

During the sugar beet season which will begin in a couple of months, 0-4-OT engines can be seen operating at several sugar beet mills in Colorado. The plant in Longmont normally uses a diesel, but the steam engine is spotted in a good place for photographs. At Loveland steam still provides all of the power. The plant at Fort Collins is now being dismantled and the engine there is gone. We did not visit the Great Western plants at Ovid, Sterling, and Fort Morgan to check on the 0-4-OT engines reportedly there.

The largest concentration of steam, of course, can be found on the Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge system. While ten years ago trains may have run twice a week or more, and even as much as five years ago they ran once a week, you are lucky now to see one every ten to fifteen days! Going west towards Durango loads consist almost entirely of drilling clay and pipe for the oil industry in Farmington. Eastbound, a lumber mill outside of Durango and another in Chama provide almost all of the freight. The moving of cattle and sheep during fall and spring is now nil. A large proportion of the narrow gauge equipment is in need of repair. Things don't look too good, especially as the D&RGW is supposedly about to petition for abandonment of all but the Durango - Silverton passenger run. It appears that this may be the last year for regular narrow gauge operations of any magnitude. Next year, perhaps, only an occasional train may run, and then.....