

WEST TEXAS Country Trader

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Thursday, December 30, 1993

AgReview

Old tractor club zooms to over 200 members

PLAINVIEW — Every old piece of iron that used to pop and groan and roll across the flat plains of West Texas might be in the junk heap now were it not for a few die hards who won't let 'em disappear.

We're talking about guys like Fred Howard — owner of more than half a dozen slicked up, painted up two-row tractors from the 1930s.

Then there's Jimmy Olson, who helped start a tradition last year with the first annual Antique Tractor and Implement Show in Plainview's Ollie Linder Center.

They are typical of the membership of the recently organized High Plains Chapter of the Texas Two-Cylinder Club, a group whose ranks have zoomed to over 200 in the past year.

Their success seems to be evidence that the popularity of the old farm machine is spreading — not only among the guys lucky enough to have an old two-cylinder to tinker with, but also with the public at large.

That show met with such success last year it has already been re-set Mar. 19-20, 1994.

"We had a great response from the public at that

See **TRACTORS**, Page 3



Gordon Zeigler/Country Trader & AgReview

Even big boys like Christmas toys . . .

Fred Howard, antique tractor enthusiast from Plainview, takes a spin on his 1936 Model A John Deere. Howard, president of the Hale County Farm Museum, took his old machines to numerous area events this year where the old Poppin' Johnnies thrilled onlookers.



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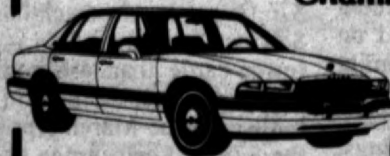
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AgReview



South Plains

Ag
News

Jan. 10-11

IRRIGATION CONFERENCE
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Information is available from Leon New at 359-5401.

Jan. 22-Feb. 6

FORT WORTH'S SOUTHWESTERN AND LIVESTOCK SHOW — The annual stock show, including a 17-day run of the championstyle rodeo, draws entries from throughout the state.

Feb. 16-17

ABILENE BIG COUNTRY FARM & RANCH SHOW — Chamion Farm Shows will present its second annual Big Country Farm & Ranch Show at the Taylor County Fairgrounds

Soy 'biodiesel' fuel powers buses

By CINDY HORSWELL
C.1993 Houston Chronicle

CROSBY — Crosby school officials soon will be able to say with authority that they do know beans about alternative fuel.

With a pilot program launched Wednesday, the Crosby Independent School District becomes the first school district in the nation to use soybeans processed into an alternative fuel called "biodiesel" in its bus fleet.

For the next six weeks, the district, working in conjunction with the National Soy-Diesel Development Board, will fuel its 36 school buses with the soybean mixture.

The soybean oil will be blended with petroleum diesel at a 20/80 percent ratio and then poured directly into the tanks without any modification to the buses' engines.

The project will be closely watched by other area school districts, said Crosby transportation director Jim Kline.

He noted Texas districts are under a state mandate to convert to cleaner-burning fuel by 1998.

"The main thrust is to reduce exhaust emissions. We have to do something. Harris County is ranked second for air pollution in the United States and fourth in the world," Kline said.

In several studies, the biodiesel fuel blend significantly reduced the exhaust fumes from diesel engines.

One study found the soydiesel combined with a catalytic converter reduced particulates by 26.8 percent, total hydrocarbons by 73.2 percent, carbon monoxide by 72.8 percent and oxides of nitrogen by 3.1 percent.

Another pollutant, sulfur, was not measured in the test. However, because biodiesel contains no sulfur, that emission would also be significantly lower.

"Using biodiesel is a win-win situation for Texas' environment and the agricultural industry," said R.D. Burn-

side, chairman of the Soybean Producers Board and a soybean farmer.

"The environment wins because of cleaner air, and agriculture wins because we're using soybeans — a renewable, domestic product."

The United States produces more soybeans than any other country in the world, with more than 5 million bushels being produced in Texas, adding \$63 million to the state's economy, the soybean board said.

Studies indicate one bushel of soybeans could produce 1 1/2 gallons of soydiesel.

Biodiesel will be competing with other alternative fuels such as methanol, liquefied natural gas, propane, electricity and ethanol.

"We're a late comer, only beginning to push this as an alternative fuel in the fall of '92," said Kelon Johannes, spokesman for the soybean producers, based in Jefferson, Mo.

"But it is one of the safest alternatives because it's biodegradable, nontoxic and nonflammable."

Its stiffest competition is coming from compressed natural gas, which is 20 cents to 30 cents a gallon cheaper than biodiesel but requires expensive bus modifications and special fueling stations, Johannes said.

Kline said biodiesel's cost of about \$1.20 per gallon is offset by the fact that no modifications need to be made to the buses, compared to \$25,000 worth of changes for each bus to run on natural gas.

In addition, he said, buses run on natural gas only have a 120-mile range before needing to be refueled and he has routes that are longer than this. "A special refueling station costs about \$1 million," he said.

