

Rogue Soil District Tells Of Drainage Progress Made

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The Rogue soil conservation district has made good progress in the last 18 months on drainage problems in the Bear Creek valley.

Some of the major accomplishments include assignment of an irrigation and drainage engineer to the soil conservation district, securing use of a power auger from the county court. (This facilitates drainage investigations), mapping of drainage problem areas, and design and installation of the lines on some farms.

Drainage has been a serious problem to farmers and orchardists in the valley for years. The Talent project calls for addition of approximately 50 per cent more water to the valley. The idea of the additional water without a planned program of water application to avoid excessive use and underground seepage disturbed many established farmers, irrigation district managers, soil conservation district officials.

Irrigation Districts Help

The major irrigation districts in the valley joined in forming an irrigation and drainage committee to work on the problem. This committee consists of Dave Lowry, Don Minear, Cloc Small, Paul Culbertson and Otto Bohner. It decided that immediate assistance is needed to work on the problem and an action program should be underway before delivery of the Talent project's additional water.

This same group met with the soil conservation service officials and requested engineering assistance. T. P. Helseth, state conservationist, assured the committee of help for this special work if there were sufficient local support to justify it. He also pointed out that detailed drainage investigations are required in this area to assure satisfactory drainage projects. Use of manpower to drill the required holes for this investigation seemed impractical, he said. The committee then asked the county court for support and help in getting a power auger to make the drainage investigations possible.

F. H. Latham, irrigation and drainage engineer, was assigned to the study on a full time basis as a result of this assurance of local help. Obtains Auger

Shortly after Latham arrived, the county court obtained the specially designed power auger for the drainage investigations and for foundation studies for county roads and bridges.

Since assignment to the Rogue district, Latham has marked off major areas of the valley according to soils

characteristics and complexity of drainage problems.

The power auger has been used for drilling and soils studies on 23 farms. The soils on these farms were classified as to drainability. The design was completed and lines installed on 12 farms. Drainage studies are still in progress on the remaining farms.

The largest single drainage problem area in the valley lies west of Central Point and Medford, the survey indicated. This area represents approximately 10,000 acres. Investigations indicate that drainage might be accomplished on this block of land by placement of tile lines 8 to 10 feet deep and at approximately right angles to the direction of the underground seepage.

These tile lines would outlet into Jackson, Griffin or Bear creek. Assurance of proper outlets for these lines would require deepening and maintenance of portions of the channels of these creeks.

Not all of the soils or farms in the area are poorly drained. However, such problems as outlets for tile lines and creek channel improvement work might involve and benefit most farms.

The soil conservation district's proposal to correct the drainage problem in the major area by laying deep tile and improving the creek channels, as been discussed with county health authorities, the county court and some farmers and orchardists in the valley. Most of these people with whom the problem has been discussed showed a keen interest in the proposal.

It appears now that the most feasible approach to the problem in this large area would be through the small watersheds program under Public Law 566. Through this program the federal government could contribute approximately 40 per cent of the cost and a long-term loan with low interest rates could finance such a project.

Public demand and formation of a water control district would be required before assistance would be made available through the small watershed program.

Small poorly drained areas and individual farms needing drainage were found in many other parts of the valley. The drainage work on these small areas or individual farms can be accomplished and financed by the individual farmer, in cooperation with local agricultural conservation programs and the Rogue soil conservation district.

The same general type of investigation is usually required to determine the manner in which soils might be drained regardless of location in the valley or size of the area involved.

The soil pattern in south-

western Jackson county is variable and complex. Therefore, detailed investigation is generally necessary to take the guess work from installation of drainage systems.

Drainage investigations normally include drilling of holes at intervals to determine drainability of the soil, depth to water-bearing strata and location of sub-surface dikes of rock or clay. Water table readings in the holes provide information on variation in water table levels as affected by irrigation and winter rains, and the amounts of water to be removed from the subsoil. All of this information is necessary to judge the location, depth and size of the tile line required.

Independent Solutions

Farmers can do much on their own to correct or prevent drainage problems. Irrigating by proper method for existing soil conditions and applying only the needed amount of water are simple things. However, these measures if followed can contribute greatly in reducing drainage problems.

