

Rancher's Report

By BILL DECKER

Dr. K. J. Peterson, state veterinarian with the State Department of Agriculture, this week made a quick summary of the livestock disease situation as it appeared in Oregon in 1957.

According to Dr. Peterson, anaplasmosis in cattle appears to be slowly spreading. The number of cases of bovine leptospirosis remains about the same as in 1956, although in certain areas of the state the disease has been more important than in the past.

As usual, he continued, quite a number of cases of pink eye in both cattle and sheep and quite a few cases of ovine ecthyma were diagnosed. One outbreak of infectious bovine rhinotracheitis was found in a feed lot.

Two cases of ornithosis were discovered in Oregon turkey flocks. No scabies or anthrax in cattle or sheep were reported. Several cases of hog cholera were diagnosed, according to Dr. Peterson.

In 1956 several cases of blue tongue in sheep were diagnosed—the only time this disease had been discovered in the state. Last year, however, no cases of blue tongue were reported.

Over 2,600 cases of brucellosis in cattle were reported. In cattle, more than 200 cases of leptospirosis were diagnosed; 171 cases of anaplasmosis were reported, as well as 73 cases of blackleg and 62 cases of tuberculosis.

Reported sheep diseases included infectious keratitis and ovine ecthyma. Oregon hogs suffered from 293 cases of influenza, 64 cases of atrophic rhinitis, 35 cases of hog cholera, 34 cases of enteritis, and many cases of erysipelas. Nearly 40 cases of encephalomyelitis in horses were reported in 1957.

Expansion of contract farming, the arrangement by which farm production and commodity processing and distribution are linked closely by contracts or agreements, is one of the most significant current developments in agriculture and is likely to continue, the U.S. Department of Agriculture says.

Contract farming can contribute to more efficient use of agricultural resources, but its ultimate effects on farm incomes and the welfare of farm people remain to be seen, according to Orlin J. Scoville of USDA's Farm Economics Research Division.

In a recent review of the subject, Dr. Scoville noted that contract farming has been applied with the greatest degree recently to broiler production, but contract deals are also being made increasingly with producers of table

eggs and turkeys and with feeders of hogs, beef cattle, and lambs. Historically, contracting has been common in the production of eggs for hatcheries, vegetables for canning or freezing, sugar beets, and a number of other specialty crops. It may involve agreements between farmers and business firms or between farmers and their cooperatives.

In broiler production contract farming has become in recent years the dominant mode of operation. Between 1934 and 1956, broiler production in the U.S. increased 35 times (from 34 million broilers to 1.3 billion) largely because of the contract method of farming. The increase has occurred in all parts of the country but most rapidly in the South Atlantic, South Central, and Far Western areas, according to Scoville. It is estimated that about 90 per cent of all broilers are now produced under contracts of assorted types.

During this recent expansion period, contract farming has played an important part in improving broiler production efficiency, Scoville says. Twenty-five years ago, for example, 12 pounds of feed were needed to produce a three-pound broiler. Today, only eight pounds of feed are needed, as a result of progress in breeding, nutrition, sanitation, and management. Broiler contracts, according to Scoville, tend to speed up the rate at which improvements developed through research are adopted by growers.

Contract farming has also expanded the size of individual broiler enterprises by making capital more readily available, relieving farmers of some of the production risks, and providing plans for efficient poultry houses and equipment. The result has been a gradual increase in production output per operator.

Just a few years ago, one man could handle annually about 24,000 broilers, or three batches of 8,000 birds each. Today, a good standard would be 40,000 birds annually per operator, or four lots of 10,000 birds each. A recent USDA-Census cooperative study showed that the average annual production per broiler farm in Sussex County, Delaware, the leading broiler county, has risen to more than 44,000 birds. With few exceptions, broiler farms still depend primarily on family labor.

The typical broiler farm is highly specialized, producing only the broilers and possibly a few acres of feed grain. As a rule, the farmer buys his chicks and most of his feed. Recent studies have shown that broiler farmers often prefer to raise birds under con-



FLORIDA FREEZE — Dade County farmers, south of Miami, Florida, plowed under their frozen tomato crops late last week in hopes of salvaging some of their losses by planting a third winter crop where only two are normal. Many growers have lost most of their two crops since the first cold wave of Florida's worst winter poured down the peninsula the night of December 11.

tract, even when their assets are great enough to farm independently of contracts. This is largely because of the protection against risk that a contract affords.

The phenomenal growth of broiler production has continued even through periods of unfavorable prices, the economist points out. Broiler numbers have declined from production totals of the previous year only twice since 1934, and the last such decline was in 1946. Yet, the broiler-feed price ratio has been somewhat less favorable since 1948, indicating that contract farming has aspects that make it attractive at a relatively low unit-profit margin. Scoville indicates that this attraction can be explained in terms of greater efficiency resulting from operation improvements, increased volume of business per worker, and the shift of production risks, all of which have combined to cause farmers to produce at prices that would not formerly have appealed to them.

Up to now, Scoville says, contract farming has not altered the traditional dependence of American farms on family labor, and this will probably continue to be the case. But production contracts may have a profound effect on the role of the family farm-worker. In some instances, the contracting

farmer may become essentially a piece-rate wage worker. Such a development would probably be accompanied by increased efforts of contract farmers to organize themselves into bargaining associations.

STOP SPUTTERING CANDLES

To prevent candles from sputtering, dip them in fresh white shellac which has been thinned. This will also keep the candles from bending while stored.

USE IMAGINATION

Some very interesting effects can be obtained by varying the method of finishing wood paneling in your den, family or living room. For instance, the West Coast Lumbermen's Association says that you can easily preserve the wonderful warmth and beauty of Douglas fir or west coast hemlock paneling. Apply a filler and let dry and then use either a clear varnish, a lacquer or a wax. The fine grain and texture of the wood is retained in all its loveliness.

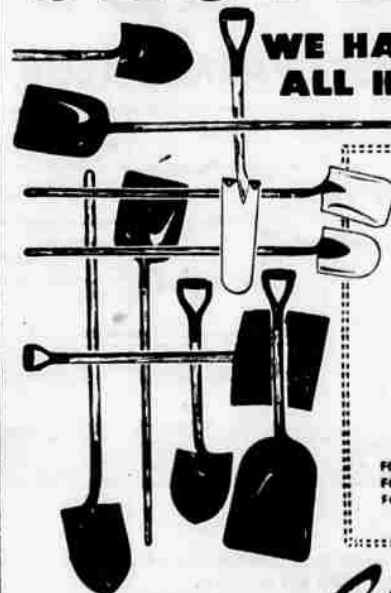
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KLAMATH FALLS



EGGSTRAORDINARY BABYSITTER. Louise, the hen who went to the dogs, is shown above mothering two Beagle pups in Bloomington, Indiana. Princess, the real mother of the pups, is shown at the left checking the situation. The animals are the pets of 3-year-old Mark Anderson.