

WEST TEXAS Country Trader

The West Texas Country Trader is a Supplement of:

Abernathy
Weekly Review
The Canyon News

The Castro County News
The Clarendon News

The Lorenzo
EXAMINER
HEREFORD BRAND

Plainview Daily Herald
Ralls Reporter-News

Thursday, April 14, 1994

The Slatonite
The Tulia Herald

Flying Farmer

Panhandle farmer mixes flying fancy with livelihood

By RICK LANNING
Hereford Brand

HEREFORD (AP) — There's nothing old-fashioned about Ralph Diller, a Hereford farmer who seems to have been born with wings.

Diller, 40, raises corn and wheat on his 1,100 acres just northeast of the city. He owns, not one, but three planes and he is in the process of teaching his son and wife how to fly.

"They're almost as crazy about flying as I am," said Diller, who grew up on a farm just a few miles from where he is now. He and his wife, Shelley have three children, Nathan, 15, Tamara, 13, and Christopher, 11.0

As the Dillers became more proficient in farming, they added 300 head of

See Chimney Safety, Page 3

He's one of many farming families who enjoy flying and us their planes for fun as well as business.

AgReview

Hey, it rained!



Gordon Zeigler/AgReview

A cattle herd seems to be enjoying the benefits of some showers that hit counties in the Texas Panhandle and South Plains earlier this week. Despite the rains, however, more subsoil moisture is desperately needed as cotton planting approaches.

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AgReview



Aggie ladybugs to take on the aphids

DALLAS (AP) — Texas A&M scientists think they have taken an important first step toward countering aphids that have been causing extensive damage to the state's pecan crop.

Texas pecan production, valued at about \$39 million annually, occurs in most regions of the state and represents 20 percent of the nation's total pecan crop, second only to Georgia.

But in Georgia, the aphids are kept in check by large numbers of ladybugs who feed on them.

If it's good enough for Georgia, it's good enough for Texas, at least in this case.

Texas A&M entomologists Allen Knutson and Bill Ree made a trip to Georgia last month and collected 12,000 ladybugs, formally known as Harmonia lady beetles, to bring back to Texas via commercial airplane.

The ladybugs will hibernate in refrigerators, 1,000 per carton, at the Texas A&M Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Dallas until their release next spring to feed on aphids that attack pecans.

"Our only opportunity to capture such large numbers of beetles was during three or four days in November when they congregate around overwintering sites," Knutson said.

"These migrations only occur on warm, sunny days, so we kept changing our travel plans until weather forecasts for Georgia appeared favorable for beetle flights."

Knutson and Ree, both specialists with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, will place the beneficial insects in pecan "nursery sites" next spring in 10 locations in Texas, hoping they quickly begin to feed on

See *Ladybugs*, Page 3



Woody Williams/Canyon News

There's an emu inside

Teri Roberts of Dancing Cowboy Ranch in northern Randall County shows off a pair of Emu eggs behind the glass of the incubation room. Emus, ostriches and their smaller cousin, the rhea, are becoming popular for breeding purposes across Texas — which has become the leader in raising the exotic birds.

South Plains

Ag
News

May 6-8

PAWNEE, OKLA., OLD TRACTOR SHOW — Typical old tractor event. Information available at 405-282-7008.

May 28

FLOYD COUNTY OLD SETTLERS — Day of celebrating and fun, plus a parade including antique tractors.

June 11

ARMSTRONG FARM TRACTOR PLAYDAY — Paul and Jackie Armstrong of Amarillo will host their annual tractor show on their farm 3 1/2 miles west of Hart on FM 145, then three miles south. A slow race, parade and plowing contest will be held.

Spring chimney cleaning is vital for fire safety

By JOHN WARDE
c.1994 N.Y. Times

Fireplaces, wood stoves and chimneys require annual inspections and cleaning, especially if used regularly. Promptness is crucial.

Burning wood produces creosote, a tarlike substance that lines a chimney with a sticky flammable coating. If allowed to cool until the next heating season, the creosote hardens to form a glassy layer that resists removal.

Thick deposits of creosote can crack masonry and loosen stovepipes. More important, allowing creosote to build up can lead to a chimney fire.

Although cleaning a short stovepipe or a chimney on a one-story house is not too difficult — brushes and other equipment are available from fireplace and wood-stove dealers — most homeowners elect to use a professional chimney sweep.