Another plus for the biodiesel is that a diesel bus costs about \$38,000, while a bus fueled by natural gas costs nearly twice that much.

With this experiment, the soybean group is providing the biodiesel fuel for free. It is also paying to test the exhaust and oil.

"Wear on the engine is supposed to be less with this fuel," Kline said.

"We tested it earlier this year out on a couple of our special education buses and had no problems whatsoever. Our drivers tell us it smells different — like popcorn or something."

Ironically, using a vegetable oil for fuel is nothing really new, Johannes said.

"This year is the 100-year anniversary of the creation of the diesel engine by Rudolph Diesel. He ran his on peanut oil.

But it switched over to petroleum in the 1920s because the refining process made it cheaper," he said.

CISD will be checking to see whether this new fuel will be the most economical answer to lowering emissions from the district's buses, Kline said.

Firm to build own pork, hog slaughter plant

By MIKE HENDRICKS
© '93 Kansas City Star

Premium Standard Farms has announced it will build a \$45 million pork packing plant that will slaughter the company's own hogs and no others.

The high-tech packing house in Milan, Mo., will be outfitted with lasers and computerized tracking systems and is expected to employ 400 people.

Premium Standard will produce fresh pork for domestic customers and ship boneless pork cuts to Japan and other Asian markets.

When completed, the

Premium Standard plant will bring to three the number of hog slaughterhouses in the state. However, unlike the Tyson plant in Marshall and Monfort in St. Joseph, Premium Standard has no plans to buy hogs from area farmers. The plant is specifically designed to kill and process hogs from the company's own herds in northern Missouri.

That way Premium Standard can control the quality of its meat all the way through production, standardizing the genetic lines of the animals it raises, controlling their feed and,

in the end, slicing them up into lean, consistent cuts that can be sold under a brand name.

That is not the industry norm. Most packers buy hogs on the open market and sell pork as an unbranded commodity.

But the method chosen by Premium Standard is becoming more common as packers try to control costs and produce a better product.

"The goal is to get a more uniform pork cut in the end," said swine industry economist Ron Plain at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Premium Standard's 250,000-square-foot plant will be built on 280 acres and is scheduled to begin operation in late 1994.

Founded in 1988, Premium Standard set out to build its hog operations in central Iowa, but moved south when environmentalists complained of potential pollution and odor problems from its hog confinement sheds and waste lagoons.

There were fewer protests in sparsely populated north-central Missouri. The company began building hog breeding farms in 1989 and continues to expand in

and around its headquarters of Princeton, Mo. The company now employs 480 people who run its hog farms, feed mills, offices and construction crew.

Premium Standard won't disclose how many hog farms it has or how many hogs are raised on those farms each year. Industry sources estimate, however, that Premium Standard has at least 20,000 sows, which means the operation could produce 400,000 pigs annually.

The hogs are now sold to packing plants in Iowa and Missouri. Premium Standard does none of its own slaughtering.

October feedlot placements mirror feeder concern

There was an inkling in the October Cattle on Feed report that cattle feeders were backing off their bullish attitude, as September placements were lower than the previous year. It was the first time since April that feedlot placements were below the previous year's levels.

That inkling became more of a reality with the November Cattle on Feed report. October placements were down 7 percent from a year ago and 5 percent below the 5 year average. If cattle feeders continue to place fewer cattle on feed during November and December, the fed cattle market could begin to improve by mid-March and could move up to the high \$70's range. But as Don Meredith said, if ifs and buts were candy and nuts it would be Christmas every day.

The facts are, there are still 6 percent more cattle on feed than a year ago, 13 percent more than in 1991, 10 percent more than the 5 year average and the most on feed on November 1 since 1978. The first quarter 1993 market should be forgotten as a gauge of on feed numbers and feel cattle prices.

The winter weather completely disrupted marketings, increased ath losses, and caused cattle to be marketed at weights 50 to 70 pounds below what they should have been marketed. That is to say simply, less pounds of beef were produced on a larger number of cattle.

To make a reasonable market comparison, one should probably go back to 1992. On January 1 there were 8.4



LIVESTOCK MARKET UPDATE

Dr. Ernie Davis

million head on feed in the 7-states area. For the first quarter of 1992 Texas Panhandle fed cattle prices averaged \$76.06 per hundredweight (cwt.). Fedcattle prices reached \$80 cwt. for only 2 days in April. That was with 8 percent fewer cattle than are now on feed!

The point is, there is no reason for cattle feeders to get bullish on the March-April 1994 market. Before prices in the \$78-\$80 cwt. range occur, marketings must be higher than year ago levels for both November and December and placements must remain below last year's November and December levels. If the new year begins with 9.0 million plus cattle on feed in the 7-States area, don't expect fed cattle prices in the high \$70's for the first four months of the year . . . unless we get another year of 93's winter weather.

