

CATTLE LOSSES REDUCED BY GRUBBING POISONOUS DRYMARIA, PROVEN BY TESTS ON JORNADO EXPERIMENT RANGE

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Typical specimen of the Drymaria plant, one of the poisonous weeds best eliminated by grubbing.

PREVIOUS to 1926 a large number of deaths of livestock on the Jornada Experimental Range each year were attributed to lightning by the cooperating stockmen. This was thought to be the cause of death inasmuch as the deaths all occurred during the rainy period and the position of the carcasses was such as to lead to the belief that the animals had been killed instantly. Investigation, however, disclosed the fact that practically all these losses, thought to be caused by lightning, had been caused by the poisonous weed drymaria, commonly called inkweed, because of the purple stain contained in the seed. (See picture).

Drymaria is a small summer annual growing 1 to 3 inches high in round clumps 3 to 6 inches in diameter. It is found mostly on heavy clay soils in adobe flats and along shallow washes or gullies in southwestern Texas, southern New Mexico, and southeastern Arizona. The solitary growth habit of these plants within areas supporting few, if any other, plants possibly causes them to be grazed to a greater extent than they would be if growing with other plants.

Losses from drymaria poisoning on the Jornada Experimental Range continued up to 1929 when such heavy casualties occurred that two of the most heavily infested drymaria areas were excluded from grazing by fencing. Although losses were reduced, they continued to be heavy enough to cause real concern. The distribution of the plant was so widespread on the summer range that it was impractical to protect the herd by moving cattle to non-infested parts of the range.

Following severe losses in 1933, Mr. B. A. Christmas, the stockman cooperating in range studies on the Jornada Experimental Range, equipped all of his range riders with light hoes. While riding the range in the course of their regular duties, the men were instructed to grub every patch of the poisonous weed found. This was continued every year throughout the danger period, lasting approximately from August to October, the

length of the growing period depending on the amount and distribution of rainfall.

As a result of the grubbing, losses from drymaria poisoning immediately declined and since 1934 have represented only a very small part of the total Jornada livestock losses.

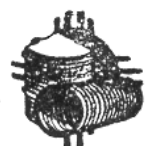
Total losses during the first 8-year period
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EASTERN NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR JUNIOR CALF SALE BRINGS YOUNG OWNERS AVERAGE OF 20.96c PER LB.

WITH everything set for its finest show, the disastrous floods of the last week in September forced cancellation of the 19th Eastern New Mexico State Fair at Roswell. The sympathy of the whole state went out to the enterprising city and to its Fair association managers who had worked hard and successfully to prepare a great fair for the valley area.

But nothing could stop the show and auction of the Junior Calf department of the Fair. It was held as per schedule Saturday, October 4, and auctioneer Earl Garten sold 42 fine calves for an average of 20.96 cents per pound.

The Pecos Valley Packing company had made a packer bid schedule ranging from 10½c to 12½c per pound, but nothing offered sold under 16 cents.

Ralls Jones, scion of a famous family of Hereford breeders, walked away with the grand champion and the top price of 80.7 cents per pound, or \$704.28 for his 873-pound champion calf.

Marjorie Angell, Carlsbad, likewise a scion of a widely known family of fine Hereford producers, won the reserve championship with her 688-pound calf which sold at 66.4 cents a pound, or \$457.00.

The grand champion was bid in by the New Mexico Military Institute. The Institute had behind it the support of some 30 Roswell business men and concerns; while the reserve champion, bid in by the First National Bank of Roswell, had some 18 associate supporters behind the bid, from Carlsbad, Artesia and Roswell.

Other young growers entering calves in the sale, who received from 16c to 26c per pound for their well groomed animals, included:

James Madsen, Roswell; Virginia Schmid, Roswell; Betty Lou Madsen, Roswell; Archie Andrews, Hagerman; Gerald Madsen, Roswell; James Bolton, Hagerman; Earl Worley Hagerman; Doane Watkins, Artesia; Royce Burns, Lovington; Mary O. Grantham, Roswell; Bobby Lee, Roswell; George Birchell, Carlsbad; Ruth Ann Ford, Hagerman; James Eakin, Roswell; Helen Formwalt, Hope; Edgar Mitchell, Roswell; Rose Eakin, Roswell; Wade McCall, Dexter; Ann McCall, Dexter; Kenneth Richardson, Hagerman; Harry Brown, Roswell; Christine Johnson, Cottonwood; Herbert Schmid, Roswell; Glynn Starling, Dexter; Sonny Timms, Fort Sumner; Glen Kyle, Fort Sumner; Joe Ford, Hagerman; Mary Schmid, Roswell; Mildred McKinstry, Hagerman; Johanna Starling, Dexter; Billie Ree Grantham, Roswell; Darell Pirtle, Roswell; Emory Ferguson, Hagerman; Gene White, Hagerman; Don Rogers, Dexter; John Henry Angell, Carlsbad; Tommy Madsen, Roswell; Richard Harshey, Hagerman.

At the annual Merino ram sale in Sydney, Australia, June 23-26, a top price of \$7,250 was paid for a stud ram. The second high was \$3,350. The offering of 1638 rams brought an average of \$120 a head.

Raton dispatches claim that Colfax county boasts the only herd of registered black Angus cattle in New Mexico. The herd is on the Millard ranch north of Sugarite near the Colorado line. There are four registered animals in the herd.

G. D. Hatfield, president of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, and A. D. Brownfield, New Mexico authority on land use and livestock, have returned to their homes in Deming from a defense planning meeting in Salt Lake City. Both are members of the State Planning Board. Eleven western states were represented.

CATTLE LOSSES REDUCED BY GRUBBING POISONOUS DRYMARIA OR "INK WEED"

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riod amounted to 91 head, while losses during the 7-year period, when control measures were in effect, were only 10 head. On a percentage basis this represented a reduction in losses from 1.49 per cent to 0.18 per cent of the total number of animals grazed. At an average value of \$25, the animals lost would represent values of \$2,275 and \$250 respectively, surely enough difference to hire several extra men for grubbing the dangerous weed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Christmas figures the grubbing was done at no additional cost since he hired no extra help, and the men did the work while engaged in their regular duties.

WINNERS AT ROSWELL 4-H CALF CLUB SALE



Top: Ralls C. Jones and his grand champion calf at the 1941 Eastern New Mexico State Fair auction. The calf brought his owner an all-time high price of 80.7-cents a pound. Below: Miss Marjorie Angell, of Carlsbad, with her reserve champion calf, which netted her 66.4 cents a pound.

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