Few states license or certify sweeps. The best way to find one is to ask for recommendations from friends and perhaps the Fire Department. Be sure that the sweep has workers compensation insurance. Many sweeps are members of the National Chimney Sweep Guild or the Wood Heating Education and Research Foundation.

As part of the cleaning, have the chimney or stovepipe inspected for

damage, especially deteriorated mortar, which can allow heat from a fire to enter walls. For a second opinion if deterioration is apparent, call an independent building inspector. Repairs involving mortar are usually best performed by a fireplace mason.

Chimney sweeps generally include cleaning fireplaces and wood stoves, but those are jobs that homeowners can realistically perform themselves to save money. Start by removing the ashes, but wait 24 to 48 hours after using the fireplace or stove to be sure that no embers still smolder. Then cover the hearth and floor with a dropcloth or newspapers and move furniture out of the way.

Next close the fireplace or stove damper and windows or doors that might produce drafts. Place a large metal bucket on the hearth near the fireplace or stove opening.

Don a dust mask, gently sweep or scoop the ashes with a brush and shovel and put them into the bucket. If a wood stove has a removable ash box, sweep the ashes into it and empty the box into the bucket. Work slowly to avoid scattering the ashes and raising puffs of soot.

Store the ashes outside in a metal garbage can with a tight-fitting lid for several

days. After making sure that they are cool, you may be able to discard the ashes with regular garbage or spread them as garden fertilizer.

To clean inside a fireplace or wood stove, wear a hat, goggles and gloves, plus a mask. Starting at the top, scrub the surfaces with a fiber-bristle brush to remove all soot, especially in corners. With a fireplace, also scrub the damper or remove and clean it separately.

Vacuum the inside of a fireplace or wood stove with just a heavy-duty vacuum cleaner or one designed for that purpose. Avoid using an ordinary household vacuum, as soot can clog the motor or be sent out the exhaust through the house.

To clean and protect the outside of a wood stove, apply paste stove polish, following the directions. To clean fireplace grates, andirons and tools, scrub them with a bristle brush and a solution of household detergent and warm water. Then rinse with plain water and dry with a soft cloth. For heavy-duty cleaning, mix the solution according to the instructions or use about a half-cup of detergent to a gallon of warm water.

Brighten brass and other polished metal with metal polish. Spruce up cast iron with paste stove polish or use heat-resistant spray

paint. Clean glass fireplace doors with ordinary window cleaner, unless different instructions are supplied. Some door manufacturers recommend household oven cleaner for removing stubborn stains or film.

To clean brick or stone hearths and trim except marble, scrub surfaces with a fiber-bristle brush dipped in the detergent solution, or in a stronger solution made by mixing a half-cup of trisodium phosphate, the commercial cleaning powder, and a tablespoon of household laundry bleach with a gallon of warm water. Wear rubber gloves and goggles.

Before applying either solution, thoroughly wet porous materials like brick, mortar and sandstone with water. Afterward, sponge with clear water to rinse and then blot dry.

For general cleaning of marble, use a marble-cleaning product. They are available from marble companies and janitorial suppliers. To remove smoke stains from marble, wash the surface with a marble cleaner containing acetate and acetone. Acetone burns skin and is harmful to breathe. So wear rubber gloves and goggles and provide plenty of ventilation.

If that does not work, buy

See *Safety*, Page 3

Flying, from Page 1

feeder cattle to beef up their cash flow during the winter months.

A genial man who stands over six feet tall and weighs 220 pounds, Diller says he enjoys farming, particularly when he is able to use modern methods to cut expenses, raise profits, and improve the environment.

"I'm a big reader," said Diller, "and that's one of the reasons I got into flying airplanes in the first place."

"I read in a farm magazine about the virtues of using beneficial insects as opposed to pesticides. Since I'm an organic farmer, I don't like to use chemicals or commercial fertilizers on my crops."

Diller faced one major problem: how to distribute the insects over his land in a timely fashion.

"I wanted to use beneficial insects to get rid of the earworms and spider mites on my corn," he said. "It's important to distribute the

insects in six hours — otherwise they'll hatch on you and die quickly. So I decided to do it from the air."

Problem No. 2 surfaced: he wasn't a pilot. Like everything else he tackles, he wanted to do the job himself. After looking through a number of publications that dealt with flying, he decided on a tiny ultralite that weighed 253 pounds and was powered by a 33-horsepower engine.

"The aircraft turned out to be dangerous when these West Texas winds were blowing," he said. "It didn't have much lift and couldn't get the job done."

