Seasonal reminders

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**Tobacco Notes**

The sale date of tobacco leaf this year has been fixed for August 27. Valuing will commence on August 3, and there will be an intermediate sale between these dates, the time of which will be fixed by the buyers after their arrival. Leaf is to arrive at Dalgety's store, Fremantle, not later than July 14, and the last lot must not arrive at Fremantle later than August 17. It is expected that at least 525 tons of leaf will be offered for auction.

Growers must make certain when baling leaf, that it contains the correct percentage of moisture. If too moist, mould will develop in the bale, and if baled too dry, leaf will be damaged in transit. Leaf is in the correct moisture condition for baling when hands can just be handled without shattering of the leaves. If there is insufficient leaf of one grade to make a bale, a division is quite in order, providing that the two grades approximate each other—for instance, first and second grade leaf, or first grade leaf and prime cutters can be placed in different divisions in the bale. Bales of 150 to 200 lb. are the optimum size, and those over 200 lb. are repacked.

When it comes to baling low grade and immature green leaf, growers should consider costs of baling, freight and commission charges as against the likely selling price. If nondescript leaf is forwarded, there is a good chance that it will not sell, and the grower would then be liable to extra costs for return or to have it destroyed.

**Seedbeds.**—A covering of pine sawdust on the beds after sowing of the seed has proved to be successful in preventing the drying out of the surface layer of the soil. If this is not obtainable, coarse sand can be used. When a surface mulch is used, the beds can be left open longer during the day, thus creating conditions less favourable for the development of the "damping off" fungi. When watering the beds, it is advisable to give less frequent heavy waterings, rather than a large number of sprinklings. Heavy watering tends to keep toxic salts at a low level, whereas light waterings and consequent evaporation draw these salts to the surface, creating a highly concentrated soil surface layer which is harmful to very young seedlings.

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**Orchard Notes**

July and August are busy months in deciduous orchards with pruning, spraying and preparing the trees for another season's fruit crop. Pruning should be well in hand by the end of August to ensure completion well before budburst. Certain peach and nectarine varieties tend to shed their buds while still dormant and in this case pruning may be left until blossoming, but this should not be made a general practice.

**Dormant Sprays.**—Straight red oil or emulsified winter oils at 1 in 15 should be applied well before budburst as an ovicide for mites and as a scalicide for San Jose and Mussel scales. Lime sulphur may be used alternatively to good effect if applied at a concentration of one in seven just before bud movement.

Should it be desired to correct a zinc deficiency, apply a spray of 50 lb. of zinc sulphate in 100 gallons of water. This spray should not be used sooner than 14 days after pruning and before any bud movement occurs.

**Bud Burst Sprays.**—Almonds and early peaches will require an "early pink bud" spray of 6-4-50 Bordeaux mixture for the control of shothole and in the case of peaches, this will also control peach leaf curl.

Leaflets on this subject are available on application. Several new fungicides such as thiram which is available commercially under the names of Thiotox, Lantox, etc., and ziram sold as Ziram 80, etc., are worthy of trial on an experimental scale. These should be used according to the manufacturers' recommendations.
FOLIAGE SPRAYS

Brown Rot of Citrus.—Where brown rot of citrus is troublesome spray the lower two-thirds of the trees with 4-4-50 Bordeaux mixture plus a spreader during the first or second week of August.

Anthracnose or Black Spot of Grapes.—An article on this subject appears elsewhere in this issue.

Brown Spot of Passion Vines.—This disease is the most serious affecting passion vines and unless preventive measures are taken, control in the height of the season is virtually impossible. A 4-4-40 Bordeaux spray should be applied early in the spring and followed by further sprays at regular intervals. For best results the vines must be well thinned before spraying.

FERTILISERS

The main nutritional requirement of fruit trees during the spring months is nitrogen to assist blossoming and fruit set. Nitrogenous fertilisers should therefore be applied several weeks before blossoming and if possible to coincide with turning in of the cover crop. A high nitrogen status is particularly important for citrus and 4 to 5 lb. per tree may be applied. For other fruits lesser quantities are necessary.

Vegetable Notes for July-August

In those districts where potato plantings have been made early in June, the young plants should soon be showing up. A topdressing of sulphate of ammonia at the rate of a bag to the acre as soon as the rows are discernible is of considerable benefit in stimulating vigorous growth in these cold months.

The slight damage caused by harrowing up to the time potato plants are two to three inches high is more than offset by the subsequent ease of weed control.

In the Albany area, tuber unit plots should be planted during August.

The storage premium on potatoes is being increased by 5s. per week until mid July and then by 10s. per week until late September. In view of the premium, all growers should pick over potatoes before consignment.

