Rancher's Report

By BILL DECKER

The 'cattle business', in the doldrums since the early '50s, may be headed for better times and a few years of relative prosperity, despite certain gloomy predictions in other business quarters.

That's what Charley Stover, one of California's most successful beef producers for the past 50 years, and known as the head of the annual Red Bluff Bull Sale, said at a meeting of his sale commitee last Saturday.

"In all my years in the cattle business, I have seldom seen a stronger price condition, coupled with such a plentiful feed supply, as we are now experiencing."

"We must also remember," he added, "that while total beef cattle numbers are declining, the increase in population nationally, adds to the number of potential consumers of beef."

Stover also had something to say as to what he thought the 350 bulls to be sold at the 17th annual Red Bluff Bull Sale sponsored by his committee on February 6, 7 and 8 would average pricewise.

He warned, "Even though feeder cattle have been selling for two to three cents more per pound during the late fall and early winter than they brought a year earlier, bulls may not sell for higher prices at our February sale, as some seem to think." "Personally," he added, "I feel that they may even average less than the $609 overall price for all breeds of last February."

Stover said that his prediction was founded on the fact that the unusually high average for Hereford bulls at the February 1957 Red Bluff event was based on the simple law of supply and demand. "We were short on bulls and long on buyers," he insisted. "This February, because we have 100 more Hereford bulls to sell than we had last year, our buyers could be edging into the driver's seat."

In commenting further on the brighter cattle picture, he attributed it to a number of conditions which he listed as follows: The breaking of one of the nations most disastrous droughts in the Great Southwest, and the demand for cattle to restock ranges there; unprecedented favorable weather and natural feed conditions existing on the Pacific Coast; a record supply of soft corn in the Midwest which had to be fed because no government loans could be secured on it, and the fact that the normal 15 to 17 year cattle number cycle was approaching a bottom in total cow population anyway.

"Of course," he added, "a marked decline in consumer buying power might offset producer price benefits resulting from the expected reduction in available supplies of beef which may total as much as 10 pounds per capita."

A total of 39 licensed dairies in Jackson, Klamath and Lake counties were operating last year, according to Thomas Bailey of Klamath Falls, district representative for the State Department of Agriculture. Breaking this figure down, there were five Grade A producer-distributors, five Grade B producer-distributors and 29 Grade A producers.

Eight producer-distributors sell milk right on their premises, Bailey continued.

Herd sizes averaged 45 head of cattle for Grade A producers, 40 head for Grade A producer- distributors and 15 head for Grade B producer-distributors.

The largest herd in this area numbered 130 cattle—there were five herds between 75 and 100 head in size, and another five herds in the 50 to 75 head category. Ten herds contained between 35 and 50 cattle, six dairies had herds of between 25 and 35 cattle, and two dairy herds were under 25 head.

For the entire Southern Oregon area, 175 licensed dairies were operating in 1957, as compared to 187 in 1956. The average herd size last year was 34 cattle; a year before the average size in Southern Oregon was 32.

In the dairies in Bailey's District, there were 32 farm tanks, 19 pipeline milkers and 18 farm tank-pipeline milker combinations.

All 39 of the dairy operations in this region use milking parlors: 33 are stanchion type and six of the parlors have raised platforms. Four dairy herds are fed and housed in stanchion barns — the other 36 are kept in lounging sheds. Twenty-five of the dairies have paved cowyards.

According to Bailey, these figures were compiled by the headquarters office in Salem, which will also release shortly the number of dairy inspections made during 1957 in this area, and other allied figures.

Licenses are held by 53 Grade B milk producer - distributors throughout the state, Oregon's Department of Agriculture reports. This figure compiled as of January 1, shows an increase of 19 over the total recorded last year at the same time.

Forty - three of the Grade B dairies sell milk right on their own premises. Fifty-one of the 53 producer-distributors sell in gallon jugs.

According to Kenneth E. Carl, who is in charge of dairy law enforcement for the department, four of these Grade B producer-distributors also hold licenses for producing Grade A milk. He added that during the past year, five dairymen changed their licenses from grade B to A.

