

Range Country Invaded

MOHAVE COUNTY

Attracts Elderly, Sportsmen

With Climate, Water and Sun

By JAMES N. McDOUGAL

Mohave County is cattle country besieged by fishermen.

In other words, it is range country where the population-pushed sportsman has discovered new fields to conquer.

Mohave is fifth largest county in the United States — 8,486,400 acres. Nearly 600,000 acres are included in Indian Reservations, and much of the balance is state and federal lands. Probably a third of Mohave County is privately owned.

A Land of Contrast

Mohave is unique in many ways:

It is a land of rugged mountains — yet it has more than 1,000 miles of shoreline on lakes and rivers.

It is a land of black river bottom

In Mohave County there are 14,850 people, and 13,644 of them greet their county agricultural agent with a warm smile and a "Hey, Jim"! As for the rest — 1200 are children too young to talk, three adults have laryngitis, and the last three just moved in last week and haven't gotten acquainted yet. For in Mohave County the county agent is widely known and warmly liked.

James N. McDougal was born on a ranch near Deming, New Mexico, and attended Deming High School. He enrolled at New Mexico State University, at Las Cruces, majoring in animal husbandry.

After two years of college he enlisted in the armed forces, serving from 1942-43 in the Coast Artillery. He then returned to Las Cruces in 1944, but in 1945 transferred to Colorado State University, at Fort Collins, majoring in forestry. He graduated at Fort Collins, with a major in range management, in 1947.

He was a county agricultural agent in Colorado for two years, then went to the Soil Conservation Service as Range Conservationist and Unit Conservationist, first in Colorado and later at Kingman, Ariz.

In April of 1959 he was named County Agricultural Agent under The University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension Service, with offices at Kingman. He is the first Mohave County Agent in the county's history. In fact he was the only county agent until March of 1961 when Mrs. Audrey Davies joined the staff as county home agent.

farmlands and high ponderosa pine forests.

It is a land where two inches of rain fall in one place and 18 inches in another.

It is a land of sparse population, yet the county seat — Kingman — is one of the most attractive, up-to-date growing cities in Arizona. And if you want a postscript to that, Havasu City, a man-made industrial city, is growing almost overnight from nothing to an industrial and retirement city destined for a great future.

But Mostly Cattle Country

Mohave County is a land of contrast — an elevation of 450 feet with two inches of rainfall on the Colorado River bottoms, but also cool Ponderosa pine forests rising to an elevation of 10,000 feet where 16 to 18 inches of humidity is recorded annually.

But mostly it is cattle country.

There are 9,600 irrigated acres, scarcely one one-thousandth of the county's area, and most of those irrigated acres supply feed for the cattle which graze over most of the rest of the state. These feed crops consist of sorghum, alfalfa, permanent pasture grasses and small grains, all marketed locally as supplemental feed when the range grasses are not sufficient.

In addition, range cattle are sometimes given supplemental feeding of ground meal, salt and vitamin A, all fed together. The irrigated areas lie along the Colorado River bottoms, along the Bill Williams river which separates Mohave County on the south from Yuma County, and on the

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DISCUSSING BRUCELLOSIS cleanup campaign are, left to right, Dr. William M. Thompson, State Veterinarian; Dr. T. T. Oyler, Phoenix, supervisor, Animal Disease Eradication Division, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture; Clayton Atkin, director of Northern Livestock Assn., and (kneeling) Slat Jacobs, brand inspector on the Arizona Strip.





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Big Sandy river bottom. All of this is pump irrigation, with very little diversion from the rivers themselves.

One-Third Is Separated

Mohave County itself is a geographical anomaly. As said, it has the Bill Williams river on the south, between it and Yuma County. It has the Colorado river between it and California as its western boundary. It has Lake Mead articulating its boundary with Nevada. Then comes Utah as the northern boundary, Coconino and Yavapai counties as eastern boundaries.

Like a ragged upright oblong, Mohave county is pierced by the great chasm of the Grand Canyon, which cuts off the north third of the county. The county agent thus must go through two other states — Nevada and Utah — to reach that 3,500,000 acre area north of the Colorado, an area known colloquially as "the strip."

Besides feed crops, Mohave County has a small interest — 300 acres or so — in Arizona's cotton production picture. This cotton, like a commercial watermelon and cantaloup crop of high quality and reputation, is grown on Colorado river bottomlands. Cotton yields are highest in Arizona — a phenomenal four to five bales per acre.