Diller had trained himself to fly the plane. That was five years ago. The flying lessons took and he decided he needed a plane that was a little larger, with a more powerful engine to buck the winds. One of the stories he had read was about two former U.S. Air Force pilots, Harlow (H.B.) Wise and Dave Owen from Portales, N.M.

The partners owned a company called Laron Aviation and were manufacturing a do-it-yourself kit for people who wanted to build their own aircraft. The plane was called the Streak Shadow.

Diller called for information and the partners invited him down to Portales for a free test ride in the aircraft. Fully loaded with two passengers, the plane weighed under 900 pounds and was powered by a 65-hp engine.

"It performed unbelievably well in the wind," said Diller. "We darted all over the sky and H.B. told me it was nicknamed the 'Volkswagon Of The Air.' He also said the Streak Shadow had set a world's altitude record in England."

That was enough for Diller. Since the plane was superior to anything else he had looked at, he wrote out a check for a down payment on the spot.

The total cost of the kit was \$16,000.

Ladybugs, from Page 2

yellow pecan aphids.

The Texas Pecan Growers Association will assist in choosing the sites to evaluate how the Harmonias adjust to varying Texas climates.

The alternative to collecting Harmonia in Georgia and releasing them in Texas, Knutson said, was to rear them in greenhouses and labs. It is a costly, labor-intensive process.

The Harmonia ladybug was imported from Japan and released by the U.S. Department of

that look like goggles. Their color varies from light orange to the familiar deep red, and there may be no spots or as many as 18.

The bugs will rest up from their trip, needing only an occasional misting of water during the winter.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, Knutson gave them a water misting and let them "exercise" by removing them from the refrigerator long enough to warm up, get a drink and move around a bit.

"We hope the released beetles will multiply and become established in Texas," Knutson said.

"If the Harmonia lady beetle establishes as well here as in other states ... they'll be natural residents of Texas, helping to control aphids on trees and shrubs."

Agriculture in Georgia about 15 years ago. Scientists recently discovered that the ladybug had become established there.

The Harmonias are similar in size to other common ladybugs but distinctive in appearance because of white markings around the eyes

TFB program encourages use of child seats

WACO — Car accidents are the leading cause of death for children under five, which is the reason the Texas law requires that such pre-schoolers are put in child restraints

Kid in one's lap taboo! "Even though it's the law, there are still a lot of mommas who feel there's nothing wrong with holding their little child in their lap while they drive down the road to the store or some safety representative for the Texas Farm Bureau.

Bullard advises well-meaning mothers not to hold that child since "in the course of an accident, that child could be crushed between the mother and the steering wheel."

While there's no way a person can get around the statute legally, Texas Farm Bureau has at least offered a means of curtailing the expense of purchasing one of the many high quality child safety seats on the market.

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TFB's Child-Saver program allows TFB members to put up a \$20 deposit for a child restraint seat. A TFB member can keep the seat until the child reaches the age of five. At that time, the safety seat can be returned to Farm Bureau and the deposit given back.

The seat, valued at \$60 or more, is available through county FB offices.

Bullard also advised

motorists to follow instructions carefully for strapping a child in a safety seat.

"There are accidents involving children who are improperly placed in a restraint seat," Bullard stated.

"The device is an excellent means of protecting a small child from being injured during an accident," Bullard said. "But, like anything mechanical, it requires people to

utilize it correctly."

Tips on the use of lchild restraint seats include:

- Make certain instructions are included with the seat (such instructions are included with the child restraint seat provided by TFB).

- Keep the auto safety belt in the right place.

- Be sure the harness is snug.

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Chimney, from P 2

a 35 or 40 percent hydrogen-peroxide solution at a drugstore. Mix it with plaster of Paris to form a paste and spread it about an eighth of an inch thick over the stain with a putty knife. Mist the paste with

household ammonia from a spray bottle, then cover with plastic wrap and seal the edges with masking tape.

Leave the paste on the marble for 24 hours or until the material dries. Then gently scrape and brush away residue.

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Farmer trying more natural method raising traditional crops

Lifelong cotton farmer Mark Wilkes doesn't - to talk others into following in his footsteps by switching to organic methods: he lets them decide for themselves, based upon the facts. Wilkes farms about 4,000 acres in the heart of the Texas High Plains. Over one-third of the land he farms is owned by his family and has been for more than 40 years. Wilkes' definition of success is making enough income to comfortably support his family and farm and keeping his land healthy and productive.

