Agriculture and Husbandry

Versatile Valleys

Diversified in its geography, versatile in its crops, varied in its industries, Santa Barbara County is a land of richness, of prosperity, of opportunity; the setting for many romantic novels of California. It is a land of wide-open spaces, of rolling brown hills, of sheltered inland valleys, of level table-lands and mesas, of miles of coastal sand-dunes.

Almost countless are the crops raised in Santa Barbara County. Here is grown barley, lettuce, dry onions, tomatoes, peas, cauliflower, carrots, alfalfa, beans (a pink and white species, as well as the lima), guayule (a rubber plant), sub-tropical fruits.

Not content with raising these many crops, Santa Barbara County residents devote themselves to sundry industries: dairying, beef-cattle production, the raising of flowers for world-wide distribution.

Because Santa Barbara County has so many geographical divisions within itself, is so topographically diverse, each inland valley is best suited to the raising of certain agricultural productions, to the development of particular industries. To understand the County as a whole, it might be best to observe its natural divisions, take each section individually, study its characteristics, its produce, accordingly.

Santa Ynez Valley. From the City of Santa Barbara, one goes up over the San Marcos Pass, arrives into the Santa Ynez Valley. Rugged, covered with splendid trees, is the upper part of this valley; ranches are on all sides, thousands of acres in size, devoted to beef-cattle production, horse-raising.

Unlike its upper portion is the lower half of the Santa Ynez; amazingly fertile for agriculture is it. There is no definite demarcation; deer may sometimes be seen nibbling, a herd of cattle munching away nearby.

Named by a colony of Danish farmers who settled in the Santa Ynez Valley several decades ago is the little central town of Solvang. Almost like a transplanted Danish community is this portion of the valley; its crops, buildings, equipment, herds—all are tidy in the way characteristic of the Dane, neat, thrifty, painstakingly clean.

Lompoc Valley. Dedicated in great measure to flower-raising is this valley, shortly to the north and west of the Santa Ynez. Spring and autumn here finds gorgeously-hued blossoms in abundance on the sloping hills, level meadows. From these fragrant flowers are secured seeds for wholesale distribution throughout the world; ideal are the Lompoc Valley climatic conditions for the cultivation of seeds to be used in innumerable climates.

Truck crops offer a decided contrast to the neighboring acreage of fragrant flowers. Small though the pleasantly odoriferous Lompoc Valley is, its residents, in addition to their large-scale flower seed cultivation, raise more than 1000 acres of such truck crops as lettuce, peas, carrots, tomatoes, cauliflower, dry onions.

Santa Maria Valley. Largest and most productive of all the agricultural districts of Santa Barbara County is the Santa Maria Valley; approached by winding upward through the hills beyond Lompoc Valley. Guadalupe, at the valley's mouth, is the packing and shipping center for miles around; three miles it is from the ocean, three miles of a desert locale so like the African Sahara in miniature that Hollywood motion picture companies constantly wend their way north, bringing screen stars of renown, adding occasional zest to the farming routine.

Flower seed farms are not restricted to the Lompoc Valley; Santa Maria Valley has large areas devoted to dahlias, gladiolas, other flowers. Less artistic, perhaps, are the valley's leading crops; alfalfa, truck produce, dairy products.

The tomatoes and lettuce that one eats late in the season are usually from the Santa Maria. When southern fields are beginning to ripen too rapidly, the Santa Maria tomatoes are just becoming rosy, plump; the Santa Maria lettuce is always crisp, firm, in great demand.

Despite all this, a vegetable, long in shape, orange in color, hard in composition, is Santa Maria's biggest single crop: the carrot. A total of 1786 acres of the valley has been devoted to this lowly vegetable this year; surrounding communities bring this acreage up to 2397.

Not all the crops of this fertile region leave through the packing, shipping center, Guadalupe. Much alfalfa hay remains at home, maintains the dairy cattle. Finest herds: Captain G. Allan Hancock's Rosemary Farm, the Acquistipace Brothers', the Knudsen Creamery, the J. W. Poulson ranch, the Santa Maria Creamery. Holsteins predominate; the Rosemary herd includes the all-American junior bull, others champions, cattle notables.

Osa Flacca. By County boundaries, this area belongs to San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara's northern neighbor. So similar is it to Santa Maria Valley, so alike are their crops, so lacking in dissimilarity their problems, that Osa Flacca is counted a part of the Santa Maria Valley in the making of surveys, in the shipping of the valley's produce.

Nipomo, Tepusquet Mesas. Not all Santa Barbara County's agriculture is confined to its valleys; there are several mesas where dry-farming is prevalent: Nipomo is to the northeast; Tepusquet to the southeast. Extensive crops: grains, the pink-and-white bean.

