

WEST TEXAS Country Trader

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The Canyon News

The Castro County News
The Clarendon News

The Lorenzo
STAMPER
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Plainview Daily Herald
Ralls Reporter-News

Thursday, December 9, 1993

The Slatonite
The Tulia Herald

Teaming electrical safety with Christmas sparkle

By DANNA RYAN

A&M Extension Journalist

LUBBOCK — The holiday season is a time of joy for most people, but it can turn to sorrow if proper precautions are not taken when lighting in and around the home.

"If you don't do things electrically safe, it will lead to a disaster," said Gayle Holland, Christmas shop manager at Holland Gardens.

Each year Holland Gardens offers workshops on holiday activities. This year they presented workshops on

bow making, advanced ribbon and bow techniques, how to start a miniature village, and Christmas lighting.

Christmas lighting is an important matter to take into consideration because of all accidents that occur during the holiday season as a result of carelessness.

Holland said to look for frayed cords and damaged sockets and plugs before putting lights up in your home. Any burned out lights or damaged plugs should be replaced.

She also said it was

"If the extension cord is warm to the touch, then there is too much current . . . This can eventually melt the cord and cause a fire. . . ."

—Lighting expert

important to be aware of the correct wattage of the lights. If you're not sure what wattage of replacement bulbs are needed the set can be taken to a Christmas or lighting store, Holland said.

Incorrect sizing could

end up stressing out the set and increasing the risk of an accident, she said.

When using outdoor lights, they need to be UL (Underwriters Laboratory) approved and designed specifically for outside use, said

Holland. The extension cords used with the lights needs to be rated for the amount of electricity pulling through the set.

"If the extension cord is warm to the touch, then there is too much current," said Holland. "This can eventually melt the cord and cause a fire."

Lighting on or around the lawn can be especially hazardous to children and animals, Holland said. The extension cords should be fastened down to the lawn to prevent tripping. This can be done by bending a coat hanger into a u-shape and

using it as a fastener. Holland added that any extra or unused sockets should be taped over and camouflaged.

"If we're careful with electricity, we should have a safe and festive holiday," said Holland.

Holland Gardens has been in business in Lubbock for more than 25 years, and is a nursery and seasonal Christmas store.

(This story was made possible through a grant from the Readers Digest Foundation)

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Technology replaces hot iron

By MICHAEL BATES

Associated Press

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — The time-honored cowboy tradition of the hot-iron brand may be fading into the lore of the West because of economics and new technology.

Electric, extreme-cold and chemical branding have

started replacing metal rods heated in cow camp fires, which cowboys have sat around for decades while they talked about the smell of singed hair and scorched hide in their poetry and song. There's also microchip insertion and ear tattooing.

The change is being spurred by the possibility of a small premium being paid

for unbranded cattle or some slaughterhouse discounting of branded stock, industry analysts say.

"The hide industry would very definitely tell you they have some very serious concerns about the effect of branding on hide quality," said Larry Corah, a Kansas State University animal science professor.

Surveys show branded hides bring from \$9 to \$13 less, depending on where the brand has been placed.

"That's a \$159 million to \$236 million annual loss to hide damage," said Brad Frye, a U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher with the Animal and Plant Health

See IRON, Page 4

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AgReview



South Plains
**Ag
News**

Jan. 10-11

**IRRIGATION
CONFERENCE**

— A two-day conference sponsored by the Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association and the A&M Extension Service will include discussion of critical issues impacting irrigated agriculture.

Monday begins with a session on energy regulations. Tuesday highlights a program on ag commodities with a morning session devoted to peanuts, corn and sugar beets and afternoon program on cotton, wheat and grain sorghum.

Jan. 22-23

**AUSTIN'S
ECO-FAIR
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— ECO-FAIR '94, to be held in the Austin Convention Center, will highlight sustainable agriculture, everything from gardening for wildlife and high tech rainwater collection techniques to holistic range management and organic cotton growing methods.

The fourth annual event seeks to encourage farming, ranching landscaping and gardening practices which are economically and ecologically sound.

Information is available at ECO-FAIR headquarters, 512-451-5212 or from Trisha Shirey at 512-266-9588.

'Eyes' take aim at field, and barn pests

By GORDON ZEIGLER

AgReview Writer

Why do a pair of eyes painted on a balloon have in common with the patterns on a butterfly's wing?

May be a strange comparison, but the similarity of design lies the secret behind so-called "Bird Scare Predator Eyes," a product sold to ag customers to scare away birds.

It seems that bird eyeforms — whether flapping on the backs of an insect, or painted on a balloon — put fear in the hearts of a bird.

It's a simple trick of nature that has been at work on many U.S. farms for several years.

"Did you ever look closely at the wings of butterflies, their patterns look like eyes . . . and you know birds don't eat butterflies, do they?" asks Joe Kovar, an exhibitor at last week's Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

Kovar said a friend in his home state of Minnesota learned of concept in 1986 while on a trip to the orient.

