

Large Pack-Out Potential For Pears Knocked by Storm

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor
Growers and shippers this past week have been surveying last season's pear production and the market situation in making plans for the coming season.

The total pear crop would have been about average compared to the 1955-59 average if it had not been for the fall wind and rain storms, growers and County Horticultural Agent Clifford B. Cordy said. It wound up below average.

Otherwise, the Medford pear district would have had the largest crop per unit of tree production on record. "Of course, the important thing is how the storms affected individual orchards. Some suffered considerable loss and others not so much," Cordy said.

He explained the 1955-59 period is used as average production years because since then the valley has lost a large number of trees due to decline and the crippling effects of decline.

The local traffic association reported 80,000 boxes of Comice were packed during the past season. The overall harvest was just about average. Wind loss was estimated at 10 to 15 per cent.

Since so many Comice got into gift packs it is almost impossible to estimate the size of this crop in the usual packed boxes, Cordy said.

Valley orchards harvested about 30,000 tons of Bartlett's which is about the same as the five-year average. This was larger than any of the last three years, however. Crop production then, in 1959, 1960 and 1961 was approximately 25,000 tons a year.

Cordy pointed out again that the last five years were not normal years due to pear tree decline.

The valley would have had one of the largest Bosc crops on record this year except for the wind storm. Actual pack-out was 468,800 and the five-year average is 496,836. Orchards should have produced 700,000 boxes, according to early season estimates, but storm loss was close to 300,000 boxes.

Price-wise, the pear industry continues to suffer. It shipped out 71 carloads of Bartlett's under the federal school lunch program. It plans to ship out 161 carloads of winter pear varieties. This program merely gives the pear growers and shippers something instead of nothing. Receipts from this program are considerably under storage and production costs, pear men point out.

Instead of private sales (sales made directly to chain stores or wholesalers), this year a large proportion of Medford district pears have had to go to the New York and other eastern auctions. The USDA report as of the week ending Jan. 4 showed the price to date on all varieties average \$4.47 compared to \$5.32 the previous year. D'Anjou averaged \$4.74 compared to \$5.56 and Bosc \$4.02 compared to \$5.03 the previous year.

Auction prices have a direct bearing on private sales and consequently private pear sales have forced shippers and growers to take a dollar or more a box less than the previous season. This dollar a box loss is almost all growers' money, it was pointed out.

Ironically, a greater percentage of pears was packed this year than last year. There was a larger crop and a smaller cannery take, growers noted. One big reason being the innovation in peeler machinery.

Last week, one shipper noticed the first real interest in the pear business from the producer standpoint. A number of long distance phone calls were received here from eastern buyers. The freeze in Florida and Texas probably sparked the interest since the citrus crop in those places has been severely hurt. Last week, one day's observations showed a good New York pear auction.

There are no known cases of illness from residues from foods when such chemical residues were within the established tolerance level, Dr. Freed emphasized.

Chemicals are recommended and tolerances established backed by the best scientific information and two year animal feeding tests plus considerable laboratory research hours, he said.

Growers can expect a tightening of laws pertaining to chemical residues since recent scientific developments make it possible to run residue tests in two hours instead of the former two or three days. This tightening of regulations means more burden and expense for the experiment stations and chemical companies, Dr. Freed said.

"We must do considerable work to develop a biological 'O' for a floor on residues. We can consume most chemicals over a lifetime with no harmful effects. And our knowledge on this is pretty good," the OSU chemist said.

A study of metabolism can help with the proper use of chemicals in orchards—so spray chemicals will disappear at harvest time but will protect crops through the season, Dr. Freed said.

"Both the public and any possible chemical applicator must be educated on the proper control of agricultural chemicals," the chemist said. "The public may return orchardists the right to use chemicals when they become frightened enough to take them away. Meanwhile the farmer has lost his crop and the consumer has had to pay much bigger food costs."

Dr. Pete Westgard, new local experiment station entomologist, said oils are being recommended for mite control in California and not in combination with chemicals. Westgard, who comes from California, charted the effectiveness of a number of oils. One of the most effective was Canadian dormant oil which reduced the mite population from 46.2 per leaf to 10.4.