Feedgrain prices and feeding costs are rising. Heavier (700 pounds plus) feeder cattle prices have not declined proportionally to higher corn prices or market price expectations for fed cattle. This should contribute to fewer cattle being placed in feedlots during November and December. Who knows for sure? 1993 was a wild year, but for most cattlemen a pretty darn good year.

On Feed: Cattle and Calves on feed November 1 in the 7 monthly reporting states totaled 9.08 million head, up 6 percent from year ago counts and 13 percent above 1991. Texas feedlots had 2.73 million head of cattle and calves

See CATTLE, Page 4

Cattle on Feed: Number on Feed, Placements, Marketing and Other Disappearance, 7 States, OCTOBER 1-NOVEMBER 1

	1991	1992	1993	93 As % of	
				91	92
	1000 Head		Percent		
On Feed OCTOBER 1	7,216	7,495	8,214	114	110
Placed on Feed OCTOBER	2,539	2,658	2,474	97	93
Fed Cattle Mkt'd. OCTOBER	1,665	1,493	1,536	92	103
Other Disappearance	77	76	76	99	100
On Feed NOVEMBER 1	8,013	8,584	9,076	113	106

TRACTOR

From Page 1

show," Howard said. "Last year was just kind of a test run, see how the people would respond to something like that. And we were real pleased with it."

Howard is an avid tractor restorer, and drives his machines in area parades. He also serves as president of Hale County's Farm Museum south of Hale Center.

The tractor fascination that hit Howard several years ago is typical of the interest among the members of the Texas Plains Two-Cylinder Club.

He believes the club has done a lot to preserve the farming heritage of the South Plains. Its activities have taken tractor-owning members as well as the public back to an earlier era when the small-sized 20 horsepower machine did a dependable day's work and got the job done, though at a slower pace.

These machines have been dwarfed by today's tractors rated at 160 horsepower or more. But their popularity at community events and parades has increased steadily over the years.

The tractor and implement display at the recent Texas Farmer-Stockman Show drew about as much traffic as any at the show, reports Howard. From stationary implements to a working model of an old steam tractor, the public loved it, he says.

"This being a farming area, they like to look back at what they used in the past," Howard theorizes.

The stories behind some of the tractors is interesting.

Take Howard's favorite old tractor. Every time he cranks up his "Minnie Mo," a 1937 Minneapolis Moline bearing a nameplate that reads, "Twin City," he stirs up a lot of personal memories.

His father, J.L. Howard, bought it new while Fred was yet a lad. The Howard family put it to work at their mainstay on a Hale County farm. It served

three decades before being sidelined by newer machines in the 1960s.

"We had a little half section northeast of town and that was our only tractor," recalls Howard, who put lots of after school hours in plowing with it.

"At that time there was more wheat raised. We had one drill for sowing wheat and the rest of it was row cropped in cotton and milo," he recalled.

At that time the MNoline — a four-row machine — was becoming popular as producers were making the shift to irrigation and higher productivity.

Howard says longtime friend, Tony Jones, was just starting out as an employee of the Plainview Moline dealership when his dad bought it.

"Tony remembers driving it, new, out to my dad's farm," smiled Howard. His may be one of the few one-owner antiques around.

Howard also has 1936 Model A and D John Deere's, and 1937-model F30 and F12 Farmalls. Among his most unusual machines is a 1941 Oliver 70, six cylinder, and a small 1943 Model Minneapolis Moline.

In its Dec. 13 newsletter and membership mailing the Texas Plains Two-Cylinder Club published a membership roster which now numbers approximately 200.

Activities in the plains area start up in March and run through the summer months. They include:

March 3: Portales Farm, Ranch and Dairy Expo with a display of member-owned tractors. Owners wanting to sell tractors may list them in the special auction by sending a description to Bill Johnston Auctioneers, P.O. Box 747, Portales, N.M., 88130.

March 19-20: Plainview's Tractor and Farm Implement Show at Ollie Liner Center.

April 16-17: Fourth Annual Cotton Gin Festival at Burton, featuring the gin, antique farm equipment, folklife demonstrations, parade, contests, kid's stuff, entertainment and arts and crafts.

May 6-8: Tractor show at Pawnee, Okla.

May 28: Old Settlers Reunion, Floydada.

June 19: Parade in Clovis.

June 11: Armstrong Farm Tractor Get Together, Amarillo.

July 15-16: Childress Reunion.

July 16: Seagraves Reunion.

July 28-31: Oklaholma Two-Cylinder Show, Fairview, Okla.

Aug. 4-7: Plains Rodeo and parade.

Aug. 17-18: Cargill Seed Company annual Ag Show in Akin.

Sept. 20-22: Second Annual Old Tractor Show, Seminole, in connection with the Farm and Oil Celebration.

Sept. 23: Levelland Harvest Festival.

Sept. 17-18: Golden Spread Antique Equipment Show, Donald Sell Farm in Perryton.

Sept. 24: Friona Maize Days.

