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Volume 2, Number 4

April, 1984

# BARNES Farm & Orchard NEWS

## Growers need to look at processing as well as planting of tart cherries

Washington is an excellent place to grow tart cherries, according to a recent report from Washington State University.

(See story on page 5).

But the state's only large commercial grower of producing tart cherry trees warns that it is not like other tree fruit growing.

"It is different than other tree fruits," said Dale Welsh of George Washington Cherries and Apples in George. "It's a specialized growing. Instead of harvesting and selling fresh, tart cherries have to be processed almost immediately."

Welsh, an East Wenatchee orchardist and former Eastmont school teacher, bought the orchard in 1981. He said that at that time, he didn't know anything about tart cherries.

"It is very new for Washington State," he said.

The trees were planted in the 1950s by the late Charlie Brown, whose dream was to develop a town around the idea of a large bakery for pies.

The large bakery never materialized, but every February the town bakes a huge pie with 1,000 pounds of tart cherries donated by George Washington Cherries.

Welsh said he would like to see more orchardists plant tart cherry trees. Some new plantings have been made on Royal Slope and in Basin City and Mabton. A tart cherry orchard in Spokane is no longer commercially producing the fruit.

"I think it's a good crop for Washington," Welsh said. "But I don't want someone to jump in without counting their costs."

"Any orchard is expensive. But unlike apples and sweet cherries, if an orchardist is not close to a processing

plant, they will have to build their own.

"For someone to jump into a business like this, they have to look at processing, too."

Welsh said that George Washington Cherries could pack tart cherries

the cherries cool on the tree so there is less bruising."

The cherries are put into cold water within 10 to 15 seconds off the tree via a conveyor belt.

The metal bins of cherries are then taken to the cooling tower at the warehouse where cold water is circulated through them for about six hours to make them as firm as possible. "This takes out bruising and keeps any tears from oxidizing, or turning brown," Welsh said.

After the cooling tower, the cherries are run through a machine which knocks off the stems. They then advance to a pitting machine and on to sorting tables where the bad cherries are picked out and the good ones are graded into four categories.

Welsh said that the pit count is the most critical. Government standards allow for less than one pit for every 20 ounces. Last year, the George Washington Orchards had a pit count of only one pit for every 270 ounces.

"We packed 98 percent at A Grade--the top grade," he said.

The cherries are then packed into plastic containers holding 25 pounds of fruit and five pounds of sugar, which the large bakeries request.

The sugar is poured on top of the cherries to act as a seal to prevent oxidizing. The cherries are then frozen and marketed during the next year to bakeries from New York to California to Texas to New Zealand and Australia.

They are used for such products as fast food desserts, jams and jellies and beverage flavorings. Lower grades are used to flavor products like yoghurt and ice cream.

"We don't waste any cherries," Welsh said. "They go somewhere."

Harvest cost per pound is much cheaper than sweet cherries. Tart cherries cost 3 to 4 cents per pound to harvest, while sweet cherries cost about 11 cents to harvest, Welsh said. Pruning labor for tart cherries is less, and the trees hold quite a lot of fruit.

continued on page 8



Tart Cherry Blossoms

harvested within a 30 to 40-mile radius. They also pack sweet cherries and apples.

Recently, they built a two million dollar controlled atmosphere storage building and are hoping that growers from the Basin will have their fruit packed and stored there instead of shipping it to Wenatchee or Yakima.

### Harvest Different

Harvest of tart cherries is quite different than sweet cherries, Welsh explained.

When the tart cherry trees are mature at 8 to 10 years, they are harvested mechanically. When the trees are younger, they are hand picked.

The cherries are actually shaken from the trees in three to seven seconds. The mechanical harvester is able to move to a new tree every minute.

The cherries are harvested from about midnight to noon in July or August. Sweet cherries ripen in June or July.

"The heat is so bad here in summer that the cherry would smash when it hit the canvas if harvested in the afternoon," Welsh said. "We try to let

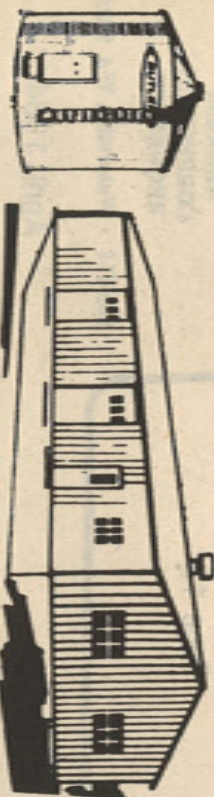
### from the field



One of the goals of Barnes Farm & Orchard News is to feature farmers and orchardists in Central Washington. To begin this on a regular basis, we interviewed, very appropriately, a farmer from Farmer, Washington. Bob Ramm and his brother, Dick, were recommended for the feature by the Soil Conservation Service and Cooperative Extension in Douglas County. In the photograph above, the brothers take a look at the water one of their terraces prevented from eroding down a hillside. It is just one of the conservation measures they have implemented on their farm. Turn to page 6 for story.



