying twigs from the bush and then spray with tribrach copper sulfate at three table-spoons per gallon of water. All oriental arborvitae, whether diseased or not, should be sprayed. If rain occurs before the spray dries on the bush apply a second application. Add a spreader sticker to the spray.

SLUG CONTROL
Slugs are one of the most common and persistent pests of home gardens in western Oregon. They are most active during the cool wet periods of the year and least active during periods of freezing or hot weather. Each individual slug is capable of laying eggs, a condition called hermaphroditism. After the first fall rains and early spring, the greatest egg laying activity occurs. The small pearl-like eggs are laid

carefully. Large squash with stem attached do not spoil as quickly as those that have lost the stem. So when moving or re-arranging squash, do not grasp with that convenient handle. Plan to use them without stems first. Protect from freezing by using plenty of paper insulation.

Apples store best at temperatures just above freezing. Not everyone has such storage available, but cool, dry storage space with some air circulation is next best. Some varieties keep better than others. But usually the small fry of the family keep storage of the family apple tree's yield from becoming a problem.

9 Million Bushels Of Grain Inspected
Salem - Almost 9,000,000 bushels of grain were inspected during October according to report by the grain inspection division of the state department of agriculture.

Portland received the largest amount of grain with a total of 8,286,665 bushels. Astoria and Pendleton offices checked in a combined amount of 468,217 bushels of wheat. Astoria had 320,550 bushels and Pendleton, 147,667 bushels. Grain coming into Portland by truck totaled 820,775 bushels; by barge, 1.4 million bushels, mostly wheat. Export shipments of inspected grain came to 6,513,965 bushels. Of this, over 5,000,000 bushels were wheat and the remainder barley.

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PEACH GROWERS SHOULD PRUNE

By DAVE PASSON
County Extension Agent

Peach growers can begin their dormant pruning now, says Dave Passon, Jackson county extension agent.

Peach tree pruning is possibly the easiest of all tree fruit pruning jobs. This is true because peaches produce the bulk of their fruit on last year's wood. Pruning of apples and pears, on the other hand, is complicated. Fruit is produced on spurs that may be from one year old to as old as the tree, says Passon.

In pruning peaches, the grower must balance his cuts to the variety, the soil, and the tree's past performance. Tree age also plays an important role. As trees become older their ability to produce new laterals diminishes.

Young peach trees should be pruned only enough to shape a strong framework. This is especially important after the trees' first year of growth, according to Passon. Later on, after a peach tree has borne fruit, pruning should be restricted to cutting out sucker growth, thinning out brushy areas, and remaining awkward or broken branches.

Summer pruning can be an aid to better tree development if handled properly, Passon says.

Persons interested in summer pruning should contact the Extension office before going ahead.

Orchard pruning demonstrations will be held later this month or early next month, reports Passon.

Al Hart, of Hart's Hatchery, just south of Medford, reported yesterday that he has received nine inquiries

for a complete feed service. About half the income from

ASC Ballots Mailed To All Farmers

A. S. C. ballots were mailed to all farmers Monday, Nov. 21. Ballots are to be returned to the county agricultural stabilization and conservation office postmarked no later than December 1, according to M. B. Caster, acting office manager.

At this election, community committees will be selected for the seven ASC communities in the county. The county convention to elect the ASC county committee will be held Dec. 20.

This "farm plant" investment now averages about \$32,000 for each of Oregon's 77,000 farm workers which includes both farmers and employed help on farms. By comparison, factories throughout the country have an average investment of about \$16,000 for each worker.

Value of Oregon's farm land and buildings, machinery, and livestock reached \$2 1/2 billion last year - equal to 70 per cent of the total personal income after taxes of all Oregonians.

Efficiency resulting from this combined farm-city "agri-business" has boosted the output per-man-hour from farms nearly 70 per cent in the past 10 years.

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