

## CULTURAL PRACTICE IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY

By

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First of all I will respond briefly to recommendations brought forward by Mr. Gunkelman. The Sunflower Growers Association was formed this past year. The aim of the Association, generally speaking, is to expand the industry on a sound basis and to enlist the cooperation of all facets of the industry in gaining this objective. The Grower Association appreciates the interest of processors in the association. I believe that many of the recommendations brought forward by Mr. Gunkelman will be taken into consideration in future development.

My presentation will involve pictures taken here in the Red River Valley of agriculture as it exists and of the production of sunflowers particularly. Agriculture, by far, is the major industry here in the Red River Basin. The Valley is a watershed of about 300 miles in length and from 30 to 70 miles in width encompassing some of the more fertile land in the world. About one-half of the Valley is very flat; the shorelines encompass the rest of the Valley and are more variable in contour and in soil type.

The typical farm in the Red River Valley is a family unit - including the farm home, storage and handling facilities for farm equipment and occasionally grain storage facilities and livestock facilities right on the place. The average farm size in the basin is about 600 acres of land. The crops grown here are primarily cereal crops of barley, wheat, oats, and forage. Sugarbeets and potatoes are other leading crops. Certain minor crops as dried beans, peas, etc. are raised.

Cultural operations in the Red River Basin begin early in April in the southern part of the Valley. The cereal crops are the first to be planted as they have tolerance to the low temperature of the soil. Typically, large machinery is used involving extensive acreages with an increasing amount of labor-saving equipment.

Sunflowers are in the early history of development in the Red River Basin. They are grown for birdseed, for human consumption, and more recently for oil. For the year 1967, there was just over 200,000 acres of sunflowers in the Red River Basin. The acreage is less for 1968 because of the decrease in oil price.

Sunflowers are planted here as early as possible - directly after the cereal crops - in rows varying from 22 inches to 30 inches. Herbicides and harrows are used for weed control. Disease, to date, is limited. The sunflower tends to be the last crop harvested in the Red River Valley. An adapter is placed on the regular grain combine which clips off the heads and separates the seeds from the plant material. Early harvesting of the sunflower seeds will require drying equipment. Immediately after combining, the soil is disked - breaking up the sunflower stalks - getting ready for the next season. Dry land farming is practiced in the Red River Basin, which means non-irrigation. Sunflower seeds are marketed in Crookston for birdseed and confectionery industry. Sunflower culture is new in the Red River Basin. We have much to learn yet. The entire industry will need a cooperative effort by growers, by the processing industry, and by researchers from the universities and from industrial concerns.

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