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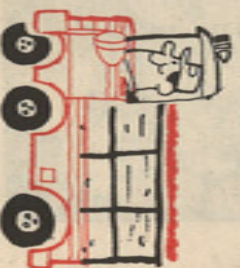
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## State wheat growers help Senate Ag Bill passage

Wheat farmers can expect better price and supply conditions over the next two seasons due to Senate passage of new farm legislation, according to Earl Pryor, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers. And a large delegation of wheat growers from Washington State were instrumental in the passage of this legislation.

Washington State had more delegates than any other state at the two-day NAWG meeting in Washington, D.C., during the third week of March, said Dennis Bly of Harrington, Washington Association of Wheat Growers president.

The delegates also spent time visiting with Congressmen on Capitol Hill about farm needs.

Bly said that Washington sent more

than three times as many delegates as any other state, and is sure that their lobbying efforts helped in the passage of the farm bill changes.

The bill, which was passed by the Senate and then given back to the House, provides farmers paid acreage diversion programs on 10 percent of their land in 1984 and 1985 at a payment rate of no

continued on page 10

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## Barnestorming about rural crime

by Kathleen Rivers



Several years ago, a farming couple near Mansfield in Douglas County lost a trunk full of prized possessions to a burglar of their outbuildings. The possessions, brought over from Europe years before, can never be replaced. Last February, an old forge handblower was stolen from an old homestead in Grant County. And in Okanogan County, an increase in violent crimes is attributed to the influx of illegal alien laborers in the area.

Rural crime, according to law enforcement officials throughout Central Washington, is definitely on the

rise. And these law enforcement officials are appealing to farmers and orchardists to fight back through prevention and alertness.

"The problem is that farmers are pretty trusting people," said Larry Boyd, Chief Investigator with the Grant County Sheriff's Department. "They don't take the keys out of their trucks and machinery. We have a problem with old, abandoned homesteads--particularly in dryland wheat counties. In these homesteads, farmers leave antiques--wagons, wagon wheels, harness, old farm machinery parts. They don't think about becoming

a victim until it is too late."

A spokesman from the Yakima County Sheriff's Office also noted that burglaries are "really picking up in rural areas, including farm parts stolen from the field. 'We have definitely had an increase in rural crimes,'" he said.

Boyd said that criminals use a variety of clever scams in property crimes. For example, some have been known to drive around, approach a residence and act like they can't speak English, he said. "They act like they are looking for work with another farmer, but what they are actually doing is seeing if anyone is home," he said.

In Okanogan County, the increased number of illegal aliens is causing problems for law enforcement officials, according to Tony Fitzhugh, chief criminal deputy with the Okanogan County Sheriff's Department. One of the main concerns is the courts' treatment of illegal aliens who are convicted of crimes.

"There is little incentive for the illegal alien to not be involved in crime," Fitzhugh said. "They are just deported, instead of imprisoned. And it is a well-known fact that when they deport people, they will be back." One illegal alien was back to the same place soon after he was convicted of rape, he said.

Yakima County faces similar problems. According to Owen King, Immigration Naturalization Services supervisor in charge of Yakima County, approximately 20 illegal aliens are

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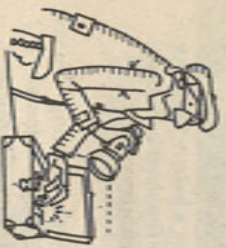


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continued on page 9



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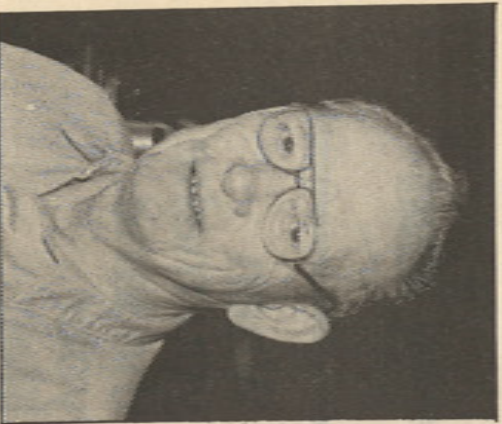
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Weldon Barnes'

# Machine & Welders Shop



Weldon Barnes

Editor's Note: Weldon Barnes, co-owner of Barnes Welding & Machine, has 45 years experience working with metal. If you have questions about welding or working with any kind of metal or machine, send them to:

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Interviewed by Charles Herring

Here's a grain auger that needs to have the flighting replaced. Before you give us some tips on how to do this repair could you tell us how the problem could have been prevented?