Mines Preceded Cattle

But the cattle — some 25,000 to 30,000 head owned by nearly 200 ranchers is the big Mohave County agricultural interest. And even these

FROM 40,000 to 50,000 acres of the Hualapai Indian Reservation in Mohave County has been improved by burning pinon-juniper forests and seeding range grasses. Above, left, Tribal leaders and Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel plan a burn. At right, same area three years later. Notice excellent grass cover.

cattle came in a little late, after gold and silver mining first put their stamp on the area.

For after the Indianas — the Hualapai, Mohave and Kaibab Piutes — the miners came first to the Mohave country. There were mining camps at places a paperback author might dream about — Chloride, Gold Road, Oatman, Signal, Mineral Park and others. The cattlemen followed the miners, and the railroad pushed its thin steel highway through the mountains in 1880.

Today Mohave County is a cattle-producing — a beef-producing — land. The mother cow herds produce the fat yearlings which are sold to many areas — Colorado, Montana, Utah, California, the Midwest — each spring, to fatten on lush grass until fall, when they will go to feedyards for finishing.

About two years out of five the rain gods favor Mohave County to a degree that the home grown calves can't keep the grass down. Then ranchers buy steers and turn them out, from December until spring, when they are grass-fat and ready for the feedyards, probably in California.

Ranges Vary Greatly

Mohave County ranges vary, some high pastures carrying six to eight head per section, but most of the mountain ranges carry around two

head per section. The better ranges are in the high country, from 4,500 feet up, but not in the Ponderosa, for pine forests bear little grass.

Herefords are favored in Mohave County, although there are two or three excellent Angus herds, and many ranchers have crossbreds, cattle which carry the desirable bloodlines of both English and Indian breeds. Brahman blood is desired where ranging ability, ruggedness, and ability to travel to cover sparse range, is desirable.

Range improvement, the replacement of worthless brush with desirable grasses, has been practiced successfully on 40,000 to 50,000 acres of the Hualapai Reservation under direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Tribal leaders. Burning has taken away the pinon-juniper forests, and range grasses have been planted.

Seed Before the Rains

Usual procedure is to burn off the dense evergreen growth in June or July, when it burns readily, then immediately sowing grass seed in the seedbed of ashes in time to catch the benefits of summer rains. Crested and intermediate wheatgrass, brome, yellow sweet clover and other cool season grasses have grown readily from such seedings.

Considerable help to cattlemen is

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the Mohave County Livestock Marketing Association, which gathers information from cattlemen and then furnishes a listing to buyers, telling how many, sex, age, approximate weight and time of delivery of sales cattle and calves. This service is performed through the county agent's office, with cooperation of the cattlemen.

The county agent's efforts on behalf of cattlemen have been largely in the areas of feeding, marketing and disease control. Recently the county's herds have undergone brucellosis testing in a move to lift the county from modified to certified brucellosis-free status. Mohave County's Certified Free Certificate was obtained during the latter part of February. It is being held by the State Veterinarian until the time when he and the Agricultural Research Veterinarians will be on hand to make the presentation to the Mohave Livestock raisers. Therefore, Mohave became the first county in Arizona to reach this status. This is important chiefly as a marketing aid. California will readily accept cattle only from those areas certified as brucellosis-free, and thus certification opens the big wide gate of California markets for Mohave cattle.

A Range Management Guide

Riding the range with cattlemen, the county agent has counseled them in range management, identifying desirable feed plants, cautioning that grazing should be regulated to not exceed range capacity. This spring the livestock men have been interested in screwworm control through biological means — release of male sterile screwworm flies which cause the female to lay infertile eggs which will not hatch. This is another step in the protection of Mohave County's livestock.

Youngsters learn adult lessons early in a vigorous 4-H program in Mohave County. Some 180 boys and girls are enrolled in the program, and the fat beef sale of 4-H calves at Kingman has received national recognition, evidenced by prices paid by businessmen for the 4-H animals. The average of these prices has topped the nation, one recent year being 54 cents a pound — and that's the average!

An Area Development Council, encouraged and assisted by the county agent's office and The University of Arizona, has coordinated efforts to meet specific community problems. It is our belief that this coordination, this unification of thinking and effort, this marshalling of human resources,



EXTENSION SPECIALISTS from The University of Arizona help with the local program occasionally in Mohave county. Here Mrs. Carol Doty, home economics specialist, explains the life cycle of the typical American housewife. Left to right above, Mrs. Clifford Touchette, Mrs. W. J. Bailey, Mrs. Doty, Home Agent Mrs. Audrey Davies, Mrs. K. B. Johnson and Mrs. William Duncan.

is almost as important for its own sake as for its accomplishments.

This Mohave County Area Development Council has worked on such projects as water and sewer facilities at Chloride and an airport authority for Kingman. Currently there is a study to evaluate the economic worth to Mohave County communities of a new interstate highway which will pierce this northwest corner of Arizona.

