

Good Time Now To Fertilize With Nitrogen

By EUGENE WINTERS
County Extension Agent

The latter part of February and first part of March is a good time to apply nitrogen fertilizers to improved irrigated pastures.

Irrigated pastures in Jackson county are generally planted to Ladino Clover, or Birdsfoot Trefoil and Alta fescue, orchard grass, perennial ryegrass or meadow fxtall. Fertilizing weeds or weedy grasses seldom pay.

Improved pastures with a good stand of clover or lotus and perennial grasses in the proportion of about half grass and half legume will benefit appreciably with a fertilizer program consisting of between 30 and 40 pounds of actual nitrogen before the middle of March. Applications of lime, phosphorous, potassium and boron should be based upon soil test reports.

Thirty to 40 pounds of sulfur should be included in the fertilizer program each year. Sulfur can be included generally with other spring applied fertilizer materials.

No Superiority

Oregon State college soil scientists have found little basis for claiming superiority of one kind of nitrogen fertilizer over another. In 65 field experiments in Oregon, no one nitrogen fertilizer was consistently better than another when the fertilizer was applied properly. Fertilizers compared included: ammonium nitrate, urea, ammonium sulfate, calcium nitrate, anhydrous ammonia, and aqua ammonia.

Regardless of the type of nitrogen fertilizer used, farmers can expect less than five per cent loss of nitrogen to the air when the fertilizer is applied properly to the soil.

When nitrate nitrogen is applied to soils wet enough to have a poor supply of oxygen, when ammonium forms of nitrogen and urea are left on the surface of soils with a pH above 7.0, and when high rates of urea are left on the surface of acid, sandy-textured, moist soils at high temperatures (vegetable cover will reduce this urea loss).

Losses from urea should not be expected when irrigation or rain immediately follow application.

Researchers found some experiments where one source of nitrogen gave better results than other sources. But in every case there were other experiments where this source of nitrogen wasn't superior.

On the basis of this recent study, OSC researchers came to this conclusion—the nitrogen fertilizer that costs the least for each pound of actual nitrogen applied to the soil is usually the best. Costs of transportation, handling, and application should be included in figuring cost.

Of course, there are items other than cost to keep in mind. The value of other plant nutrients—such as sulfur—in some nitrogen fertilizers should be recognized, but only if that plant nutrient is needed in the soil on which the fertilizer is to be applied.

Pears Have Future In Willamette Valley

"In the face of a mild pear planting boom, the first one in 30 years," Henry Hartman, Oregon State college horticulturist urged Willamette valley growers to be cautious.

The horticulturist who is working on the pear decline research in the Rogue valley made this statement at the Mid-Willamette pear meeting in Salem last week.

Sharp drops in pear production in the Rogue valley, Washington and California has brought a current flurry of increased demand for Willamette valley pears not affected by pear decline, Hartman noted.

"However, growers in those areas are not discouraged. They are replacing lost trees,"

Cost of Living Increases Pass By Farmer

Corvallis—Cost of living increases—those built-in escalators in the weekly pay check—bypassed the farmer almost completely during the past 10 years.

Net income for the average farm operator increased only 3 per cent since 1950, reports M. D. Thomas, Oregon State College extension agricultural economist. In the face of rising living costs, this meant the farm family income in 1960 would buy 13 per cent less than in 1950.

At the same time, the average person working off-farm for wages or salary earned about 50 per cent more in 1960 than in 1950. Allowing for inflation, this provided about one-fourth more real income.

The big squeeze on the farmer came with rising operating costs coupled with lower prices for the things he raised.

Main cost gains have been interest on borrowed funds, property taxes, and wages of hired workers, according to a recent national survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wages Up

Wage rates for farm workers were up nearly 50 per cent and factory products used on the farm showed increases ranging from 5 per cent on fertilizer to 40 per cent on farm machinery.

Those items needed for production which showed decreased costs, themselves originated on the nation's farms. Feed, seed, and feeder livestock prices in 1960 were lower than in 1950 by 7 to 11 per cent.