Many times I've heard people say that they plan to use their auger a year to

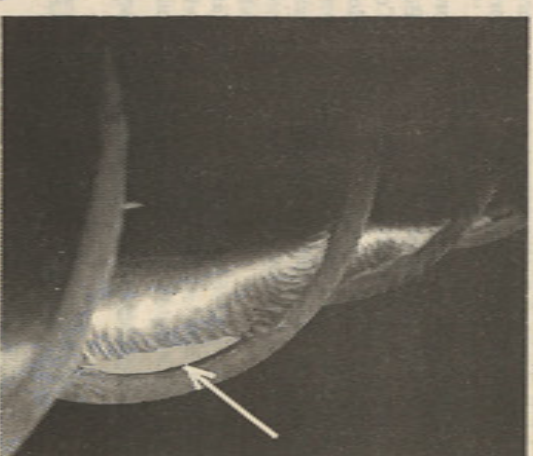
'get the paint off.' Under heavy use you can half wear out an auger in a year, so you're doing a lot more than getting the paint off.

Before using this auger I would sand the paint off and apply hardfacing--you might get a season or two more use just from doing this.

Is there any special material that you'd use?

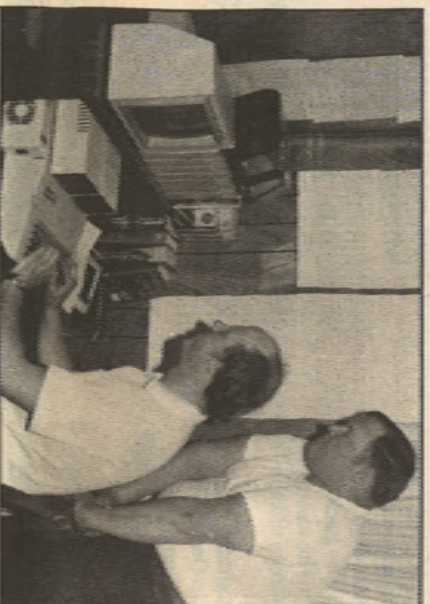
Yes. This flighting was hardfaced with a strip of tungsten carbide--can you tell how rough it feels? This rough surface will cause friction on the grain and tend to cause it to turn over and over. The friction will slow down the flow of grain and the job will take longer. To fix this I'd suggest you use cobalt arc 160 because it leaves a smooth surface and reduces friction.

The arrow shows a hole in flighting which was later repaired by Barnes Welding & Machine.



## Keeping track of costs is as hard

### as keeping up with the crop.

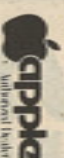


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Will you describe the technique you'd use to replace the flighting on this grain auger?

Notice the hole in the flighting. Do you see where it is? It's right below the 1/2 inch strip of hardfacing. Since the entire web of flighting carries a load, you can see that the break occurs right below the hardfacing where there isn't any additional support. To prevent this you apply the hardface powder in a wide strip. The flighting on this piece is ten inches so you should apply a web of powder 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide around the outside. On the outer 1/2 inch, where the flighting is thinnest, you should go back and put a second layer of hardfacing powder. If you do this before you first use your grain auger you might get as much as five times the wear before replacement is necessary.

What if you're in a hurry and on a tight budget? Doesn't it take longer and cost more to put the extra half inch strip of hardfacing on?

In the long run you'll save a great deal more money if you follow these suggestions. On this 10 foot grain auger I'd probably use about two pounds of hardfacing powder at \$15 a pound--a total of \$30. To put the extra 1/2 inch strip of hardfacing on it costs about 15 percent more--about \$5--and about 15 percent more time, too. All I can say is that a little more time and money to fix it right will save a great deal more time and money later.

Is there anything else a person should watch for when replacing flighting?

When you're welding the flighting to the tube you should make sure the spot welds are evenly spaced so you don't warp the metal with the heat. The book recommends 18-20 psi for your oxygen and 15 psi for your acetylene, but I use about 12 psi for oxygen because it delivers a better carburizing flame. Also, I use more powder than most people when I hardface. If the powder bubbles, you need to clean the surface before applying more. You have to be careful you don't get the metal too hot (no hotter than red hot). The powder should look moist when it goes on; if it's too hot it'll oxidize.

**Need help with a windbreak?**

If you need help planning a windbreak or designing a drip irrigation system for that windbreak, contact your Soil Conservation Service office.



## Washington is prime place for growing tart cherries

Washington has an excellent opportunity to establish a \$35 million to \$55 million a year tart cherry industry, according to Dr. W. Smith Greig, Washington State University agricultural economist.

Greig estimates that the Pacific Northwest, primarily Washington, could capture between a quarter and a third of the nation's tart cherry industry by expanding orchards and processing plants. Tart cherries are used mostly in pies.

Currently, Michigan produces more than 70 percent of the nation's tart cherries, on 46,000 acres. New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin account for another 20 percent.

Most of the remaining 10 percent is grown in Utah, Oregon and Colorado. Greig said Washington has planted about 1,500 acres of tart cherries, but most are not yet of bearing age.

The economist reports Washington's average cherry yield is 9,582 pounds per

acre, more than twice Michigan's 4,512 pounds, and the variance from average yields is more than 2.6 times greater in Michigan than in Washington.

Greig said the relative dependability of Washington production could help expand the nation's tart cherry market. Processors and major users have made relatively few attempts to develop new products to expand the market because of unpredictable prices caused by annual production variability.

