

# New Ideas, Equipment Tried By Tireless Orchard Foreman

By JOE COWLEY  
Mail Tribune Farm Editor  
Edward W. Earnest, orchard foreman for Myron Root and company, Medford, could be called the prototype of the new generation of pear orchard managers, eager to try anything which will save costs and promise more company profit.

"I don't think Ed owns a clock or watch. Time on the job means nothing to him," Warren Bayliss of the progressive fruit company remarked, recently.

Managing the valley-wide fruit company orchards plus 70 acres of his own pear, peach and apple trees is almost a 24-hour-a-day job for the 33-year-old man; particularly during the orchard heating season.

To do it he averages 100 miles a day. He estimated his pickup truck has logged 77,000 miles in two years. He frowned when we suggested after two years his truck should be junked as worn-out equipment. He quickly assured us the fruit company's own shops keep such equipment running efficiently much longer than that.

Like Eden Valley  
Like the Eden Valley orchard in a previous article, Myron Root and company repairs and makes its own special equipment. Three mechanics operate from the plant shop and one in the vines orchard. The management's eagerness to try out new equipment and procedures as manifested by Bob and Don Root make such shops an integral part of the overall operation.

Although a young man trying out new ideas in orchard management, Ed is familiar with the old style operation. He grew up in the business in California by working in orchards starting in his high school years. He remembers how "a lot of hoses had to be drug around for spraying."

The husky young orchard foreman came to the valley while his father was in the Camp White veterans' hospital. He liked it and bought some orchard property here. Later the Root brothers asked him to come to work for them. During his five years with the company Ed has taken pride in the gradual streamlining of the company operation.

This has meant use of two-way radios, concentrate sprayers and recently Gorettes, or self-propelled platforms using a long boom with crow's nest cage for picking, pruning and thinning.

Perhaps the two-way radio hookup has been the most far-reaching development for the Medford pear district as well as the Root company. The Roots use it for trouble calls for mechanics, for irrigation and for orchard heating.

Frost Warning Hookup  
Last week we heard the new, almost valley-wide, frost warning radio hookup in action. This was spearheaded by the Root brothers and inaugurated this year. Orchardists reporting cloud movements and temperatures helped Meteorologist Bill Rogers, of the Fruit Frost Warning Service, obtain a fix on the immediate weather conditions from his "radio shack" at the airport. It also gave each orchardist an idea of how his orchard conditions checked with others.

The comparatively weak citizens' radio band works best at night when little interference occurs. Such daytime interference would make it difficult to use extensively in the day time and for wide area harvest operations. It can be used early in the morning, a time of little radio interference, to route pickers from orchard to orchard, however.

The two-way radio hookup is especially efficient for night-time irrigation when irrigation water evaporation is at a minimum. Using walkie-talkies and a mobile radio, irrigators can check the water from the head to the end of a row. This requires fewer men, makes for more efficient operation and better use of the water during the night period when few if any users want it. In effect, it provides 24 hour water control.

In the 1961 harvest season the Roots used one gorette or squirrel for picking. Now the company has six more, used in 1962.

"The squirrel is well-suited for pruning, blight cutting and thinning, but there is a lot to work out for picking," Ed answered. "The main problem is getting the fruit of the gorette into boxes. Bins would work better. But this would mean a change over of the

packing house handling equipment which would be costly." A large picking bag mounted on the squirrel which could be reeled down as the bag filled was tried. But one man was required to do nothing but place and remove boxes as the fruit tumbled in from the over-size per bucket affair.

The orchard foreman generally eventually has a picking rig will have its own conveyor tower to carry the fruit to a bin on the ground. Last season's work demonstrated the machine could be used effectively for light crop picking. But these machines are expensive and savings must offset the operation cost.

The Roots use a sprayer "on the concentrate side" so more of the spray gets on the trees than on the ground than it does with the dilute sprayer. Key to this was nozzle adjustment.

The one crop - pears - and the short season generally makes this area unattractive to migrant pickers. Mexican Nationals are a necessity as a good, steady, dependable labor supply, the orchard foreman said. But this is a problem being worked on at higher levels.

The pear orchards are here to stay, but the smaller orchards which cannot operate profitably on a slim margin of cost-profit are being bought out by the larger companies, or lower grade orchards are being pulled out for subdivisions, Earnest noted. More and more pear acreage is being planted and will be planted. The pear business is not going out of the valley, Earnest concluded.

## Vote Due May 21 On Wheat Program

Corvallis—Over 17,000 Oregon farmers can qualify to vote May 21 in the national wheat referendum which will decide the nation's wheat marketing policies for 1964.

The vote relates to the program that would be in effect only for the 1964 crop. This referendum is required by the 1962 Food and Agriculture Act. The law instructs the Secretary of Agriculture to offer U.S. wheat producers an opportunity to choose between two kinds of programs for next year, explains M. D. Thomas, Oregon State university extension agricultural economist.

