



GROWER—Oluf Dahl, right, convinced that guavas have an important future in California, after a decade of growing experience, examines tree with Harry Patterson of Visalia, who will take over Dahl's ranch operations upon his retirement.

Exeter Rancher Says Guava Growing Can Become Million Dollar Industry

EXETER, June 13—Oluf Dahl of Exeter is convinced Tulare County orchardists are overlooking a profitable crop, the guava, a fruit native to tropical areas.

Dahl, who has announced his retirement from fruit ranching after 40 years on his Exeter property, declares firmly that the opportunity is here for the guava to develop from an infant industry just as the avocado boomed into a million-dollar enterprise.

Experiment Pays Off

Dahl has been raising and selling guava on his farm here for eight years. Although his production of the fruit has been limited he said the crop has been a profitable experiment and he is convinced it is well adapted to valley climatic conditions.

He is selling his ranch interests to Harry Patterson of Visalia who plans to continue

to produce guavas from current plantings.

Guava can be used fresh as a fruit or can be stewed, dried or frozen. It can be made into jelly, ice cream, sherbet and similar products. A Visalia ice cream plant has recently been producing small quantities of guava sherbet on an experimental basis, from a recipe supplied by Dahl.

Dahl, a native of Norway, started out as an almond producer and almonds are still the principal crop of his ranch.

Several special cultural practices are necessary to produce the fruit, but none makes guavas hard to raise. It is a hardy green fruit, slightly larger than the average avocado when it is mature.

Dahl had a hard time finding a market for his product when he started production. He said he visited stores and hotels throughout the valley and in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Some were willing to try a lug or two, but at first all were skeptical. In many cases he had to give his fruit away, on a sampling basis.

In a short time all his supply was contracted for, by one store chain. For the last eight years this one firm has taken his entire supply.

Guava production is extremely simple, says Dahl. Picking is no problem. A guava is ripe and ready to ship when it falls from the tree. During harvest season the grower just makes daily tours of the trees, picking up the fallen fruit.

Resistant to Frost

Guava trees are not subject to any of the disease problems afflicting many orchards in the valley. The fruit is rich in Vitamins C, A and B.

A guava tree can be producing commercially within five years after planting. It is more resistant to frost than citrus trees, Dahl says.