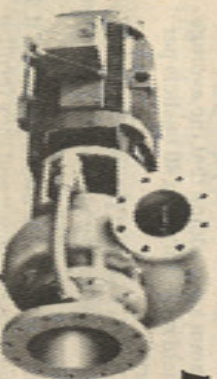
Greig said many of Washington's fruit or vegetable processing plants could add tart cherry processing to their existing plants.

### New director named

Thomas J. (Tom) Hale, president of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League, will replace Joe Brownlow as executive director of the Washington State Apple Commission. Brownlow will retire May 1 after 32 years with the Apple Commission, the past 21 as manager.

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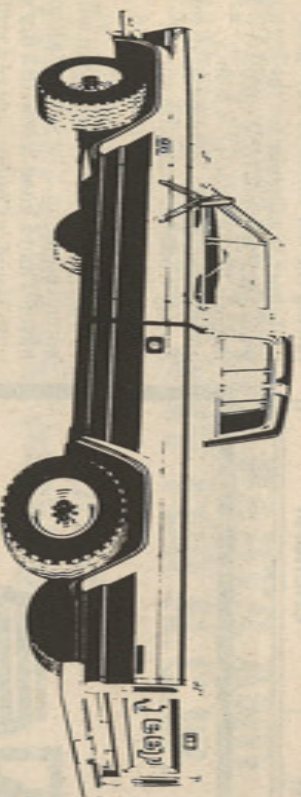
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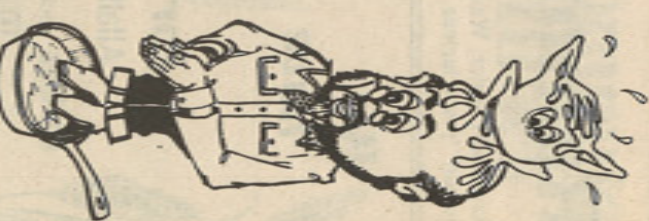
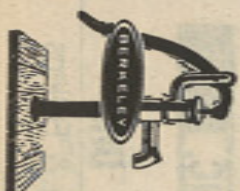
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Douglas County. Ramm and his younger brother, Dick, are experimenting with annual cropping, terracing and strip cropping in an effort to conserve their land and still make a living. And that's not always easy on some of the land which receives only an average of 7 to 9 inches of rainfall a year; land that yielded only 15 bushels per acre in 1980. The Ramm brothers farm in an area where the most accepted wheat growing practice is the fall planting of winter wheat, a summer harvest, and leaving the fields fallow for a year to soak up precious moisture.

### ANNUAL CROPPING

But in 1979 when they harvested their worst crop ever--only 10 to 12 bushels per acre following a winter wheat-summer fallow rotation--they decided to try recropping barley that next spring. "We heard that barley has a more

efficient use of moisture," Bob Ramm said.

So, the brothers planted a hilltop with barley--a field they had actually abandoned in 1979 because of the poor crop. The 1980 harvest averaged one and three-quarter tons.

During harvest, they also discovered there were no erosion-caused ditches to cross, adding to the longevity of their combine.

"So, we started recropping the hillside," Ramm said.

The Ramm brothers farm about 2,700 acres. They started in 1974 with a quarter-section they purchased from their father, Eugene Ramm, now of Quincy.

"I didn't really have that much interest in farming until I started doing it," said Ramm, who had worked as a mechanic in Wenatchee.

The brothers are experimenting with the annual cropping on the original quarter-section, which has soil with high alkalinity. "We seem to have pretty good luck with spring grains," Ramm said, adding that the average yield has been about 40 bushels per acre.

Ramm said that the biggest thing with annual cropping is the reduction of field operations. They abandoned rod weeding because they determined it did not help that much and they fertilize while seeding, reducing their field operations to three.

"I've noticed in our recropped ground, the ground is mellowed," Ramm said. "It is so much easier to work. You don't need a heavy chisel plow. We haven't used a chisel plow in spring since 1980. We now use a cultivator."

Ramm believes many farmers are locked into a winter wheat-summer fallow rotation. "Practically nobody" annual cropped in the county during the 1970s, he said, and only about a dozen have experimented with it in the 1980s. "Many farmers think the old ways are the best ways," he said. "But why not try something different? They do with new wheat varieties. They are not raising the old varieties any more."

"If there is a change for the better, I'll go for it, if it is not too expensive. The biggest limiting factor is money."

Ramm believes a lot of fields in the county would do well with annual cropping, especially areas with an average 12 to 15-inch rainfall.

"I think I'm coming out ahead with annual cropping," he said. "Although I haven't had a good test with a dry year. "In Douglas County, you can probably go annual cropping and make at least as much, probably more, than with winter wheat."

"Recropping is going to work if we go minimum till or no-till to cut down on the operations."

### NO-TILL

Because of this, the Ramm brothers are experimenting with an air seeder and no-till drill.

Last year, they seeded 150 acres with an air seeder. And this spring they signed up to seed 53 acres in a cost-sharing, no-till program.

