

Adjustments from a Farmer's Standpoint

By CARL KING

Agricultural Adjustment Administration

Changes are the order of the day. We are going through a period of readjustment or change which amounts to almost a revolution in many ways.

In our physical set-up, relating particularly to farmers, perhaps the greatest change we must recognize is the changing picture in Europe. From all indications, the picture does not favor large exportations of our surpluses, especially with the United States changed from a debtor to a creditor nation. Farmers, generally, have not recognized this shift.

As a further consideration, power farming is here to stay, but we have not yet learned to live with it. I have sometimes wondered which was the master, the man or the machine. Up to the present, it is debatable. The machine has brought its problems along with its benefits. It has brought to a head our surplus problems as well as our Soil Conservation problems, much quicker than would otherwise have occurred. We can deplete our soils far faster than formerly and also to a further degree, at an apparent profit. By being able to create optimum conditions for the liberation of the last ounce of plant food, we can more effectively decrease the organic matter content of our soils, thereby making them more susceptible to erosion.

All this is cumulative, and with each passing year action is speeded up from an erosion standpoint. Too, the surplus problem is very much in the fore right now, so much in fact, that it is causing meetings of farmers and headaches for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and other agencies.

Another change on the physical side of the picture is that of science. We are told about using up surpluses to manufacture goods, but so far it seems to

have worked the other way. Science has created substitutes for agricultural products which are competitive, rather than using up surplus agricultural products. Examples are rayon, and in Germany, making wool out of dried skimmed milk, and the Duponts threaten to revolutionize the sheep industry of this country with a synthetic wool.

Another change is the change in diet of the people. They no longer eat the energy-giving foods that were so essential under the more rugged existence of using man power; nor do they now need, with closed cars and comfortable heating systems, the heavy garments of wool and cotton.

Another change to be reckoned with is specialization of farming. Our farms are turning into factories of one or two essential products rather than remaining on a self-sufficiency basis as formerly. A wheat farmer, for instance, is becoming less interested in a garden or in curing his own pork, and in many other things that can be done more efficiently through specialization.

A farmer may be able to do these things cheaper (by working for nothing), but the demand is keener for a fair price for the thing he has to sell. A poor price of any one major product disrupts our economic rhythm far more today than formerly. As specialization increases, to the same degree does our independence decrease. We are becoming more and more interdependent and the disruption of any service is thereby becoming more keenly felt.

But, perhaps most important is our whole idea about land policy. The nation has had a policy founded upon exploitation. Farmers, generally, are still thinking in terms of exploitation, even though much progress has been made. The consensus of opinion among farm-

ers seems to be that of a Shylock in regard to the land—to exact all at whatever cost to the future, to be content only when every bushel of soil-depleting crops has been taken from the land. But, by economic pressure, it has had to be so, the argument runs. Granted that this is a very vital factor, it still has not proved out even when the economic pressure lifted.

The point in question—that of conservation—was not considered during good times. During the war, a period of high prices, or in any other period of good prices, we have not seen any evidence of adjustments for the good of the land. A farmer having a little extra money over and above expenses has used it as a small down payment on some more land. This has been the rule rather than the exception even when the original holding has a substantial mortgage on it and needed improvements. Farm mortgages are created to a large degree in good times and paid off during hard times.

The question arises, how far can we go with a fellow whose wants for land are never satisfied, who keeps the land mortgaged to the hilt and then must in turn exact the last ounce of organic matter from it?

About all any farmer wants that I've run across so far is all the land that joins him. This has gone on at the expense of the soil. The speculator has also added to the problem.

But even this is changing. High and low prices have been the farmer's and the soil's greatest curses. The high prices of the war left the farmers and their soil much the poorer. We will never know the amount of this bill, but farmers and their soils will be paying for it for years to come.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act passed by the last Congress recognized all this and more and is a great step forward toward stabilizing commodity prices and land values, reducing specu-

lation and encouraging conservation. It is new and a radical change, but this effort of Congress merits our earnest consideration and support. The developments in land policy, new to the United States, are old business in foreign countries where more limited land resources and denser populations long ago forced the recognition of the importance of land planning.

We are only in the formative stages as to a national land policy, but we are attacking it from many points. From the great droughts of 1934 and 1936 and recent floods, we have become land conscious in these United States.

An American who went to Europe to study conditions in rural communities was deeply impressed. He observed that many of the farms visited had been in the same family for several hundred years. The improvements generally were of brick and tile, with considerable steel framework construction. The production of similar land was about double that which is obtained in America. One particular farm had been handed down from father to son since the eleventh century.

It seems to me that we in this country have lost a part of our love for the land because the supply of land has been considered to be inexhaustible. Now we realize our mistake and we must begin to conserve our ownership, as well as the land itself.

Our traditional attitudes toward land ownership and land use must change before a real soil conservation program will work. We cannot change ownership every seven years as we have in the past. We must learn to love the land before we can best use and conserve it.

We must become soil-conscious to the extent that we are holding the land in trust for a short span of life. Our old ideas of holding land ownership in fee simple must change, denying the right of a person to do as he pleases with

land regardless of the nation or society. This is a slow process which borders on what we call our freedom or liberty, but if we as farmers insist on soil destruction and waste and final abandonment, what is the price of that liberty or freedom? I fear that the cost is much too great for this or any other nation to bear.

If there is one lesson in history that is unmistakable, it is that national strength lies very near the soil. All wise plans must be based on the hy-

pothesis of continued national existence, yet we know that even in our own country the way we have cropped our soils has been anything but toward permanency.