"When we first started farming this land, it was all organic except for a couple of the first agricultural chemicals," Wilkes said. As research progressed, more and more chemical pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and exfoliants came into use. By the time Wilkes took over operation of the farm, many more chemicals were in widespread use. Although chemicals could have made his job easier in some respects, his first response was to go easy on them. His sale has always been to limit his involvement with the government, which led to low-input methods because of the cost and regulation of agricultural chemicals. By switching to organic, he has reduced the potential for problems such as water contamination, disposal of chemical containers and poor employee health.

Wilkes' first experiment with growing organically in 1990 as a natural result of his farming sale. It was a very dry year without good planting rain. He didn't feel comfortable spending more money in what looked like a bad year, so he switched to all organic methods on 75 acres of his land, decreasing his input costs to almost nothing. The year turned out to be better than Wilkes had expected, and he turned a good profit on the



Wilks in cotton field

organically grown cotton. In addition, he realized cost savings by eliminating the costs of chemicals.

After this first successful foray into organic growing, Wilkes realized that organic cotton could make him money in both bad and good years and he decided to jump into organics with both feet. He now grows about 3,500 acres of certified organic cotton, including several acres of high value color organic cotton. His yields in 1993 were about 600-700 pounds per acre for irrigated and 210 pounds per acre on d-land. -en he farmed conventionally, he would produce about 750 pounds per acre on irrigated and 275 pounds per acre on d-land. Prices for organic cotton now range from 21/2-51/2 times what traditionally-grown cotton sells for. He makes a larger profit with organic cotton than with traditional cotton even though his yields have decreased and his labor costs have gone up because of increased product value and decreased chemical costs.

Wilkes never relied heavily on synthetic chemicals and fertilizers, so the switch to organic production was

not dramatic. He knew that with organic cotton he could make money selling at higher prices, but if necessary-, he could still make a profit selling at traditional prices. His crop yields declined about 15 percent the first year, but the higher price that his cotton commands more than made up for the loss of volume. Since then, his yields have increased and his market price is higher - and net farm income has improved.

On his remaining acreage, Wilkes raises millet and wheat and also has some of his land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The millet is a special- crop grown organically and sold at more than twice the price of traditional millet to marketers of natural birdseed. Wilkes feels that the risk he took in devoting some of his acreage to millet, a crop outside government support programs, was well worth the risk. "If you choose your crops carefully, you can command a very good price," he stated.

Wilkes swears by Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to solve his insect problems. He has used ladybugs, lacewings and -trichogramma wasps

pling. He has been using cow manure and green manure with moderate success. He has never tried commercial fertilizer because of high transportation costs. He will probably experiment with other methods in the future. He is also planning on beginning a crop rotation program to keep his soil from becoming depleted from constant cotton crops. He will rotate cotton with soybeans, blue corn and other crops that command high prices on the organic market. He wants his farm to grow in size and to become entirely certified organic.

Wilkes is president of the Texas Organic Cotton Growers Association (TOCGA), which was formed in 1992 and has sent newsletters to a mailing list of about 1,500 growers, apparel and textile industry- representatives and other interested individuals and businesses. The organization is in the process of becoming incorporated and plans to continue educating people about organic cotton. Wilkes sees TOCGA developing into an organization not unlike the National Cotton Council, which would develop nationwide advertising and public awareness campaigns, fabrics and

to keep pest populations down. He has seen chemical pesticides come and go as they lose effectiveness because of increasing insect tolerance. He says, "The only thing that a bad bug can't develop a tolerance to is another bug - unless they start carrying knives." Wilkes doesn't see organic sprays as being any more effective than non-organic sprays in this sense. Wilkes uses the common-sense methods of timely cultivation and hoeing to keep weed populations down. Fertilizer is one issue with which Wilkes is still grap-

markets, and send representatives to conventions in related industries. This year, TOCGA has developed an organic cotton producers cooperative; this group provides a centralized location for mills, retailers and other merchants to purchase raw cotton. Judging from TOCGA's growth -h and Wilkes' personal experiences, it is easy to see the progress organic cotton has made from its place on the fringes of production just a few years ago.

Wilkes makes the time to be involved with several projects and organizations in his community-. He is willing to assist any farmer interested in organic cotton growing methods on an individual basis.

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"It's downhill all the way!"

A&M program intends to prepare cattleman for 21st Century

COLLEGE STATION — As fall classes begin, the partially completed Animal Science Teaching, Research and Extension Complex near the Brazos River is already bringing an updated educational concept to a new breed of student.