"I used to think that no-till would never have a chance in Douglas County," Ramm said. "But the more I see of it, the more I think farmers will go from a summer fallow rotation to annual cropping and no-till."

"I think we will see the day when we see quite a bit of no-till in the county." Not only has the recropping helped

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## conservation practices

prevent erosion, so has the use of terraces. The Ramm Brothers began terracing in 1977.

### TERRACING

"Every summer, this one field would get hit by a cloudburst," Ramm said. "It washed ditches and we would have to rework the ground. The ground would then go 'fluffy' and we wouldn't get a good stand."

The Ramm's have built about three miles of terraces during the past seven years. From their experiences, they have learned that you need to have enough soil depth so you don't get into a problem with rocks and to not build them when the ground is below freezing. They have also started

building wider terraces than their first ones.

"If you have any soil on top of a hill, I'd say put in a terrace," Ramm said. "And get it as wide as you can so you don't feel like you are farming in a ditch."

Ramm said the terraces have helped every field except one which was too rocky. And the terraces have reduced the soil loss to within the government's minimum standard of five tons per acre per year.

### STRIP CROPPING

The Ramm brothers have also put one field into strip cropping.

"If you have a large enough field, I think it will work," he said. "Or if you have a field that is too shallow for terraces. It can be more of a headache, but in harvesting it actually cuts down on truck traffic."

The Ramm brothers are not through with their conservation farming practices.

"There are a lot of things I'd like to try," Ramm said. "I'd like to try more no-till in a spring operation. I'd like to try more air seeding. I'm toying with the idea of building an air seeder."

And despite a large surplus of wheat and low grain prices, Ramm believes the future for wheat growers is promising.

"Generally, we are pretty stable in this area because a lot of the land is owned by the farmer," he said. "They can take a lower price and still make money."

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## Tart Cherries continued from page 1

"Overall, it is cheaper to raise tart cherries than sweet cherries and apples," Welsh said.

Like most fruit, winter damage and spring frost is a big worry, but unlike sweet cherries, the grower doesn't have to worry about rain because the cherries will not split.

Last year, George Washington Cherries packed over a million pounds of tart cherries. Welsh expects the crop to increase to three million pounds in the next few years because of new plantings.

The cherries sell from 45 to 80 cents a pound, depending on what is happening in Michigan.

"Michigan really determines where it falls," Welsh said, explaining that that state is the hub of the industry.

The nation now uses about 250 million pounds of cherries, with a Michigan

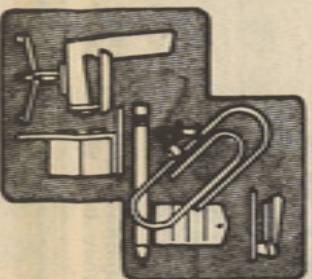
bumper crop reaching about 150 million pounds. "Michigan still pretty much dictates the pricing," Welsh said. But the George Washington grower sees Washington as a much safer place to grow the fruit because of "the tremendous differences in weather back in Michigan."



"Last year was a beautiful year," Welsh said. "We got a high of 83 cents per pound."

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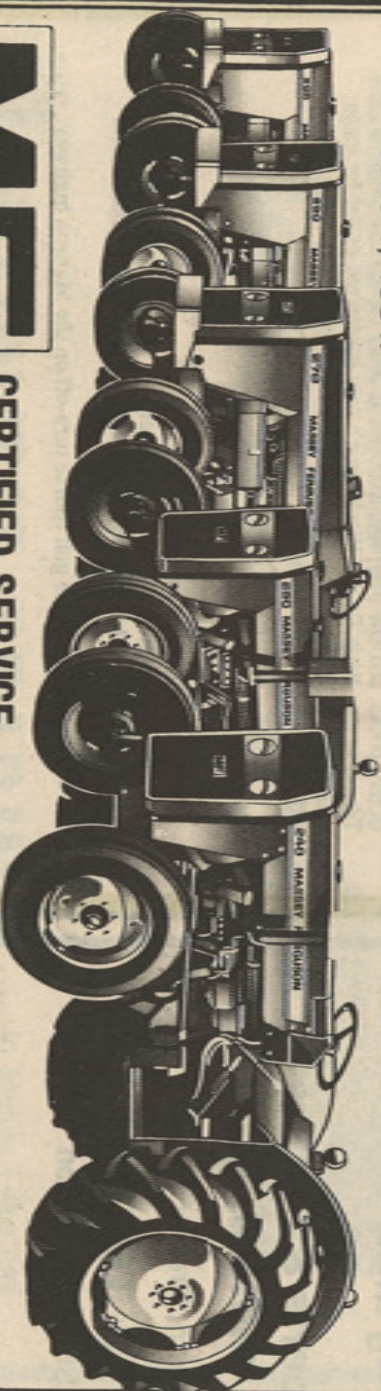
**662-3635**

Dale Welsh, owner of George Washington Cherries, said some people have accused him of not properly pruning his orchard. What these people don't realize, however, is that tart cherry trees require far less pruning than sweet cherry trees, and therefore have a more "bushy" look.