We farmers are but the custodians of our soil, and the farmers of the nation, under our system of ownership, hold the balance of the power, not in numbers or in voting power, or from an economic standpoint, but from the control of the nation's greatest asset—the soil.

Extension of the Known Range of *Ribes coloradense* Colville

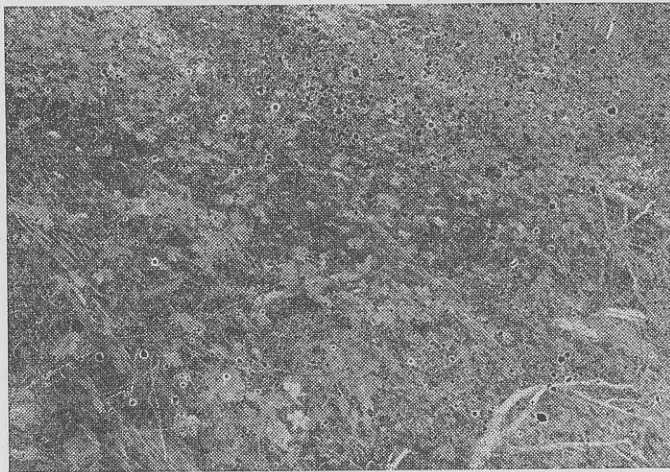
By EDWARD L. JOY¹

Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine

On July 8, 1927, during the course of scouting for white pine blister rust in northern Idaho, specimens of a species of *Ribes* uncommon to this region were collected by H. N. Putnam² and M. C. Riley³ along Rattle Creek, a tributary of Lightning Creek, about 15 miles north of Clarks Fork, Idaho. This location is within 2 miles of the Idaho-Montana line at an elevation of 4,200 feet. A week later, on July 15, Putnam collected the same species from near Revett

Lake, which is within one-half mile of the State line 12 miles east of Murray, Idaho. These two locations are about 55 miles apart by air line. A thorough scouting of the Lightning Creek area by the writer and others in 1928 disclosed the fact that this *Ribes* grows in the upper reaches of most of the tributary streams throughout about 12 miles of this drainage.

In February 1929 a specimen of the material collected near Revett Lake in



Ribes coloradense Colville Growing in Western Montana.

1927 was referred to the Bureau of Plant Industry for identification. In turn it was submitted to the late Frederick V. Coville, the outstanding authority on this genus of plants. His determination was that the species is *Ribes coloradense*, a plant he had collected and first described as a species in 1901.⁴

In 1935, with the extension of blister rust control work in western Montana, the finding near Spar Lake, about 16 miles south of Troy, of a species of *Ribes* not generally prevalent in that part of the region was reported. This location is just across the State line only a few miles east of the Lightning Creek drainage in Idaho. With the collection of complete specimens of this species, the material was submitted for identification in 1933. This also proved to be *R. coloradense*.

A review of literature in which the range of *Ribes coloradense* is recorded indicates that this species has previously been reported from only Colorado,

New Mexico, and Utah, where it grows in the mountainous areas at elevations ranging from 9,000 to 11,000 feet. To this is now added northeastern Idaho and northwestern Montana in mountainous areas at elevations of from 3,500 to 5,500 feet. Further work in this added territory will shed light on the full extent of the species distribution there. There still remains a stretch of 700 miles or more between the two regions of its occurrence from which there is no reported collection of *R. coloradense*.

In the Idaho-Montana range of this species it has been found at the following specific locations:

¹Forester, Northwestern Region; ²Senior Pathologist, Central States Region, and Associate Forester, Northwestern Region, White Pine Blister Rust Control, Division of Plant Disease Control, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

⁴Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, 14: 3. 1901.

Idaho	Bonner	Rattle Creek	T. 57 N., R. 3 E.	4,200	July 8, 1927
Idaho	Shoshone	Revett Lake	T. 49 N., R. 6 E.	4,000	July 15, 1927
Idaho	Bonner	Wellington Creek	T. 57 N., R. 2 E.	3,600	Aug. 21, 1928
Idaho	Bonner	Gordon Creek	T. 58 N., R. 2 E.	5,000	Aug. 23, 1928
Idaho	Bonner	Lunch Creek	T. 58 N., R. 2 E.	5,200	Aug. 23, 1928
Idaho	Bonner	Moose Creek	T. 58 N., R. 2-3 E.	5,400	Aug. 18, 1928
Idaho	Bonner	Deer Creek	T. 58 N., R. 2 E.	4,800	Aug. 20, 1928
Idaho	Bonner	Quartz Creek	T. 58 N., R. 2 E.	4,500	Aug. 20, 1928
Montana	Lincoln	Spar Creek	T. 29 N., R. 34 W.	3,500	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Cub Creek	T. 29 N., R. 34 W.	4,500	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Whoopie Creek	T. 29 N., R. 34 W.	5,000	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Hiatt Creek	T. 29 N., R. 34 W.	4,500	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Spruce Creek	T. 29 N., R. 34 W.	4,500	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Keeler Creek	T. 30 N., R. 34 W.	4,000	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Cheer Creek	T. 30 N., R. 34 W.	5,000	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Cliff Creek	T. 30 N., R. 25 W.	5,000	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Halverson Creek	T. 30 N., R. 35 W.	5,000	1935-1938
Montana	Lincoln	Benning Creek	T. 30 N., R. 35 W.	5,000	1935-1938