The first beef cattle laboratory sessions have already been held at the new complex's Beef Center. Dr. Bill Turner, professor of animal science and planning coordinator for the new complex, said it will better serve today's agriculture students who differ from those in his college days, when most agriculture students came out of farming and ranching families.

"We're getting what I call second-generation agriculture students who are very bright but often have no hands-on agricultural experi-

ence," Turner said. "We knew land and animals like these students know science and computers."

But the new complex, which will include five major centers when finished, is not a "model farm or ranch," Turner said.

"It will be an all-purpose, interactive facility run not only for the students, but by them, and giving them the best opportunity to achieve and integrate everything they learn," he said.

Cattle will be bred and raised on the 582-acre complex, although many will be finished out at commercial feedlots and other facilities. Students will have the opportunity to see and take part in application and management of a total beef program, Turner said.

The animal science department also

intends the new complex to be a focal point for industry, he said.

"For example, breed associations can come here and hold a field day hosted by students, who would provide complete labor and services," Turner said.

Some students will have working internships at the complex, but it is also a place where other students can watch or practice the things they learn about, where industry groups can hold functions, and even where students can cater meals for their clubs' social events, Turner said. When the complex is completely finished by the spring of 1995, it will include the Beef Center, the Swine Center, the Sheep and Goat Center, the Thomsen Animal Euthenics Center, and the Nutrition and Physiology Center.

The Beef Center was the first of the facilities finished, and Turner said he has imagined that someday all Texas A&M beef science classes could be held there.

However, it will not be fully utilized until further construction projects open new roads and parking lots at the complex in 1994.

Mass transportation will also be available by 1995, bringing students from the main campus to the complex, located some five miles west of the main campus.

Another year of pasture development is also necessary, and a house on the grounds will be converted to the G. Rollie White Visitor Center. During the summer, the Texas A&M University Board of Regents assigned the house to the animal science department for renovation.

Two student caretakers eventually will live

full-time in the house, which is envisioned as a central location for both visitors to meet and for students riding transportation to or from campus.

Turner said the new complex should make Texas A&M unique among land-grant universities, because it is the only complex he knows of with class-

rooms, laboratories, animal support facilities and a potential for extensive student interaction with all major agricultural animals within a short bus ride from campus. The facility will also provide students an exposure to state-of-the-art research and extension programs, he said.

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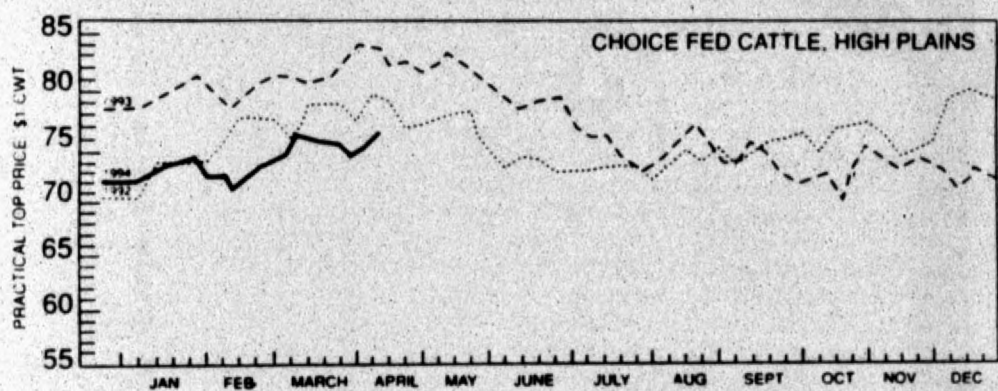


