THE SUGAR BEET IN THE WAR AND POST-WAR PERIOD FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER

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THE thinning and harvesting labor requirements of present hand methods in growing sugar beets are excessive, requiring utilization of transient labor in both spring and fall. From the agricultural engineering point of view these peak labor demands need to be leveled to the extent that with proper farm management of other crops, a smaller labor crew may be maintained throughout the year to handle all of the farm work in a balanced program. Usually, the labor requirements for sugar beet production have stood out in the grower's mind to the exclusion of some of the other factors, but now that there is promise that the labor curve can be very definitely smoothed out, the study of some of the other factors is appropriate.

The cost of machinery must, quite properly, be charged against these new highly mechanized operations in sugar beet growing. With the purchase of new and specialized equipment, the machinery cost per acre or per ton of product may be somewhat higher than it was when more of the operations were performed by hand or when smaller units were used. It is possible, however, that with a more mechanized system larger acreages will be in order, with the consequent lowering of unit acre costs. There have been several accepted schemes of evaluating these costs, systems of figuring based on the probable life of the equipment, and an expected cost of repairs and interest as well as operating costs incident to the use of power. In this study, these systems of computations were used and were found to differ very little.

Too frequently plans have been evolved for growing sugar beets with the entire thought centered on this one crop to the exclusion of other crops of the grower. If a proposed system calls for two tractors and the remaining crops have no need for the second tractor, then the system is illogical. Hence it is necessary to consider the farm...