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## Douglas Wheat

### Growers Meeting

Transportation will be the topic at the May 1 meeting of the Douglas County Wheat Growers in Waterville.

A social hour will begin at 6:45 p.m. at the Dodge House Restaurant, followed by a dinner at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting will feature speakers on railroad, truck and barge transportation of grain.

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## Rural Crime continued from page 3

picked up a month, most of whom commit misdemeanors. "There are not too many felonies, however," King said.

King said some do come back, even though a condition of their release is that they do not return to the United States. Often, they will use a different identity, he said.

Most rural people, until they become victims, tend to correlate crime with the cities, thankful that they live in the country. However, Boyd remarked that "a farmer is just as vulnerable to violent crime as a city dweller." And property crimes in rural areas, he said, are "far exceeding" the rise of crime in urban areas.

The Yakima County Sheriff's spokesman believes that the increase of burglaries is partially attributable to the "very nature of patrol problems."

Other counties are finding the same problem. For example, Grant County has 16 field deputies for 277 square miles. These deputies, in turn, are divided into three shifts. "Some of the counties are spread pretty thin," said Boyd. "That is one of the reasons rural crime is on the increase."

And that is also the reason that neighbors are becoming more and more important in crime prevention.

"For example, it was because of a neighbor's observation of a strange pickup that the Grant County Sheriff's

Department believes that they may have recovered the old forge handblower stolen last February. "Had the neighbor not contacted us," Boyd said, "they may have gone undetected. In rural, and residential areas, a neighbor can really solve a number of problems."

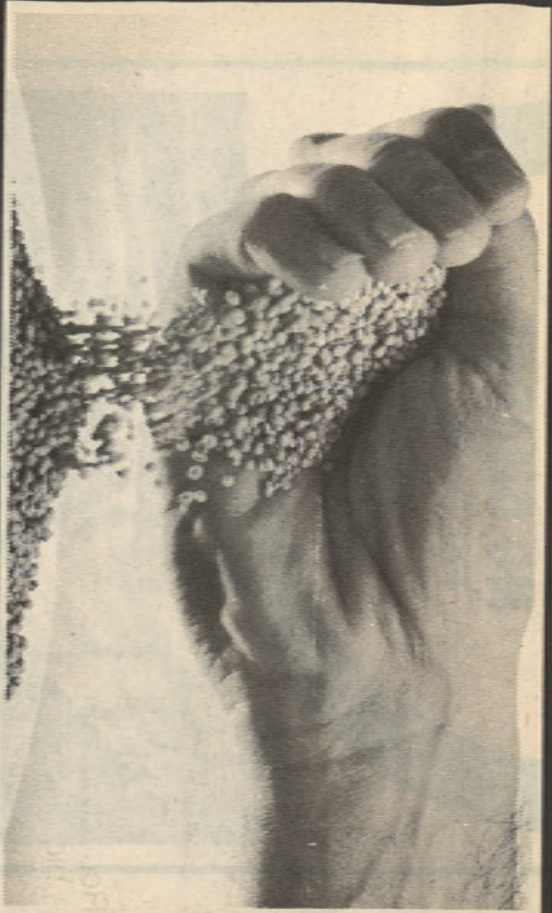
Therefore, many counties, such as Douglas, are setting up crime prevention programs, including Block Watches, Operation I.D.s and increased security measures. In Block Watches, neighbors are encouraged to watch for any unusual actions, according to Lew Clark of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. Operation I.D. is a program designed to get people to inventory, describe and possibly photograph their belongings which are most likely to be stolen. Many items should be marked with a driver's license number so the property can be more easily returned. "Quite often, stolen goods are recovered, but we don't know who they belong to," Clark said.

Security, including locks and lights, are also important in crime prevention, Clark said. Many people are going to home alarm systems, one law enforcement official noted.

Such measures can make a great deal of difference on whether or not a farmer or orchardist is a victim. "Ninety per

continued on page 10

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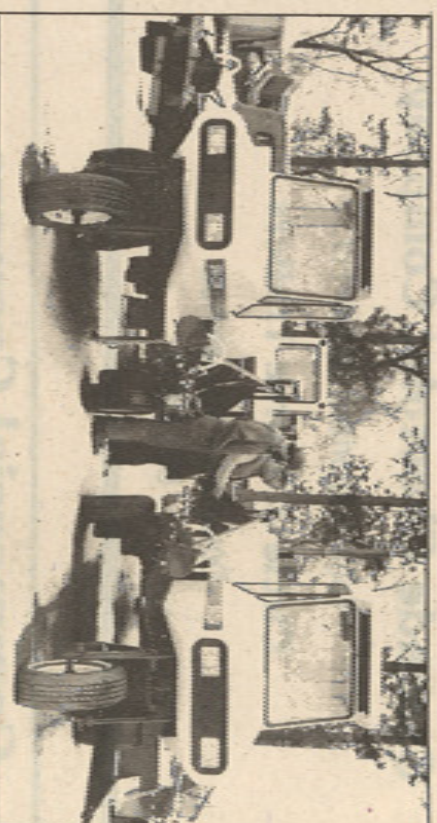
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## Lobbying Pays Off

continued from page 2

less than \$2.70 per bushel. One-half of the diversion payments will be advanced to farmers following signup in the program.