"A rice farmer had a balloon with eyes," he said. "My friend asked why it worked, and the farmer explained the concept. They had a lot of blackbirds there, but they stayed away from the fields."

The idea originated with Japanese rice farmers who used the theory of the butterfly's wings to keep smaller, grain eating birds out of their rice paddies.

The farmers designed a sturdy, weather-resistant balloon with the eyes of predator birds — hawks, eagles, falcons — painted on the sides.

Hung at various intervals in the rice paddies, the balloons scared the smaller birds away and boosted production without use of chemicals, sprays, nets or other controls.

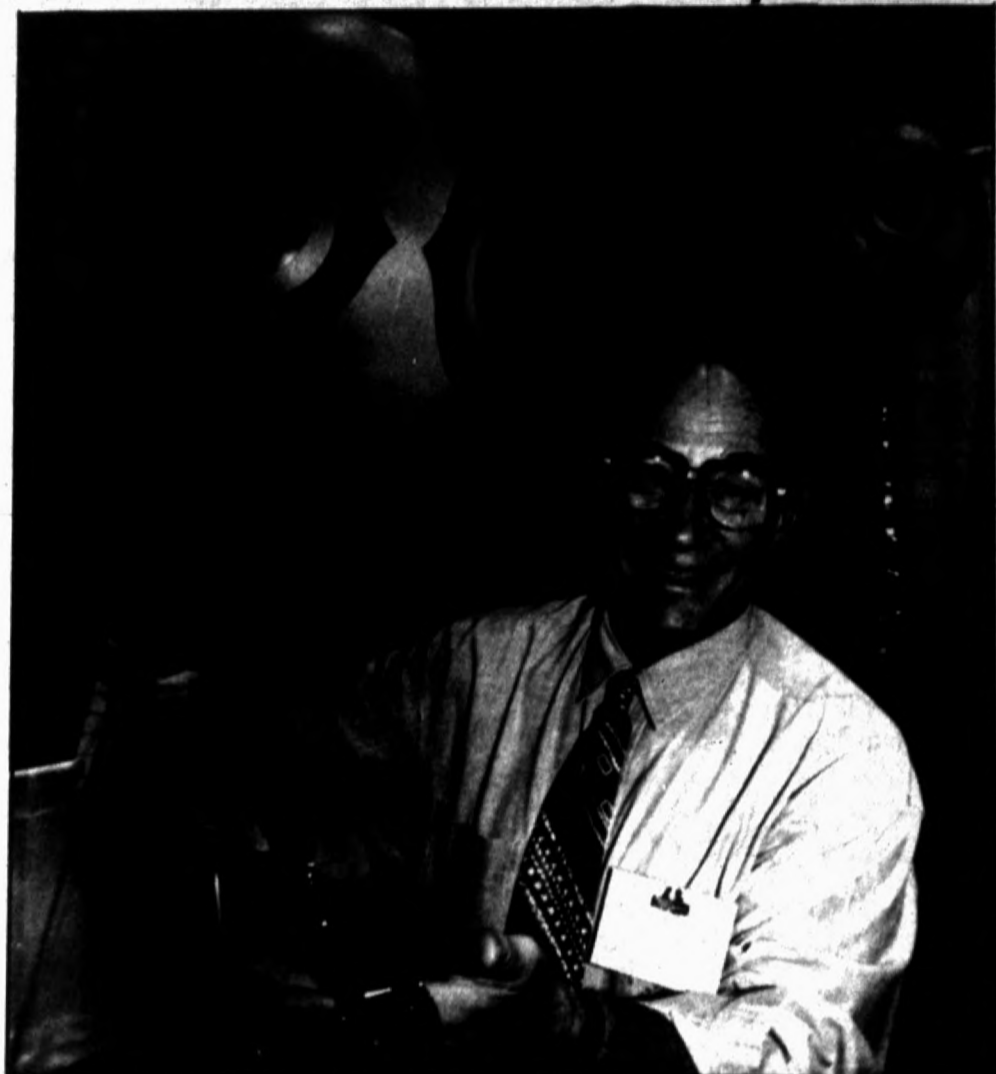
Kovar, a retired implement manufacturer, and Jack Tepoorten, finally teamed up to manufacture the balloons in the United States.

The Texas A&M Extension service uses them widely on their experiment plots today, says Kovar. They are quite popular in milo test plots.

Now, the company is selling the poly-vinyl balloons, whose purchasers are reporting they work well in machine sheds, airport hangars and marinas as well as gardens, orchards, grape arbors and recreational areas.

Sparrows, seagulls, pigeons, woodpeckers, blackbirds and other unwanted guests seem to flee when balloons are present.

Kovar, the Anoka,



THE EYES HAVE IT — Joe Kovar is a Minnesota-based distributor whose balloon with eyes promises to scare away bird pests on the farm.

