



AT LEFT IS view of a typical high country permanent pasture, surrounded by forest. County Agent Brechan is looking ← at some of Tom Marlar's cattle on pasture at Pumpkin Center. Baled oat hay in the background will be stacked for winter feeding.

## *Vast, Cool, Beautiful -- That's* **COCONINO COUNTY**

William M. Brechan

Coconino County, 18,238 square miles, largest county in Arizona and second largest in the continental U. S. That's a fair piece of land in anybody's language.

*Of the 11,672,320 acres, about half is Indian reservations, another large piece for national parks, another large chunk for federal land, still another piece for state lands, and a very little left for private lands. Much of the land is found in the 6,000 to 10,000 foot elevation, and is covered with ponderosa pine forests. An average year will see about 157 million board feet of timber*

*taken from the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests in the county.*

Timber isn't the only product produced in the county. Coconino County is one of the largest cattle producing areas in the Southwest, has both irrigated and dry farming, raises all kinds of deciduous fruits and berries, and has more National Parks, Monuments and scenic points than any other county in the U.S.

### **It's Big Cattle Country**

Livestock is the biggest business in the county. Thousands of head of cattle and sheep spend the months of June through October in the National forests. The cattle, mostly long yearlings, are then taken to feedlots in the lower valleys. The sheep go down to the green pastures in the Salt River and Casa Grande areas to lamb.

There are a large number of ranchers who remain in the county all year. Their ranches are large, some consisting of 13 townships. The predominant breed of beef cattle is Hereford with some Angus, Charolais and mixed breeds.

The main cash crop is oats. It is

grown for both grain and hay. A few years ago the farmer threshed all his oats, but the county agent convinced him that putting part or all of his oat crop into hay, and feeding it through his own livestock, was more profitable. Today most farmers have a small herd of cattle and are doing this very thing.

### **Saves on Labor**

Permanent pastures are also a popular crop in the county. Much of the farm land has gone into permanent pasture grasses. This enables the smaller farmer to realize an income from his land with a minimum amount of labor. Today there are over 10,000 acres in grasses, such as crested wheatgrass, intermediate wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, brome grass and others. More acres are being converted each year to these grasses.

Potatoes used to be the key cash crop in Coconino County. This vegetable was raised under dry farm (rain-fall) conditions and produced a very high quality product. Good, saleable tubers would average about 75 sacks per acre. Soon the central valleys of Arizona began raising potatoes under irrigation, and with the heavy use of

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**BELOW, RED DELICIOUS apples in Oak Creek Canyon. Note the spray material on the fruit. At harvest time all spray material will be removed by modern polishing and grading machines.**



One of the more challenging county agent assignments in Arizona is the post at Flagstaff, in Coconino County. This is because of its altitude, its climate, and its variety of area and agricultural enterprises. William M. Brechan, one of the veterans in the Arizona Extension Service, has fielded that position with marked competence for the past 15 years. Bill Brechan was born on a Maricopa County farm, attended Arizona State University and Texas A & M before coming to The University of Arizona, where he was graduated with a bachelor of science degree in agriculture in 1942. He went immediately into the army, serving nearly four years in this country and in England. Returning, he was hired Jan. 1, 1946, as assistant county agent in Pinal County. On July 1, 1949, he was named county agent in Coconino County, making Flagstaff his home ever since.



**SMALL GRAINS ARE** source of winter hay in Coconino County. At left, the county agent stands in a field of Markton oats in the Doney Park farming area east of Flagstaff. At right, Doug McClain and son, Jim, farmer-ranchers in Bull Basin, stack oat hay for winter feed for their cattle.



**POTATOES GROW WELL** even at 7,000 foot elevations. County Agent Bill Brechan shows a few tubers dug from a demonstration plot testing varieties best suited for the high country.

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fertilizers were producing yields of up to 400 sacks per acre. Needless to say what this has done to the Coconino potato business. Potatoes still are a good garden vegetable and the quality is tops.

#### Land of Bountiful Fruit

Oak Creek Canyon, south of Flagstaff, is where you find the garden spot of America. Although it is a Na-

tional Monument, there are many small privately owned farms along the creek. Here are raised the best apples, peaches, pears and berries in the Southwest.

The main fruit is apples, with peaches second. The Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Jonathan, Winesap and Grimes Golden are the principal varieties. The growers, in cooperation with their county agent, are producing a high quality fruit and are able to cope with the insect problem. It isn't uncommon to get 20 to 30 field run boxes of apples per tree, which means about \$150 gross per tree. There are about 35 trees per acre. Most of the fruit is sold either in the canyon or in the county. Some, however, goes to the Phoenix market.

#### Some Irrigation at Fredonia

The only irrigated area of the county is in Fredonia, 196 miles north of Flagstaff. Here there are about 1,000 acres under irrigation. Alfalfa hay and seed are the two main crops. All

**BELOW, COUNTY AGENT** Bill Brechan and U. S. "Buster" Crisp, farmer-rancher in the Doney Park area east of Flagstaff, discuss the cutting of wheat for hay.



**BILL TODD, OAK** Creek orchardist, shows a nice crop of Red Delicious apples. Note lower branches stripped of leaves by deer.

farmers have a few head of cattle and a few have large cattle ranches in the surrounding areas.

The County 4-H program is an active one. There are about 400 members in the county, with clubs in all parts of the county. Quality, rather than quantity is stressed by the county agents.

The county homemaker program is also an active one. It consists of several clubs throughout the county.