Irrigation water should be applied according to soil type and for the crop grown. Heavy soils hold more water and don't need to be irrigated as frequently as light soils.

Water should not be applied before it is needed by the crop. However, crops should not be allowed to wilt. Over irrigation reduces the yield just as surely as under irrigation.

Soil augers or probes can be used to check soil moisture conditions. By simple observations and feel one can determine when to irrigate.

Soil conservation service technicians or county agents will assist in explaining how to make these simple tests. The SCD will assist in planning and layout for proper irrigation systems so water can be controlled and applied properly.

To prevent winter rain from contributing unnecessarily to the drainage problem, small ditches should be installed from low spots or swales to allow free drainage from the soil surface. Major ditches and natural waterways should be kept open to permit water discharge.

Land-owners or operators in the county having irrigation or drainage problems are encouraged to contact one of their soil conservation district supervisors, a county agent, the agricultural stabilization and conservation committee office or the soil conservation service. Representatives of these offices will assist or direct the land operator to the proper place according to his problem or assistance desired.

Farm & Garden



USING POWER AUGER—F. H. Latham, SCS irrigation and drainage engineer, in this picture is operating the power auger. The auger is mounted on a four-wheel drive pickup truck. It is driven from the power take-off. The tower is raised and lowered hydraulically. The machine will drill a 10-foot hole as it is set. By adding an extension on the rod it will drill to a 20-foot depth.



TIMING WATER RATE—It is important that proper size tile is installed to carry off subsurface water. The rate that water raises in a drilled hole is the basis on which size of tile is determined. Here the SCS engineer is timing the rate water is rising. Measurement is taken by using a "Dutch float" which is a simple float fastened to the end of a steel tape which reels in automatically through a guide as the water raises.



TABLE READINGS—On some farms it is necessary to obtain water table readings through the irrigation or winter season. In such cases the drainage holes or wells are lined with perforated down-spouting to prevent cave-in and to permit water table readings over a long period of time. Here F. H. Latham, SCS irrigation and drainage engineer, is reading water table depth in a local orchard.

MARKET NEWS

Red bluff livestock auction report, Tuesday, March 7, 1961

CATTLE: Salable 380, including around 140 calves. Slaughter steers and heifers scarce; small supply of slaughter cows inadequate to fully test market; about steady; stocker and feeder calves and yearlings only moderately active, about steady. Instances easier on calves; stock cows with calves at side steady to strong. Supply comprised of less than 5 per cent slaughter cows, remainder mainly stocker and feeder classes. Consignments almost entirely of northern California origin.

SLAUGHTER COWS: Individual Standard 775 lb. \$18.70, individual Utility 1140 lb. \$16.20, sprinkling Canner and Cutter \$12.50-14.75.

SLAUGHTER CALVES: Few head Good 340-350 lbs. \$26.00-28.25.

STOCKER AND FEEDER STEERS: Individuals and small lots Medium and Good 300-500 lb. calves \$22.50-26.00. Few penlots and individual Good and Choice 600-700 lb. heifers \$24.00-24.35, individual Common and Medium 565-595 lbs. \$21.25-23.75.

STOCKER AND FEEDER HEIFERS: 6 head lot Good 277 lb. calves \$23.50, few small lots and individual Medium and Good 250-300 lbs. \$22.25-23.00. Few individuals and lots Medium and Good 340-370 lb. yearlings \$20.00-22.85.

STOCK COWS: Few individual Common \$11.00-12.20. Penlots and individual Medium and Good with young calves at side \$20.00-24.00 per pair. Common and Medium \$14.00-17.50 per pair.

HOGS: Salable 13. Supply mainly feeder pigs.

FEEDER PIGS: Couple lots Good and Choice 87 and 92 lbs. \$19.40 and \$19.90.

SHEEP: Salable none. Market untested.

449 Cattle Sold At Midway Sale; 82 Consignors

A total of 449 cattle and calves were consigned during Friday's Midway Auction yardsale, according to Manager Bill Bray.

Eighty-two consignors were tallied during the very active market in all classes.