Minnesota-based distributor for Joe Kovar Company, travels widely to farm shows and other similar events to market

the colorful, bird-scaring balloons which market for \$12.95 and operate on one of nature's simple principals.

"This is a product that really works, it does what it is supposed to," Kovar claims.

Stallman edges out True for top Farm Bureau post

SAN ANTONIO — Texas Farm Bureau voting delegates elected a new leader last week in an extremely close race as Bob Stallman, 41, of Columbus defeated incumbent S.M. True, of Plainview, in the election for president of the state's largest general farm organization.

In the general business session, voting delegates at TFB's 60th annual convention voted overwhelmingly to oppose retroactive taxes and said they favored an increase in sales tax to replace the school property tax.

In other tax-related items in the first day of the resolutions session, delegates said they favored a tax structure which requires all people to share the responsibility of supporting governmental entities. They also said that land acquired and used for agricultural purposes should be granted agricultural or open space valuation immediately and urged that current state inheritance tax provisions be maintained.

State resolutions adopted here become policy for the entire Texas Farm Bureau membership for 1994. National resolutions adopted will be forwarded to the American Farm Bureau Federation Resolu-

tions Committee. That committee puts together resolutions to be considered at the 75th anniversary AFBF meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in January.

Delegates of the state's largest general farm organization also chose to tackle the upcoming farm bill in developing policy. They suggested that annual loan rates for commodities should be 75 percent of parity and that loan rates and target prices be increased to reflect the cost of living and cost of production on an annual basis. They said stock reduction programs should be implemented to maximize producer income without creating excessive stocks. They recommended that payment acres be increased to 100 percent of planted acres, and said the 0/85 program should be available with guaranteed minimum deficiency payments paid on the full 85 percent.

Delegates also recommended a marketing loan for wheat and feed grains and opposed a Federal Crop Insurance Corporation program that only allows losses on a county or regional basis.

Delegates registered opposition to the Texas High Speed Rail project as

currently proposed. They said they would support high-speed rail projects in Texas only if due consideration has been given to all developing American rail technologies and industries; the proposed rail system is capable of operating on existing highways or railroad right-of-ways; and the proposed rail system will serve both rural and metropolitan counties along its route.

In other action on the state level, delegates:

- Supported a concerted joint Texas-Mexico effort to control/eradicate bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis.

- Favored a compulsory check-off of one cent per pound on honey, with imported honey paying the same check-off as domestic producers.

- Said the use of restricted chemicals should be regulated in urban areas, households and yards through certification and requirement of an applicator's license.

- Recommended that studies be pursued to determine the value of constructed wetlands as a water purification method.

- Opposed non-profit organizations buying land in environmentally-sensitive areas and selling

it to government entities at a profit.

- Recommended that money spent on advertising the lottery should be reduced to the amount needed for the point of sale material and the drawings, and that state lottery profits be used to fund education at all levels.

- Opposed the enactment of restrictive legislation concerning the purchase, possession or sale of firearms and ammunition by citizens of the United States.

On national resolutions, the delegates:

- Supported term limitations for national elected officials.

- Recommended that paper work for producers who participate in the farm program be reduced.

- Opposed homosexuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

- Opposed the exemption of \$60,000 worth of farm equipment as collateral in bankruptcy cases.

- The convention will end Wednesday with the conclusion of the resolutions session and the election of TFB president.

The final tally in the president's election was extremely close when a

run-off was forced after former TFB Vice President Don Smith tallied 108 votes in a three-way race. True garnered 489 votes to Stallman's 436. John Baker of Temple drew five votes in the first round after declining his nomination to run for president.

The run-off election saw the immediate past vice president Stallman, who had finished his last two-year term on the board of directors, finish the election with 520 votes to True's 515. True had served 11 terms as TFB president.

"It was certainly close," TFB's new president said after the election. "I'm going to try to earn their (Farm Bureau members) confidence in me."

Stallman, a third generation rice farmer, has been active in Farm Bureau for many years, serving as director, secretary-treasurer, vice president and president of the Colorado County Farm Bureau. He also served on the TFB State Resolutions Committee, the Blue Ribbon Goals Committee, and the State Health Advisory Committee.

Stallman and his wife, Connie, have two daughters, Angela and Kimberly.



Country Trader 'was there'

Wendell Tooley, associated with newspapers in Canyon, Tulia and Slaton which are part of the *Country Trader* advertising and news network, greets crowds attending the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show last week with a complimentary issue of the *Trader*. The annual Amajillo show is one of the largest indoor events of its type in the country.

\$1.8 billion in CRP funds paid to 375,000 contracts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has announced that cash payments of more than \$1.8 billion are being made to qualified producers on 375,000 contracts in the Commodity Credit Corporation's Conservation Reserve Program.

More than \$956 million of the fiscal 1994 CRP payments are being made to producers in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota,

Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Those are states hit by flooding and excessive rainfall.