Cost items which have shown little change in recent years include prices of motor vehicles, gasoline, oil, tires, and building materials, Thomas noted.

The farm production cost picture is outlined in the current issue of Oregon farm and market Outlook published by OSC extension service. The outlook also includes a detailed report on trends in fruit and vegetable production and marketing. Free copies of the outlook circular may be obtained from local county extension offices.

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--- CHIT CHAT ---

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

While the farmer is being careful to see that people don't get the wrong impression of him, he should be equally careful to see he doesn't spread the wrong impression about people who affect his operation.

Farmers and their families have long resented being stereotyped as "hayseeds." The farm family is as well-dressed or perhaps even better dressed than the city dwellers; the farm home has all the modern conveniences, the pickup truck is as smartly streamlined as any passenger car.

Therefore, the farmer should be careful he doesn't describe or refer to his associates in stereotyped descriptions, also. Too often, we have heard farmers say that as soon as they fix their fences and paint their barns their taxes will go up. This is deliberately spreading a false impression.

We were somewhat concerned when we read Wheeler McMillen's column in the February issue of the Farm Journal. We are glad he labelled one item as "Farm Fable for February." That's what it is, a fable. But it's the kind of fable too many people take as the gospel truth.

The column tells of how a farmer's wife nagged her husband until he cleaned up his trashy barnyard, painted and repaired his fences and buildings and even landscaped the premises. The assessor came along and raised his taxes, according to this yarn. Then a rich city man drove by, admired the farm and bought it for twice as much. Moral to the story was even if a wife is wrong, she will turn out right.

In case you didn't know, the assessor doesn't raise the taxes on your farm property or anybody else's property. He merely determines the value. You raise your own taxes in any county when you vote for increased governmental services and expenditures, new school buildings, improved roads, etc. Fortunately in this county O and C timber receipts finance county roads, some timber receipts even help support the schools and timber receipts are used also to finance the operation of county offices.

As we have tried to bring out in the series of land appraisal problems we have been running on this page, there are many, many factors to consider in establishing the appraised valuation of land. It's this appraised valuation which forms the base for your property tax. Levies made by such special districts as fire, water, and irrigation also affect your property tax.

Incidentally, we were interested in the comment of Arnold Bohnert, Central Point area farmer, when asked by the home rule committee if county expenditures are inclined to go up since they are not tax supported. He replied if we did not have the O and C funds county expenditures would probably be held at lower levels. Bohnert is a member of the county budget committee which sets the budgets for all county offices.

Personally, we hope we aren't riding too high on a "bubble" of economy. Other counties are pressing for state laws to share these timber receipts. Lumber companies who pay the money for cutting the government timber report a bad year. A portion of what they pay for the government timber goes to the county so this could have a serious effect.

Anyway, what we are getting at—the farmer should not continually kick a man in the seat of the pants, when he depends on this man's governmental services. The local assessor's office contains a highly skilled, conscientious crew anxious to set a fair tax value on farm land and any other property. Such silly stories about taxes going up every time a farmer paints his fence or barn do not help relations between the farmer and assessor's office. The assessor deserves a pat on the back, not a figurative kick in the pants. This, too, is good public relations.

And while we are on this theme, it seems to us that irrigation district managers should receive more appreciation than they do. They, like the county agents and experiment station personnel, are vital to the farmer's welfare and agricultural progress. The irrigation district manager is responsible for regulation of water flow and maintenance of the vital agricultural arteries of ditches and canals.

The county agent may be presented with a gold watch or some other symbol of appreciation upon retirement. If the irrigation district manager is able to survive the continual pressure from those who want more than their share of water and the continual stream of complaints on other matters, he is allowed to limp off to seclusion.

We heard about a man out our way who is planning to return to dairy farming after being out of it a little while. He's been selling farm machinery. He had another farmer over to do some part-time work on his barn and milking shed.

This brings up two points: the dairy business must be improving and the number of farmers doing part-time work. Dairy farmers must still be in the firm grip of the cost-price squeeze. OSC reports that the state has fewer milk cows than expected earlier and fewer of them than in any previous year since 1914, according to the latest USDA estimate revised on the basis of the 1959 census of agriculture. And, nationally, the milk cow inventory is the smallest since 1909.