A number of new chemical materials for mite control, not yet released for full commercial application are Bayer 35203, OW-9, Morocide, Pentac and Anamert. The new entomologist also noted that British Columbia growers are getting effective natural control of pear psylla through predator and parasitic insects. California studies for the last two or three years indicate such natural control will play a big role, but this is not firmly established as yet, he said.

L. D. McNelly, Santa Clara county, Calif. farm advisor, said researchers there have so far stimulated tremendous tree regrowth through a combination of severe pruning and injections of the chemical hormone Dexon into the soil near trees suffering from water mould or a form of pear tree decline. However, tests have not continued yet through a fruiting cycle. Injections of water into the soil have also been somewhat effective, he said.

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Chit Chat

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Snow flakes drifting to the ground hardly remind people of pear blossoms, but pear growers yesterday were already preparing for another season as they met for the annual pear program sponsored by the Jackson County Extension service.

Reports of what to expect were not encouraging. In fact, Dr. Virgil Freed, OSU agriculture chemist, opened with the question: "Things being so bad why don't you go into another business?"

First solid note of the pear growers' blues was sounded by Dr. Gerald Korzan, OSU agricultural economist. Percentage-wise the number of non-bearing or young Bartlett pear trees in California has increased 100 per cent from 1954 to 1959—from 434,000 to 986,000. Both Oregon and Washington non-bearing trees have increased 50 per cent.

In Oregon's Hood River valley the non-bearing Bartlett trees have increased two to three times that of Jackson county—60 per cent compared to Jackson county's 25 per cent. These young trees will be in production in the next few years.

Jackson county remains an important producer of winter pear varieties but its percentage of new trees is not nearly that of Hood River.

All local pear producers can do is what they are doing—produce as many pears as economically possible. Only alternative would be a federal marketing order to limit production to help obtain higher prices, Dr. Korzan said.

With the tremendous production expected from the large number of present non-bearing trees the pear prices may decline, the OSU economist said.

In 1962 Oregon Bartlett production set a new record—70,000 tons or \$4 million worth. However in 1961 with a production of 20,000 tons less, production was worth \$4.4 million.

Pears and other agricultural products are not like auto production. Auto production hit a record volume last year, but prices remained the same as in 1959, another record year.

Later, a local pear man commented that anyone who continues to plant Bartlett's here is "crazy." Local pear production should trend toward more Seckles or Comice for gift or specialty packs. This has to be an area of specialty packs due to the wonderful pear quality possible, high labor and land costs, he said.

Per person consumption of pears in the U. S. is 4.6 pounds per person, or 2.8 pounds fresh pack and 2 pounds canned, according to 1960 figures. Peak consumption for 1960 was 15.9 pounds (canned and fresh) per person.

New peelers which place more of the pear in the can also tend to reduce the price to growers since canners can get more cases of canned pears per ton. Such new peelers on a rental basis cost more than the old ones and resulting peeled pears don't grade as well, the economist said.

Rachael Carson, author of "Silent Spring," a book calling agricultural chemicals a deadly menace has struck a blue note which has resounded over the land. Every fruit and spray session we have attended recently has mentioned this book.

When did the spray and chemical dust residue problem really start? About 30 years ago, according to Dr. Freed. Then lead arsenate was used extensively on Pacific Northwest fruit shipped into Britain and other European countries. The British jumped onto the residue problem in part to knock out northwest apples which were competing with British Apples. Also in England about that time were outbreaks of arsenate poisoning in foods and beer and a lead problem from some fumes.

There are no known cases of illness from residues from foods when such chemical residues were within the established tolerance level, Dr. Freed emphasized.

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Growers can expect a tightening of laws pertaining to chemical residues since recent scientific developments make it possible to run residue tests in two hours instead of the former two or three days. This tightening of regulations means more burden and expense for the experiment stations and chemical companies, Dr. Freed said.

