Chit Chat

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

This is fair time for Jackson county.

It's the time when dad gets up to find he has to cook his own breakfast since mother has already taken the kids and their exhibits out to the fairgrounds. Dinner is late or non-existent for 4-H and FFA families, probably a bite grabbed from the fair refreshment stand. It's a time of hurry up and wait, frustration, sometimes overlooked minor, but important details, exultation or disappointment and work, work, work.

The only thing the public sees are the exhibits, ribbon presentations and the various contests on the rapidly shrinking fairgrounds south of Medford. They don't see the work of the dedicated 4-H leaders and parents the year-around. This culminates in the livestock, home-economics, forestry and other exhibits. They don't see the work, time and care expended on each animal or project which may not even bring a fourth place ribbon. But it's all represented at the fairgrounds this week.

Again we urge everyone attending the fair, and even those who don't, to make a frank appraisal of what this county is producing in way of fairs. Something must be done about the fairground space itself — and soon! As one prominent 4-H leader put it: "They're gonna have to decide whether this will be a fairgrounds or just a place to put county buildings." One of the biggest mistakes made in the past was putting the National Guard Armory smack-dab in the middle. Then came the juvenile detention home. Now one of the older fair buildings is being converted into a rehabilitation center for the blind. Coming next is the public health building.

Dedicated strictly to the activities of youth the annual 4-H and FFA fair attracts more youthful participants each year; especially since 4-H programs now include city and suburban youngsters.

The White City area has been suggested for a new fair location since more acreage is available there. A member of the county court remarked that one of the large warehouse buildings on the recent military surplus property acquired by the county on Table Rock rd. might be used. Proper location of a county fair is one of those things everybody talks about, but nobody does anything about.

Space is just one of the factors to be considered. Others are: possible shift to include a general open-class fair, fair board leadership, financing and county or area support.

The popular refrain has been, "The public doesn't seem to want an open class fair. We haven't heard any general demand for one." Nobody demanded recreation facilities at Howard Prairie or Emigrant, either. But, anticipating their use and the ring of cash registers from tourist business, the county court provided such facilities.

And who says that county fairs don't bring more business into a county? Large numbers of people shop in Medford from Siskiyou and even Del Norte, California counties.

The Medford Chamber of Commerce says the average tourist spends approximately $6 a day in an area. Why doesn't this apply to transient shoppers? It stands to reason that a good, colorful entertaining fair might keep such shoppers here overnight making two shopping days instead of one.

Furthermore, a fair should be the showcase of an area's activities. This means that a general Jackson county fair should include exhibits on the lumber industry, certainly the fruit industry. (What better means for the fruit growers to show the importance of the fruit industry to the economy of the valley, hence their need for a reliable supply of pickers?) other agricultural activities and recreation.

The fair should also include historical exhibits produced by the Southern Oregon Historical society and Siskiyou Pioneer Sites foundation. A school science fair could be worked in, too, to provide some fascinating and instructive exhibits. The science building at the Seattle World's fair has attracted considerable acclaim from a number of Jackson county visitors, so this latter section would seem a natural.

We have long thought that a Rogue Valley Food Products exhibit or series of booths would be both colorful and a valuable promotion for this area. This would include foods prepared by the many naturalized citizens from foreign lands now living in the valley.

This would be a fair to talk about long afterward and more important it would be a fair everybody could anticipate and enjoy. It would not smother the 4-H and FFA exhibits and contests. It would draw more people to see them. In fact, we would favor a junior fair board to run the youth department.

Speaking of fair boards, the county court has been talking about adding more people to the fair board, but as yet, has done nothing about it. It has good men on the fair board now, but they need more to expand the annual affair to an open exhibit fair. The Oregon Fairs Association Newsletter of July recommends consideration be given to a fair director's experience, attitude, age and time availability.

County or area support certainly would be forthcoming if a county fair would represent all economic activities in the valley.

