

Sweat, Determination Help Make Small Local Farm Pay

By JOE COWLEY
Mail Tribune Farm Editor
Sams Valley-Caspar Meyer and his family have done with sweat and determination what most people only dream about.

They have made a small family farm up Ramsey Canyon rd. in the Sams Valley area pay off, which many of today's agricultural experts say can't be done. It's even more remarkable since Meyer was neither raised nor trained as a farmer.

Setting for this story is 130 acres of land high above the Rogue valley, with a small cleared patch planted to green rows of strawberries stretching up the hillsides and about 150 apple trees silhouetted against the sky on the crest of a hill and bordering a small reservoir. In the foreground area a small wood frame house flanked by a vegetable garden and out-buildings. One is a root cellar dug into the side of a hill and the other a small log hayshed which was once a pioneer cabin.

Swiss Farm Setting
Two flaxen-haired blue-eyed daughters complete the setting resembling a small Swiss farm. The Swiss appearance is only natural because the Meyer family is from Switzerland.

Meyer speaks English, French, German and Italian. His wife, Swiss-German and English as do the two boys and two girls.

"When I was working (as a Swiss sales tax clerk) I kept thinking about what I could do. I had a job which thousands of my countrymen would like to have. But, I thought I would like farming. I had done a lot of gardening and worked with farmers. I liked farming."

"So, we saved all the money we could. I came to this country alone in 1954. They wouldn't let me bring my family because they thought a former government clerk couldn't earn a living and might have to go back. But, I found a job the first day," he grinned. "The family joined me about six months later."

Then followed years of hard work to get money for a farm. Meyer worked in a Canadian sawmill at night and as a farm hand during the day.

"I would work 34 hours at a time. Maybe I would be in bed for four hours," he related in his Swiss accent. "About 1958 when the family felt they had enough saved they packed their meager belongings into a jalopy and headed for Tracy, Calif., 58 miles east of San Francisco. But land prices were too high there. The family had liked glimpses of the Rogue valley

on the way through to California.

Classifieds Help
A classified advertisement in the Mail Tribune brought six replies. Meyer inspected three of the most likely farms and settled on his present farm. He saw it and bought it all in the same day. It was the small reservoir fed by a mountain spring which decided him. "You can't do anything without water," he declared.

There were problems on financing the farm through the former owner. Meyer was working for the Pelton orchards and on someone's advice contacted his foreman for a loan. This way he was able to discount the farm loan by \$550 and is paying his benefactor through one of the

Brush Controls Study Under Way

Corvallis - Basic information to help the land manager control vegetation with the least amount of contamination by herbicides is the goal of Oregon State university scientists studying the biochemistry and toxic hazards of chemical brush control.

Planned as a five-year joint project between the agricultural chemistry and forest research divisions of the OSU Agricultural Experiment station, the work is supported by a Public Health Service grant of \$20,000 a year.

Working on the program will be Virgil Freed, head, department of agricultural chemistry; George Barnes, assistant director, forest research division; Michael Newton, instructor in forestry; and Logan Norris, assistant in agricultural chemistry.

The scientists will study the uses of herbicides on forest lands to determine the most efficient means of vegetation control and the effects of such treatments on water purity and wildlife habitat. Basic studies will be made of the behavior of herbicides in plants, water and soil.

It is hoped that such information will result in more efficient use of herbicides and develop a better understanding of pollution problems. Much of the field work will be done in OSU's McDonald Forest north of Corvallis. Soil and water samples will also be collected in conjunction with spray operations on federal, state and private forest lands.

NEW FLY RECORD

An aged bull, in a Kansas herd, was observed to have 10,000 adult horn flies buzzing around his head and forehead—which marks a record of sorts.

local financial institutions. The whole family works at chores. The two boys, Walter, 16, and Bruno, 17, work before and after school in the fields with the tractor, at spraying, weeding and harvesting. The daughters work in the house with their mother.

Father is particular that nobody handle the cow except himself so that is his special project. The cow manure is mixed with straw for fertilizer on the one-acre strawberry field and the comparatively small vegetable plot. Nothing is wasted.

Meyer went to college and commercial schools in Switzerland until he was 21, so is intent on seeing his boys make the most of their education. American schools, he said are the best in the world. Both boys are on the honor roll at Crater High school. The older one received honors in mathematics and chemistry and wants to be a forester. The younger brother isn't quite sure, but thinks forestry might interest him, also.

Right now the family is winding up the strawberry season. Meyer estimates he produces 4 1/2 tons per acre. Make a circle by touching the tips of thumb and forefinger. This will show the size of these bright red, sweet berries sold through Chapman's Little Acres on Table Rock rd. and through some local markets.

Raise Apples, Too

This fall there will be boxes of Spitzenbergs and Yellow Newtown apples coming off the 150 trees perhaps 500 boxes. Last season the grove of trees produced a thousand boxes. Some people who know what the little farm will produce already have their orders in.

Meyer also likes to grow cabbage for which he finds a ready local market. Cabbage is a hardy vegetable and brings a good price, he said. He has about 3,000 plants. Later he hopes to plant grapes.

