

1950 Conservation Handbook Stresses Practices For Wheat Land Conversion

By DWIGHT F. MASSEY, Montana PMA Committee

THE MONTANA HANDBOOK of the 1950 agricultural conservation program has been formally approved, and copies have been sent to county PMA committeemen from which they will prepare county handbooks fitting the program to their individual counties.

Although in general the 1950 Handbook is very similar to those of previous years, several major changes have been made. Of these the one most significant, perhaps, to individual operators is that the per-person payment limitation has been raised from \$750 to \$2,500. Also, the state allocation of funds for conservation practices has been increased from \$3,655,000 to \$4,051,000.

Rates of payment, which on an average represent about 50 percent of the cost of performing practices, have been increased because of higher costs of materials, operating expenses and contractual services. For example, the rate of payment for application of phosphate has been increased from 3½ to 4½ cents per pound of available phosphoric acid, and the rate for dirt moving under such practices as dams, dikes and ditches has been increased from 9 to 10 cents per cubic yard.

Stress Legume, Grass Seeding

In order to encourage farmers to divert acreage from wheat, an increased rate of assistance is being offered for legume and grass seeding practices, which will be at 80 percent of the average cost of seed, not to exceed \$4 per acre.

A new practice is being offered this year for legume and grass seeding in addition to the permanent pasture seeding practice which has been in the Handbook for a number of years. However, the acreage that will be eligible for assistance will only be the acreage established in excess of the usual acreage of all biennial and perennial legumes and perennial grasses on the farm.

Alfalfa has been added as a green manure crop but is limited to the first or second year alfalfa from which no hay, seed, or pasture is taken in 1950. The land clearing practice is applicable only to land cleared for establishing permanent pasture or biennial or perennial legumes or perennial grasses needed for a better soil conserving cropping system on the farm.

Authority is continued in the 1950 Handbook for county committees to select with the approval of the state PMA committee and the Agricultural Conservation Programs branch, Washington, D. C., one local and one special practice which merits the use of program funds to meet particular conservation problems which cannot be taken care of through the use of state approved practices.

Summary of Practices

The Montana Handbook of the 1950 Agricultural Conservation program contains four practices for applying fertilizers and adequate growth of soil-conserving crops; four practices for green manure and cover crops to develop cropping systems that protect the soil and restore and maintain soil productivity; five drainage and irrigation practices to conserve and obtain efficient use of agricultural water and to promote land use adjustments needed in es-

tablishing soil-conserving cropping systems, or to permit other measures required to conserve soil and water resources; nine erosion control and water conserving practices to protect soil from wind and water erosion; nine practices to restore and maintain range and permanent pastures; four forestry practices to establish, restore, and maintain farm woodland, and four miscellaneous practices to permit the adoption of a better soil-conserving cropping system, to control perennial noxious weeds as a necessary step in soil or water conservation, and to meet local or special conservation needs.

In connection with the use of diverted acreage under 1950 wheat acreage allotments, particular emphasis is being placed this year on seeding grasses and legumes, contour and straight stripcropping, protection of summerfallow by crop residue management, establishment of sod waterways, planting of forest tree seedlings and shrubs, and perennial noxious weed control.

Farmers generally can comply with wheat acreage allotments by changing their cropping systems to

include greater acreages of legumes and grasses and increasing the acreage of summerfallow which should be protected from wind and water erosion by straight and contour stripcropping or crop residue management.

Assistance is offered through the Agricultural Conservation program to encourage such cropland uses. A deduction of \$3 per acre will be made from payments which might otherwise be earned under the program, for breaking out native sod or permanent vegetative cover without the approval of the county committee.

A change which should be noted by farmers who intend to participate in the program is that the 1950 program year is from Jan. 1, 1950, to Nov. 30, 1950, inclusive, instead of on a calendar year basis as previously.

Farmers may participate in the 1950 Agricultural Conservation program by filing a farm worksheet with the county PMA committee not later than May 20, 1950, and receiving prior approval to perform the practices.

Farm and Ranch Experiences

Bluestone Treatment of Posts Is Effective, Economical

By ELMER and ED DOTY, Carbon County

OUR RESULTS with treating posts by the bluestone (copper sulphate) method have been very satisfactory. Though we have tried no other method, we have read of some, and doubt if any of them are any better than bluestone, taking everything into consideration.