The Oregon Fair association also recommends an extensive six-year improvement program "to breath new life into the local county program, and to insure that fairs will continually re-examine their position in the face of rapidly changing conditions."

A report from the state legislature's interim committee on agriculture indicates that present state allocations may be curtailed.

This means that a fair will need community financial support. O and C funds can be stretched only so far. Local industry and agriculture can provide such support if included in a general fair. It could be charged off to advertising.

The OFA also suggests multiple use of fairgrounds and buildings. Josephine county is doing this now. But it has adequate grounds and buildings. Jackson county does not. It needs room for home and garden shows, wrestling matches, farm equipment displays, art and musical festivals, rock hound shows, poultry and livestock shows.

An article in the current Farm Journal points out that new county fairs are booming. It presents several ideas: go-cart races for dads and sons, bicycle races, egg-throwing contests, tractor-pulling matches, pet shows, calf scrambles, Swiss yodelers, photography shows and many others. The author cautions that: "A fair ought to teach something, sure, but it can educate itself out of existence. The best fairs keep good entertainment uppermost."

And now for the kicker: "There are a number of fairs which are presented by the extension service as 4-H and FFA fairs; these are not considered balanced or representative fairs. The management of the fair must be divorced from the extension service, which service could be best employed in 4-H promotion, without having to concern itself with the fair as a whole," according to the Oregon Fairs association.

Farm & Garden

Grant Received For Soil Study

Corvallis–A research project seeking knowledge that will be useful in obtaining better understanding and management of soil resources has been launched at Oregon State University under a grant from the U.S. Public Health service.

Directing the research into the "location of charge and chemical properties of clays" are Dr. Moyle E. Harward and Dr. Tsun Tien Chao, both soil scientists with the OSU Agricultural Experiment station. Their work is being supported by a three-year grant of more than $40,000.

The chemical properties and reactions of soil are influenced to a great extent by the kind and amount of clay minerals present, the scientists said.

The kinds of clay found in soils play a major part in the absorption and release of plant nutrients, the absorption and movement of fission products and in the retention and leaching of natural and synthetic organic compounds, such as pesticides. The absorption of these materials is of interest to the Public Health Service, they explain.

In their project, the scientists are interested in the relationship of structure to properties of clays, chief of which is the electric charge that determines the ability of clay to absorb organic compounds and to fix such chemicals as potassium in the soil.

At present, literature is contradictory on whether the location of the charge or its density is the dominant feature associated with such properties. The OSU men hope to clarify the cause and effect relationship between structural features of clays and their properties. This clarification also has important implications for clay mineral identification in soils.

The scientists are now working with relatively pure clays in their efforts to establish general principles, obtaining clay samples from throughout the world for this purpose. After the principles have been established, they plan to extend their work to include the more complex clay mixtures which occur in some of the soils of Oregon.

420 Cattle Sold At Midway Sale; Market Steady

Ninety-nine consignors sold 420 cattle, 25 hogs and 38 sheep at the regular Friday auction sale of the Midway Auction yard on Aug. 10.

The market was reported steady with the previous week and very active on feeder cattle.

Hereford steer calves at good to choice sold for $25 to $26.70. Angus calves went out at $25.25 to $26.25. Medium calves sold for $22 to $24.50.

Good to choice heifer calves sold for $23 to $25. Medium quality calves sold for $20 to $22.75.

A pen lot of 56 yearling Hereford steers weighing 671 pounds sold for $23.70. A pen of Angus Hereford crossbred steers weighing 700 pounds brought $23.90. A pen of 680 pound Angus steers sold for $23.80 and a pen of 600 pound Hereford steers brought $24.35. Other steers in the 600 to 700 pound class went from $22 to $23.50.

A pen of 37 Hereford heifers weighing 580 pounds sold for $22.40. A pen of 610 pound heifers sold for $22.50. Others sold from $21 to $23.10. Medium quality heifers brought from $20 to $21.50 and dairy crossbreds sold from $17 to $19.50.

