Wait 'Till Next Week

Farm Push Will Be On

Headlines from last year saying 'moisture will be necessary for germination' certainly does not pertain this year, as intermittent rain and snow storms the past few weeks have been anything but conducive to starting spring work or even seeding beets.

The moisture problem and the unsettled situation among beet growers in Nebraska have kept things at a much slower pace in the sugar beet business this year.

Although Great Western Sugar Company announced from Denver last week that contracts covering more than 70 per cent of the estimated 1973 sugarbeet acreage have been signed, the picture appears different in the Nebraska district.

Leonard Henderson, Nebraska district ag manager for GW Sugar, said Thursday, that contracting here, after a rapid start the first few days, is now progressing less rapidly. No estimate as to the amount contracted was available.

At Mitchell, Gordon Rudolph, ag manager for the factory there, said that contracting in his district was progressing. He added the growers in the Wheatland area had approved the 1973 sugarbeet contract and signing of the contracts was scheduled to begin Thursday.

Meanwhile the continued wet weather had field work throughout the valley at a standstill. From Bayard, Red Johnson, GW ag man there, said that some work had been done in the lighter soils, which seemed to be typical. At most places in the Valley, heavy equipment sat idle in the fields, as muddy conditions kept work from progressing.

Beet land in the Mitchell factory district had received some seed bed preparation between snowfalls, and about half dozen fields were reported ready for planting, according to Gordon Rudolph, GW ag manager at Mitchell.

Seed houses in the Nebraska district are open, but report very little pickup so far, GW officials state. Indications are that $5 per cent to 90 per cent of the seed wanted will be the Mono-Hy variety, a continued increase over previous years.

Torrington ag manager Al Edwards, of the Holly Sugar Co., reports wet ground has kept field work to a minimum in his area. Lingle growers were able to do a little preparation work, he said. The company still has no contract with the Goshen County Beet Growers association as of Thursday, Edwards said.

The only beets planted so far this year as reported last week were put in by Jake Marker, of Scottsbluff. Figures from GW showed that several thousand acres of beets were in at this time last year, which was an unusual year.

Officials do not consider present planting behind schedule as normal seeding is anytime from Apr. 1 to 15. With the large modern equipment used today, once the weather breaks, growers will move in fast and have the job done in a hurry, one GW official said.

When company president, George E. Wilber, Jr., of Great Western Sugar, announced last week that 70 per cent of the 1973 acreage had been contracted for, he also stated, "Great Western Sugar has learned from the Co-operative that a preliminary prospects See Farm Push P. 3
Agriculture, in the midst of all this, couldn't possibly avoid entanglement. Ray Davis of Potter, national president of the wheat growers association, this week was in Washington, D.C. His point was that loss of federal legislation dealing with farm and ranch activities would hurt the whole industry, specifically the wheat producer. Under pressure, the Nixon administration has sought to cut back on agricultural program spending.

The impact of fewer idle farm acres in 1973 has been viewed fretfully by those who remember when wheat growers, urged by the federal government, to supply increasing demands of the world. They say that the set-back wheat growers suffered after producing more wheat than could be used is still an item which is a reminder of what can happen under unlimited production situations. The sale of feed grains and wheat to Russia and other countries has been a real factor in improved grain prices which climbed rapidly to new highs, then settled back once the general excitement about supply shortages diminished.

In the meantime, press reports this week carried a story about a family in the Midwest forced to watch their pennies because of higher costs. This wasn't so unusual, but the fact that this particular industrial worker was earning $17,000 a year was.

The question arises naturally: Was his standard of living elevated so fast his earnings were unable to cope with them? Or, was his $17,000 just not going far enough to buy him the normal things a family needs? The answer to this is rather obvious. In this area, $17,000 in earnings would hardly be something to fret about.

This week, the American Farm Bureau Federation reported work to be done to promote commodity marketing. Marketing by groups has been common in other areas for years, but this has had mixed success at a local level. However, with the implementation of purchase of Great Western Sugar by the grower group — GW Producers Cooperative — producers are looking to themselves as growers and processors. Other grower groups have taken a similar course of action in North Dakota.

Turbulence, at times, appears to be the way of life these days. Unfortunately, agriculture, adapting itself to higher production costs and marketing problems, has enough of its own difficulties. The compounding of these because of outside influences makes life a bit more demanding, but that's the story of the times. Agriculture is unlikely to escape from the conflicting views of those who are confused about their own progress.

Uphold Ruling On GW Sugar Court Case About Seed

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court Judge Robert McWilliams has supported a U.S. District court ruling by Judge Ewing Kerr of Cheyenne, that Great Western Sugar Co. of Denver could use truth as a defense in a libel and slander suit brought by Jack Ando, Cody, Wyoming, sugar beet grower.

The alleged libel and slander was said to occur in a 1969 GW press release and through comments of a seed expert that Ando's seed produced beets lower in sugar content than those from GW seed and were more susceptible to certain diseases and freezing.

The judges agreed that the company was protected in that statements about the seeds were truthful and "published with a good intent and for justifiable ends", as required by the Wyoming Constitution.