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The Slatonite
The Tulla Herald

AgReview

Farmers hear rundown
on Apr. 15 EPA deadline

■ Hale Center gets new
regional pollution office

By GORDON ZEIGLER

AgReview

PLAINVIEW — Ag producers gathering in Hale County last week heard some welcome as well as not-so-welcome news last week concerning what's new on the farm for 1994 — and EPA regulations affecting the South Plains farms topped the latter list.

Ag producers listened attentively, though not altogether happily, as one of the 47th Soil Fertility Day speakers — Dr. Dr. Pat Morrison — discussed the many new EPA rules concerning worker protection standards in pesticide use and handling to take effect April 15.

But there was also some good news for one South Plains community — the town of Hale Center.

James Moore of the Texas Soil & Water Conservation Board in Temple told the group that on Apr. 1 his agency will open a new non-point source pollution monitoring office in that community.

A highlight of the soil stewardship day program was naming of Jack Witten of Edmonson as Hale County's Outstanding Conservation Farmer for 1994.

In making the presentation, Paul Robertson of the Hale County S&WC district board, said Witten "has an outstanding commitment to water conservation, cultural practices, efficiency and conservation of soil moisture."

See PAPERWORK, Page 3



Gordon Zeigler/AgReview File Photo

Milo: a look back

Milo acres, while down dramatically from 1992 when sorghum was a follow-on crop of choice after a cotton failure, actually were back to normal on some farms in 1993. John Starnes (left) and Joe McFerrin, for instance, rely consistently on milo in their crop mix. They harvested 120 acres of seed sorghum last fall. In this file photo, they admire a handsome 1,200-acre stand of milo they planted to follow failed cotton in 1992.

USDA sets signup for wetlands reserve program

By MARGARET SCHERF
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Agriculture Department will hold its second Wetlands Reserve Program signup from Feb. 28 through March 11.

The program, which has nearly \$67 million to enroll up to 75,000 acres in the current fiscal year, restores and protects habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, helps purify water supplies and absorb flood waters.

Landowners in Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Mis-

souri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin will be able to enroll eligible acreage during the signup, USDA said this week.

During fiscal 1992, when there was a limitation of 50,000 acres, landowners on 2,337 farms sought enrollment for more than 462,000 acres. Acreage was tentatively accepted for 49,888 acres on 265 farms.

Of this, 30,868 acres will be restored to forested wetlands, 14,105 to emergent wetlands, 3,374 to scrub, shrub and other types of wet-

lands and 1,542 to upland buffers.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, or ASCS, said about 7,509 acres will directly benefit the recovery of threatened or endangered species. It said an additional 30,085 acres may be used to protect those species or lie within ongoing state or federal wetland restoration and wildlife project areas.

Under the program, permanent easements are purchased from participating landowners of farmed wetlands, prior converted wetlands and riparian areas that link wetlands.

Participants agree to accept no more than the fair market value of their land for agricultural use, in return for a lump-sum payment and cost-share assistance for implementing wetland restoration practices.

Specified compatible uses are permitted on the restored acreage by the landowner and any successors.

USDA's Soil Conservation

Service and the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service will assist the conservation service in determining the eligibility and environmental quality of the acres offered by landowners.

"Many provisions which applied to the first ... signup held in June 1992 are applicable to this signup," said Grant Buntrock, administrator of the conservation service.

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AgReview



South Plains Ag News

Jan. 22-Feb. 6

FARMERS MARKET CONFERENCE IN AUSTIN — The Texas Certified Farmers Marketing Association (TCFMA) will host a direct marketing conference in Austin at the Royce Hotel.

The meeting will cover tactics to help market fruits and vegetables directly to the public. Information is available by calling Danny Russell at 817-894-3401.

Jan. 22-Feb. 6

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

Jan. 25-26

CROSBY COUNTY CAPROCK COTTON CONFERENCE — Ag leaders to meet with area producers in the Crosby County Pioneer Museum.

Feb. 16-17

ABILENE BIG COUNTRY FARM & RANCH SHOW — Champion Farm Shows will present its second annual Big Country Farm & Ranch Show at the Taylor County Fairgrounds on Feb. 16 & 17.

In addition, the Rolling Plains Cotton Growers will hold their annual meeting at the show.

Man plies blacksmithing into iron artistry

By GORDON ZEIGLER

AgReview

PLAINVIEW — He's done lots of blacksmithing in his time — fixing everything from farm implements to garden tools and welding just about everything imaginable.

But in recent years Gilber Luster has turned his professional skills into a little bit of artistry on the side, and it's brought him quite a few hours of enjoyment.

"I just do it when I have the time," says Luster, who has crafted cowboys playing guitars, cowboys throwing lassos at longhorn steers.

One of his favorites is a classic metal 'balancing sculpture', in which a lasso-toting cowboy bobs up and down on a balance beam as a bull at the other end bobs up and down in unison.

Luster also likes to build what he calls "bird shovels". They're made of garden shovels, recrafted into yard decor items.

Luster grew up working in his father's business, Farmer's Blacksmith, which he still operates over a half century after its founding.



Jerry Jeff Walker to unveil song at heritage ceremony

The new Jerry Jeff Walker song, "Keep Texas Beautiful," chronicling a man's homesickness and desire to preserve the Lone State's uniqueness, will premier at the Texas Department of Agriculture's 1994 Family Land Heritage ceremony Friday in Austin.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the Family Land Heritage Program which recognizes families with farms or ranches in continuous production for 100 years or longer.

"Texas has a long and proud agricultural legacy, and Jerry Jeff's song pays tribute to our state and to land that Family Land Heritage honorees have helped preserve," Ag Commissioner Rick Perry said.

The premier of the song will accompany a TDA-produced video showcasing the state's natural beauty.