The annual rental payments are made under contracts producers signed to enroll cropland in the CRP during crop years 1986-1992.

To date, 36.4 million acres have been enrolled in the CRP.

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A better catfish via genetic engineering

By JENNIFER LOVEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Government scientists are using genetic engineering to produce a superior breed of catfish.

The process, known as gynogenesis, produces catfish with greater tolerance to poor water quality, more resistance to disease, more efficient food conversion and improved growth rates and

body composition. Scientists at the Agriculture Research Service's Catfish Genetic Research Unit in Stoneville, Miss., have even solved what had been a major problem with the pro-

cess — that the superior race included only female offspring. Experiments with sex-control mechanisms have developed females who can produce male and female fish.

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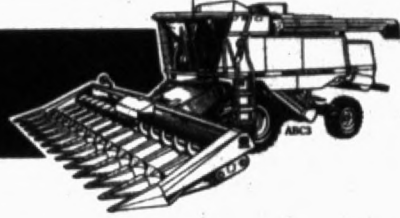
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IRON

From Page 1

Inspection Service.

Even when theft losses are compared with hide damage losses, the hide damage toll outweighs theft by a ratio of 12-to-1 to 15-to-1, Frye said.

People have been putting distinctive marks on livestock to identify ownership and deter theft for centuries, historians say. Drawings of branded cattle in Egyptian tombs date to 2700 B.C.

Today, livestock brands usually are registered by the state.

Animal rights groups, such as People for The Ethical Treatment of Animals, have objected to hot-iron branding for years.

"There's just no excuse for branding cattle in this day and age. We think it's barbaric," said Jenny Woods, a spokeswoman for PETA.

A recent continental U.S. federal survey of 3,400 producers showed branding still is the most common form of identification.

In the south-central region — which includes Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas — about 11 percent of all cattle opera-

tions brand unweaned calves, which translates into 22 percent of all such stock.

The southwest region — California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah — leads the nation in branding, with 61 percent of the operations there putting brands on 92 percent of unweaned calves.

In the western states, there's still public grazing and open range, which makes branding even more important for sorting cattle, Frye said.

The United States and Canada export about 76 percent of their cattle hides for a 43 percent share of the world market, according to the USDA.

Corah and Frye said ranchers eventually may get docked for having traditionally branded cattle or hides with other damage.

"But you can't ask producers today to quit branding," Frye said. "They don't get an incentive not to brand, and they do get penalized if someone steals one of their steers."

Ken Stielow, a Paradise rancher, sees the transition to hot-iron brand alternatives going slowly because of the practicality of high-

technology equipment and its cost.

Corah said Kansas State has been researching electronic microchip insertion for livestock identification.

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Dolling up cows sells more than just the beef

By PAULA BARR

© '93 Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY — Every morning they are bathed, blown dry and brushed. Their feet are polished. Their tails are teased. Conditioners and oils are sprayed on their hair until it glistens.

Ah, the pampered lives of show cattle at the American Royal Livestock Show.

The cattle show features Brangus, Charolais, Hereford, Polled Hereford, Angus and Simmental cattle parading through the arena. The animals will be groomed according to the latest styles for each breed.

The fashions usually are developed to mask faults or create an illusion. Sometimes, trends begin by accident when an exhibitor deviates from fashion in some manner and then wins the class, said Angus fitter Tony Weber of Dousman, Wis.

"If the successful people do something different,

other people try to do the same thing," he said.

This year's trend toward the natural look in some breeds reflects a desire to cut costs and to reduce the amount of work necessary before the show.

On Friday, cattle beauticians, called fitters, already were preparing for today's competition. They dressed in knee-high rubber boots and carried a comb or brush as they walked each animal to the wash area.

After a bath, each animal was blown dry. Long hairs were clipped off, and hair was cut short on the heads and bellies of Brangus, Charolais and Blonde d'Aquitaine cattle.

The type of breed and the number of animals each fitter must beautify determines how early the pro-

cess begins.

"If you show at 8 in the morning, you start at 4," Weber said.

Angus fitters have stopped teasing the hair on their animals' tails into balls, Weber said.

"This year we're leaving the tails natural," he said. "It's easier on the tail. To use all the stuff we used to, it gets expensive."

Fitters use spray adhesive and cattle mousse on each Angus to fluff out the hair and keep it in place. The adhesive is sticky but stays pliable. After the show, it is easily removed by spraying the animal with oil and washing it with soap and water, Weber said.

Hereford fitters also are changing the way they do

the tail hair, said Debbie Westover of Ashby, Neb.

"We don't pull them up and ball them anymore, because that's a major pain," she explained as she scrubbed a Hereford bull with a stiff brush. "We just fluff them up and spray them with adhesive."

The sticky spray is applied to the lower back legs, and the hair is pulled outward to make the legs look bigger. But Westover doesn't use adhesive on the rest of the body because it can make the hair brittle.