Holstein steer calves sold for $19 to $21. A pen lot of 575 pound steers sold for $20.50 and 700 to 800 pound steers $19 to $19.90. Two steers weighing 1,265 pounds each sold for $19.70.

Choice veal at 350 to 500 pounds sold for $23 to $25.50. Slaughter bulls brought $19 to $21.

Grain Fed Steers

Grain fed steers sold for $23.10 to $24, grass fat steers $20.50 to $22.90 and grass fat heifers $19 to $22.40.

Fat cows sold for $15 to $16.40, utility cows brought $14 to $15, cutters $2 to $13.90, canners $8 to $11.80.

Sows sold for $13.70 to $14.35, weaner pigs $8 to $12 per head and feeder pigs at 70 to 80 pounds sold for $15 to $18 per head.

FROM THE GROUND UP

By BART BARTLETT

The harvest of early ripening varieties of fruits has progressed locally to peaches. The Red Haven and Gold Rush peaches have been ready for consumers for several days now.

Red Haven is about the earliest ripening peach that has any quality and is the only one grown locally in any quantity. It will be followed in rapid succession by varieties that improve in quality as the season progresses.

Some local plums may be available in small quantities at this time. Apples for cooking will be available shortly.

Despite an air of grower pessimism and some very hot weather, all pear varieties seem to be increasing in size to the extent that pear sizes should be normal for the area. It is expected that Bartlett Pears in some orchards may be nearer early picking maturity than is generally realized. This impression was gained from the appearance of some Bartletts as seen from the roadway. They have a "finished" appearance that shows just at early maturity.

Deer may become destructive in orchards or fields that are near woodlands. It may be well to secure some deer repellant and apply it before damage occurs.

Zoning

Zoning of rural areas of Jackson County seems to be in the plans of certain county officials. If a small amount of zoning could be accomplished without the dreamers and politicians becoming the lords and masters of the rural homeowners and landholders, it could be a good thing. However, each politician should be suspected of doing what is best for himself first and the people can share what's left. The way zoning stands now I'm in favor of it.

It may be well to give lawns and the shrubs growing on them an application of fertilizer. Lawn grasses feed heavily because the frequent mowing keeps them growing all season as compared to the same grasses that when not mowed produce a crop of seed and then for relatively long periods does not grow. The frequent heavy watering of lawns also tends to leach large quantities of nutrients deep within the soil and out of reach of the shallow grass roots.

Ladders, trucks, tractors, picking bags and any other equipment that will be needed in the pear harvest should be made ready for use — time is growing short.

The local livestock markets were very active this past week. It is somewhat surprising to see the prices of almost all types of cattle remain at such high levels so late in the season. This may, in part, be due to the excellent condition of the cattle that are offered for sale. It was learned from some of the California cattlemen that local cattle are in better condition than many of their California cattle. It was also stated that the market prices were higher here than in California.

384 Cattle Sold At Rogue Yard; Horse Sale Good

Phoenix–The Rogue Valley Auction, Inc., sold 384 head of cattle at its regular Saturday, Aug. 11 sale.

Manager Bob Bever reported the market very active on all classes of cattle. Feeder cattle mostly sold 50 cents to $1.50 higher.

Baby calves sold at steady prices with whiteface calves selling at $35 to $45 per head. Holsteins sold $31 to $37 per head. Mixed calves brought $20 to $31 and Jersey and Guernsey calves sold at $7 to $15 per head.

Several pen lots of light weaner steer calves sold at $27 to $27.85 per hundredweight with one pen lot of 350 calves sellin gat $27.85 per hundredweight.

Heifer calves sold at 50 cents to one dollar higher than week before. One pen lot of 430 pound weaner heifers sold at $24.50 per hundredweight. Yearling steers sold at higher prices with steers in the 600 to 750 pound class bringing $23.70 to $24.20 per hundredweight. Light yearling steers in the 450 to 550 pound class sold at $24.75 to $25.75 per hundredweight.