Choice Hereford steer calves, 375 to 425 pounds, brought \$25 to \$28.50. Good to choice 500 to 650 pound steers in lots of 10 to 15 head brought \$23.50 to \$24.50. Medium to good steers weighing 400 to 600 pounds in pen lots and singles sold at \$22 to \$24.75. Holstein steers brought \$18.50 to \$21.

Choice Hereford heifer calves sold at \$23 to \$24.10. Several lots of 300 to 350 pound heifers sold by the head at \$70 to \$88. Feeder heifers weighing 500 to 650 pounds sold at \$20.50 to \$22.30. Medium heifers sold from \$18 to \$20.

100 Hereford Cows

Over 100 head of Hereford stock cows were in this sale. A pen of six cows with calves sold for \$235 and a pen of 18 springers brought \$209 per head. A pen of 23 aged springer cows brought \$162.50. Calvy heifers sold from \$170 to \$203 per head. Several lots of good stock cows went out at \$180 to \$205 per head.

Slaughter steers and heifers, mostly standard to good, sold at \$19 to \$22.80. Slaughter bulls brought \$18.10 to \$19.10.

Butcher cows with a few standards sold at \$18 to \$18.40, whiteface utility cows brought \$16.50 to \$17.75. Utility Holstein cows sold at \$15 to \$16.10. Cutter cows sold at \$14 to \$15.80. Lightweight canner-cutter cows brought \$12 to \$13.75.

"Market your slaughter cows in the next three weeks to catch the best market," Bray advised.

A lack of salt in the rations contribute to the route of Napoleon's troops during his disastrous winter retreat from Russia. The men were unable to shake off fatigue; their wounds would not heal as they should.

Hort Society Discussion Set

A committee to discuss topics and speakers for the stone fruit section of the Oregon State Horticultural Society will meet tonight at 7:30 o'clock, according to Dave Passon, Jackson county extension agent.

The committee meeting will be held in the Jackson county court house auditorium.

Persons interested in working with the committee are invited to attend the meeting or contact one of the committee members.

The committee members are Dave Lowry, chairman, Bud Barnum Jr., Otto Bohner, Gordon Kershaw, Don Korih, Joe Meyer, Wendell Spence, John Higdon, and Donald McGuire. This committee provides a chance for peach, cherry and plum growers in the area to help organize the program for the annual Oregon State Horticultural Society.

Farm Catalogue Still Popular

Fox-frightening turkey bells, glass eyes for horses, goat-powered tread mills—these were some of the products sold to rural America at the turn of the century by the Sears, Roebuck and company.

Today, these products are only a memory. Windmills have given way to electric generators. "Number eight" horse shoes have surrendered to roto-spaders and three-quarter ton four-horsepower gas engines have been replaced by 4½-horsepower models weighing 48 pounds.

In fact, less than 1 per cent of the 2,100 items listed in the new 1961 Sears, Roebuck and company suburban-farm catalogue now being distributed are carried over from 60 years ago.

The new Sears book lists a complete line of modern gardening and farming equipment. An example of the new line of equipment is the riding mower capable of mowing more than an acre an hour. It can be quickly converted into a 42-inch snowplow.

A complete line of leather saddles, racing karts and even a do-it-yourself aluminum banana set is listed for the sportsman in the new 180-page catalogue.

Another Lamb Pool Set for Local Area

Another lamb pool will be formed in Jackson county as soon as sufficient lambs are available, County Extension Agent Earle Jossy said today. In about a month Jossy plans to send letters to find out how many lamb growers are interested. A week before each shipment cards will go out to be mailed back to the extension office indicating the number of lambs available.

Feeders are shipped to Dixon, Calif. by the Farm Bureau Shipping association. Since most of the sheep growers of this area have small numbers of sheep—25 to 150 ewes—not enough lambs to go anywhere. The program was started two years ago.

Last year about 3,000 lambs were shipped through this pool. It will operate on the same general arrangements this season.

Takes Cut

The grader takes a cut of 10 cents per 100 pounds for weighing by the yarder for weighing and loading. The Farm Bureau receives 25 cents for its organizational work. Consignors are paid the average price agreed upon between the pool

Annual Meeting Set For SCD

Dr. Murray Dawson, from Oregon State college, and recently returned from Thailand, will speak at the Jackson Soil Conservation district meeting in the Eagle Point Grange hall at 8 p.m. Thursday, according to Gene Winters, county extension agent.