Five dairies that had been operating illegally, or without licenses, obtained them during 1957. Carl added that five more unlicensed producer - distributors have applications pending.

According to Carl, the bacteria count requirement for Grade A and Grade B milk is exactly the same. Classification comes from the type of equipment the dairies use.

Among requirements for Grade A producer-distributors are a two-room milkhouse, a three-compartment wash sink, and an automatic filler and mechanical capper for bottling.

Grade B dairies are permitted to have smooth tongue and groove wood floors, a one-room milkhouse, two-compartment wash sink, and a hand operated valve for filling bottles.

A delegation of Oregonians with sights set on increased net returns for the state's 16 million dollar potato harvest through processing and better handling will take a look at southern Idaho's highly developed spud industry, February 18 to 20.

The visit to potato storage and processing plants between Idaho Falls and Twin Falls is part of the three-day ninth annual Northwest Perishable Loss Prevention short course.

The short course is a cooperative project of Oregon State College, University of Idaho, the Washington State College, and the American Railway Development Association. Meetings rotate among the three states to take up problems of fruit and vegetables common throughout the Northwest.

OSC representative to this year's short course is Roland H. Groder, fruit and vegetable marketing specialist, who will join with Oregon potato growers and shippers in studying the center of Idaho's potato empire.

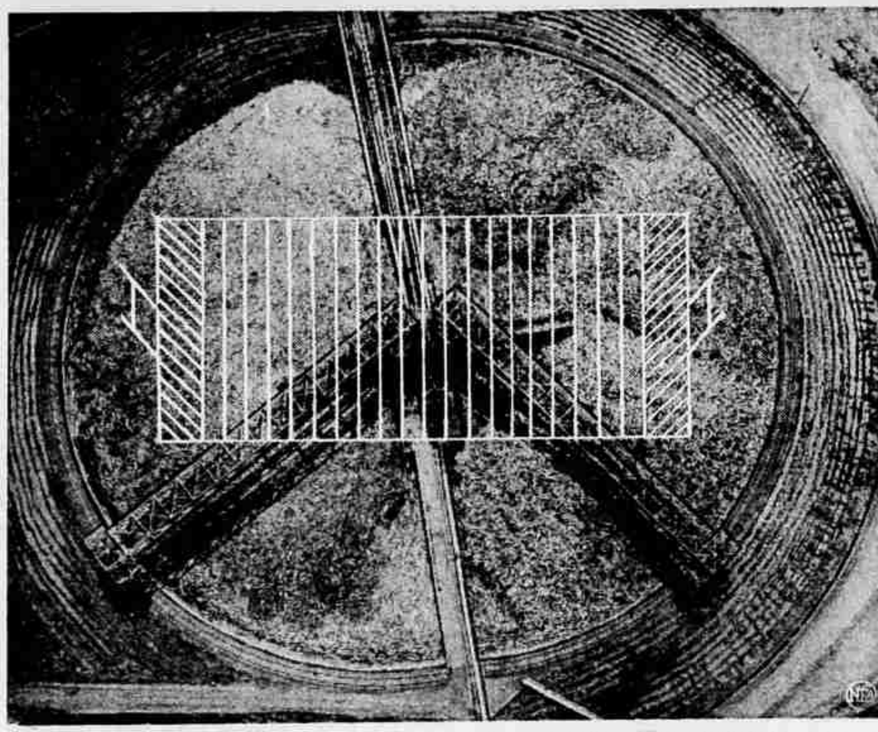
Lack of potato processing plants in Oregon has squeezed local growers into a poor competitive position, Groder says. Idaho and other key producing areas are skimming the cream of the crop from their potato harvest for top grade fresh market or table stock.

The slightly lower grade U.S. No. 1's and high No. 2's go into processing in those areas, the specialist explains. Oregon's harvest, all grade, are trying to compete on the fresh market against only the best from other main producing areas.

In Idaho, Groder continues, the grower gets paid for everything he produces since the less select tubers are processed into such highly marketable products as frozen french fries, potato flakes, and other new potato products.