Oct. 1-2: Annual Old Tractor Show, Temple.

Information about joining the Texas Plains Two-Cylinder Club is available by contacting Don Sarchet, 4009 Terrace, Amarillo, 79109. Phone is 806-358-3433.

Uncertain year ahead for dairy farmers

By ROBERT GREEN

AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — This has been a year of turmoil in the dairy industry, with a speeding up of trends like the shift of production from the Midwest to the West.

After all, it was in September that California surpassed Wisconsin as the top milk-producing state. California produced 218.8 million gallons of raw milk in the month, about 10 million gallons more than Wisconsin.

Though four decades in the making, forage problems from the wet spring and summer helped drop cow numbers in the Upper Midwest faster than they had been declining.

But what most dairy farmers will remember is rapid swings in milk prices. Prices will average \$12.80 per hundredweight in 1993, the Agriculture Department predicts.

That price is 2 percent below the 1992 average. Prices for non-fat dry milk, butter and milk used to make cheese bounced up and down from month to month.

The government's Dairy Export Incentive Program, which subsidizes overseas sales, helped generate price increases. The limited capacity of Southwestern plants to manufacture cheese also had an impact. Commercial use patterns also shifted.

The department estimates that milk prices paid to farmers in 1994 will fall to the \$12 range because of large surpluses in milk fat and skim solids.

"However, extraordinary uncertainty about supply and demand conditions may make a mockery out of any price projections," the department said in a December report.

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CATTLE

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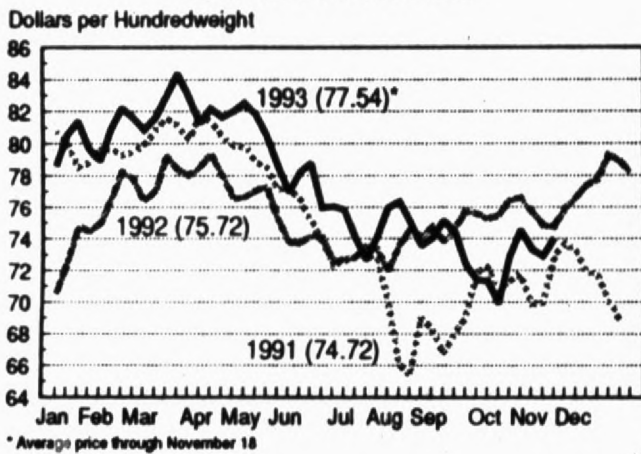
on feed, 16 percent above year ago numbers.

Placements: Cattle and calves placed on feed in the 7-States during October totaled 2.47 million head down 7 percent from last year and down 3 percent from October 1991. Texas feedlots placed 715,000 cattle and calves on feed during October. This was 12 percent below October 1992 placements.

Marketings: Marketings of fed cattle from the 7-States during October totaled 1.54 million head up 3 percent from last year and down 8 percent from October 1991. Marketings from Texas feedlots during October totaled 480,000 up 9 percent from last year.

(Dr. Ernie Davis, Livestock Marketing Specialist with the Texas A&M Extension Service, is an authority on the livestock markets.)

Texas Panhandle 1100-1300 Lb. Fed Steers, Cash Market Prices, 1991-1993.



Beef Production: For the month of October, beef production was 1.98 billion pounds, down 2 percent from last year. Head kill totaled 2.80 million head, down 2 percent from last year. The average live weight at slaughter decreased 7 pounds to 1,187 pounds.

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Farm liquidated after 199 years

By HAROLD FABER

© '93 NY Times News Service

UNION VALE, N.Y. — After 199 years of raising animals and growing crops to feed them, the oldest farm in Dutchess County is going out of business.

The 200-acre Ken-Ray Farm, founded in 1794, auctioned off its herd of 160 cows last month and plans a spring sale of tractors, balers, manure wagons and plows. The land itself is on the market, too, at a price of \$1.5 million.

"It's not because I wanted to retire, but dairy farming is no longer profitable," said Raymond Vail, 66. Ever since he was old enough to walk to the barn, he has been working on the farm, which is named after him and his brother, Kenneth, who died in 1975.

He said that low prices for milk, the sluggish economy and high property taxes were chiefly responsible for the decision to go out of business.

The demise of the Ken-Ray Farm has become another statistic in the continuing decline of dairy farms in Dutchess County and the United States. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported 171,560 dairy farms in the nation in 1992, down from 181,270 in 1991.

In New York, the third-leading dairy state in the nation behind California and Wisconsin, the number of dairy farms dropped from 15,371 in 1982 to 10,625 in 1992, according to the state Department of Agriculture and Markets. But milk volume has remained high, largely because of increased production per cow on large farms.

Over all, the remaining dairy farms in the state are in healthy shape, with \$1.53 billion of milk and milk products sold in 1992, up from \$1.4 billion the year before. Geographically, though, the picture is spotty, with upstate farms doing well and downstate farms poorly, mainly because of taxes.