Growers who through lack of sheltered storage space or who for convenience store potatoes in the open, should recondition and place them in dry bags before ralling.

In the Garden.—During July and August, preparations should be made in order to take early advantage of the approaching warmer weather. Aspect and soil warmth are points that should receive most attention at this time, particularly for the less hardy vegetables. Areas with a north or north-easterly aspect are most favourable for plantings during these months. Wherever possible, shelter from west and south-west winds should be provided.

Following the heavy winter rains, the aim should be to rebuild the general level of fertility of the soil. The first step in this direction should be the addition of organic matter. Adequate organic matter is particularly desirable on sandy or leachable soils where loss of soluble fertiliser is likely. Besides being a source of many of the elements required for plant growth, organic matter has the ability to hold added fertilisers in an available form until drawn upon by the plant.

Consideration should also be given to special fertilisers. The elements required in the greatest amounts by the plants are nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. For successful vegetable growing all three of these major elements are necessary in sufficient quantities. Potato Manure "E" contains adequate amounts of each of the three ingredients recommended. Depending on the initial fertility of the soil and the amount of animal manure or compost incorporated, dressings of this fertiliser may range from 5 cwts. to a ton per acre.

Bulletin No. 777, a valuable handbook entitled "Vegetable Growing" is available from the Department of Agriculture for 2s. post free.

Apiary Notes for July-August

The winter is the quietest season for bees, but not for the bee-keeper, for while little work can be done in the apiary during the cold and wet weather, the bee-keeper can make good use of the time in repairing and maintaining his equipment.

If the spring work is started with equipment on which the bee-keeper can rely, he knows that he will have very few hold-ups and will be able to gain the most from any early flow.

When the hives are closed down for winter, remove the drone comb that has been lifted to the top and the side during the extraction. Melt the comb down and replace full sheets of foundation comb in the frame in readiness to be built up again in the spring. Overhaul the truck and the extracting equipment, replacing anything that is worn or liable to break. Have a good look at the extracting caravan to see if the arrangement can be bettered and improved for more efficient work during the coming season.

Try to remove from the hive, the boxes that need painting; rub them down, repair and repaint them so that there will be few, if any, leakages of bees during shifts from one site to another.

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Wheatbelt Notes

WITH seeding operations completed, July should see the fallowing well in hand on properties where ley farming has not rendered this operation obsolete. Wet days will provide opportunities for the renovation of machinery, buildings and equipment, and this is a good time of year to classify supplies of used cornsacks and superbags which may be sorted, counted and tied into bundles.

During August, early fallow may require cultivation or ploughing back to destroy weeds, or for the purpose of restoring tilth if the surface has set hard.

Hay-cutting machinery should be overhauled and the grain and fodder requirements decided upon in readiness for the hay-cutting season.

Sheep and Wool
July activities will consist of the preparation of yards, sheds and gear for shearing, and the ordering of wool packs, branding fluid, raddle, etc. Opportunities may be taken for the classing and culling of sheep before shearing as this can make drafting and woolclassing much easier at shearing time. Ram requirements should be booked.

Shearing commences in early districts during August and all shorn sheep should be branded with the registered wool brand and a recommended fluid. Market early fat lambs.

During July, paddocks intended for meadow hay should be selected and shut up. Good growth should be made during August and most pastures will stand fairly heavy grazing at this time of the year, although frequent changes are desirable. Give the best grazing to ewes and lambs.

Poultry Notes for July-August

MAKE certain that the temperature of the brooder is comfortable for the chicks. Test the temperature of the brooder two inches above the surface of the litter and mid-way between the source of heat and the outside edge of the hover. The thermometer should record 95° to 100° F. for the first three weeks and thereafter the temperature can be decreased by 5° F. each six weeks of age.

Where infra-red ray lamps are used, a hurricane lantern should be hung in the brooding compartment in case of a power breakdown. This prevents any undue panic which may occur if the brooder house is suddenly thrown into darkness.

It may be necessary to lower the infra-red lamp to a height of 10 inches in order to obtain sufficient heat. Usually, however, the bottom of the lamp is placed 12 to 14 inches from the surface of the sawdust litter, and should insufficient warmth be available when the lamp is lowered to 10 inches another form of brooding is called for as the voltage is unsuitable for infra-red brooding.

For the first week a guard made of flat iron and one foot high should encircle the brooder. It should be so placed that it prevents the chickens from straying too far from the source of heat while at the same time allowing them to get away from the heat should they become overheated. In addition to helping the chickens to realise where the heat is, the guard also prevents any floor draughts from sweeping on to them and in this way prevents chilling.