Speakers for the three-day short course will be drawn from agricultural colleges throughout the nation, industry, the Association of American Railreads, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Groder urges all persons connected with the Oregon potato industry to attend for this first-hand information on problems and goals of the Northwest potato industry.



LUMBER BOWL. Shown above is an artist's drawing of a full-scale football field and gives some idea of the size of this log storage pond at Calhoun, Tennessee. The huge bowl, capable of storing two million logs, is part of the 80 million dollar newsprint mill of Bowaters Southern Paper Corporation, which consumes nearly 1,500 cords a day and produces 300,000 tons of newsprint annually. Lined with concrete, the tank measures 498 feet across, 40 feet in depth and holds enough water to float a 10,000 ton ship. Logs arrive at the mill by train, barge and truck. Parallel cable conveyors carry them to the center of the pond, where twin rotating stackers fling them into the pond. The 200-foot-long gantry cranes, extending below the football field in this aerial photo, ride the tracks around the rim.

Hoppers Pose Crop Problem

Grasshoppers, perennial insect problem of Western and Midwestern ranchmen and farmers, have been found on some 18,700,000 acres of rangeland in 16 states, as a result of late summer and fall federal-state surveys, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports.

It is within these areas that outbreaks requiring organized control effort are likely to occur next year, the department says. The most widespread infestations were found in Texas, Montana, California and Colorado.

Judging from the number of grasshoppers present this year, there are areas in the Texas Panhandle totalling some six million acres that should be watched closely in the spring of 1958. Montana has almost five million acres of rangeland in the same category, California more than three million, and eastern Colorado about 1.5 million. Smaller potential trouble spots occur in adjoining areas of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and in Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

Croplands infestation in general is lighter than it was a year ago. Largest threatening areas appear in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. Control on such lands is handled by the farmers with technical assistance from USDA and state pest-control agencies.

The surveys reveal how many grasshoppers infest an area, and indicate potential severity of infestations for 1958. Surveys next spring for newly hatched grasshoppers will provide a final index of grasshopper populations and identify areas where control during the 1958 growing season will be essential to prevent severe losses.

Review Shows Surplus Check

More than 400 million bushels of grain and corresponding amounts of other commodities would have been added to the nation's surplus stockpiles in 1957 if farmers had planted crops of land held out of production in the Soil Bank, U.S. Department of Agriculture officials said in a year-end review.

With yields of all basic crops at record or near-record levels, it has been estimated that about 225 million bushels of corn, 175 million bushels of wheat, 2 million bales of upland cotton, 6 million hundredweight of rice, and 93 million pounds of tobacco would have been produced on the 21 million acres in the 1957 Acreage Reserve of the Soil Bank. These were "allotment" acres, and represented a net reduction from the permissive totals previously established for the year under the basic crop adjustment programs.

In addition, farmers held 6.5 million acres out of production of general crops in 1957 under the Conservation Reserve—the longer range phase of the Soil Bank.

In total, just under 30 million acres of cropland were "in reserve" for the year—in a direct attack on surpluses.

Nearly a million (914,819) individual agreements were signed by farmers, putting 21.3 million "allotment" acres in the 1957 Acreage Reserve. In complying with these agreements, participating farmers would be eligible for maximum payments totaling slightly over $614 million. By crops, the number of acres put in the program were: wheat, 12,785,000; corn, 5,235,000; cotton, 3,015,000; rice, 242,617; and tobacco, nearly 80,000.

The 6.5 million acres diverted from production to conservation uses under the Conservation Reserve were covered by individual contracts with over 85,000 farmers.

Total first-year payments to these farmers, both cost-share for putting conservation practices into effect and annual per-acre rentals, were $108.3 million.

LARGEST CARRIER

World's largest air-freight carrier is the Military Air Transport Service, which flew 580,000,000 ton-miles of cago and mail for the Defense Department in a single year.

COMPASS PLANT

Direction can be determined by means of the compass plant. When exposed alike on all sides to sunlight, the edges of its leaves point approximately north and south.