"One of the problem areas is in the Hudson Valley corridor between New York City and Albany," said Richard T. McGuire, the state commissioner of agriculture and markets. "The real property tax is double there compared to what they are paying in the rest of the state."

Carter attends beef meet

PHOENIX -- Robert Carter, feedlot manager at C-Bar Feedyard near Plainview, attended the December 10-11 meeting of the Beef Promotion and Research Board where a long range plan for the U.S. beef industry was unveiled.

The plan was presented at the winter meeting of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. It was developed by a 14 member task force, jointly appointed by the Beef Board, the National Cattlemen's Association, the U.S. Meat Export Federation and the Beef Industry Council.

Today, there are only 52 dairy farms in Dutchess County, down from 105 in 1987 and from 275 in 1972, said David Tetor, the dairy agent for Cornell University's Cooperative Extension Service.

He said he expected three or four more farms in the county to go out of business before the end of the winter, in part because of drought that forces farmers to choose between selling their herd or buying feed to support them, in part because of longer-term economic pressures on farms on the northern fringe of the New York City metropolitan region.

"If you ask farmers here what their major problem is, they will reply taxes," he said. "And what drives taxes up is people moving into the area."

The impact of a growing population is evident around the Ken-Ray Farm, particularly new houses and housing developments on Route 55 between the Taconic State Parkway and Pawling.

For Vail, the result of increased services required for the rising population has been a property tax of \$24,000 a year, double what it was 10 years ago.

"Five years ago we considered selling out, but we wanted to farm as long as possible and we probably continued too long," he said. "This year was probably the worst crop year since the 1950s because of

the drought. To stay in business we would have to buy feed, and we didn't have the money."

An added reason for selling this year was to settle the estate of his brother and co-owner, he said.

Vail, who has six children and 12 grandchildren, worked the farm with a son-in-law, Victor Holmes, and an assistant, Peter Deforest. Holmes now works for an excavating company and Deforest has been elected highway superintendent of Union Vale.

But Vail is still on the farm, uncertain about the future. Standing in an empty barn where he once milked up to 100 cows twice a day, Vail looked out a window at the empty farm fields and mused about his changed way of life.

"What I think I am going to miss the most is looking out and seeing the cows out there," he said. "I liked coming into the barn at 4:30 in the morning to see the sun come up and hear the birds sing."

For the time being, he goes into the barn at 6 a.m. to milk two cows that he retained — Millie, a Jersey, and Jamie, a Holstein — and to care for nine calves that he has kept for his grandchildren.

He and his wife, Eleanor, a nurse who works at Sharon Hospital in nearby Connecticut, live in a house on the border of the farm, and plan to stay there after the land is sold.

"I'm a little on edge," Mrs. Vail said. "I was getting ready to retire, but now I'll have to wait and see what's going to happen on the farm."

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Early voting begins in water election

Voting in a special High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 election began Monday and will continue through Jan. 11.

The Jan. 15 election is to elect a Director and five County Committee members to represent Hale County in Water District matters.

Early voting ballots in Hale County may be cast during normal business

hours in the office of Lee Dent at the City Hall in Hale Center. Lee Dent is the election clerk.

Gilbert L. Fawver of Floydada, David Appling of Floydada and Bruce Riger of Plainview are seeking the Precinct Five District Director's position. Fawver is the incumbent Precinct Five Director seeking re-election to a four-year term. District Director's Precinct Five

consists of all of Hale County and the portion of Floyd County above the escarpment.

The Board of Directors meet monthly to consider Water District business. They oversee all Water District activities — including legal, financial and business matters. Board members set long-range goals and direct staff activities through the Water District manager.

Four members of the Water District's County Committees are elected from the County Commissioners' Precinct in which the voter lives and one member is elected at-large. Candidate for County Committee positions are Mike Ferguson of Plainview, Precinct One; incumbent Carroll Leon of Petersburg, Precinct Two; Tommie H. Wages of Abernathy, Precinct Three; and Birt Lane

of Plainview, Precinct Four. Kevin Igo of Plainview is the candidate for County Committee member-at-large.

County Committees meet regularly to recommend approval or denial of applications for water well permits and agricultural water conservation equipment loans. Committee members help keep directors advised

on water-related needs of their county. Also they serve as a local contact person for water conservation problems or opportunities in their community.

Additional election information is available by contacting Becca Williams, High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1, 2930 Avenue Q, Lubbock, 79405-1499 or by calling 762-0181.

'Tis the season for salmonella

WASHINGTON (AP) — With lots of grazing opportunities out there on holiday buffet tables, the Agriculture Department is warning revelers to beware a lurking grinch: salmonella.

Research shows this

holiday spoiler may be present in some unsuspected places.

"Although holiday foods such as egg nog, turkey and bread pudding pose potential food safety hazards if mishandled, seasonal foods have not been implicated as

the cause of most salmonella enteritidis outbreaks in the home setting over the past three years," a USDA statement said.