Income protection through a target price is set at \$4.38 per bushel for two years, while over \$2 billion in

## Rural Crime

continued from page 9

cent of break-ins are by nonprofessionals," Clark said. "They see an opening and take it. The more difficult you make it, the less likely you will be a victim."

Obviously and unfortunately, the "Little House on the Prairie" days are gone as far as the occurrence of rural crime. And, obviously, law enforcement agencies do not have the increased personnel to meet this rising rate, although they are making efforts to educate people in protection of their property. Excellent pamphlets on rural crime prevention are now available at most law enforcement offices. The rest is up to the farmer and orchardist.

concessional and government guaranteed export financing is established through October, 1985.

Changes in the 1984 wheat program provide for an increased PLK payment of 85 percent of a farmer's yield and authority to implement haying and grazing of diverted wheat acreage. The measure also alters 1985 feed grain, cotton and rice programs by freezing target prices and providing trigger levels for paid acreage diversions.

"The biggest change," said Bly, "is in the early announcement. We are finally going to get an ag program a full year in advance."

Although the bill had not been passed through the House at press time, Bly said he expected House approval.

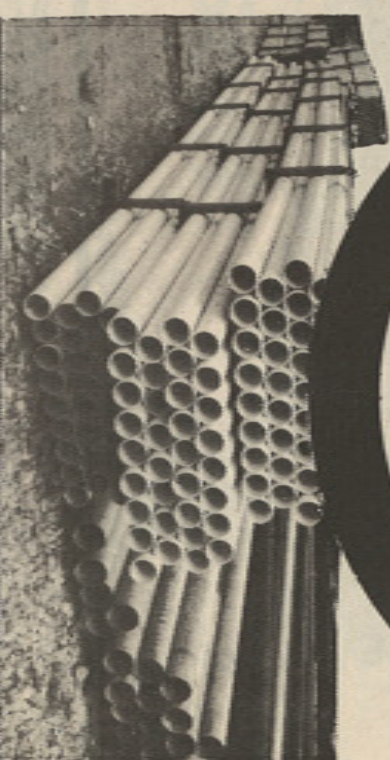
Besides work on the farm bill, Washington delegates also addressed grain storage problems in the Pacific Northwest, export promotion credits for white wheat to other countries, and transportation problems with the abandonment of branch lines.

The 35 people from Washington were able to contact more than 100 people about these issues, Bly said.

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## Conservation Districts Board Meetings

The Foster Creek Conservation District board of directors will meet in the Mansfield Firehall at 8 p.m. on May 1. The South Douglas Conservation

District board of directors will meet in the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service conference room in Waterville at 8 p.m. on May 7.

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## Scientists study orchard ground covers

Orchardists who are having problems with their ground cover standing up to weeds or vehicular traffic may find it beneficial to replant with another grass, according to United States Department of Agriculture Plant Physiologist Alex G. Ogg.

Ogg has been involved with orchard ground cover research at the Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Prosser.

Six different grasses, including the ryegrasses Derby and Elka, the red fescues Boreal, Fortress and Envyva, and the hard fescue Scaldis, are under study in small test plots at Grandview and Wapato.

All were seeded in the spring at 10, 20 and 40-pound rates per acre and are irrigated by sprinklers. The tests were begun in 1980.

So far, the ryegrasses prove to be the most desirable, Ogg said. "They stand up well to vehicle travel and are quite competitive with weeds," he said.

Of the two ryegrasses, Elka proved the most desirable because of its low-growing characteristics. One or two mowings may be all that is needed during the growing season in an orchard, Ogg said.

"There has been a lot of interest in it by fruit growers," Ogg said. "A lot have planted it."

John McLean of the John McLean Seed Company in Coulee City said that even homeowners are planting it for their lawns because of its ability to withstand heavy vehicular traffic and suppress weeds and its low-growing characteristic.

Ogg said that there are still some unanswered questions about the ryegrasses, however.

"One of the criticisms of ryegrasses in the past is that they didn't persist for a long period of time," he said. "After five or six years, they tended to die out. However, with the new varieties, there is no indication of that happening after four years."

Ogg said it is still unknown how the ryegrasses will persist as far as shade tolerance once an orchard matures.

To help with this potential problem, Germain's Seeds sell a mixture of 80 percent Elka ryegrass and 20 percent red fescue, McLean said. The fescue is more shade tolerant.

Ogg said replanting the cover grass in an orchard may be viable, although it is more difficult to move equipment in an orchard once trees grow large.

"Obviously, if the grass is not doing the things an orchardist wants it to do, such as not standing up to orchard traffic, it may be worthwhile to replant with another grass," he said.