Instead, she relies on Zoom Bloom, a type of spray hair conditioner.

"You spray it on and blow them out," she said, "and it pops the hair out around the body."

Some fitters sand the horns of the bulls to make

them shine, but Westover just cleans them off.

Grooming of Polled Herefords, which are hornless, is similar to the horned breed, said Ed Bible, senior vice president of the American Polled Hereford Association in Kansas City. Fitters pay special attention to the poll, or top, of the head, however.

"They straighten the hair and spray it to emphasize the hornless aspect," he said. "A polled head is more valuable over the long run because of the labor and cost of removing the horns before taking (cattle) to market."

Blonde d'Aquitaine fitters sometimes curl the hair at the top of a cow's head and spike the hair of a bull, said David Hauck of

Richardton, N.D. The light tan animals are clipped closely on the face and belly. Shoulder hair also is clipped, though not as short. The remaining hair is combed forward and sprayed flat. Hair on the top of the tail is pulled straight up and sprayed to give the hind end a square look.

The hair on the poll of Charolais cattle is sprayed into a point, and the tails are balled up, said Ruth Ann Peters, a fitter from Fair Grove, Mo. Leaving the tails natural would be the same as a woman leaving her house with curlers still in her hair, Peters said.

"It would be like sending them off without being dressed," she said. "Everything we do to cattle is to show them to their best benefit."

Cattle feeders pleased with NAFTA passage

AMARILLO — Cattle feeders are reacting in very positive fashion to the recent passage of NAFTA.

"Cattle feeders are very pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives sided with the spirit of free trade when it voted to approve the North American Free Trade Agreement," said Les McNeill, president of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association.

Both the U.S. Senate and the Mexican Senate have since ratified the treaty.

Cattle feeders will feel an immediate benefit from NAFTA when Mexi-

can tariffs on U.S. beef fall to zero on Jan. 1, 1994. Last fall, Mexico unexpectedly imposed a 15 percent tariff on live slaughter cattle, a 20 percent tariff on chilled beef and a 25 percent tariff on frozen beef.

An existing 20 percent tariff on variety meats will be phased out over 10 years.

"Prior to the tariffs, Mexico was one of the fastest-growing export markets for U.S. Beef," McNeill said. "Removing these tariffs means Mexico will likely resume that role as the country strives to improve the standard of living for its people. Growth in the beef business means more jobs in our region since more people will be needed to produce, process and export more beef."

Mexico currently is the third largest export market for U.S. beef, at \$260 million. It is expected to become a billion dollar market by the year 2000.

"In addition to helping establish North America as a major power in world trade, the NAFTA vote will help to break the logjam in GATT negotiations," McNeill said.

Corn growers mount effort to sell Clinton on ethanol

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Over the next three months, the National Corn Growers will be mounting efforts to contact the Clinton Administration to strongly voice support for ethanol.

The months ahead are critical for the issue, corn producers believe, because the Environmental Protection Agency has until Dec. 15 to finalize ethanol's role in the Clean Air Act's Reformulated Gasoline program.

"There is no scientific or environmental reason why ethanol should not be allowed to fully participate

in the RFG program on a year-round basis," claims Randy Cruise, a Nebraska corn grower and president of the NCGA.

"The Clinton Administration and particularly the EPA need to know corn growers fully support ethanol and that we expect it to receive the opportunity to fairly compete in the marketplace with other oxygenates."

Under current Clean Air Act emissions standards, during the summer ethanol cannot be blended into reformulated gasoline without significant restrictions.

The NCGA claims that critics of ethanol have erroneously charged that its higher evaporation rate increases ozone formation. The producers group cites a recent study by the Council of Great Lakes Governors that seemed to demonstrate that a 10 percent ethanol-blend and an 11-percent MTBE-blend perform similarly in improving air quality.

Market opportunities for ethanol could exceed 2 billion gallons per year, requiring 800 million bushels of corn, the NCGA claims.

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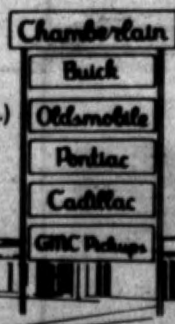
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'Eat a clove a day,' garlic farmers say

By HAROLD FABER

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BRUNSWICK, N.Y. — Although Grace Reynolds does not like the taste of garlic, she eats a clove a day as a health measure. She minces it, puts it under her tongue and masks its taste by drinking milk with it.

For her two daughters, Kim, 12, and Karen, 10, she puts slivers of garlic in a gelatin capsule, which they swallow without tasting.

One of a rapidly increasing number of garlic farmers in New York State, Mrs. Reynolds believes the pungent bulb is not only a money-making crop but also a major contribution to the health of the nation.

Sitting in her open-air drying shed sorting recently harvested bulbs by size,

Mrs. Reynolds said, "I believe that if we sell more garlic and more people eat garlic, we will have more healthy people."