Baked pasta and soft cheese dishes, such as lasagna and stuffed shells, were the cause of more than

one-third of the 19 egg-related salmonella outbreaks that occurred in homes since 1990, it said.

"It might be because when eggs are used with soft cheese as a binder, they take a long time to bake," said Kendra Pratt, a USDA spokeswoman. "People might not be cooking them long enough."

The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 800-535-4555 can answer specific questions.

Amendment given changing USDA wetlands regulations

WASHINGTON (AP) — Legislation to amend wetlands provisions of the Clean Water Act was introduced recently by Rep. Gerry Studds, D-Mass., chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

The bill incorporates a number of provisions from the Clinton administration's wetlands proposal released in August, said Washington Councillor.

published by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Provisions of agricultural interest include:

—The required use of the 1987 Army Corps of Engineers wetlands delineation manual, pending completion of a study by the National Academy of Sciences.

—The Soil Conservation Service's authority to decide on agricultural

lands.

—A \$10 million fund to assist small landowners who cannot afford development plans to mitigate wetlands losses.

—An appeals process for penalties, delineations and permits.

—Exemption from regulation of former wetlands that were converted to agricultural uses before passage of the 1985 farm bill, unless abandoned.

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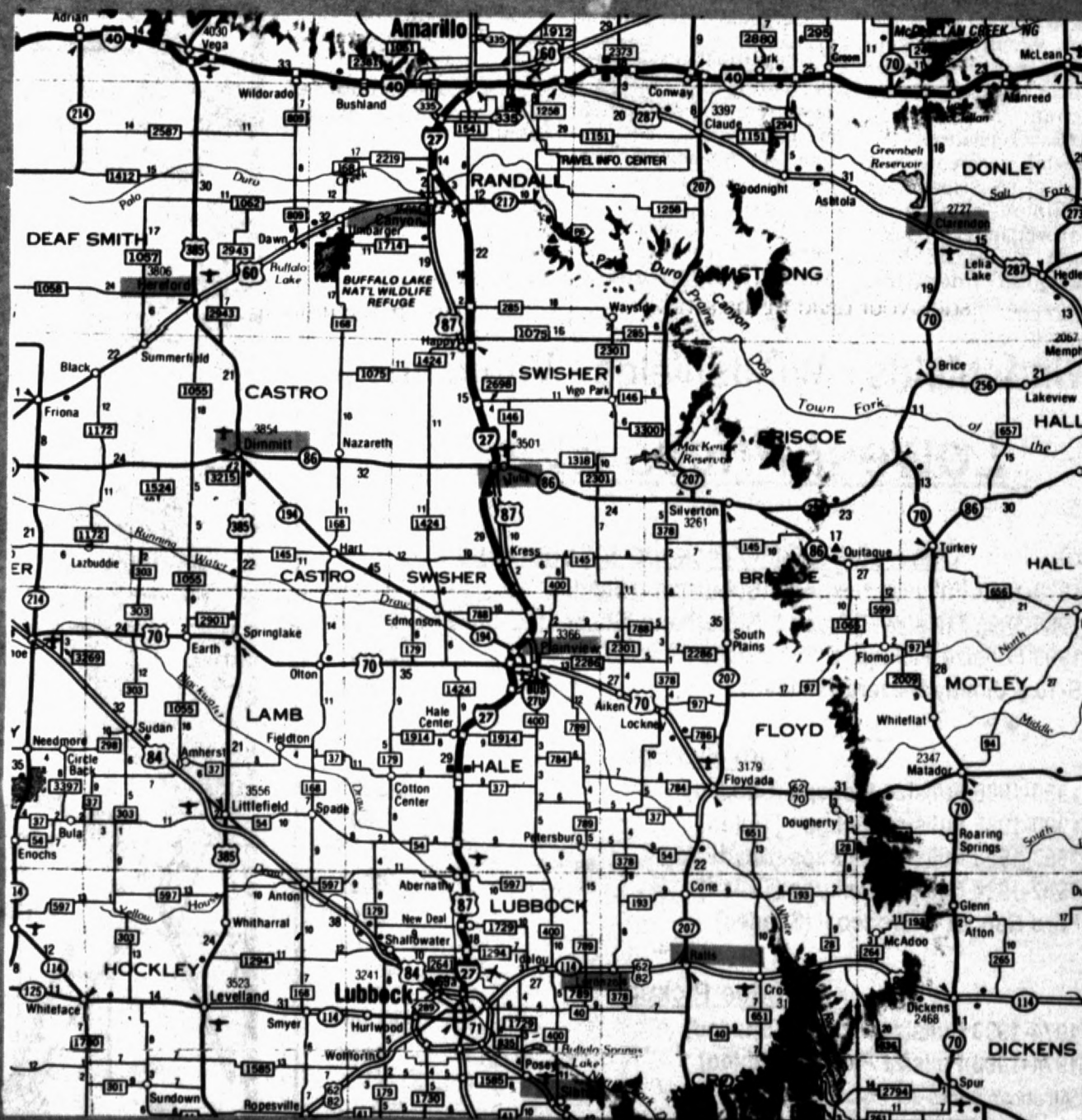
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WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD IS ON DRUGS.