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Soil Sterilant Required Now, Weed Expert Says

Winter and early spring months are a particularly good time for the home owner, farmer and business man to look into their next summer's weed problems. Uncontrolled areas are quite conspicuous by the residue left from last year's growth. Appearance of many areas could be greatly improved by burning now with follow-up controls during the spring and early summer months.

Some of these areas such as fence lines, lanes, irrigation ditches and fire breaks around buildings from the farmer's point of view could be treated for weed control now. In so doing nearby crops don't present the problem as with summer control measures. Sterilants give a longer, more economical control.

Home owners and business places have areas, such as parking, storage, property borders and buildings, where weed control measures could improve the appearance, help safeguard against fire and make much more convenient the storage of equipment, parts, and lumber in storage areas.

These non-selective weed control chemicals are available, generally in three forms for the user's convenience, wettable powders that can be applied in water, powders that can be applied dry and wet in, or in granular form that can be spread by hand or mechanical spreader.

Under ideal conditions each will give satisfactory control. These conditions vary a great deal and is responsible for the varied mixtures and formulations of these chemicals. Soil type plays an important part as is the type of weeds to be controlled, and location of the area to be treated in relation to desirable plants, slope of the ground where chemicals could be washed into areas where treatment would be harmful. Application rates will vary according to the above conditions and the chemical types being used.

Starting the afternoon session Shearer will explain crop response to soil moisture availability, how this varies with different types of crops, factors affecting rate of use, so called "critical periods" what they are and how management can affect moisture use such as mulch, cultivation and clipping.

Hansen will explain irrigation scheduling. This will include under the basis for scheduling: crop, root, soil depth, storage capability of soil, release characteristics of soil, experimental results. He will also tell how the farmer can determine "when" and "how much" to apply. This will cover the need for measurement, gypsum block, tensionmeters, dendrometers, and soil sampling.

Shearer will start the Friday session at 10 a.m. with a talk on surface irrigation. This will cover distribution problems and their correction, how principles of water measurement can be applied.

Two-Day Course Set On Irrigation

Irrigation can either make or lose a farmer money. Thursday and Friday, Feb. 7 and 8, local farmers and orchardists will learn or relearn what water does in the soil, what it can and can't do and how it should be best applied.

Conducting the course will be Lee R. Hansen, agricultural sales director, Pacific Power and Light company, Portland; Andrew H. Schmidt, agricultural sales engineer, Pacific Power and Light company, Medford; Marvin N. Shearer, OSU extension irrigation specialist, and Bert G. Wilcox, Jackson county agent.

Starting at 10 a.m. Thursday, Wilcox will explain the storage and release of water by soil. He will illustrate how water is stored — forces involved, effect of soil physical characteristics, kinds of water — excess, available, non-available, wilting point, field capacity and how water is released — comparison of typical moisture release curves and why they are important.

Following that he will explain how and why moisture moves in the soil; terms of free water, tension, pressure, etc.; why water moves, importance of movement, and will show a film, "Soil Moisture Movement."

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He will follow with a lecture on pumps and pumping including pump selection, motors and power plants, installation, operation and maintenance; and automatic controls.

Shearer will wind up the two day short-course with a talk on water control as applied to surface irrigation. He will summarize what has been covered, generalize to all areas, talk on irrigation structures and end with a movie, "Gift From the Clouds."

U. S. Said Vulnerable To Submarine Missiles Mobile, Ala. — (AP) — A top military defense officer said Monday the United States is vulnerable to ballistic missiles fired from submarines.

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Farm & Garden

Gardening Tips

By JOHN W. M'CLOUGHLIN
County Extension Agent
Foliage Plants Foliage plants play an important role in the decor of the modern home. Their green leaves are often silhouetted against a plain background to introduce a coolness, freshness and restfulness to the home. Foliage plants are used also to accentuate green tones in a room or are arranged attractively with tones of brown, orange and off-white.

Texture is also added to the room by foliage plants. In this group of plants we find leaves with a velvet texture; others with a satiny texture; a few may be thick and leathery; some are lacy and feathery.