Santa Barbara County may some day rival the South American countries as a rubber-producing region. Now being grown for experimentation is the guayule, a plant which demands little attention, little water, but from which rubber can be extracted. Hundreds of acres near Sisquoc are already planted with guayule; soon to be erected at Salinas is an extraction plant.

SUPPER TIME FOR SANTA MARIA PRIZE STOCK

Among cattle notables is the all-American prize bull.

Teague Quizzed

With seven Federal Farm Board members interrogated last week at Washington, the Senate Agricultural Committee, investigating the fitness of members of the board, came upon the name of the eighth member, Santa Paula's C. C. Teague.

Quizzed by the committee, Teague delved into the farm problem, told the group of investigators, at first dubious, what the board had done so far since it was founded. Mainly it had aided the Florida citrus industry in its crisis; when beset by the Mediterranean fruit fly it had faced ruination. Also, it has loaned to the California grape industry the sum of $4,500,000 through the Sun Maid Raisin Association.

C. C. TEAGUE

"This man deserves some applause."

After Teague had testified, investigating Senator Wheeler of Montana arose. Said Wheeler: The Federal Farm Board has spent too much time in aiding the grape industry, and has failed to prevent huge losses to the wheat farmers. The grape loan, Wheeler claimed, had raised the value of Sun Maid bonds. Similar efforts, he thought, would have benefitted wheat prices.

Of all these facts Teague said he was aware. He denied the board had neglected the wheat situation, insisted that he himself had a deeper interest in wheat, and cotton, too, than any other commodity. But to pass out indiscriminately the $500,000,000, allotted for farm relief by Congress, to unorganized groups such as the wheat producers were, would only be throwing away the people's money. The wheat growers were not in a position to receive aid, nor were many another needly agricultural group. The grape growers had received aid because they had been organized early, and along the right lines.

Then Teague launched into a three-hour dissertation on the farm problem, during which time the investigating committee evinced avid interest. Many a pertinent remark, potent suggestion, he made. (1) He advocated a nation-wide expansion of the co-operative marketing system among agriculturalists. (2) He agreed that separate stabilization groups should be formed for each industry. Cotton, in his opinion, would lend itself easiest to single marketing control. (3) With more help from private interests, he thought the farm board could give more relief. (4) The board should set up a complete marketing service of its own, study the country's crops with the view to organizing them for better marketing practices and prices. (5) The government should educate the country to the views of the farm board. (6) The board's primary purpose should be to build up grower-owned and grower controlled marketing organizations.

In California, Teague said, the citrus and walnut industries, during the past twenty years, increased the demand for their products five times faster than the nation grew in population. He thought the same thing could happen for the whole nation. One big reason for the California growers' success was that the co-operatives, representing 75 per cent of the crop, controlled the market.

The California man's constructive explanation of farm problems so struck the committee that at one point usually critical Senator Heflin clapped his hands, declared: "Mr. Chairman, this man deserves some applause." Arkansas' Senator Caraway added: "I think that if other members of the Farm Board knew as much about the farm problems as this gentleman, there would be no criticism." Said South Carolina's Senator Smith: "I second the motion."

Teague received many another plaudit during the course of the investigation, in which he himself seemed to be doing most of the investigating. Heflin again was praiseworthy when he said: "I am glad we have someone on the board who is sympathetic with our problems."

Toward the end of the session Teague drew praise even from Iowa's Senator Brookhart. Teague had testified that although he was president of the California Fruit and Walnut Growers organizations he served without pay. Said Brookhart: "That sounds to me like real co-operation—like you had cut out all the unnecessary high salaries." Said Teague: "Thank you!"

Quarantined Walnuts

Major among prevalent insect pest troubles within the last several months have been the activities of the walnut husk fly (Rhagolatis Juglandis). At Chino, where infestation is worst, many an experiment has taken place, many a confab between walnut growers and entomologists held. Chief among the eradication experiments and most successful was that of carpeting an orchard floor with tar-paper prior to the time adult flies emerged from the earth, thus killing them. (News Review, Aug. 26-Sept. 1).

But walnut husk flies continued to multiply faster than they could be killed. Thus, last week, the State Dept. of Agriculture decided to quarantine walnuts in the area within the San Bernardino Base Line, in the vicinity of Chino. This action prevents shipment of walnuts without certification and also regulates walnut movements within the regulated areas by permit. Strict count is kept on every movement of walnuts in the quarantined area and on each internal shipment; the shipper must sign a certificate bearing statements that the walnuts are free from husks or have been sterilized.

Bug Contract

At Rivera, in Los Angeles County, one of the chief industries is bug raising. Located there is the branch county insectary. Last spring, however, the insectary burned down, destroyed the lives of 4,000,000 lady-bug beetles (cryptolaemi). But not in vain did the host of bugs sacrifice their lives, for soon after the catastrophe, the County Board of Supervisors voted $29,000 for a new and more modern insectary.

Last week in answer to the ad-

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