

# A County Pilot Farm Program

# Misdemeanor Prisoners Help Raise Food for Local Institutions

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Some sages of old, modern psychologists and many philosophers, writing during the in-between years, laid the foundation for the program now under way at the Jackson county farm, 5465 South Pacific highway.

For all believed there is therapy for man's ills in the good earth. They saw a solution to many of man's problems in the tilling of the soil, on ranch or in garden. Each had his own way of saying it just as Jackson county officials have today. However, they were all talking about the same thing. The doctors recommended it. The poets sang about it.

In a seed catalog a little verse from Saadi, Persian poet, written in 1258, has been adopted by the company to bring the message to prospective buyers of bulbs. It reads:

"If of thy mortal goods thou art bereft,  
And from thy slender store two loaves  
alone to thee are left,  
Sell one, and with the dole  
Buy hyacinths to feed thy soul."

At the Jackson county farm, where misdemeanor prisoners are growing cabbages as beautiful in the eyes of Tommy Dunn, overseer, as they were to the school "marm" in Edna Ferber's novel of the 1920s, they feed more than the soul.

The school marm said "Cabbages are beautiful." County officials say they are filled with nutrition. They supply the tables at county institutions along with the meat also produced at the farm.

The cabbages, beets, potatoes, onions, carrots and prospective tomatoes were checked by county officials on a recent inspection tour of the farm.

The onions and carrots were sampled by the group, who also predicted that the best tomato crop in Jackson county will be produced on the Jackson county farm. Originated by Commissioner Ed Taylor, District Attorney Alan Holmes, District Judge Loren L. Sawyer and former Jackson County Sheriff Joe Walsh as a pilot program, the farm project is now in its second year.

Last year 31,000 pounds of produce came from the farm to feed residents of the farm home, boys and girls, detained in the Jackson county juvenile detention home, and inmates of the county jail. In other words, all Jack-

son county institutional menus, according to Commissioner Taylor, were improved, vitamin-wise and every other way, with the addition of the fresh vegetables.

The ground used for the garden, grain field and pasture (50 acres in all) was formerly the county's experimental farm. The plantings this year include 15 acres of barley, 18 acres of alfalfa and three acres of vegetable garden. The remainder is pasture land.

Only the misdemeanor cases work at the farm and they must volunteer. No one is required to do the farm assignments, but there is no shortage of volunteers, according to District Attorney Alan Holmes.

Judge Sawyer, who describes the philosophy involved in the program as in keeping with that of the U.S. Navy in operation of the "brig," says, "We keep them so busy all day that they will be ready to go to bed at night."

"I'm convinced that this project is not costing the county money. I think we're making money. The county realized a small profit last year without considering the money saved in rehabilitation," Sawyer continued. "A good start has been made but I think the program should be expanded to where we can have an honor farm, a place for the offenders to go and live and serve out time."

"This was the original thought we had in launching the pilot program. (Under the present program the prisoners go back to jail at night and return to the farm again in the morning.) Only the minimum security risks are placed on the farm. The revolving door drunks, I call them," Sawyer added. "They go in and out of jail."

### Need Follow-Up Program

"We need a follow-up program for drunks," Sawyer said. "to channel them into Alcoholics Anonymous. We are hoping that we can get a program of this type which will provide counseling. Eighty-five per cent of the cases that come into the court are directly or indirectly the result of drinking. And, the ones who come into court, the ones who end up in jail, are only 10 per cent of the whole drinking problem. The others aren't bothering the courts but they are probably bothering their families and neighbors," Sawyer summarized.

County Sheriff De Armond Leigh, successor to Sheriff Walsh, is as enthusiastic about the project as his predecessor.

"A person can't stop being active all at once even if he is a law violator. When men are placed in jail with no work to do they become worse instead of better. When they work on the farm all day they come in tired, go to bed and go to sleep," Leigh contended. "It is a valuable rehabilitation program even though the period is short that most of them are in jail."

"It is too bad we can't get the felony cases out, too," Leigh stated, adding that it would be too expensive for the county since guards would have to accompany the prisoners.

### Do Irritating Things

"It is surprising," he clarified at this point, "the irritating things they do just because they have nothing to do. Some times they gather up papers, start fires, collect things from their meals, store them up, particularly coffee, and try to reheat them with a cell fire. Just anything to be annoying."

The farm furnished work for an average of 44.9 persons per day in June, the sheriff said. There were 144 prisoners jailed during June and 3,691 prison meals served. The prisoners worked 2,432 hours on the farm.

"There have been no disturbances caused by the ones working on the farm since they went on the job," Taylor said.

The farm supports 22 head of cattle at this time and the county court plans to increase the number and maintain between 30 and 35 in the herd at all times. The meat is put in lockers for institutional serving.

### Moves Into Barley Field

Taylor moved into the barley field to demonstrate that the crop is waist high.

All members of the inspection group walked through the pasture, milling through the herd of cattle while Dunn, who began his career on the farm as a misdemeanor case, reported the latest news. He pointed out the four little calves recently born on the farm.

He says he doesn't miss the alcoholic drinks that got him into various troubles now that he is working in the soil and the fresh air. He is now a paid worker, has his car license back and his car insurance, he announced as proof of his changed conduct.

Sentences are reduced through good work and good behavior on the farm and in the jail.

"I hope this program works," Dunn whispered in an aside. "I really enjoy it here. I want to keep on here."

He was born on a stock ranch in Wyoming, where he grew up. Later, he farmed in Idaho.

"He's a good farmer," the inspection group chorused for him. "I like to watch things grow," Dunn replied, lifting his eyes to the wide panorama of southern Oregon fields and hills, limited by no walls and few fences.



These county officials seemed to cause a stir in the youngest ranks of the herd. But the older cattle refused to move far in their cool pasture on a warm afternoon. Sheriff Leigh is in the lead while Commissioner Faber and District Attorney Holmes are at an apparent standoff.



This typical work crew of misdemeanor prisoners was snapped during the inspection of the project. The men had used the abandoned spading fork to get carrots for the guests, who toured the country farm, including all phases of the work.



Charles Taylor as Pistol in "Henry V" eats real leeks in the current presentation of the play at the Shakespearean festival, according to the audience. Here, Sheriff Leigh and District Attorney Holmes eat onions without an audience at the county farm.



Tommy Dunn, now overseer of the Jackson county farm, can produce his own corned beef and cabbage right from the project. Here he shows garden specimens to county officials on inspection. He likes the farm and wants to stay, he told them.



They weren't dressed for the job, but Jackson county officials, inspecting the county farm, waded right in to the garden patch. Here, left to right, District Attorney Alan Holmes shows a bunch of carrots to Commissioner Ed Taylor, who is clutching a fat head of cabbage. Commissioner Don Faber discusses the quality of the carrots and County Sheriff De Armond Leigh remarks that the plants are ready for harvest. The crew has been harvesting them for two weeks.



Tommy Dunn finds time for some "Do it yourself" projects at the county farm. The cultivator he is using in this photo is one he made. The front wheel was formerly on a bicycle.