"Strawberries bring good, fast money, but they are a heck of a lot of hard work, too," Meyer said.

But there's not much chance Meyer will buy a farm down in the valley in spite of recent offers. "There you just work to pay off the interest," he grinned.

When he moved onto his farm about four years ago it was covered with foxtail and other weeds and brush with a number of old apple trees he is gradually replacing.



STRAWBERRY HARVEST—Teenage boys can be seen in the distance picking strawberries on the Caspar Meyer one acre strawberry patch up Ramsey Canyon rd. in the Sams Valley area. Picking was expected to be completed at least by the end of this week. Meyer estimates he gets 4 1/2 tons of Northwest strawberries per acre.



STRAWBERRY PICKERS—These pickers had just come from the strawberry field on the Caspar Meyer farm when this picture was taken. David Johnson, 16, Central Point, picks the crew up in his jeep every morning before 5 o'clock. Other pickers are Jay Lusky, 17, Central Point; John Remley, 14, Gold Hill; Bill Shoemaker, 16, Central Point; and Charley Lusky, Jay's brother, 15. Meyer said he is proud of pickers who aren't afraid to work overtime.



FARM RESERVOIR—Caspar Meyer, Ramsey Canyon rd., Sams Valley, pointed out his farm reservoir to his visitors recently. This, he said, was the big reason he bought the 130 acre farm through the Mail Tribune classified ads. The reservoir irrigates Meyer's vegetables and apple trees.

Broilers Gain, Turkeys Down

Corvallis - Supplies of broilers during the remainder of 1963 will be larger than the same period last year, but about the same quantity of eggs and turkeys will be available to consumers, according to C. N. Fischer, poultry specialist.

An expansion in broiler production is in the making with the May output of broiler chicks the largest output for any month on record and up seven per cent from May, 1962, he noted. The number of eggs in incubators June 1 indicates the June hatch will be larger than the same month last year and the largest on record for that month.

Most of the prospective increase in turkey production this year may be offset by smaller cold storage holdings. Holdings on June 1 were 11 per cent smaller than on the same date last year, Fischer reported.

LICENSE DEADLINE

Salem—The Oregon Department of Agriculture has issued a reminder that July 1 was the deadline for renewing licenses for all scales and weighing and measuring devices. This also includes scales, gasoline pump meters and liquid petroleum gas meters.

Meat Care Required To Beat Summer Heat

Salem - "Pick up some meat and we'll cook it." This is a suggestion heard often during the warm summer weather, and a good one. But, Dr. M. L. Houston, supervisor of the meat inspection service of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, says it is wise to add one reminder - "Don't let it stay in car so long that it starts to heat."

Houston explained that the summer weather that lures the population out-of-doors for cooking and into the picnic grounds also warms meats to temperatures that make them more subject to bacteria action, resulting in spoilage and possible food poisoning.

FEES REDUCED

Salem - Some of the fees charged for potato inspections would be reduced by an amendment to the inspection regulation being proposed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Salem—Grain export loadings inspected in Portland by the Grain Inspection Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture continued to decline in M. J.

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Gardening Tips

Peach Borer
Spray the trunk and lower scaffold limbs of peach, cherry, plum, prune, nectarine and apricot trees and English laurel by July 15. This is a preventative spray to control the peach root borer.

This insect bores into the inner bark and cambium layer of the tree and girdles the tree. The borer holes are readily seen near the base of infected trees.

Thoroughly soak the trunk and scaffold limbs of the tree with a spray containing eight tablespoons (one-half cup) of 50 per cent DDT wettable powder to a gallon of water. Apply enough of the spray solution so that it will run down the trunk of the tree and puddle at the base. (Use about two pints of spray for a tree six inches in diameter.) Apply a second spray for the control of the peach root borer three weeks after the first spray.

Corn Suckering
Suckering corn, that is, the removal of side shoots or suckers is often claimed to increase both yields and the size of ears. Numerous tests have shown that the removal of suckers is not beneficial to Golden Cross Bantam and similar varieties.

Gladiolus
Pick gladiolus flowers that are used for indoor decorations as soon as the flower at the base of the stalk opens fully. The rest of the flowers will bloom indoors in water. Leave at least four leaves on the plant to insure a healthy corn for next year's flowers.

Tomatoes
Continue to control weeds in the tomato garden by shallow cultivation and the use of a mulch. Weeds compete vigorously with tomatoes for the moisture and nutrients necessary for good fruit production.

Remember that blossom-end rot is caused by a lack of soil moisture and wide fluctuations in soil-moisture supply. This physiological disease produces a sunken, black leathery rot around the blossom end of the fruit.

If you smoke, be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before handling tomato plants. The tobacco mosaic virus which causes mottled foliage and fern-like leaves is most often transmitted to plants by the fingers of gardeners who smoke.

Do not do any unnecessary pruning as this reduces the total yield and exposes the tomatoes to the sun. This exposure contributes to blotchy ripening or yellowing of the fruit.

Harvest ripe tomatoes as this encourages continuous flowering and fruit development.

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