



GRAND CHAMPION—Michael Clark, of the Oak Grove district, Medford, showed his 1,535 pound Angus bull in the Midco Purebred association show and sale Dec. 7 in The Dalles and took the grand championship for the Angus breed. Clark is a 1954 graduate of the Crater high school FFA and vocational agriculture classes.

Young Breeder Gets Championship

A young part-time farmer from Madrona lane, Medford, came home with the grand championship for Angus after entering his Angus bull in the Midco Purebred association show early this month. Michael Clark, an employee in the engineering department

of the Camp White Veterans Administration domiciliary, hopes to do as well in the Klamath Falls, Oregon Angus association sale scheduled for March. However, he already has some championship rosettes hanging on his wall. These include the reserve grand championship at the Josephine county fair and the reserve junior championship in the Oregon State Angus sale last year.

Young Clark was graduated from Crater high school in Central Point in 1954. He got his start with Angus under the FFA and vocational agriculture program then. He has been a part-time farmer and full-time employee in the Camp White domiciliary engineering department since his four years in the Air Force.

Aiming at Breeding

Clark is aiming at a breeding business and while not working at the domiciliary is trying to raise bulls and sell them. His father, Lewis Clark, has a 100-acre dairy farm where the young breeder lives and keeps his stock. His herd includes 22 head of cows and calves, built up since he started raising steers in 1948.

Clark's advice to other young farmers starting out is to buy only good stock, keep the best bulls and take good care of them. "I like Angus since this breed is naturally polled (no horns), have very little calving trouble - have smaller calves and due to their black color don't get pinkeye," the young breeder said. "I never had any trouble getting loans. My full-time job helps. I also keep detailed records."

Clark observed that popularity of Angus in the valley is growing. Ten years ago there were hardly any Angus herds and now there are a number of them, he noted.

Short Course Set For Seed Growers On Jan. 19-20

Corvallis-Oregon's \$30 million seed industry, shooting for increased foreign sales, hopes to squeeze more efficiency from its already highly developed seed processing plants.

A seed processors short course at Oregon State college, Jan. 19 and 20, will present new research on seed cleaning and discussions of warehouse management, marketing regulations, and other operations affecting Oregon's competitive position in domestic and foreign trade.

Local seed growers meeting recently at Portland tabbed Africa, the Far East, and Latin American countries as outlets for increased Oregon seed sales, but noted that both Canada and Europe were streamlining their seed industries in a bid for these markets.

Jesse E. Harmond, OSC agricultural engineer and chairman of the short course, said the two-day course includes morning lecture sessions and afternoon demonstrations on seed processing, plus a school on seed identification by the OSC official seedtesting laboratory.

New Methods Listed

New methods of separating different kinds of seeds involve principles of electronics, magnetic response, electrical vibration, dimensional differences in seed, and pneumatic process. Other topics are use of multi-wall bags for seed handling, maintenance of air-screen machines for cleaning seed, and fluorescent tests for seed viability.

Also scheduled for discussions are U.S. department of agriculture seed laws and regulations, and management and bookkeeping records for small seed cleaning plants.

Seed certification, seed-borne diseases, and control of insects, rodents and other hazards in seed cleaning plants are among topics slated for the course.

Harmond urges all persons interested in any phase of the seed industry to enroll. Housing reservations should be made with J. Ritchie Cowan, farm crops department, Oregon State College, Corvallis.

Old Water Group Meets Tonight

A meeting will be held at 8 o'clock tonight in the Sams Valley Grange hall to reactivate the old Sams Valley-Beagle Water Development association, according to County Commissioner Ralph James.

"We feel that reactivation of this group will give us more of a voice as the plans for the Rogue River basin project come closer to completion," James said. The group was active in 1950. Ben Day, Medford attorney, is president, and Ralph James, secretary-treasurer.

--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

The AWOC is coming into Medford next year to organize the pickers. And when it does, it probably will be tied in with the Teamsters union.

