



**EASY ON WATER**—Judge William Keller and Rancher P. M. Gregory examine castor beans, now being planted commercially in Antelope Valley. They require little water.



**TEST PLANTING**—Thorny pods contain castor beans from plants on part of the 800 acres planted this year.  
Times photos

## Castor Bean Crop Tested on Antelope Valley Land

LANCASTER, July 28—Agriculture in the Antelope Valley continues to develop new row crops.

These crops have a record at the Antelope Valley Field Station of being low in the use of water, as compared with production of alfalfa, often conserving as much as 35% of the water ordinarily used in irrigation.

### Test Yields Good

Castor beans, extensively used in oil paints, hydraulic fluid, plastics and more than 200 other products, are planted in commercial acreage for the first time. More than 800 acres are planted in plots of 10 to 40 acres each, well distributed over the entire valley.

The test plots at the Antelope Valley Field Station for the last two years have averaged 1 1/4 tons an acre. Commercial processors of the castor beans believe the climate of the desert area to be ideal for the castor bean culture.

The market price for castor beans stands at \$280 a ton. Castor bean production is critically low and in great wartime demand and few areas in the United States have the climate for their commercial production.

### Used as Clean-up Crop

The crop also is an excellent clean-up crop for the land and is a conservor of water.

A companion crop to castor beans is sugar beets, again in commercial production after a lay-off of three years, resulting from the Federal allotment of sugar beet acreage in 1947. Some 180 acres are being tried on four ranches and indicated production at harvest time is estimated to exceed 18 tons an acre with a sugar content upward of 19%. Sugar beets are a short-term crop, and based on the records of 1946 and 1947, they used 60% of the water necessary to produce a season of alfalfa hay.

There is tremendous interest in this "new thought" farming in the Antelope Valley, developed by the Field Station under the supervision of the University of California College of Agriculture, and in soil and water conservation practices demonstrated by the Antelope Valley Soil Conservation District and the county offices of the Agricultural Commissioner and Farm Advisor.

## Contracts Let for Irrigation Improvements

FRESNO, July 28—Awards of contracts for construction of distribution systems utilizing water from Friant-Kern Canal were announced today by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Important units of the Lindsay-Strathmore, Exeter and Ivanhoe Irrigation Districts systems will be built at a total cost of \$2,858,062.50 under the terms of the awards.

In the Lindsay-Strathmore district, a contract has been awarded to Stolte and Early of San Francisco for construction of the Trauger pumping plant at a cost of \$709,603.

Another contract went to R. A. Wattson Co. of North Hollywood for additional distribution mains for the Lindsay-Strathmore district at a cost of \$624,227.50.

### Contract Awarded

The bureau announced American Pipe & Construction Co. of Los Angeles has contracted to build the first unit of the Exeter Irrigation District system at a cost of \$860,941.20. A contract has been granted to Food Machinery & Chemical Corp. of Los Angeles for 10 vertical shaft turbine-type units to pump Friant-Kern Canal water into the laterals. These pumps will cost \$27,013.80.

A contract to construct the distribution system for the Ivanhoe Irrigation District was awarded the United Concrete Pipe Corp. of Baldwin Park at a cost of \$636,277.

## Park Fountain Dedicated

AZUSA, July 28—Harry D. Jumper memorial fountain was dedicated today in Memorial Park in memory of the former late Mayor.

The fountain was unveiled by the Rev. B. J. Paroulek and accepted on behalf of the city by Mayor Karl Jones.

The design was the work of Paul Kressley, former city engineer, and installation of the memorial was under the direction of Art Wolfe, public works superintendent. Cost of the undertaking was borne by public subscription.

## Oceanside Adopts Water Saving Plan

OCEANSIDE, July 28—Co-operating with other parts of San Diego County, local residents have adopted a water conservation program of alternating garden and other irrigation.

Lawns are watered on alternate days under a system worked out by Water Supt. Robert A. Weese.

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