New Industry — Recreation

Like most of Arizona, Mohave County has its water problems, despite its wide area of lake and river frontage. To get that water to the farms and communities, to the fields and people who need it, is a problem indeed.

On the other hand, the vast lake shore areas caused by man's damming of the Colorado River is already bringing recreational industries to the county. This new "business of fun" is expected to increase greatly as more and more people have the time and money to fish, water ski, go boating, swim and picnic. These shore areas also make Mohave County increasingly attractive, plus the area's superb climate, for retired people.

Early this year there were 420 developments of one kind or another in Mohave County, ranging from trailer parks to ranchettes. Along the Colorado River, in a rich flat area of river bottom soil, many people have built retirement homes on small acreages, but acreages large enough to include gardens, fruit trees, small fields of alfalfa and other feed crops. With home grown fresh fruits and vege-

tables, with feed for a beef steer, a milk cow or two and a flock of chickens, these people have found retirement with all its ideals — outdoor activity, partial subsistence, community activities, quiet and fresh air, and a superb climate.

New and Old Live Together

More and more, in future years, can we expect this influx of people to contribute to the county's economy — people many of whom have spent their more active working years elsewhere, but bring with them a dependable retirement income. Best of all, these retirement colonies, as well as new industry at Havasu City and elsewhere, complement and do not interfere with the principal industry of livestock agriculture. They can all live together, all contribute together, one taking up the slack when another facet is slowed for one reason or another. The result is a balanced, thriving economy.

As in all counties, the distaff side of extension work contributes its share. Mrs. Audrey Davies, like many Arizonans, is a refugee from a colder climate. She had been an extension worker in Montana and Alaska before coming here, as our first county home agent, in the spring of 1961.

There are five homemakers' clubs in the county — two at Kingman, one at Chloride, another at Lake Mohave Ranchos and the fifth at Topock. Each club has a monthly meeting, frequently with a lesson or topic pre-

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pared by Mrs. Davies, occasionally with a guest leader from The University of Arizona.

Wide Range of Interests

Topics of club discussion and activity, chosen by the members themselves, range from the importance of wills and estate planning to a Christmas workshop. The selection of furniture, color harmonizing for the home, making over used clothing, an upholstery workshop, foods and meal planning, all are included.

Each spring there is a homemakers' tea, when the clubs meet together, members bringing guests who may be inclined to participate in future activities of the groups.

The county home agent also supervises the distaff side of 4-H work, with home management, clothing and food projects for girls enrolled in 4-H, direction in public speaking, and this all climaxed by a 4-H revue each spring, with a dress revue, favorite food show and public speaking.

Many Aid Extension Program

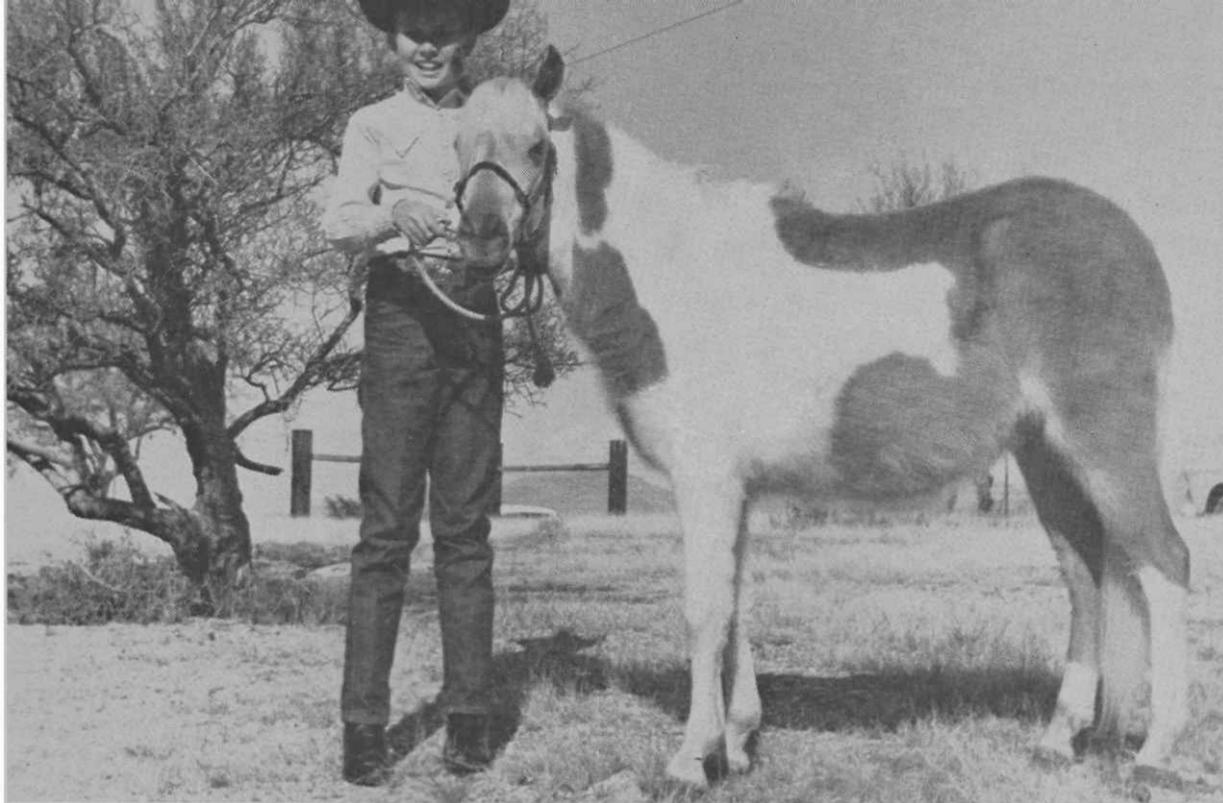
The extension work in Mohave County has a number of built-in advantages which ease the work for the county agent-in-charge and home agent, and make that work much more effective.