Yearling heifers were also higher with 600 to 700 pound heifers selling at $21.50 to $22.70 per hundredweight.

Common cattle are selling well at this time, Bever reported. Steers are bringing the highest prices for some time. Mixed steers in the 600 to 750 pound class are selling at $20.50 to $21.50 per hundredweight.

Common heifers are also selling better at this time with 600 to 700 pound common heifers selling at $17.50 to $19.50 per hundredweight.

Slaughter cows are selling at steady prices on good fat cows, but the thin cows are under pressure and are selling lower, the auction yard manager noted.

Grass fat steers and heifers are selling well. Fat steers in the 800 to 950 pound class sold at $22 to $23.10.

One consignment of grass-fat heifers from a local ranch this week sold at 50 cents to one dollar higher than any time this summer. These heifers weighing 780 to 960 pounds sold at $22.60 to $23.20 per hundredweight.

"I would like to thank all the people who turned out for the horse sale. We sold 22 head of good horses for Gene Lowery and had a real good sale," Bever commented. "The top horse in the sale went to Elmer Hopkins of Ashland. This was a quarter-horse type mare and sold for $540. Also, in the higher selling class was one three-year-old filly quarterhorse type sold to Bob Miller of Green Springs farm for $510. Bob also bought one cutting horse, one of the most well broken horses in the sale. Twenty-two head of horses averaged $338 per head."

FARM

Woodlot Facts

By DICK OLSON
State Farm Forester

Usually at this time of the year, people are troubled to see forest trees dying.

Sometimes it occurs singlely but more often it occurs in small patches. Both of these cases are noticed by the general public as well as timber owners themselves. The individual who is hit hard, perhaps the hardest, is the city home-owner with a small lot, who loses his Douglas fir or Ponderosa pine shade tree due to insects.

Numerous requests for information about how insects kill trees are received by the Farm Foresters office. The county agent and the U. S. Forest service also receive many calls about this matter. For this reason, the week's "Farm Forest Facts" is about one of the area's worst insect tree killers and its control.

This year's most dreaded insect tree killer is the Western pine beetle (Dendroctonus Brevicomis). The Western pine beetle attacks and breeds primarily in Ponderosa pine.

In an examination of a dying ponderosa pine tree, the real killers, the western pine beetles, often escape detection because they are concealed within the outer corky bark or have completed their development and emerged. The large grubs or beetles commonly found between the bark and wood of these trees are of other species and of only secondary importance.

The western pine beetle attacks only the main trunks of trees with bark sufficiently thick to protect its various stages through its development. It does not breed in limbs or small tops, and seldom attacks trees under six inches in diameter. The needles of infested trees fade rapidly and progressively from green through the yellows to a red and then to reddish brown. They die from the center of the needle cluster outward and usually from the top of the tree downward. The third year after attack, about 80 per cent of the needles drop from the tree, and after the fifth year practically all the needles have been lost.

Whether a tree has been attacked by the western pine beetle can best be determined by examining the bark of a suspected tree. If the tree has been attacked, small amounts of fine yellow reddish borings will be lodged in the crevices of the bark or deposited on the ground around the base of the tree. Around, or closing the point of entrance of a pair of beetles will usually be found pink or red pitch in the form of a small tube, about the size of a quarter. Trees lacking vigor will have inconspicuous "pitch tubes" or none at all. The real evidence of a devastating attack by this insect can be found by removing a section of bark. If a maze of criss-crossed tunnels, tightly packed with reddish borings, is found winding through the cambrium layer, and bark the tree is doomed. These are the egg galleries constructed by the adult beetles.

A few beetles cannot kill a tree. It has been estimated that a concentration of 12 pairs of beetles per square foot of bark surface or about 6,100 beetles, are required to kill an average sized Ponderosa pine. It has been estimated further, that enough new beetles are produced in a single infested tree to kill five other trees of the same size.

