

Farmer Of The Week: LaVerne Haskins



J. L. HASKINS and his son LaVerne are shown above inspecting some of the steers in their feed lot. They have 400 acres of hill pasture which they combine with their hay, grain and potato operations to utilize their by-products to the utmost. They run about 500 yearling steers which they finish themselves and this year they began feeding earlier than usual with great success.

Feedlot And Farm Go Well Together

By DICK HUBBELL

LaVerne Haskins, Yonna Valley rancher, admitted the other day that his name got him into quite a few fights while he was in school, and added that it got him into training to buckle down and operate the 850-acre ranch he owns with his father, J. L. Haskins.

Haskins says his father is a "silent partner who provides the brains in the operation," but father, on the other hand, claims that he does "nothing but clip coupons."

The younger Haskins moved onto the Yonna Valley ranch in 1941 when his father acquired it. At that time, it was only about 260 acres, but it expanded slowly until it grew to 850 acres of irrigated land and an additional 400 acres of range land in the hills.

In 1947, Haskins purchased a half interest in the place from his father. Four hundred acres of the irrigated land is in grass pasture and the rest is in farm land. Crops include 20 acres of white rose seed potatoes, 100 acres of Gem seed, hay, grain and clover. The potatoes have made foundation seed rating for the past four years, and Haskins says he believes this year's crop will repeat again.

Haskins runs about 500 yearling steers, fattening them in his own feed lot. He says that this year he began feeding in July, somewhat earlier than normal, and has found that the experiment worked out very well. In fact, he said, he topped the local sale for four weeks in a row.

The potatoes represented the real gamble, he said.

"We were told when we came in here that we would never grow potatoes here—that we would be frozen out," he said. "But it hasn't worked that way, even though there were times that we worried. We have always grown

spuds here, even though some years we grew as few as seven acres."

His two sons are both active in 4-H work, and he is an assistant leader of the Bonanza Potato Club, headed by Les Porterfield.

The first year his younger son Bruce planted 4-H potatoes—he was nine at the time—he won the 1954 4-H Potato King award, which shows, his father says, that potato growing runs in the family.

But Haskins says he will never attempt to force either of his sons into the farming business. "I feel that a boy should grow the way his own nature takes him, and not be forced into something he does not want for a career by his father," he explained.

The ranch has progressed in more ways than size since the Haskins took it over. Almost all of the irrigated land has been leveled from the rolling hills of Yonna Valley, and the well type irrigation system has been expanded and improved.

Well water, Haskins said, is a little better than river water for seed potatoes as it is not so likely to pick up disease before it gets onto the fields. This, he

added, has been one of the factors aiding his good seed potato record. Another factor he mentioned is the relative isolation from other potato growers.

The major factor though, he said, is hard work.

Testing Program Results Listed

More chickens, but fewer turkeys, were tested under Oregon's poultry and turkey improvement program in July and August than in the same period last year, says Earl Reitsma, supervisor of the program for the state department of agriculture.

Chickens and turkeys tested during the two months this year totaled 125,815, an increase of 23,060 over July and August, 1955. The testing breakdown was: chickens, 119,007, an increase of 24,451; turkeys, 6,808, a decrease of 1,481.



LaVERNE HASKINS dug up a hill of Gem seed potatoes to check on the progress the spuds were making. He has 100 acres of Gem seeders on his Yonna Valley ranch and for the past four years his spuds have qualified for foundation seed ratings.

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