For the first time, farmers with wheat allotments of less than 15 acres will be able to vote. However, farmers with these small allotments had to indicate their wish to vote by signing with the county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office by May 14, points out R. E. Schedeon, chairman of the State ASC committee.

Those signing up to vote will also qualify to receive price supports, marketing certificates and diversion payments if marketing quotas are approved, those who sign will be in essentially the same position as if they had not indicated a desire to vote, Thomas said.

As usual, all wheat producers with allotments of 15 acres or more are automatically eligible to vote in the referendum.

Program Details  
Details of the 1964 program were recently announced by Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman. He has set the

national acreage allotment at 49.5 million acres, 10 per cent under 1963 but the same as 1962, and has proposed a national marketing quota for domestic use, export, seed and livestock feed of 1,220,000,000 bushels.

If approved, certificates covering about 80 per cent of the quota will be issued. These certificates entitle the farmer to a support price of \$2 a bushel, national average. The remaining wheat would not receive certificates, but would be supported at a lower level of \$1.30 a bushel, national average.

If quotas are disapproved, the law provides that the 1964 wheat support rate would be 50 per cent of parity for growers who plant within their allotments. At the March parity level, this would mean about \$1.25 a bushel support. Those exceeding their acreage allotments would lose their eligibility for price supports, but there would be no marketing quota penalty, Thomas said.

Secretary Freeman set Oregon's 1964 wheat acreage allotment at 769,059 acres. This compares with 871,980 acres in 1963 and 763,938 in 1962. County ASCS and Extension offices have work forms for wheat producers used in analyzing income effects on individual farms. They also have other pertinent information to help each grower decide for himself how he wishes to vote on May 21, Thomas said.

Salt-fed steers will gain more weight on less feed than will similar steers that have been denied salt.

The crew sponsored by the Tulare County Farmers' association was active for 35 weeks or 245 days. It obtained 178 days of work. A crew sponsored by the Americans Friends Service committee was active for 42 weeks or 245 days and obtained 214 days of work. Directors of the two crews estimated that on a year's or 365 days basis the crews would have had 250-260 days of work. However, a Kern county study (next to Tulare county) showed that family heads averaged 138 day of farm work in 1961.

So what? So if the temporary farm worker in California had averaged an additional 35 days of work in 1961, the

# Chit Chat

By JOE COWLEY  
Mail Tribune Farm Editor

Fruit growers like any other businessmen must keep their costs of production as low as possible to insure profit. An Oregon State university agricultural economist is now making a study of pear production labor here to see just how it is being used.

California has completed such an objective study recently. The University of California and the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics has compiled a fat volume of facts and figures which may well become the "White Paper on Seasonal Labor." It's an excellent job.

One thing the California report brings out strongly is the need for the Mexican Bracero.

"Among the many groups that have served California farming, there is no doubt the Bracero has been one of the most productive," the report states. "In addition to their willingness to work in some of the crops and operations that have not been highly attractive to domestic workers, the Braceros have played the important role of being a supplemental labor supply."

They give the assurance that the crops will be harvested, the report points out. If the Bracero program was suddenly stopped "the impact would be intense," according to the report.

One big advantage of the Braceros is they come without their families. This makes the housing problem much simpler as local growers will tell you.

"Green Card Mexicans," those who have applied for U. S. Citizenship, have worked well in this area. But being a more settled type of worker their families often come with them which does mean larger housing units. This also affects the school space required if the harvest carries over into the school period.

It is true U.S. farmers have fostered this labor source as an alternative to the Bracero program since the latter is a year by year program subject to much red tape and more and more controls.

"It is estimated by July 1, 1961, as many as 50,000 permanent immigrants from Mexico had been added to the U. S. farm labor force, with 22,000 being in California," according to the bureau of employment security, U. S. Department of Labor. "Green card" immigrants in the California farm labor force at the 1962 peak was 30,000, to 35,000."

"For the state (California) as a whole, based on the entry rate of 1961, this source of pupils from immigrant families is estimated to require the equivalent of 140 new schoolrooms per year," according to the report. However, school is usually in its first two weeks in the Rouge valley when growers need these workers to finish up the winter pear harvest.

The experts predict that more and more Mexican immigrants will be coming into this country even if the Bracero law is extended. The buildup of the "green card Mexicans" will rapidly speed up if the law is not extended.

The Bracero is temporary. Numbers are limited by certification of labor shortage by the secretary of labor. Work contract is specified by legislation and intergovernmental agreement. He must remain in specified farm work and with the contracting employer unless otherwise arranged. The worker's family is not permitted to enter. The employer's cost of procurement such as transportation and insurance is required by legislature and intergovernmental agreement.