When the beetles alight on the trunk of a tree, they seek crevices in the bark and bore small holes directly into the cambium layer. If they encounter too copious a flow of sap or pitch, they may be drowned or "pitched out." However if the flow of sap is weak, the beetles are able to continue their boring through the cambium or vital growing layer of the tree. During the summer months, it takes only about 14 days for the beetle to kill an average-sized ponderosa pine.

The adult western pine beetle is brown to black, cylindrical, rather stout, and is from one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch long. In Ponderosa pine trees of this area, eggs laid in trees attacked during June and July develop into beetles by August and September. During September and October, these new adults attack and kill other trees, in which they and their progeny pass the winter in the egg, larval, or beetle stage. Thus, two sets of trees are killed annually in this area.

Control of this pest has been and still is very difficult. Once a Ponderosa pine tree has been successfully attacked by the insect, there is no known method by which it can be saved. The best natural control, birds — especially woodpeckers — devour vast quantities of immature beetles. These birds in search of food, may nearly strip an infested tree of its bark. The best direct control method is to fall and burn infected trees and spray the surrounding trees with Thiodan. This is a chemical that is still being tested, but looks very promising. Trunks of the trees should be sprayed heavily as far up as a power sprayer will reach. In cases of acreage greater than five or 10, aerial spraying may be the only answer. Spraying should be done in early June and again in September.

The most promising method of combating the Western pine beetle is improved forest management practices. Thinning of stagnated stands and sanitation logging are two of these practices. A healthy fast growing tree or stand of trees is the best insurance against beetle attack.

Garden Tips

Leaf Scorch

The leaves on my trees are turning brown. What should I spray them with? This question is often asked at the county extension office.

In many cases the browning of leaves is due to environmental conditions. These conditions cause a water deficiency in the leaves. When this happens, brown spots form in the leaves and we have a condition known as leaf scorch.

Leaf scorch can be caused by shallow soils, poor soils, high temperatures, strong winds and a number of other conditions. The signs of leaf scorch vary on different plants, but the most common sign is the leaves turning brown around the edges and between the veins.

The thin-leaved species of trees that have very little wax on their leaves are most prone to leaf scorch. Maple, dogwood, horsechestnut, linden and beech are commonly affected. Among the maples, the Japanese Red Maple is more susceptible to leaf scorch, because of the thinness and red color of its leaves. Red leaves absorb more heat from the sun than green leaves. This results in a great amount of evaporation of water from the leaves and a great demand for water from the leaf area.

Broad Leaves Suffer

Broad leaved evergreens, such as rhododendrons, laurel and azaleas will also suffer from leaf scorch as a result of drying winds during the winter months when the soil is frozen. When water in the soil is not available, the leaves brown and die in a characteristic pattern with the leaf edges and tips drying first.

On rhododendrons, we may find scorch making itself evident as two long brown areas running parallel with and on either side of the central vein on the leaf. This scorch develops when the rhododendron leaf is curled up during low temperatures, allowing evaporation damage to occur only on the long, narrow exposed section of the leaf.

The narrow - leaved evergreens, such as pine, spruce, and fir, show leaf scorch by a brown discoloration of the needle tips. The more severe the scorch, the farther down the needle the browning occurs. This type may result from either hot dry weather in summer or from high winds during cold weather.

Field Crop Day Set At Station

A field crops field day will be held at 9 a.m. Tuesday morning, Aug. 21 at the Southern Oregon Branch experiment station, according to Supt. Harold White and Agronomist John Yungen.

"This will be a look-see time for local farmers," White said. "Before we held this field day in July at the peak of the season. This year we are holding out later so farmers can see the end result of our experiments."

The tour of the experimental plot will include field corn and sweet corn, various forage crops such as different varieties of alfalfa and grasses, some investigation work on irrigating corn and forage crops, some chemical residue plots and such truck crops as onions, tomatoes.

An experimental double cropping system will also be examined. Station personnel have also been working with different varieties of sorghums, bush beans and a small plot of safflower.

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