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If you think you're a failure, consider this: There are many kids with neglectful parents who never use drugs. There are also children with seemingly model parents who do use drugs.

So the first thing to accept is that drugs, while indeed dangerous, are one more problem for youngsters to handle. And they'll do it better and faster if you're aware, involved, and don't stick your head in the sand.

THE AWARE PARENT IS THE GOOD PARENT.

Part of awareness and a major deterrent to experimentation is to talk to your kids about drugs.

But even with a lot of parental involvement, there are no guarantees. So it's important to know the symptoms of drug use and to take action if you see your youngster displaying them.

THE WARNING SIGNALS.

There are no symptoms that are absolutely reliable. But there are clues (see box).

Most of these symptoms tend to be gradual which is why parental awareness is so important.

But don't jump to conclusions.

Many of the warning signs for drug use are the same as those for depression or for the ups and downs of being a teenager. There's also the possibility it's a physical or emotional problem.

But whatever the problem, we're talking about a child who needs help. Right now.

The Telltale Signs

Chronic eye redness, sore throat or dry cough.

Chronic lying, especially about whereabouts.

Wholesale changes in friends.

Stealing.

Deteriorating relationships with family members.

Wild mood swings, hostility, or abusive behavior.

Chronic fatigue, withdrawal, carelessness about personal grooming.

Major changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

Loss of interest in favorite activities, hobbies, sports.

School problems - slipping grades, absenteeism.

First, you'll need an evaluation from a health professional skilled in diagnosing adolescents with alcohol or drug problems.

You may want to get involved with an intervention program to learn techniques that will help convince a drug user to accept help.

For the user, there are self-help, outpatient, day care, residency, and 24-hour hospitalization programs.

START WITHIN THE FAMILY.

Nothing beats the power of love and family support. That has to start with a frank discussion.

Don't make it an attack. And don't try to talk with your child if he or she seems under the influence.

Wait for a calm moment and then explain that you're worried about certain behavior (be specific) and give your child every opportunity to explain. That means really listening, not doing all the talking.

At the same time, it's important to speak frankly about the possibility of drugs. And it's particularly important to talk about your values and why you're dead set against drugs.

If your youngster seems evasive or if his or her explanations are not convincing, you may want to consult your doctor to rule out illness and to ask for advice.

You may also want to have your child visit a mental health professional to see if there are emotional problems.

FURTHER ACTION MAY BE NECESSARY.

If your child seems non-responsive or belligerent, and you suspect drugs are involved, immediate action is vital.

The right program depends entirely on the circumstances and the degree of drug involvement. Here, you'll need professional help to make an informed choice.

Another point: If a program is to succeed, the family needs to be part of it. This can mean personal or family counseling. It may also involve participating in a support group where you learn about co-dependency and how not to play into the problems that might prompt further drug use.

If you don't know about drug programs in your area, call your family doctor, local hospital or county mental health society or school counselor for a referral. You can also call the national helpline - 800-662-HELP - for advice and a referral.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GIVE UP.

That child who upsets you so much is the same little boy or girl who, only yesterday, gave you such joy. They're in way over their heads, and they never needed you quite as much as they need you now. No matter what they say.

For more information on how to talk with your kids about drugs, ask for a free copy of "A Parent's Guide to Prevention." Call 1-800-624-0100.

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

New weapon in use to fight boll weevil

By SARAH PEKKANEN

© '93 States News Service

WASHINGTON — Every year, Hollis Isbell's enemy destroys about \$90,000 worth of his cotton crops. The Alabama farmer has done everything in his power to stop the rampage, but each spring, when he surveys his fields, he sees the damage wrought by his nemesis.

Isbell is one of thousands of Southern farmers who wage an annual battle against a ladybug-sized insect called the boll weevil, which routinely devastates 5 to 15 percent of their cotton crops.

"I've had a lot of years when I've had a lot of frustration and I've thought, 'Why am I into this?' But the next year, I'm out there again. We've just learned to deal with adversity," Isbell said.

Until now, farmers have been forced to spray insecticides over their fields to control the infestation, a costly option that can kill beneficial insects and drift over neighboring communities.

But this spring, cotton farmers will have access to another weapon: the boll weevil bait tube. Developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture after years of research, the relatively inexpensive biodegradable cardboard tube uses much less insecticide than traditional spraying methods.

Trap cropping is tried to control field pests

LUBBOCK — Controlling insects and other crop pests is a universal problem that doesn't always have an easy solution.