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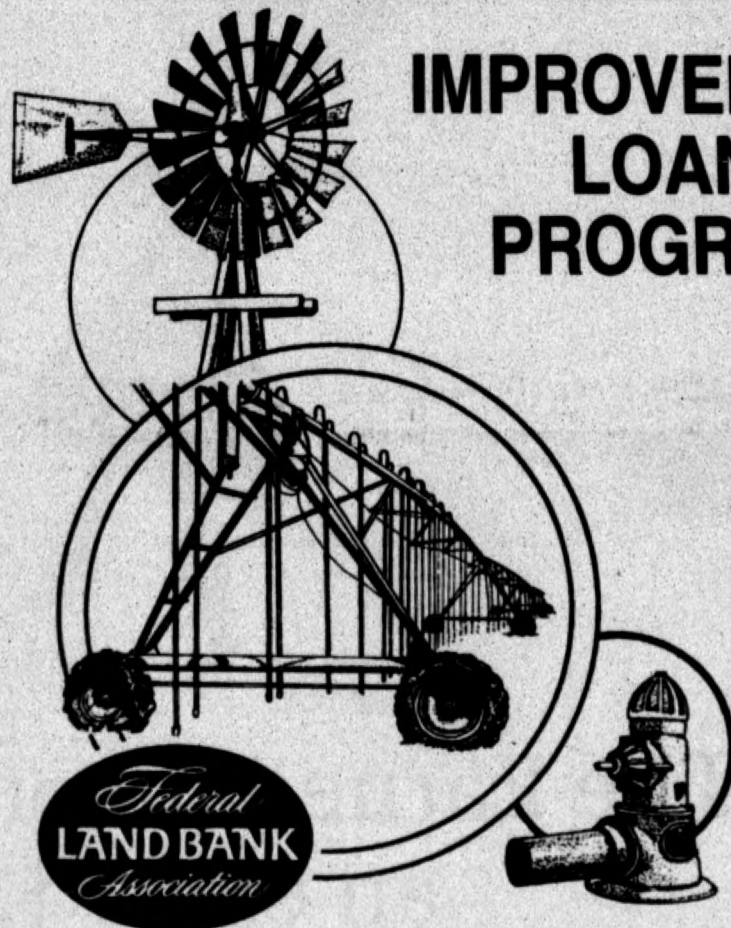
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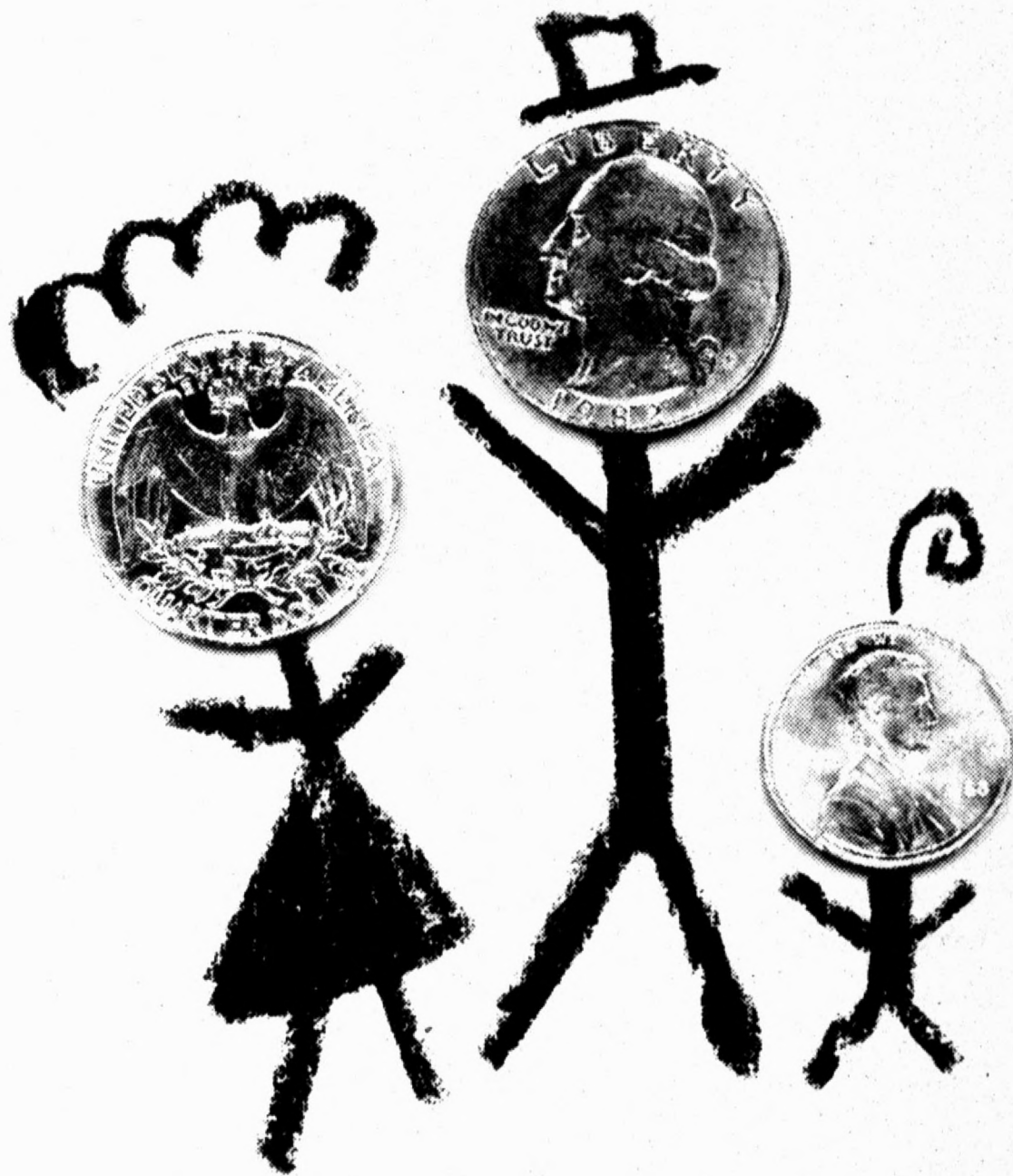
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Kanaf: New paper source and new diversified crop