The Mohave County Livestock Association, the Cowbells, the county's Area Development Council, the 4-H Leaders Council, the Homemakers' Clubs and their leaders, all cooperate actively and effectively in the work we try to do.

Equally important are the town folks — the Kingman merchants who support 4-H activities and bid on the 4-H calves. The Rotary, Soroptimists, Lions, Optimists, the Women's clubs and the garden clubs — all contribute to any success we have.

And finally, key to public expression and leadership so direly needed by every community, are the avenues which report on the community to itself and to outsiders — the news media. The Mohave County Miner and Radio Station KAAA have ever been eager to help carry our message, to report on agricultural and homemaker activities, to help bring crowds to our affairs and to report on those meetings afterward, and to encourage our very successful county fair, where 4-H, agriculture and the homemaker groups find their annual show window.

Without the help of others, we and our work would be nothing.



EDWARD AND HIS PONY, the Shetland he received from the American Shetland Assn. Edward Taylor, 16, son of Mr. and Mrs. Shirley S. Taylor of Florence, Ariz., was given this pony to care for, as a 4-H project. Edward was one of two Arizona boys to be given custody of ponies at ceremonies at Mrs. Frederica Page's Hungry Horse Ranch, near Tucson.

State's Farm Income Drops

By JOHN RIDDICK

Arizona farmers and ranchers sold their goods last year for \$541 million — \$41 million less than the year before and \$47 million below 1962.

A fall in prices on both cotton and cattle struck the state agriculture a blow in the pocketbook.

The annual report of the University of Arizona department of agricultural economics reveals that the state income from cotton fell from \$138,665,000 in 1963 to \$131,859,000 last year.

And the cattle industry suffered an even greater setback, falling \$21.1 million to a level of \$153.7 million.

Total agricultural production was 7 percent below 1963 and 8 per cent below 1962.

"It may be that 1964 was a year of transition and that we will see a continued decline in agricultural income," said Dr. Jimmie S. Hillman, the department head.

"The two keys to the situation, are commodity support prices and the water supply.

"And the further decline in income will be contingent on what the government does about the price support

situation, what the United States and the state do about water, and on the management efficiency of the farmers in dealing with these two problems."

The state is mining 4½ million acre feet of water a year from its underground reserves. And the dropping water table is forcing more and more agricultural land out of production because pumping costs simply make it uneconomical.

Along with cotton and cattle, the agricultural income also declined in hay, vegetables and citrus.

The cotton market last year was primarily controlled by a drop in the government support price from 32½ cents a pound in 1963 to 30 cents. There will be another drop of a cent a pound this year.

The crucial event in the cattle industry last year was that the feeders, who had been suffering from lowered prices since 1962, shared their problem with the producers, said Hillman.

The result was a decline in prices across the board although the number of cattle slaughtered increased from 203,000 to 223,800.

The average price of choice 900 to 1,100 pound steers at Phoenix was \$22.60 per hundred pounds, compared to \$23.81 in 1963. Range feeder calves dropped from 28 cents a pound in 1963 to 21 cents in 1964.

In harmony with the declining cattle prices, the value of hay production in 1964 was estimated at \$24.6 million compared to \$32.8 million in 1963 as the price dropped \$6.90 a ton.

John Riddick is science and education writer for The Tucson Daily Citizen.

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