One of the disadvantages of applying pesticides is that many insects can develop resistance and soon the chemicals have little effect. In lab tests conducted in 1986 and 1987 at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES) in Lubbock, the diamondback moth was found to be such an insect that has developed resistance to many different classes of insecticides.

In past years, the diamondback moth has been known as a minor pest of cabbage but within the last five years it has become a serious pest. In an effort to prevent damage from the diamondback moth, Dr. David Bender and other TAES researchers have developed a pesticide resistance management program for growers. Bender is an associate professor of vegetable production at TAES.

The program involves using a different pesticide each time the cabbage crop is sprayed. This practice, along with good sanitation, has helped to reduce the insect problem.

In a joint project with researchers at Oklahoma State, trap cropping is being studied in Lubbock as a means of reducing insecticide applications on cabbage and as an alterna-

'As it moves into the future, there will be less spraying . . . We take some strong medicine for a year or two, but after that, the number of sprayings are drastically reduced . . .'

National Cotton Council spokesman

The boll weevil, a grayish-brown winged insect, has plagued U.S. farmers since it first crossed into the Brownsville, Texas, area from Mexico in 1892 and began a slow, devastating journey through neighboring states.

The female weevil preys on the squares, or young flower buds, of the cotton plant. After chewing a hole in the square, she lays an egg and seals the hole. The developing weevil is protected from pesticides while it feeds on the pollen as it develops, causing the fruit to drop off the plant.

"It's a sickening thing to see what a boll weevil can do to a crop of cotton," Holland said. "Undamaged, it's one of the most beautiful plants you'll ever see. It looks just like fresh fallen snow."

Placed around the perimeter of cotton fields, the yellowish-green hollow bait tubes contain a plastic sheet impregnated with a chemical called pheromone, which mimics the scent the male boll weevil emits when he feeds on cotton squares.

"It pulls weevils from anywhere, right into the insecticide," said Bill McGovern, an entomologist for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Mississippi.

Last year, farmers in Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee tested the lures. The tubes reduced spring emergence of weevils by more than 90 percent in some cases, according to the tube's inventor, Gerald

McKibben of the Agricultural Research Service.

But not every tester reported such glowing results.

"I have some mixed emotions as to what they did," said Roy Holland, a cotton researcher in Big Spring.

Holland put out the tubes when he planted new crops in mid-May. Initially, they appeared to do the job; he often saw handfuls of dead weevils around the tubes. But by the end of the summer, his crops were covered with one of the heaviest infestations of boll weevils he'd ever seen.

"There were just so many weevils they overpowered the tubes," he said. "We had to start spraying."

Holland said he would consider using the tubes again, noting that the bait tubes were not placed around nearby cotton fields and weevils might have migrated to his protected field. In addition, he put the tubes out too late to catch weevils as they emerged from winter hibernation and began to invade his field, he said.

"If I was going to use the tubes again, I would use them early," he said.

After its migration in the late 19th century, the boll weevil began a relentless assault on southern agriculture. "It took a while to cross the cotton belt, but wherever it was, there was no stopping it," McGovern said.

In 1915, the weevil invaded Alabama. That year, it destroyed 60 percent of the cotton yield in Coffee County. Frustrated farmers gave up battling the insect and began planting peanuts instead.

Four years later, peanuts had infused the economy and become the county's top crop. A monument dedicated to the boll weevil was erected in the middle of Main Street in Enterprise, Ala., where it remains today.

"It sits up there very glorious and very bold," said Kathleen Sauer, executive director of the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce. The statue is of a woman in a toga lifting a plaque upon which rests a boll weevil. Part of the inscription reads: "In profound appreciation of the boll weevil and what it has done as the herald of prosperity."

But for the many farmers who continued to grow cotton, the war was far from over. In the late 1970s, the federal government offered to help struggling farmers through a boll weevil eradication program. Under the program, the government picks up 30 percent of the cost of spraying insecticide over cotton crops and monitors fields to determine infestation levels.

So far, the program

appears to be a success. During the last decade, boll weevils have been eliminated in North and South Carolina and most of Florida and Georgia. The program is chasing the weevil through the South, with major efforts currently concentrated in Alabama's roughly 470,000 infected acres.

Other states which have hundreds of thousands of infested acres include: Texas and Oklahoma, 4 million acres combined; Arkansas, 980,000 acres; Louisiana, 880,000 acres; Mississippi, 1.3 million acres; Missouri, 300,000 acres, and Tennessee, 640,000 acres.


The eradication program, in effect in Southern Alabama for several years, has "been a tremendous asset," said Isbell, who is a member of the producer steering committee of National Cotton Council. The program started in central Alabama this year and will begin in the Tennessee Valley in the fall of 1994.

In Texas, where more than two million acres are infested, farmers are itching to begin the program.

"There are such incredible numbers (of weevils) in the Rio Grande Valley, it's unbelievable," Holland said.

During its first year, the program seeks to eliminate the boll weevil through weekly insecticide sprayings from late August until the first heavy frost.

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