OSC Ag Economist Stephen C. Marks gives the reasons as technological changes and the cost-price squeeze on dairy farmers during the post-World War II years and producing cattle for beef has been more rewarding in recent years.

Another OSC report states that milkfat receipts are slightly below a year earlier. Receipts of milkfat in manufacturing milk during September, 1960 were 3 per cent more than the same month a year earlier, but receipts of butterfat in cream were 10 per cent lower. The January-September accumulated totals showed one per cent more fluid milk, but 5 per cent less butter fat in cream compared with the same period last year. Milk production is unchanged from last year.

Better management on the farm doesn't always produce the extra needed greenbacks. New money is needed. This means either the farmer or wife, or both, must work off the farm, or new ideas to produce more farm money must be found. A few months ago we mentioned "cow-sitting" as explained in the Ford farm almanac. This means that when the farmer wants to take a week end off, he hires a man to take care of his cows. This means extra money for the farmer who has the time.

Other people in this area have squeezed their feed costs by feeding dried cull pears to beef and porkers. We know of another farmer who invented a corn drying machine which uses the gases from sewage wastes for power. He did custom drying for farmers. The dairy farmer we wrote of earlier probably will continue to sell farm machinery and have his teen-age son handle many of the farm chores.

Near the Sun Valley, Idaho, winter resort many farm families rent rooms to skiers who don't want to pay the higher resort prices. With the development of one or two winter recreation areas here, nearby farmers might follow suit.

Before he left for school in California, County Agent Don Berry was trying to get more fruit growers to use sour cherry trees for interplanting. There is at least one flower bulb farm here that we know of. Perhaps other people could grow bulbs on part of their acreage to earn a little additional money. These are just a few ideas of probably hundreds which could become profitable. As farmers are finding out, it takes ingenuity to keep ahead of the mortgage.

Garden Tips

By JOHN W. McLOUGHLIN
County Extension Agent

ROSE PRUNING

Now is the time to prune roses. Since flowers are produced on new wood, prune annually to encourage strong new flowering wood.

There are basic pruning principles to follow on all hybrid tea roses. First, remove all dead or diseased wood, suckers, and any canes crossing the center of the plant. Suckers are distinguished from canes in that they originate below the bud union and have seven leaflets. Canes originate above the bud union and have five leaflets.

Remove old canes in proportion to the amount of new canes being formed to retain the balance of the bush. Prune new canes back to one outside bud 12 to 18 inches above the base of the plant.

Demonstrations

Rose pruning demonstrations will be held at the following times and places:

Saturday, March 4-10 a.m., rose garden, Lithia park, Ashland, corner of Nutley st. and Winburn Way and 2 p.m., public library, Medford.

Monday, March 6-1 p.m., public library, Medford, and at 3 p.m., rose garden, Lithia park, Ashland, across from tennis courts.

LANDSCAPE

A home landscape course has been scheduled for 1 p.m. on March 29, 1961 at the Jackson county courthouse auditorium.

Mrs. Fred Lorish will be the instructor. Persons interested in attending should forward a postcard containing their name, address and phone number to County Extension Service, P.O. Box 1069, Medford, Oregon.

LAWN SEED

Quality is the all important word in purchasing lawn seed. Consider the guaranteed purity and germination of the seed and its adaptability to this area.

Bluegrasses (Kentucky, Newport, Merion) and fescues (Allahee, Rainier, Chewings) are preferred for new plantings.

Because of the intense management required for success with bentgrasses in this area, they are not recommended.

Home owners purchasing bargain lots of seed are buying seed with a poor growth

Coordinated Plans Laid Out For Battling Pear Decline

Coordinated plans for combating the pear decline problem are continuing among California, Oregon and Washington top level agricultural administrators.

A revised request for allocation of funds on the state level for pear decline research has yet to be worked out in all details, it was reported.

