



"Wired" trees begin producing apples the fourth year after planting.

TREES TRAINED TO GROW ON WIRES

"Clothes Line" System For Growing Apples

Maybe your next new cash crop should be apples. Not just another apple orchard, mind you, but apples grown on wire clothes lines — the way New Zealand nurseryman Roger Evans, of Napier, does it.

He's spent the last 13 years perfecting the revolutionary growing system which is attracting visitors from all corners of the world. A busload from China had been there several days before FARM SHOW arrived to interview Evans. He has about 100 acres "wired up" for apples and estimates that other growers throughout New Zealand using his system account for another 900 acres.

Most of the interest from outsiders has come in only the past several years as skeptics, who maintained at the start that the system wouldn't work, are changing their tune as they watch Evans produce about twice as many apples per acre as they're getting from conventional orchards.

Here's an oversimplification of how the system works:

First, you build yourself a special kind of wire "clothes line" for each row of trees. There are four tiers of wires, about 2 ft. apart, with six wires (three on each side of the tree line) per tier. Stretch the wires tight, anchor them securely at each end, and plant the seedling trees. You then prune and train the tree branches to grow along the horizontal wires. Upright growth from the main lateral branches is woven through the outer wires, forming a horizontal fruiting plane.

Here, according to Evans, are the key advantages of his Ebro-Espalier (French for growing crops on a wire) Growing System:

Yield: Trees begin producing earlier, starting with the fourth year. Production is about double that of regular apple trees in a conventional orchard.

Quality: The horizontal planes

provide more even light distribution, with no densely shaded areas such as you get with regular trees. This produces fruit of more uniform size and maturity.

Spraying: Due to the system's low shape and profile, savings up to 75% on spraying costs can be achieved. Closeness of the rows, and the low profile, enables spraying to be carried out in windy conditions.

Wind Damage: The wires provide protective support for the branches through all stages of growth, making them less vulnerable to damage from wind, snow or sleet.

Picking: The first three tiers can be picked from the ground, and the top tier from a step stool or simple mobile platform — no expensive hydraulic ladders are needed.

Pruning: In 15 minutes, a new worker can be trained to do the necessary pruning and working of the branches.

Reworking Trees: As improved varieties are introduced, they can be easily grafted on by removing the laterals, leaving only the stubs on the main leader at each tier of wires.

"I was so impressed with the system after seeing it that I signed up to help promote and market it here in the states," says Jack Henderson, a California based distributor of electric fencing and other products manufactured in New Zealand.

Henderson has a licensing agreement with Evans to market the system, which Evans says is patented in the U.S. in both design and wire configuration. Growers who purchase the system get "how-to" construction recommendations and consultation services from Evans.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ebro-Espalier Growing System, c/o Live Wire Products, Jack Henderson, Pres., P.O. Box 53, Rough and Ready, Cal. 95975 (ph 916 432-1220).

Look What They're Doing In New Zealand

While covering the National Field Days in Australia several weeks ago, FARM SHOW swung into New Zealand to learn, firsthand, about these exciting new products and ideas.

Harold Johnson, Editor

"Savory" Grazing System Challenged

"We experimented with a grazing program similar to the Savory System 25 years ago but junked it after one year. It's good but its wagon-wheel concept has some glaring flaws," says Vaughn Jones, marketing director of Gallagher Fencing Systems and one of New Zealand's best known grazing and electric fence specialist. "You Americans are 25 years behind the times on efficient grazing of native and tame pastures," he told FARM SHOW.

The Savory System, featured in FARM SHOW 2½ years ago (Vol. 6, No. 4, 1982) has been widely promoted in the U.S. and Canada the past several years. "It'll double the present carrying capacity of any ranch," maintains its developer Allan Savory, a range consultant in Rhodesia.

The pie-shaped or "wagon wheel" design of laying out pastures for rotation grazing is the most popular trademark of the Savory System. Water and working areas are arranged in the central hub of the wheel, with up to 40 or more pie-shaped grazing areas surrounding it. It's the "wagon wheel mentality" of the Savory System which Jones and other grazing specialists in New Zealand challenge: "Biggest problem with it is that it isn't suited to hilly terrain. It overgrazes in the center of the wheel, and undergrazes the far edges. Plus, you end up with excessive foot paths," says Jones.

"If controlled grazing is practiced by New Zealand farmers could be transferred to existing cost and price standards in the U.S., America's grass farmers would be the wealthiest agriculturalists in the world. You use expensive machines to harvest your

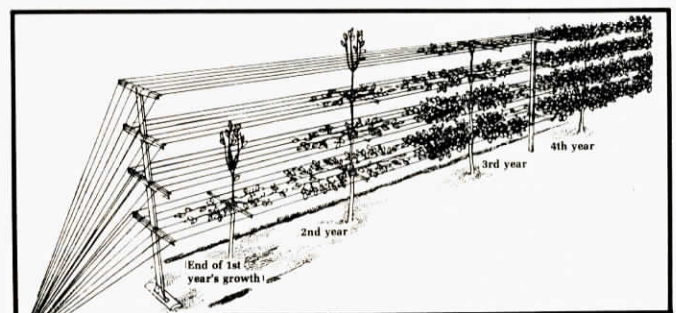
crops. Here, with higher land costs, lower prices for our products and lower profit margins to work with, animals are our machines. They move in to harvest a small area every day or two as cleanly and as completely as a forage chopper."

Clovers and modern electric fencing are the two key ingredients, says Jones, for efficient controlled grazing. "Clovers are to the New Zealand farmer what oil is to the Arabs," he quips.

He notes that, with easy to move electric fence, dairy, sheep, beef and deer producers in New Zealand move animals to new square or rectangular paddocks every day or two. "Generally, the shorter the duration, the greater the yield. Good dairy farmers, for example, leave animals on a small paddock for only 12 hours, which means that it's quickly grazed right to the ground and starts regrowing immediately. A leading sheep farmer, who in season moves his animals daily to a new paddock, has his 300 acre farm divided into 100 paddocks, all subdivided with electric fence.

Bob Patterson, marketing director for Snell Fencing System, a U.S. distributor of New Zealand-built Gallagher electric fencing products, notes that his company has about 200 dairy and beef producers throughout the United States on controlled grazing programs patterned after New Zealand's system.

For a copy of controlled grazing as Jones recommends it for livestock producers in the U.S. and Canada, contact: Bob Kingsbury, Marketing Director, Snell Systems, P.O. Box 17769, San Antonio, Texas 78217 (ph 512 494-5211).



System involves four tiers of wire, with six wires (three on each side of the trees) per tier.