Sugar Beet Era Not Dead In Sevier County

The era of growing sugar beets in Sevier County as a major crop ended several years ago when a combination of increased freight rates and water shortage turned many farmers to corn crops. But the sugar beet era isn't quite dead and two farmers in the southern portion of the county have continued raising beets, becoming the only two harvesting crops this year. Max Tuft, whose farm is west of Monroe, and Quinn Christensen, Central, are harvesting about 130 acres between them and having them shipped to the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company's Garland factory for processing.

Local officials of Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad said a total of 44 cars of beets will be shipped from the Gramse loading station two miles north of Richfield, representing about 2,000 tons of sugar beets.

Since the closure of the West Jordan plant of U-I Sugar, all beets in the state are now shipped to Garland. Because of the additional distance, which necessitated a freight increase, most sugar beet growers in Sevier County stopped raising beets a few years ago. However, Mr. Tuft has continued to grow beets and accounts for the bulk of this year's Sevier crop — some 90 acres.

While the sugar beet era is not only still alive in the county, many agriculturalists are optimistic that more farmers will be coming back to growing beets, especially in the light of the high sugar prices being paid.

A good many farmers formerly growing beets have turned their land into growing corn for cattle silage and diverted to either additional cattle feeding or for sales of their crop for cattle feed.

Still A Sweet Story

Even though sugar beet production was practically ended in Sevier County, these two carloads are among 44 which have been shipped from the county with some 2,000 tons of beets from two farms. Beet industry is expected to rise again.