Since she started her daughters on garlic, she said, they have had fewer infections.

Mrs. Reynolds is one of about 250 small garlic growers in New York. This year, she harvested about 3,000 pounds on her Hillside Organic Farm here, about seven miles east of Troy, where she devotes one acre to the crop.

Like most of the other garlic farmers in New York, Mrs. Reynolds is relatively new at it, having started in 1988. A graduate of the University of Maine with a degree in animal science, she cast around for a home occupation after she and her husband, Robert,

moved here. Her husband works for General Electric in Waterford.

"I wanted to farm, but I wanted something different from the other farmers in the area," she said. "I looked for a specialty crop, something that could be grown in a small space, and I came across garlic. I wanted to make some money and also do something that would contribute to society."

For centuries, eating garlic has been said to preserve and restore health and even youth. More recently, scientific studies have cautiously indicated that garlic, a bulb that contains more than 200 different chemical compounds, can help counter many diseases, including cancer and heart problems.

Although its medicinal

value comes from being eaten raw, most garlic sold in the United States is used in cooking. Large producers in California and growers in China supply most of the garlic consumed in the metropolitan area.

By contrast, garlic is a minor crop in New York, so small that it is not even tabulated by the State Agricultural Statistics Service.

For Mrs. Reynolds, garlic farming is a one-woman operation, although she occasionally hires part-time workers for weeding and sorting.

"It's a labor-intensive crop," she said. "You have to handle each plant seven times."

She listed the steps: separating the bulb into cloves, planting the cloves by hand in October, cutting the shoots when they come

up in June, pulling the bulbs out of the ground at harvest time in July and August, hanging them to dry, cutting the tops and roots and finally grading the garlic by size.

In addition, she said, there is the marketing. She sells her crop by mail and at a small roadside kiosk, at \$3.50 a pound or 25 cents a bulb for the large size, about one-and-three-quarters to two inches in diameter.

She saves one-third of her crop as seed for the following year and sells one-third. The remaining third is too small to sell, she said, and she donates it to the local food bank.

"I haven't made a profit yet," she said. "It has taken me longer than I expected and I am not as successful as I had hoped."

But she said she was confident that she would make money, and planned to install a trickle irrigation system for the field.

Like most other growers in the state, Mrs. Reynolds is a member of the Garlic Seed Foundation, based at the Rose Valley Farm in Rose, N.Y., about halfway between Rochester and Syracuse. Founded in 1985, the foundation has grown to about 700 members.

Another indication of the growth of interest in both garlic and its production is the rising attendance at a Hudson Valley garlic festival. The first festival, in 1989, drew about 100 people. Last year, more than 5,000 attended, said Patricia K. Reppert, the festival organizer. Ms. Reppert operates the Shale Hill Farm and Herb Garden.



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Once near extinction, longhorn cattle are back

By **BARRY SCHLACHTER**
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FORT WORTH — The longhorn, herded by the thousands to northern markets in the Wild West days of Texas and then pushed to the brink of extinction early this century, is on the rebound.

While they may never again be the dominant cattle in the state, herds of the rangy, multicolored longhorns now dot the Texas landscape. In terms of sheer numbers, the longhorn hasn't been stronger since the last dogie straggled up the Goodnight/Loving trail in the late 1800s.

Down to a mangy handful in 1927, purebred longhorns are now estimated at more than 200,000, the highest count since the late 1800s, calculated Darol Dickinson, who was reared in nearby Burleson, Texas. A prominent breeder, Dickinson said that his figure represented a 25 percent increase in a decade.

"It tells us if they weren't able to support themselves and be profitable, there would be a number deterioration," said Dickinson, 50, who owns the Badly Scattered Cattle Co. of Houston and the Dickinson Cattle Co. of Calhan, Colo.

The cattle, who were sent 10 million strong along trails to northern markets, helped rescue the post-Civil War economy in Tex-

as. Today, they might provide health-conscious Americans a source of low-cholesterol meat that breeders insist, with only slight Lone Star hyperbole, is leaner than skinless chicken breast.

Some cattle raisers still deride the longhorn as a mongrel. Others extol it as a line rich in heritage and able to survive the harshest range conditions, merits that border on reverential.

The longhorn evolved in the wild from black Spanish cattle, first brought to the hemisphere by Columbus in 1493. Mixing with English breeds imparted the distinctive speckled color. By the 19th century, their horns had taken on a spread of 5 feet and more. Millions roamed the land.

"When my family first came to Texas in 1822, they found the wild cattle here and have been raising them ever since," said J.G. "Jack" Phillips Jr., owner of the Battle Island Ranch near West Columbia.

At 85, Phillips still rides out on horseback to look over his 350 longhorns.

Natural selection gave traits to the breed, ranging from an ability to survive the harshest conditions, a resistance to disease, and a strong nurturing of its young, which are born small and without human assistance, to a remarkable fertility that has them dropping calves years longer than others, said Larry Boleman, a Texas A&M

University professor and cattle expert.