Use your imagination and ingenuity in choosing and arranging these plants. By so doing, you will introduce interesting designs, colors and textures. Avoid using too many plants and too many contrasts as this will produce a cluttered and confused effect.

Usually the location selected for foliage plants is not ideal for plant growth. The growth produced by plants in such locations is abnormal and unattractive. Consequently, a slow rate of growth is desirable. This can be achieved by keeping the plant roots relatively dry.

Double potting is a method of planting that makes it easy to keep the soil relatively dry. Double potting consists of placing one porous clay pot inside a decorative container. The area between the two pots is packed with peat moss. The peat moss prevents rapid fluctuations in soil moisture and soil temperature.

The outer container must be large enough to allow at least a one-half inch space between the clay pot and the container. The pot must be shorter than the container. The rim of the pot should be about one-inch lower than the rim of the container after the planting is completed. This allows room to cover the inner pot with peat moss and also prevents the peat moss from washing out when the plant is watered.

The outer container need not have a hole in the bottom. Place a one-half inch layer of gravel or pebbles in the bottom of the container. This will prevent the plant from sitting in water, should the plant be overwatered.

Place the pot on the gravel in the container and with a long slender stick pack the peat moss between the pot and container. Keep the peat moss at least one-half inch from the rim of the container. Peat moss is easier to handle if it is thoroughly moistened a day or two before it is used.

To water double potted plants, push the peat moss away from the soil and water the inner pot. The peat moss should be moistened occasionally. Do not allow it to dry out.

The next article will deal with planting large planters and small table planters, and dish gardens.

Ornamental Course Slated Feb. 5-7 Corvallis — A streamlined program and a new special interest session will greet horticulturists who come to Oregon State university's 7th annual Oregon Ornamental Short course, Feb. 5-7.

Special interest groups will meet on different days this year, announced A. N. Roberts, OSU horticulturist in charge of the short course. This will enable participants to take part in more than one group.

For registration please write Charles Ross, Extension Farm Forestry specialist, Forestry Building, OSU, Corvallis, Oregon.

Josephine County woodland owners, interested in Christmas tree growing, may wish to attend Douglas County's Farm Forestry Committee's Christmas Tree meeting on Friday night the 1st of February at 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the courthouse auditorium.

Christmas tree growing and marketing will be discussed and a time for questions and answers will follow.

Both meetings will consist of visiting two small private woodlands and one small forest industry. Main subjects of discussion will be stand improvement, tree planting and Christmas tree growing. Many other subjects, however, will no doubt come under discussion.

In Corvallis on Feb. 27 and 28 and March 1, there will be a management conference for small woodland owners. Although designed for those small owners who are engaged in woodland operations, it is open on a limited basis to anyone interested in small woodland management. Qualified discussion leaders will outline program topics. Adequate time will be provided for group discussion and audience participation.

Advanced registration is requested by Feb. 1, 1963. A fee of \$3.00 per person will be charged at the conference.

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FROM THE GROUND UP

By BART BARTLETT

Some development work is being done in an effort to use a growth control chemical agent to limit the grasses along roadways to a height of about four inches.

Following the growth control chemical an application of a fire retardant material is made to reduce possibility of dangerous grass fires. This work is significant and perhaps even more so since it is not an Oregon project. Oregon has more miles of highway roadside to protect from fire hazards than do certain other western states.

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Farm Buildings Meeting Feature

Farm buildings, construction and use will be in the spotlight at a meeting scheduled for Friday, Feb. 1 in the Court House auditorium in Grants Pass according to Earle J. Stry, county extension agent. The time is 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This meeting has been arranged by M. G. Huber, OSU extension agricultural engineer, to cover both Josephine and Jackson counties.

Included in the program besides Huber will be H. P. Ewalt, Dairy Specialist, and John Landers, livestock specialist, discussing the use of buildings. A. A. Zander, West Coast Lumbermen's association, Paul Christensen, Portland Cement association, will discuss materials and construction.

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