Wheel tracks in an orchard from vehicles on grasses which do not stand up to heavy traffic can attract turf diseases, he said. These diseases can then spread into the rest of the ground cover.

"As turf ages, particularly with fescues, it becomes less competitive with weeds," Ogg said. "That is why we got involved with ryegrasses. They are superior from a weed standpoint."

One problem with this competitive characteristic of ryegrasses, Ogg pointed out, is that it will reduce tree growth if planted too close to young trees.

He suggests that an orchardist plant ryegrass three or four feet on each side of a row when trees are young, and to control the weeds close to the trees with herbicides or cultivation.

Ogg is also beginning to study cover

grasses and drip irrigation in grapes.

In some drip irrigation vineyards at St. Michelle Vineyards north of Sunnyside, 10 different crested wheat grasses are being tested. The first plantings were made last fall and this spring.

Crested wheat grasses, Ogg said, do not have as many desirable characteristics as the fescue and ryegrasses, but they do seem to persist under dry conditions.

Fescues, and particularly ryegrasses, are high moisture grasses, he said.

Ogg said he hopes to publish the results of the fescue and ryegrass trials this fall, although observations of their performance will be continued in the future.



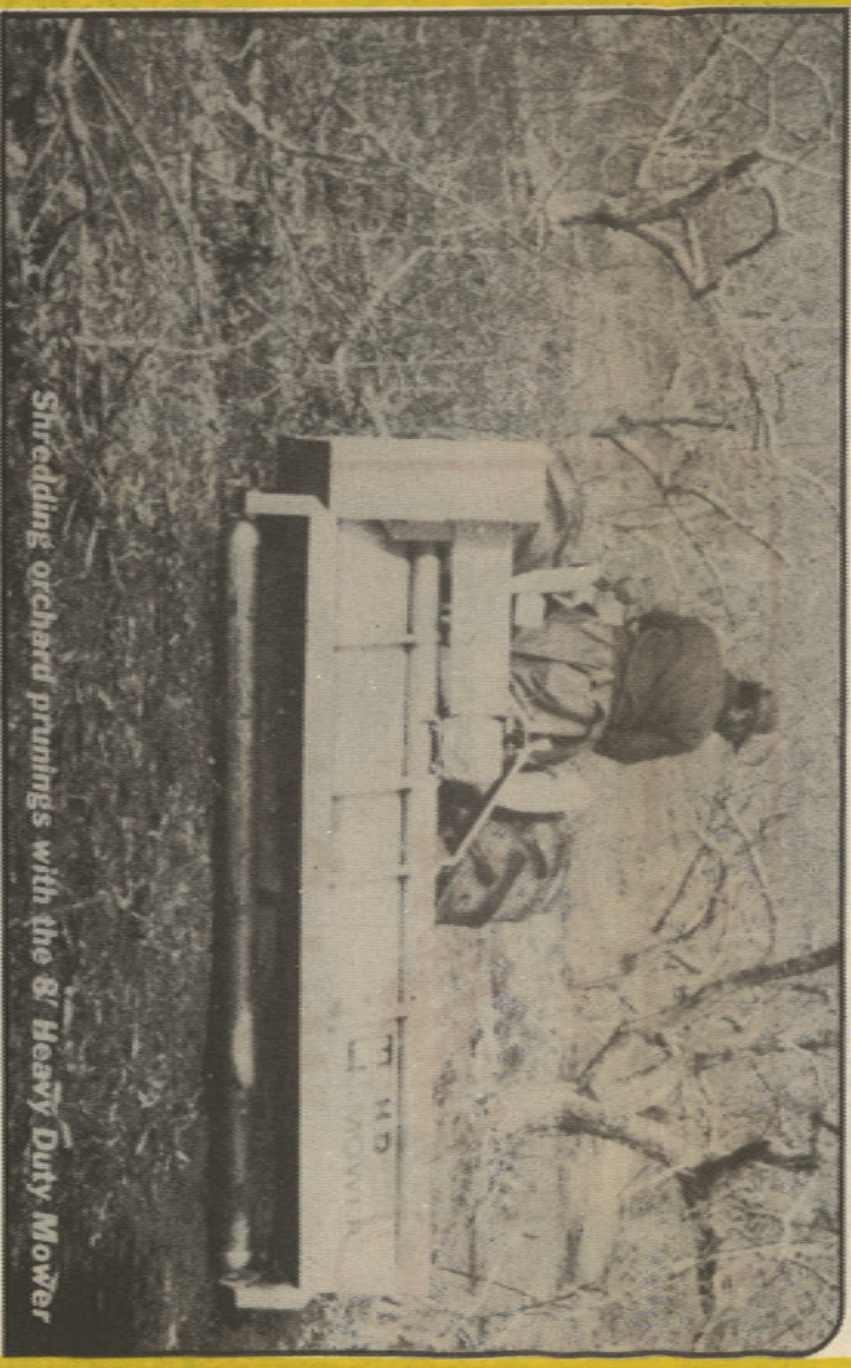
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