Longhorns were trailed to Louisiana as early as 1763 and up to Missouri in 1846. They became "Texas gold" when destitute Civil War veterans saw nearly worthless cattle bringing good money at the railhead in Abilene, Kan., J. Frank Dobie said. In his 1940 book, "The Longhorn," Dobie estimated that 10 million went up the trails to feed the industrializing North between 1866 and 1888.

But demand collapsed, along with the price, from \$25 a head in 1884 to \$6 ("with calves thrown in") nine years later. It became clear that not everyone shared the Texas affection for the longhorn.

Jimmy Stewart's 1966 film "Rare Breed," about the first Hereford brought to Texas, summed up the dislike by denouncing the longhorn as "milkless, meatless and murderous."

(All can be virtues, argued A&M's Boleman. They turn murderous to protect calves from coyotes. And since twice the nutrients are needed to produce milk, longhorns can get by on marginal ranges where fatter breeds would perish, he said.)

But Eastern markets demanded fat livestock. The leaner, tougher longhorn did not simply vanish, Dobie wrote, but it was bred with the Asian Brahma and English stock virtu-

ally out of existence.

By 1919, the secretary of the Oklahoma Historical Society warned that the purebred longhorn neared extinction. It took eight more years before Congress, urged by Wyoming Sen. John B. Kendrick, a former Texas cattleman, voted \$3,000 to rescue the longhorn.

To try to save the breed, the U.S. Forest Service sent two men to look over 50,000 head, then settled on just three bulls and 20 cows to ship via Fort Worth to what is now the Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge near Lawton, Okla.

"They claimed they could not find more," said Gene Bartnicki, a former refuge biologist who now runs longhorn in Aquilla, Texas, near Waco.

Unfortunately, one bull turned out to be more Brahma, one didn't produce and the other died, he said.

The bull that saved the longhorn, and came to be known as No. 83, was finally located in Monterrey, Mexico, Bartnicki said.

"Without him, I don't think there would have been a breed," he said.

Once despised beyond Texas borders, longhorns are now found in New England, Canada, Poland and the South Pacific. New Zealand and Australia, importing them for easy calving, have more than 125 purebred and 12,000 crossbred, said Charlene Semkin of Prescott, Ariz.

He has exported longhorn on the hoof, via semen straws in dry ice and frozen embryos, since 1989.

By then, the "smoke and mirrors" market manipulation and hucksterism that led to claims of \$2.5 million-plus prices for prized bulls during the mid-1980s oil boom had vanished with the oil bust, "Texas Longhorn Journal" editor/Publisher Charles D. Searle said. Lower prices allowed start-up ranchers to get into the breed, and numbers have grown.

A small premium is being paid on longhorn calves as rodeo stock, but many auction buyers still discount part-longhorn calves for the beef market. They fear that the meat produced would be too tough, conventional wisdom longhorn that breeders hotly dispute.

Nonetheless, ranchers say that the purebred market has improved in recent years. Recent sales in Houston and Fort Worth fetched an average price of \$2,000, which ranchers consider healthy, for longhorn bulls, cows and pairs.

Ranchers behind the comeback are as varied as the longhorn is speckled: weekend hobby ranchers, hide-and-horn producers, owners of federal refuge-descended cattle, lean beef producers, roping call breeders, "traditionalists" who didn't want the breed tampered with, and self-described "progressive"

ranchers keen on developing a bigger, meatier steer for market.

And it's not always a happy mix.

"There's a rift there," said Dickinson, a "progressive" who breeds big for the beef and who has no time for nostalgia ranchers. "There are wealthy people in Texas whose goal is to raise longhorn cattle like goldfish: a pasture full of them, throw out the feed, and clean out the bowl. They just want to tell someone at the Petroleum Club that they own a herd."

Others, like Bartnicki, who calls himself "more of a traditionalist," warn that developing bigger beef cattle will breed out the longhorn's best traits.

"They are going to have trouble, trouble and trouble — trouble in calving ease, trouble in reproduction and loss of disease resistance," Bartnicki said.

Three years ago, dissident minorities felt so strongly that they bolted the main ranchers' group, the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. Dickinson's "progressives" formed the International Texas Longhorn Breeders, while hard-shell "traditionalists" set up the Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry, which requires both blood testing and a visual appraisal to confirm breed conformity.

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Farm-specific driver license is proposed by Texas DPS

The Texas Department of Public Safety has proposed regulations to create a Farm-Related Service Industry Commercial Driver's License (FRSI CDL).

DPS Inspector John Hall of Austin says implementation of the new regulation will go in effect after Jan. 1.

"We've completed the work with the Texas Register without any public comments. Therefore, there will be no public hearings," Hall said.

The DPS inspector says training materials regarding the new CDL law are being distributed to DPS offices statewide to instruct personnel on the enforcement of the law.