This we learned after talking over the problem with a union source. We quoted an article published in the Oregonian earlier last week and received only an amused smile from a union member as an answer. A newly organized union group must have a certain minimum membership to qualify for a union charter. After that it's not likely that the AWOC will disintegrate as the Portland newspaper claims it is. According to our sources, "practically all of the pickers in California" are organized.

We saw the little green cards with AWOC stamped on the outside. Dues are \$2 a month and can be paid when the picker is able to, we were told by a shop steward. The pickers apparently feel that the union is their only salvation. If the teamsters join forces with the AWOC the pickers will have a mighty strong bargaining weapon. If and when that happens, then we'll again see Richard Carney, Portland attorney who has been so ably defending O. H. Bengtson, Medford Attorney. Carney handles the legal work for the Teamsters.

The people we talked to also saw "Harvest of Shame" on television. They feel, as we do, that the Ed Morrow film showed conditions much worse than those on the Pacific Coast. Conditions here aren't that bad, but could stand considerable improvement.

We visited with some pickers who stopped in one of the local trailer camps while en route to another harvest area. They had been delayed, but were looking forward to picking orange in California. The trailer we sat in was so spotted that you could have eaten off the floor. The two families we interviewed were dressed inexpensively, but cleanly and neatly. If you saw them in town, you would probably figure they were people from small ranches here. They emphasized repeatedly they pick because they would rather do that than anything else. In fact, one of the husbands was working temporarily in a lumber mill and didn't like it.

What kind of life do they lead? Talking to these two families we got the picture of open highways, picking fruit under sunny skies while children played near the trees, and a group of friendly migratory workers always willing to help one another in a pinch. Their two main complaints were poor living quarters and unfair picking foremen.

Our two families, typical of Pacific Coast pickers, follow a regular circuit. They pick citrus fruit in California all winter, which allows their children to stay in the California schools through the school year. Then, late in May, they start thinning peaches in California, around Modesto, Marysville and Yuba City, then pick them. Next they move into the cherries around Stockton, move to Oregon's Junction City, Salem and may go as far as The Dalles for cherries. During this period, some may pick beans in eastern Oregon and Washington. They come down to Medford to pick pears. After the pear harvest they shift to olives in northern California, then to oranges and other citrus fruit.

"We would stay longer in Medford if we had better living quarters and working conditions," one of the women pickers told us. "When you figure it costs \$30 to \$50 to move from one area to another it pays to stay in one spot as long as you can."

These people complained of paying \$35 a month for cabins with warped floors, infested with bugs and having only an outside toilet. This doesn't include heat and electricity. They weren't complaining of wages as much as the unreasonableness of some ranch foremen. Some get trees loaded with fruit and others get "thin" trees. It all depends on how you stand with the crew foreman, regardless of how efficient you are at picking or how many years you have been returning to a particular orchard. An average pear picker can make from \$8 to \$15 a day or \$90 a week, they told us. They figure they can make \$15 to \$25 a day in cherries, and some, \$30 to \$50 a day.

These pickers complain of being forced to use Canadian buckets, which are bigger than U.S. buckets, for picking fruit in other areas. They tell of pickers quartered in bunkhouses without heat or blankets, forced to eat green beans all mixed in with scrambled eggs, of room rents and groceries suddenly going up in price as the pickers move into an area. These people feel they are doing an honest day's work and should be treated as well as anybody else working for wages. One of the husbands is a trained flight-line electrician from large aircraft plants, but prefers the freedom of a picker's life.

Our two pear grower friends can say "we told you so." Suggestions for improved picker conditions made by these two families interviewed correspond exactly with their's. These are: establish a large, central migratory labor camp and set picking rates according to tree harvest conditions. These people propose an area which would include attractive parking sites for house trailers or family type houses, plus an attractive but practical barracks for single men. They would set picking scales according to whether each orchard has good or poor crops and how easily trees are picked. Such a picking scale should be worked out with a representative of the pickers and the grower, they suggest. Such a scale should be based on what an average picker can make and what the best picker can possibly earn, they added.