Dawson will discuss pasture management in New Zealand and Australia.

The annual Goodyear Rubber company award for outstanding soil conservationist will be presented. Directors will be elected to fill positions vacated by A. T. Wattenberg, Burdett Dodge and John Konwiser. This is the tenth anniversary meeting.

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committee and the grader, less the total fee as explained. "We beat the Portland market every time we shipped," Jossy said. "This has meant a minimum of 2 cents more a pound to the shipper. FOB here the minimum net has been a cent a pound."

Main object of the pool has been to beat the high cost of freight by shipping individually. Pools are becoming increasingly important to lamb marketing "as the slow but constant attrition goes on in independent lambs with the big packers getting bigger all the time, observers have noted."

Last year a Klamath county pool handled 1,700 to 2,000 lambs per shipment every three to four weeks during marketing season. The lambs went direct to San Francisco killers and netted growers 25 to 75 cents per hundred-weight, more than was being paid by local outlets or by packer buyers in the area.

Pool Organized

This pool, organized by the Valley Livestock Marketing association of Dixon, Calif., has been operating for five years. Expenses to growers run 7 cents per animal marketed. About 1,000 growers sell through the pool.

Lane county sheepmen are reported to be starting a lamb pool.

Lambing here has been excellent and feed conditions considerably better than normal due to the open weather this winter. Jossy foresees little difficulty in selection of lambs for market grades.

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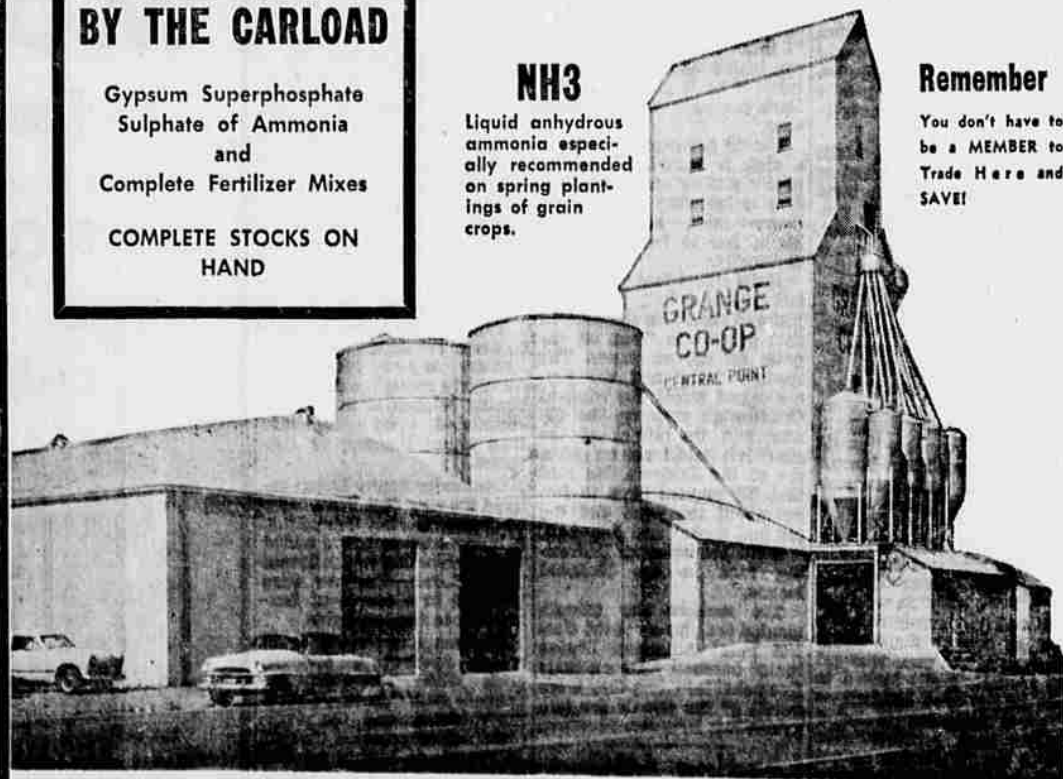
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