Special to AgReview

For over 40 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been investigating the possibilities of using the kenaf (ke naf^Q) plant, a native African plant, for making paper.

Agency tests indicate that newsprint made from the plant is just as strong as conventional paper and requires less ink. Albuquerque-based KP Products backed the first commercial production of kenaf paper last October, and Fort Worth-based Alpha & Omega Printing & Graphics began printing on kenaf bond last November.

So, what is kenaf? And what impact might it have on the printing industry?

Kenaf was introduced to the U.S. during the 1940s as a possible substitute for jute (used for making rope, burlap sacks and other fibrous products). In the late 1970s, private interests became heavily involved. Kenaf newsprint was used several times in newspaper press runs, most recently in 1987, when The Bakersfield Californian printed two sections on kenaf.

Newspaper tests proclaimed the results as good or better than traditional newsprint made from wood pulp, according to the economist in charge of the Kenaf Demonstration Project in the Agricultural Department's Cooperative State Research Service in Washington. The resulting newspapers were brighter, had high contrast and good color. Less ink was needed to print them and the ink did not rub off on hands and clothing. Even after a year in storage, the kenaf newspapers did not turn yellow.

As a fiber source, Kenaf also has the potential to be used for a number of agricultural products. If these markets prove viable, this plant could become a new cash crop for farmers in New Mexico and the southern U.S.

The potential uses of the kenaf plant, however, aren't enough justification for farmers and investors to jump on board yet. They are waiting for positive results — results that require some investment.

Kenaf's roots in the U.S.

After reading an article about the kenaf plant several years ago, Thomas Rymsza moved from New York to Arizona and eventually to New Mexico, growing his own small crop of kenaf, and joining efforts to promote the commercial use of kenaf in the U.S.

While a tree takes 7 to 40+ years to mature to harvestable size,

kenaf, an annual crop, reaches a mature height of 18 feet in 120-150 days after planting, and can produce seven to 11 tons of dry fiber per acre. The outer fiber of the plant comprises about 40 percent of the dry weight of the plant, the inner core about 60 percent. The 60/40 mix is ideal for newsprint, but it's necessary to process the two fiber types separately, and then mix them in different ratios, to produce other paper grades.

In 1992, Rymsza contracted with five farmers in New Mexico to plant two acres of kenaf each. The productive harvest enabled the beginning of commercial use of the plant, with one company conducting pulping tests to determine if kenaf could be used as a cheaper alternative to wood pulp.

Rymsza currently operates under the company name KP Products, based in Albuquerque — the first endeavor to make kenaf paper products for commercial use with the October '92 release of kenaf bond. Rymsza has contracted with a paper mill to produce the paper, but has plans to build a kenaf mill in New Mexico, perhaps by 1995.

He is also working with Kenaf International in Texas, a joint venture company formed in 1981, to promote the crop's commercial use by having some of the kenaf made into paper. The USDA has signed an agreement for about a ton of bond paper for office letterhead. Kenaf International and Earth Care Paper in Madison, Wis., have both contracted for a ton of paper each.

Rymsza expects to produce a minimum of 500 tons of kenaf bond in 1993, and will sell the product both directly and through pending East Coast, West Coast and Texas distributors. Desert Paper and Envelope in Albuquerque sells kenaf product in volume and Earth Care Paper sells smaller quantities of the stock.