The immigrant Mexican is permanent but may return to Mexico temporarily. Number is not limited except an individual employer sponsoring 25 or more requires certification of labor shortage by the secretary of labor. No contract is required. There are no restrictions as to employers or type of work. The family may follow the entry of the head of the family. No procurement cost requirement is set.

The fact Braceros are not allowed to operate machinery may be of increasing importance as more harvest machinery such as self-propelled elevated platforms are used in orchards or picking.

Those making the California study noted that the seasonal pattern of California agriculture has shifted forward in the calendar year. A larger share of the temporary work now occurs in the school vacation period. Emphasis on youth for this temporary work has brought encouraging results, according to the California Department of Employment. Use of high school students for the heavy and strenuous pear-picking work is still hotly debated in this valley. One big handicap is school opens when they are needed most-near the end of the season when migrant labor has migrated.

The California researchers state the reasonable labor available is not used as fully as it should be. This is the fault of both worker and boss, they point out. The workers don't always know where and when work is available. Specialization in certain crops also keeps them from working as much as they could, the report pointed out. But the employers recruit independently and long before the season and take on more workers than they actually need.

So, in Tulare county they tried two experimental crews to see what the maximum amount of work each crew could obtain. Each crew member was told to accept different types of work when it became available and jobs were arranged and scheduled.

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So what? So if the temporary farm worker in California had averaged an additional 35 days of work in 1961, the

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additional work contribution would have been more than half of that supplied by foreign workers in the state that year.

We do not claim this study can be applied to Oregon, much less to Jackson county. But, it does raise some major questions: Is all available labor fully utilized? Are labor recruiting efforts fully coordinated among growers, packing houses and with governmental agencies? How touchy to political pressure is the Bracero program? Is the avowed U. S. Department of Labor's goal to hold down the number of Braceros used in the U. S. a fair and realistic one? If coordination is a major key to this seasonable labor problem could the U. S. Department of Agriculture do a better job of distributing seasonal labor where it is needed by using its advance crop information?

# Farm & Garden

## Gardening Tips

By JOHN W. McLOUGHLIN  
County Extension Agent

Lilac blight may be prevalent this year due to the rainy weather.

This disease causes dark black streaks on the young shoots or one side of the shoot may be blackened. Spots may occur on the leaves. These spots may run together and form a water soaked blotch. Young leaves may turn black and die quickly.

This disease also attacks the flowers causing the flower head to wilt and turn brown. The flower buds may be completely blackened by lilac blight. The white flower varieties seem to be more severely affected than the colored varieties.

Good cultural practices play an important role in the control of lilac blight. Give your plants adequate growing room and prune to provide good air circulation. Avoid overfertilization of the planting.

Prune any diseased shoots six inches beyond the infected area. Sterilize the pruning shears before each cut by dipping them in denatured alcohol. Then spray with a copper spray at the rate of three tablespoons 50 per cent copper to a gallon of water. Spray infected lilacs with copper in the fall at the above rate.

Available Phosphorus Important for Vegetable Crops

The response of vegetable plants to phosphorus fertilizer is greater during early growth than at any other time. An abundance of phosphorus encourages development of fibrous roots which are important in helping young plants establish themselves and get off to an early start in the spring.

When applying phosphorus, as super phosphate or in mixed fertilizer, to acid or cold soils, don't mix the fertilizer

# Belknap New Head Of Riders' Group

The full membership attended the April meeting of Jackson County Horsemen's association, held in the recreation room of the Tex Nash Ford Tractor and Implement building. They unanimously elected John Belknap to the presidency.

Belknap has been conducting recent meetings since the resignation of Larry Perry some time ago. Jack Brown, Medford, is vice president.


Belknap addressed the group, and led discussions regarding the necessary program, how to proceed, promotion, aim and needs of the members and local 4-H clubs, as well as other interested groups, and all the different activities now being conducted throughout Jackson county.

Lonnie Varner stated the needed requirements of any constructive plan would be to see ample room and facilities will be available, in order to accommodate the increasing number of clubs. This would enable the youngsters, as well as the other groups to properly display their livestock, poultry, homemaking projects, and all their hobbies.

Ted Christensen, chairman of the membership and activi-

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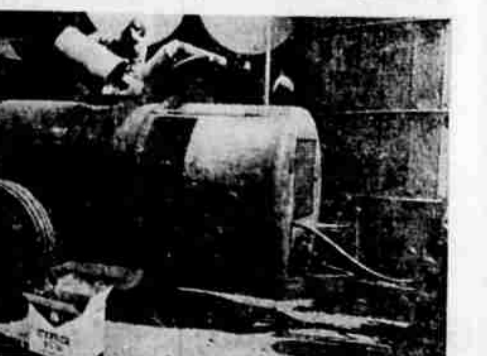
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