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Just about every lead of stock at the ranch is so sack broke that we use more feed for bait than we do shoes for the horses. Each year, the labor force becomes smaller. Any trick that'll work short of setting steel traps around the waterholes has to be used to carry off a work.

As I reported some years ago, I tried to hire the San Angelo Bass Club to fish a herd of knot headed lambs from a pasture covered in broom weeds. I neglected to reveal the outcome. Folks over in San Angelo think country people are clowns. I wasn't able to entice one fisherman to take up lamb angling. I wasn't surprised, as carbon monoxide fumes and cafe coffee, I think, kill a man's imagination.

Broom weeds are a problem again this year. I have been having good luck gathering the sheep using a deal similar to a story I read on Africa. Over in the jungle, the natives set fire to the country to drive wild game from the overgrowth. By playing the wind and backfiring an area, those fellows smoke the animals from the jungle out into the openings. I was afraid to use fire, as dry as the summer has been, so I've been stirring the dust and the pollen from the broom weeds to get the same results. After we have made one round on horseback, we drag a 14-foot gate behind a pickup up and down the roads until the stragglers have to poke their heads out of the weeds for air.

The horsemen have to be ready to rope the minute any heads emerge. In case, however, we miss a loop or throw a little late, the sounds from the lambs sneezing leads us right back to the quarry. Hombres such as myself who have a hard time roping a post with a 14-foot loop, can still catch a lot of lambs because the severe sneezing fits knock them off their feet.

I like the method better than anything I've ever tried on heavily infested weed country. The men stay in contact by listening to each other cough and wheeze. After sheep have been bunched a few times, as soon as they hear a pickup pulling the gate they head for high ground. Be sure if you decide to try the deal, to use it on native sheep only. Woolies raised away from the dust of the Shortgrass Country might suffocate, but the old nellies born here couldn't be smothered down in a smog that'd make a gas mask in effective.

Time and necessity are mighty good teachers, you know. I'm too softhearted to make money. A right smart businessman would charge for these ideas.