Now, hang onto your hats! California farmers have proposed something very similar. They have set up their own employment service as part of a four-point program. Idea is to provide a readily available pool of domestic workers for farmers throughout the state, according to a California newspaper. The over-all program is designed "to improve the lousy image the public has of the farmer," according to John V. Newman, a Ventura citrus grower, president of the Council of California Growers.

Other parts of the program are: health insurance for migrant workers, paid in part by farmers and in part by workers, a drive to persuade government authorities to provide housing for migrant families, a campaign to obtain adequate public schooling for the children of roving field hands.

This new employment service will be run by the California Growers Farm Labor committee which has been in the forefront of the farmers' battle against organizing efforts of the Agricultural Workers Organizing committee of the AFL-CIO. The farmers voted the program in after a recommendation by the council.

The health insurance proposal would pay premiums for the migrant workers, but not for his family, while he is working for the farmer. The next farmer would take over the premiums while the migrant worker is employed by him. When unemployed, the worker pays his own premium.

Incidentally, the pickers interviewed thought the workers should be charged rent for housing at the labor camp. They don't want free quarters to be considered part of their wages. Also, any picker can get a good education if he want it, trouble is some don't, they pointed out.

One prominent packing house operator replied that there are three or four growers who have housing and working conditions the rest of the industry is not proud of. However, the vast majority do their best to provide sanitary and neat housing. Picking rates are adjusted if some trees, such as those on ditch banks, are harder to pick than others, he said referring to his own orchard. The state of Oregon has strict regulations on housing, sanitation facilities and on the vehicles which carry pickers, he added.

On the light side—"The cow is a mobile animated machine, housed in unprocessed leather. On one end it is equipped with a mower, a grinder, and other standard equipment, including bumpers, headlights, wing flaps, and fog horn. "At the other end is a milk dispenser and insect repeller.

'Pear Decline' in Valley Takes 250 Acres of Trees, Cordy Says

More than 250 acres of Rogue valley pear trees have been destroyed by "pear decline" during the past two years, and another 750 to 1,750 acres of trees can be expected to be similarly destroyed, according to Cliff Cordy, county horticultural agent.

Cordy made these observations at the Medford Chamber of Commerce round table luncheon Monday in the Jackson hotel. He had been called on to explain pear decline.

Cordy said pear decline has been defined as "any malady that attacks a pear tree for which there was no known or obvious cure." He noted that this is a poor definition because it implies "ignorance."

Although something is known about the disease, Cordy said there is not, nor probably will be, a cure for pear decline.

Recent Years Threat He said pear decline has only become a threat to the valley's pear crop in recent years. It started several years ago in Washington and then slowly worked its way south, he said, finally hitting California "with a whallop" last year.

Local growers became concerned about the disease in 1953, he said, and pooled \$28,000 and employed a Southern Oregon college professor to study pear decline.

Asked just how serious the disease is, Cordy replied that Yakima, Wash., was hit so hard that the canneries closed down. The Yakima pear output declined from a "normal" 180,000 tons a year to last year's 25,000 ton output. This was probably the low point in its pear production, he said.

Kind of Virus Cordy said pear decline is thought to be a kind of virus, distributed by bugs, that attacks the roots of the pear tree. Although probably all trees now contain the virus, only those trees with certain kinds of roots are susceptible to the disease and will die.

Cordy elaborated on this and explained that each pear tree is started from a seedling root, some of which are imported from other countries.

In order to grow the local Comice, D'Anjou and Bartlett trees, they are grafted onto the seedling root from which they then grow. If the seedling root is susceptible to the disease, then the entire tree is doomed.

Cordy said the most susceptible of these seedling roots are apparently two varieties imported from China. There are two other Chinese varieties, he said, which are not susceptible.