During a meeting in Berkeley, Calif., on Feb. 17 agricultural administrators of the three western pear-growing states and the U.S. Department of Agriculture laid plans to coordinate the overall pear decline research project to make the most efficient use of funds available.

This malady, first observed in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, invaded California last year. Surveys show losses in excess of \$3 million in California.

Approximately 30 administrators and pear experts from the three states met in Berkeley earlier this month. It was agreed each of the three states' experiment stations, the USDA and the California Department of Agriculture will take one portion of the research project.

To Pool Results

The results will be pooled in hopes of finding the quickest possible remedy.

Paul F. Sharp of the California Agricultural Experiment station was host. The three western states account for 90 per cent of the pear production in the United States.

"I think one of the important results of this meeting was the exchange of ideas among the research people and the realization that even before this meeting, the work on pear decline research was well coordinated," Sharp commented.

"If California's pear producers are to survive, a remedy for pear decline must be found and toward that end the University of California Agricultural Experiment station has organized an all-out

rate, small amount of pure grass seed or a lot of weed seed. A seed bag containing one quarter of one per cent (.025%) of weed seeds is enough to sow five or more weeds per square foot.

research program guided by a statewide committee. Dr. T. A. Shalla, of Davis, is chairman," the experiment station director said.

Committee personnel include economists, representatives of the extension service, irrigation specialists, entomologists, plant pathologists, pomologists, and a plant nematologist from Berkeley, Davis and Riverside. The California State Department of Agriculture, the states of Oregon and Washington, and the United States Department of Agriculture have designated representatives to work with the California research committee.

Survey Conducted

A total of 181 pear orchards—25,000 trees—were included in a statewide survey. This was to obtain accurate data on distribution of pear decline in California, its rate and pattern of spread, and its relation to rootstocks, cultural practices, soil types, and so forth. The orchards surveyed were selected at random in each county from orchards producing 100 or more tons during the 1959 season, Sharp said. Such orchards comprise about 85 per cent of the total California acreage. Each tree was graded as to degree of decline and a record made as to whether it was quick decline or slow decline.

Other data obtained in the orchards examined included variety, age, rootstocks, and interstocks, soil type, culture, method of irrigation, frequency and amounts of water used, location of diseased trees according to position in orchard. Other information gathered included amount and types of fertilizers, spray program in insecticides, fungicides, orchard location and types of soil management, Sharp said.

California researchers decided that from the Washington experience it is highly probable that all pear trees on Oriental rootstocks, and a certain amount on imported French, may be killed eventually by decline.

The California experiment station head stated since decline spread has been so rapid "there is every indication" that no area will escape pear decline. Reddening of pear foliage in the fall occurs as a result of girdling or root in-

jury. This may indicate impending decline.

Checking Insects

Researchers in California are also trying to find the insect which may be responsible for spreading the decline. However, spread of the pear decline has been so rapid and extensive insect control is not promising as a partial solution.

Experiments are being conducted to test insect species possibly responsible for spreading decline such as aphids, leafhoppers and the pear psylla, Sharp explained.

Only practical means now of controlling pear decline is by replanting on resistant rootstocks such as Old Home now being propagated at the Southern Oregon Branch Experiment station. There are approximately 30,000 pear trees on Old Home roots in the Medford area unaffected by decline, the California agricultural authority stated.

Although the rootstock being developed here is disease free, California growers have somehow obtained Old Home stock with a vein-yellow virus which causes reduced vigor or stunted trees, particularly in Comice and D'Anjou, California also has found Bartlett trees on Old Home roots with a high rate of measles. This is believed to be caused by a virus which may reduce the pear crop by one-third to one-half.

"The extensive studies under way are designed to find the factors causing pear decline, as well as to eliminate those which are not," the experiment station director concluded.

Eisenhower Denies

Kennedy Criticism

Palm Springs, Calif. — (UPI) — Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower has categorically denied criticism of the Kennedy administration attributed to him by Sen. Karl E. Mundt (R-S.D.).

In one of the few prepared statements he has issued since arriving on vacation at this desert resort Feb. 8, Eisenhower described Mundt's report as inaccurate, saying he has so far made no judgment of the new administration.

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