Our first posts were treated in 1944 and set in the ground in the spring of that year. This makes six seasons that they have stood. Examination of them beneath the surface of the ground shows them to still be perfectly sound and solid.

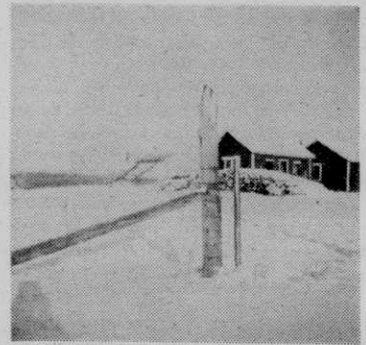
Treatment by the bluestone

method consists of soaking one end of the posts in a solution of bluestone.

Prefer Late Fall Cutting

We have cut posts in the fall, winter and spring, but prefer cutting them in the late fall and letting them lie over until spring before being treated. Posts must be green when treated, as a dry post will not take the treatment.

Posts which are cut and allowed to lie awhile in cool weather seem to take the treatment somewhat faster than those which are cut and



Shown here are comparative sizes of posts treated successfully with the bluestone method by the Doty Bros., Carbon county. Posts range from 3 or 4 inches to 10 or 11 inches in diameter. In the background is a pile of several hundred aspen posts cut last fall. They were treated this spring.

immersed in the solution immediately. We haven't treated enough to be certain of this though, and would not care to pass it on as a positive fact. Our faster results on posts handled in this way may have come from other causes.

Cement Vat Essential

The construction of a cement vat is almost essential for the treatment of a large number of posts. The bluestone solution is corrosive to metal and so cement is about the only satisfactory means by which it may be held. Treatment of a small number of posts might be done in a common wooden staved barrel, but there would be some danger of the rungs corroding and the bluestone solution being lost.

The size vat an operator wants will be determined by the number of posts to be treated, and their size and how many it will be desirable to treat at one time.

We have constructed a vat with cement sides and floor. The top is flush with the surface of the ground. Our posts are usually mixed up quite a bit as to size and we get close to 100 in to a vat full on the average.

It is a good idea to build a ridge of cement up around the edge of the vat to keep rain and snow water from running into it. We did not build such a ridge around ours at first, and were bothered by water dilution.

Also, it is a good idea to build a cover out of 2 or 3-inch plank to place over the vat while it is not in use.

Saturated Solution

The water and bluestone should be put in the vat before any posts are put in. A saturated solution is recommended. (A saturated solution is one in which bluestone has been dissolved into the water to a point where no more will dissolve in it).

We obtain a saturated solution by first scattering bluestone over the floor of the vat. We then hang a burlap bag, with bluestone in it, in one corner of the vat. This bag should be raised out of the solution every day or so, in order to make sure that it still has bluestone in it, and thus insure a saturated solution.

The water will dissolve somewhere around three pounds to the gallon. The solution should be allowed to stand a day or two before being used, to make certain that the first posts are treated in a saturated solution.

After the posts are cut to the desired length, it is recommended that the part which will be set beneath the surface of the ground be peeled. This is the practice which we have always followed.

This peeling involves a consider-

Song of the Lazy Farmer

THE MOMENT I've been waiting for throughout the last few weeks or more is just a couple hours away, it's on Thanksgiving day. The kitchen's busy as a hive, the relatives will



soon arrive, Mirandy's temperature is high, and no man's hungrier than I. Inside, the promise of a treat including turkey and mincemeat has permeated ev'ry room with a mouth-watering perfume. I couldn't stand it any more, so I'm out here beside the door where I'm free from that mad'ning smell, but sure to hear the dinner bell.

This year I'm testing out a scheme to make this day a grander dream; for weeks I've eaten like a bird, each meal's been light, and afterward I've hiked or worked enough to be sure that no fat piled upon me. Mirandy thinks that I've been ill, but in a little while she will be shouting that I ought to stop before vest buttons start to pop. I'm confident I'm lean enough to handle four men's share of stuff; I've also got the stove all hot, the way is cleared from plate to cot, and when the gorging feast is o'er I plan to sleep six hours or more.