Certain To Die Trees growing on these two varieties, he said, are certain to die. Another variety, this one coming from France, is apparently susceptible to the extent of 5 to 10 per cent, he said.

It is not known exactly how many of the valley's pear trees were started from any particular root, and it can only be guessed as to the exact number of trees that will be affected by pear decline.

But, it is estimated, he said, that there are from 500 to 1,000 acres of valley trees that grow on the susceptible Oriental roots. Adding the 5 to 10 per cent of French root trees, this will mean that a total of 1,000 to 2,000 acres of valley trees will eventually be destroyed, he said.

Economic Loss If these figures are correct, Cordy said, it will mean a loss to the valley economy of from \$2 million to \$2½ million. The 250 acres that have already been destroyed, he said, represent a loss to the valley of more than \$300,000. Contained on these 250 acres were approximately 17,500 trees, or 2½ per cent of the valley's total number of trees.

Cordy noted that probably no one valley orchard contains all susceptible trees. He did say that some orchards contain up to 25 per cent susceptible Oriental root trees.

Although there is no cure for pear decline, Cordy said, "we have learned how to evade it."

An experimental fruit tree farm, established here in 1918 by Professor Reimers, he said, has proved valuable in determining which kind of seedling roots are resistant to pear decline.

'Old-Home' Variety The best of these, Cordy said, is an "old-home" variety eastern seedling which is used as an inter-stock in the trees. An inter-stock seedling, he explained, is a seedling grafted onto the original seedling. The final seedling, such

as the Comice or Bartlett, is then grafted on to the inter-stock seedling.

It has been found, he said, that the old-home variety inter-stock seedling grows roots of its own, so that when the susceptible original root is struck and killed by pear decline the tree can continue to grow on the interstock roots without any apparent harm to the tree itself.

Nurseries are now being encouraged to graft the interstock roots onto the original roots, he said.

Start Planting Program Cordy said the Rogue valley is fortunate to have started a tree-planting program several

years ago, using trees that would not be susceptible to pear decline.

This means then, he said, that in a few years, new trees will be coming into production at about the same rate as the susceptible trees are going out of production. Cordy pointed out that it will take from 10 to 15 years for the new trees to start paying for themselves because of their slow growth rate in the valley. He noted that Rogue valley trees grow much slower than those in California.

"We will lose faster than we will gain for awhile," Cordy said, "but fortunately, we have a head start."

GARDENING TIPS

By JOHN McLOUGHLIN
County Extension Agent

It is a matter of time before many of our house plants such as Dracena, Dieffenbachia and rubber plant grow out of place in the area of our homes we had originally planned for them. Two ways to cope with this problem would be to buy new plants and discard the old ones or to propagate new plants. I believe most home gardeners would receive more satisfaction trying to propagate new plants.

The method I would use to propagate would be air layering. The materials required for air layering are sphagnum moss, twine, an impervious covering material such as plastic and a sharp knife. Peat moss or sawdust may be found to be satisfactory substitutes for the sphagnum moss.

The air layering method is as follows. Make a slanting cut extending one-third into the stem of the plant at the desired location for root formation. For rubber plants this cut would be nine to 15 inches below the growing tip, in Dracena and Dieffenbachia just below the lowest leaf. It would be advisable to make the cut slightly below the node.

Put in Splint

After the cut is made, place a splint in the cut to prevent the plant tissues from mending. Hormone powder may then be applied to the area. Wrap this area with two handfuls of wet sphagnum moss. Tie the moss firmly in place with the twine and then wrap the moss ball with the plastic. The purpose of

the plastic is to keep the moss constantly moist throughout the period of root formation. Leave a little hole on top in case additional water need be added.

The new roots should be sufficiently formed in eight weeks. However, do not remove the new plant until a good root system is visible in the moss. At this time cut the new plant below the new roots and pot. Remove the plastic and cut the twine before potting but do not disturb the moss ball. Pay added attention to the new plant until good root development has occurred.

THROUGHOUT DECEMBER

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