"The CDL is different from the usual commercial driver's license and is very restricted," Hall pointed out.

He says the new farm-related CDL applies to

"seasonal drivers" such as (a) farm retail outlets and suppliers (b) agri-chemical businesses; (c) custom harvesters (including cotton module operators); and, (d) livestock feeders.

Key items contained in the CDL statute are as follows:

■ A farmer and his farm hands are exempt from obtaining (the normal) commercial driver's license, which requires a lengthy written exam.

■ A person who purchases a crop in the field but takes no part in the cultivating of the product is not exempt.

■ A person who purchases acres of growing timber and cultivates and harvests the timber is exempt.

■ "The exemption applies only when used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from the farm and which is not

used in operations of a common or contract carrier," Hall quoted from the Texas Register.

Moreover, the transportation of ag goods must occur within 150 miles of a given farm.

Hall explains that Class B and Class C are the only vehicles that may obtain the restricted CDL.

"Class B (CDL) applicants must pass the 20 question Class A-B rules test and non-CDL skills test in a class B vehicle," Hall notes.

Applicants who hold a valid Class A or B non-CDL or one that has not been expired over two years do not have to pass the 20-question written test, he adds.

Moreover, Class C FRSI CDL applicants do not have to pass any type of knowledge of skills test if they already hold a valid or renewable Class C Texas

license and meet the good driving requirement, Hall points out.

Those applicants without a license will have to pass the requirements as for original applicants and meet the good driving requirements.

The "good driving license" requirements simply refer to (a) no multiple licenses; (b) no suspensions, revocations or disqualifications; and (c) no conviction of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, leaving the

scene of an accident, or committing any felony involving a motor vehicle.

Also, a driver must have no convictions for serious traffic violations such as speeding 15 miles per hour above the speed limit, reckless driving, improper or erratic lane changes or following too closely.

The driver must have no record of accident-related violations.

A major restriction of the farm-related CDL is a 180-day limit, Hall notes.

"Applicants must indicate the seasonal period he will operate and will be limited to 180 days," Hall states. "A driver will be required to revalidate the license each season."

The validity period cannot exceed 180 days with the minimum period being 30 days, he says.

Cost of the CDL is \$40, the same as the unrestricted CDL.

Revalidation of the CDL will be \$10 per season.

(Story compiled by Texas Agriculture, the monthly publication of the Texas Farm Bureau).

New editor named for TFB magazine

WACO — Mike Barnett has been named editor for Texas Neighbors and Texas Agriculture, the official publications of the Texas Farm Bureau.

Before assuming his present position, Barnett was assistant editor since June 1987.

School. He received a bachelor of science degree in agricultural journalism from Texas A&M University in 1977.

He has been involved in Texas agriculture most of his career, having served as editor of the Nocona News and writer for the Appaloosa Racing Record in Nocona. He served as news/ad coordinator for Texas Farm & Ranch News in San Antonio, rising through the ranks to general manager and then publisher. In 1985 he became editor and publisher of Texas Livestock Review and later served as managing editor of the Mathis News in Mathis.

Barnett was born in Freeport and graduated from Brazoswood High

Some U.S. farm exports expected to drop in 1994

By ROBERT GREENE
AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Exporters of corn and other coarse grains, soybeans and wheat face grim prospects in 1994, while the year holds out hope for exporters of meat, milk products, fruits and vegetables, the Agriculture Department says.

A report issued Tuesday projected farm exports at \$42.5 billion in the fiscal year that started Oct. 1, no change from the previous year.

But exports of coarse grains, soybeans and wheat will decline \$800 million in value because of smaller demand, higher U.S. prices and increased competition, the report said.

What's worse, it said, the volume of so-called bulk exports will drop to 94 million tons. That's 15 percent below fiscal 1993's level of 110.5 million tons and the lowest volume since 1986, when a sharp drop in exports sparked a financial crisis for U.S. agriculture.

Bulk exports hit a record in 1981, when the combined value of shipments to China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union totaled more than \$5.5 billion, compared with \$2.5 billion in 1993.

If it weren't for increased exports of rice to Japan and cotton to Mexico along with other countries, the picture for bulk commodities could be even worse.

Because of the drop in bulk commodities, the overall volume of exports is projected at 130 million tons, compared with 147 million in 1993.

But increased exports of so-called high-value products will keep the value of exports from slipping. "Another record year is expected for U.S. livestock, dairy and poultry product exports, with export value forecast at \$8.5 billion," Eugene Moos, undersecretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs, told an outlook forum Tuesday.

Those sales reflect greater demand for beef, pork and variety meats in such countries as Japan, South Korea and Mexico, he said.

Another high-value category, horticultural products, is looking up. That term refers to fruits, vegetables and deri-

vatives such as juices. Sales of those products are also in for a record, up \$300 million from 1993 to reach \$7.5 billion in 1994 because of exports to Canada, Europe and Japan.

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