Allow the chickens to run outside when they are 10 or 12 days old, weather conditions permitting.

Details of suitable rations for feeding to chickens are available at the Department of Agriculture. Vitamins A and D₃ should be supplied in the mash in the form of fish oils. After two to three weeks, the chickens should be receiving sufficient sunlight to provide their Vitamin D₃ requirements and the supplement of Vitamin D₃ can be discontinued with safety.

A perching platform should be provided when the chickens are four weeks old.

Sulphaquinoxaline should be on hand in case of an outbreak of coccidiosis and this should be administered through the drinking water when definite symptoms of the disease are apparent.

Leaflets dealing with the various aspects of chicken rearing are available at the Department of Agriculture on application.

Veterinary Notes

STOCKOWNERS in the South-West will need take particular precaution if further losses from parasitic gastro-enteritis in calves and yearling cattle are to be avoided during the winter months. The parasites mainly responsible for this condition in Western Australia are the small brown stomach worm (Ostertagi ostertagi) and the small intestinal hair worms (Cooperia and Trichostrongylus spp.) though at times the nodule worm (Bovicola radiatum) may also play a part.

Affected animals develop symptoms of progressive loss of condition, weakness and scouring and the mortality rate is frequently high.

The control of parasitic gastro-enteritis is largely a matter of good animal husbandry and particular attention should be paid to feeding...
and management. Good feeding is essential. In the case of calves the milk ration should at all times be adequate and it should be supplemented with concentrates. For both calves and yearlings good grazing should also be provided and in backward seasons it should be supplemented with good quality, well-cured meadow hay, which should be fed on a generous scale.

Overstocking and the use of low-lying damp paddocks, both of which favour the spread of infection, should be avoided. In addition, as a means of reducing pasture infestation, a system of rotational grazing should be adopted. Calves should be moved at weekly intervals and their paddocks spelled for a period of at least a month in turn. The subdivision of calf paddocks will be necessary to achieve this object. Commencing at the age of four weeks, calves should be drenched either with phenothiazine or bluestone-nicotine sulphate. This treatment should be repeated after 14 days and then at intervals of three to four weeks so long as necessary. With yearlings, drenching should commence about three weeks after the advent of the autumn or early winter rains. It must, however, be emphasised that none of the drugs at present available are highly effective either against the small brown stomach worm or the small intestinal hair worms and that drenching alone cannot be relied upon as a control measure. Further information is contained in leaflet No. 2,012, copies of which may be obtained upon application to the Department.

MYCOTIC DERMATITIS ("Lumpy Wool")

Although not a disease of major importance, mycotic dermatitis or "lumpy wool" may become a source of considerable loss to individual growers. It occurs during the winter and spring months in the areas of higher rainfall and is most prevalent during wet seasons.

Outwardly, affected sheep usually show no abnormality but on handling the wool, particularly over the backs and sides, horn-like processes will be found projecting upwards from the skin rendering shearing difficult and in some cases impossible.

The disease is caused by the fungus Actinomyces dermatonomus which proliferates in the superficial layers of the skin when the wool is constantly saturated with moisture, as the result of frequent heavy rains or prolonged showery weather, and sets up an inflammatory condition known as dermatitis accompanied by exudation and the formation of hard crusts or scabs which bind the wool fibres together.

When these scabs are forcibly removed, a raw bleeding surface is exposed. Young sheep in which the fleece is open and more readily penetrated by water, are most frequently affected. The treatment of affected sheep is usually unsatisfactory but the majority recover spontaneously during the summer months and the disease rarely recurs.

For the control of mycotic dermatitis, dipping in a 1 in 500 solution (1 lb. to 50 gallons of water) of bluestone or of zinc sulphate is recommended, and this should be carried out in late autumn.

Since the fungus is often present in the soil of yards and paddocks and may enter and lie dormant in the wool throughout the summer months, dipping after shearing in the spring is of no value as a preventative measure.

BACONER CARCASS COMPETITION

State and Zone Championships

The Australian Meat Board has announced that the annual baconer carcass competition will be held during the period commencing July 6, and ending September 12, 1953.

For the purpose of the competitions, the State has been divided into six zones in which separate competitions will be held and from which the prize-winners will compete for the championship awards. The Prize list includes:

- State Champion—£21, plus trophy valued at £15.
- Reserve Champion—£10, plus trophy valued at £5.
- First Prize (each zone)—£10.
- Second Prize (each zone)—£5.
- Third Prize (each zone)—£1 10s.

Full details and application forms are available from the State Representative, Australian Meat Board, 194 St. George's Terrace, Perth. (Phone B 6417)
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