

CRANBERRY CULTURE.

One Thousand Bushels of Berries to the Acre---Is Destined to Become a Large and Profitable Industry.

But few counties in Oregon can lay claim to raising cranberries, but of that few Tillamook stands out pre-eminently as the leading county of Oregon fitted to monopolize this industry, and the one which affords plenty of opportunities for those who want to get into the profitable occupation of raising cranberries. Conditions in Tillamook county are such that the cranberry industry is bound to grow to large proportions and become a great factor in the development and industrial prosperity of Tillamook county, whether it is developed by local enterprise or by those seeking homes in the northwest, where they can make comfortable and independent livelihoods.

A few years ago cranberry raising in Tillamook county was only in its experimental stages. Today it is a demonstrated fact that those who first experimented in cranberry raising are now possessors of valuable cranberry bogs. It has surpassed all their expectations, the bogs having turned out a gigantic success. To give a correct and concise idea of the cranberry industry in Tillamook county, which the HEADLIGHT may state is only in its infancy, no better qualified person is able to give information and particulars than Mr. W. C. King, of Sand Lake, commonly known as the Cranberry King of Tillamook county, and whose ability, energy and perseverance in introducing and experimenting with cranberries made it an assured success.

What Mr. King has accomplished in this respect every industrious person can. Like every other industry it requires labor and a certain amount of capital to develop, and with these two combined, success awaits those who turn their attention and energy to cranberry raising in Tillamook county. Mr. King says:

"I commenced the culture of cranberries in the spring of 1893, and have each year since added some to my bog.

"I find that the vines are well adopted to this climate. They grow vigorously, and where the bogs are properly prepared they are enormously productive. While picking my crop last year ('98), I measured off some ground and picked them carefully, and found that they produced at the rate of one thousand bushels to the acre. Allowing one dollar per bushel as a net profit, I do not know of an agricultural product that will compare with it, and placing the net profit at one dollar is placing figures at the lowest.

"It costs from two to four hundred dollars per acre to prepare the ground and plant the vines, including the cost of plants. The land which has timber standing on it is the most expensive to prepare, although none the less adapted to the raising of cranberries so long as the land is made up of vegetable muck or peat.

The bog must be so situated that it can be drained by means of ditches to the depth of at least fifteen inches, and one must also have control of plenty of water for irrigation and flooding purposes. Although I have seen some marshes that were a success with out any water supply, do not consider it safe in view of large blays.

"A bog, once set in the proper shape, will last indefinitely. The first cost, though quite large, cuts little figure in the long run.

I find that the cranberries grown here are of a darker color than those grown in the east, and they are much superior in flavor, and also weigh more to the bushel; the size of the berry is about the same.

"According to my experience, the McFarland cranberry is the best variety for this coast. It is the largest and most prolific, and a splendid keeper, and by all odds the best seller.

"In the east this sort was considered a poor keeper. But it appears to be better adapted to this climate and grows to perfection.

"I have had good success with the Cherry & Bell variety. They yield well and are good color, and their flavor is excelled by none and they are of good size, though not as large as the McFarland.

"The picking season is usually one of pleasure, for several reasons, to both picker and proprietor. The weather is generally fine—September and October—when men, women and children come for an outing in the cranberry fields. They come with a camping outfit, prepared to enjoy the pleasure of out door life and the health-giving ocean breeze and a rest from the city and home toils.

"Lines are stretched across a plot of ground three feet apart, and each picker works between the lines, the vines making a complete carpet upon which to work. They hang on uprights about six inches high and are a most beautiful sight to look upon. The berries, a bright red color, and in many cases three and four deep and touching each other completely hiding the ground and vines beneath.

"The pickers are given a six quart measure to pick in, and are required to pick the berries clean as they go. When the measure is full it is emptied into a bushel box, and when the box is full they are given a check which is good for 50c. Yard men are in attendance to oversee the pickers and carry off the boxes.

"My best pickers last year picked about three bushels a day.

"In the East the vines are often infested with insect pests, and if the growers have not the control of the water the whole crop is in danger. I understand the pests have been imported here at different times in shipping plants, but they soon disappear as they cannot thrive in this climate.

"There are many acres of cranberry land in this county situated at different places. The land in its wild state is worthless, but properly treated and planted to the standard varieties of the tame cranberry they can be transformed to one of the most paying pieces of land.

"The chief requisites for a successful cranberry bog, according to the best authority, are, a good peat bed, entirely free from any clay or loam, good drainage at least to a depth of 15 inches, plenty of water supply and a coat of from three to six inches of clean beach sand over the entire surface.

"There is money in the cranberry business and the many bogs of Tillamook county are waiting for the men with means and energy to develop them."