KP's kenaf offset is a semi-bleached (no chlorine) natural color, comparable in thickness and feel to a 20-lb. bond sheet. It is available in 8¹/₄ x 11-inch and 11 x 17-inch wrapped reams; #10, A2, #6¹/₆ and A6 envelopes; 17 x 22, 23 x 25 and 25 x 38-inch cut sheets; and rolls of 3 inch core, 40-inch outside diameter and 17¹/₄-inch minimum width. Special sizes and specifications are available.

In November 1992, Alpha & Omega Printing & Graphics, Fort Worth, began using kenaf bond on its 12-year-old A.B. Dick 375 offset duplicator.

"We gave the paper no special considerations in our first attempts to run it, and much to our satisfaction, we found that kenaf bond ran like a champ," says owner Mark Shippy. "Kenaf paper performs at least as well, and in many cases better, than comparable recycled and standard papers. Kenaf bond paper and envelopes are now a part of our regular inventory, and we have had complete success in all of the printing jobs we have produced on the stock."

Shippy has put the paper through some rigorous testing, using a variety of inks, including rubber-base inks.

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More tree plantings could benefit urban America

NY Times News

Planting trees in cities and suburbs can reap millions of dollars in long-term savings by making it less costly to heat and cool buildings, by absorbing air pollution and by conferring a range of other environmental benefits, according to a study by the U.S. Forest Service.

The three-year study focused on metropolitan Chicago, and the researchers estimated that planting 95,000 trees in Cook and DuPage counties would result in a net benefit of \$38 million over 30 years.

Scientists have long known that trees exert a cooling effect, absorb pollutants, improve water quality, lessen flooding and abate noise, among other benefits. But the new study is believed to be the first to put dollar amounts on the benefits and measure them against the cost of planting and maintaining trees in a specific area. In the course of their investigation, the researchers also produced an unusually detailed examination of the role of vegetation in an urban-suburban ecosystem.

Metropolitan Chicago is particularly well endowed with trees — more than 50 million of them in the two-county

study area, according to the study report by Dr. E. Gregory McPherson, Dr. David J. Nowak and Dr. Rowan A. Rowntree, all research foresters with the Forest Service.

Trees "have long been recognized as valuable community assets" by Chicagoans, McPherson wrote. But, he went on, officials faced with dwindling budgets are questioning whether trees are worth the cost of planting and maintenance, and homeowners are beginning to wonder whether coping with fallen leaves, invasive roots, grass-killing shade and broken branches is worth the trouble. "Urban forestry programs," he wrote, "must now prove their cost-effectiveness."

The report estimated that in 1991 alone, the value of the removal of pollutants like carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone and particulate matter from the air by trees amounted to \$9.2 million in the study area.

By providing shade and blocking winter winds, the study found, a single 25-foot tree can reduce annual heating and cooling costs by 2 to 4 percent, and three adroitly placed trees could save Chicago homeowners \$50 to \$90 a year. The economic analysis

found that energy savings could exceed costs by 35 percent for trees planted near typical two-story buildings and by 90 percent for trees near energy-efficient wood-frame buildings.

"You can manage your trees to improve energy efficiency by planting the right species in the right spot and doing the right pruning," Nowak said.

For example, trees planted on the western side of a house generally provide maximum shade. Trees planted on the southern side would also increase the cooling; but in northern climes, they would also block valuable southern sunlight in the winter, thereby raising heating costs.

Even the branches of leafless deciduous trees can block 30 to 40 percent of incoming solar radiation, Nowak said.

Selecting "solar friendly" trees with

open crowns that drop their leaves early in the fall and sprout them again late in spring can mitigate this problem, according to the report.

Among solar-friendly trees listed in the study are, for instance, ash, Norway maple and poplar. And trees planted on the northern or northwestern side of homes in many northern areas can turn away chilling winter winds, reducing heating costs.

Street trees, which account for 10 percent of Chicago's trees and 24 percent of total leaf-surface area, were found to be a major source of building shade. The researchers calculated that the shade of a large street tree situated to the west of a typical brick residence can reduce the use of air-conditioning energy by 2 to 7 percent.

While the study found that large trees remove 60 to 70 times more pollution than do small ones, it also discovered that most of the Chicago area's trees are small. Many of these are invasive species that sprout readily in disturbed areas, grow quickly and live a relatively short time.

The most common trees are buckthorn, green ash, white ash,

various species of the cherry family, box elder and the American elm. The invasive buckthorn, a European native originally imported as a decorative shrub that has widely proliferated and crowded out many native species, accounts for 12.7 percent of the total tree population but only 2.9 percent of total leaf surface, according to the study.

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