Walker said he was inspired to write the song by his travels and frequent absences from the state.

Cutting horses provide hands-on challenge for Lubbock grocery magnate Lonnie Allsup

By Anita Baker

© '94 Star Telegram

FORT WORTH — Lonnie Allsup knows how the adrenalin flows when horse and rider merge in cutting-horse competition.

When the 60-year-old entrepreneur isn't flying to one of his 305 convenience stores or three radio stations, he is often sitting atop one of his champion cutting horses.

Whether making millions in Allsup's Convenience Stores in New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma or finally breaking even in cutting horse competition, he operates as a hands-on businessman.

"It's quite a thrill — the excitement and enjoyment of horse and man combined," the Lubbock native said of his latest venture.

His horses are drawing top purses. During this year's National Cutting Horse Association World Champion Futurity, being held at Will Rogers Coliseum through Dec. 12, Little Badger Dulce will be named Horse of the Year, a new award that draws no money.

At the age of 4, the horse has won \$250,000 in competition.

Despite his business success, friends say that Lonnie Allsup and

his wife, Barbara Allsup, are down-home people who keep a low profile.

"Although he has lots of money, he is still very Texan, very down to earth," said Lyle Eggleston, a spokesman for the National Cutting Horse Association. "He will tell it like it is."

Lonnie Allsup was recently named to the NCHA executive board.

His interest began as a child growing up in the tiny Panhandle town of Morton, where his father was a Chevrolet dealer who kept cutting horses at his nearby farm.

His younger years were typical for those who live in most Panhandle towns. He played football and basketball, married the band majorette and attended Hardin-Simmons University and Texas Tech University before joining the Air Force.

He bought his first convenience store in Roswell, N.M., and eventually sold a chain of 12 to Southland Corp. Then he began expanding again, to more than 300 stores, which annually gross as much as \$250 million.

But by the early 1980s, he was

itching for more.

He began with working cow horses but decided that he preferred cutting horse competition instead.

"I like the pure cutting horses better," Lonnie Allsup said in a recent telephone interview from his Clovis, N.M., offices. "They are more highly trained. You totally release the cutting horse to handle the cows. It's more of a challenge."

Initially, his trainers rode in competitions. But by the mid-1980s, he decided he "wanted some action" and began riding himself.

Lonnie Allsup usually leaves most of the shows to his top trainer, Pete Branch, but finds time for occasional nonprofessional competition.

He makes it to as many shows as he does, and still has time to swing by the nearest Allsup's Convenience Store, because of a twin-engine Beech Baron that he pilots.

The craft also makes it easy to take quick weekend jaunts to one of his three ranches: one in Las Vegas, N.M., where his broodmares and foals are kept; a second just outside Farwell, N.M., where his training facilities and competition horses stay; and a third near Seymour, where he grows wheat.

His fourth getaway, basically for relaxing, is a home facing the ocean in Mazatlan, Mexico.

Barbara Allsup, an avid cutting horse fan, is usually with him at competitions or in the grocery business. She is vice president of the company and keeps up with internal operations, Lonnie Allsup said.

Each year, he awards the Fort Worth futurity nonpro winner a free trip to his Mexico home.

For the past two Septembers, in conjunction with the New Mexico Cutting Horse Association, Lonnie Allsup has held a 10-day El Cid Futurity — named for two of his ranches — at facilities near Farwell. The full purse this year was \$300,000.

Cutting horses are definitely a business, he said, describing himself as "rural" through and through. But it's not always the business end that draws him to his Farwell ranch in the early morning hours to ride before starting the day at his offices.

Branch, who also manages the Allsup's Farwell ranch, said, "We try to make it as much a business as we can."

"But they just love the horses. It's the reason they do it."

What's new for '94? . . . More farm paperwork

PAPERWORK

From Page 1

Robertson praised Witten for use of water-conserving center pivot sprinklers, and said he has talked many of his neighbors into converting to highly-efficient pivots and LEPA systems.

News of the Hale Center development is part of a state plan to open three regional SWCB regional headquarters in Texas as part of a new statewide program to monitor NPS pollution, Moore said.

Hale Center will be responsible for the northern third of Texas as far south as El Paso, with other offices to be located in Dublin and Mount Pleasant. More offices will be added in the future, gradually shrinking the responsibilities of the first three offices.

The EPA-approved plan will ultimately help the state implement federal water quality management guidelines in Texas.

Hale Center's office will be operated by a staff of five — all to be hired by the Texas S&WCB. The staff includes a manager as well as engineers, clerical and technical employees.

Its purpose will be to implement programs to identify pollution problems in the

region, and enlist voluntary support from ag producers in solving them via establishment of water quality management plans.

Tuesday's program included a wide range of subjects — from reports on disease control in cotton and corn, to aphid and bollworm control.

On the subject of CRP land and its future, some predictions were made as to what may happen when the USDA discontinues the CRP program, as it is expected to do.

Dr. Terry Ervin, Texas Tech Ag Economics professor reported on his recent scientific sampling of landowners in the 54 counties of the Texas High Plains. Ervin found that 69 percent of CRP landowners are likely to break out land for planting of prior commodity base — which is expected to be, by and large, cotton. Other CRP acres may be used for cattle production, he predicts.

Dr. Matt Cravey, extension beef specialist, reported on the first two years of the Ranch to Rail Program — the program costing calf producers only \$10 a head to study quality of cattle around the state by furnishing them to A&M for feeding out and study.

Preliminary data from Ranch-to-rail studies point to

pre-feedyard health of cattle as being the biggest determinant of profitability in cattle, followed by breeding genetics.

Jack London, County Executive Director of the Hale County ASCS committee, discussed new provisions of the 1994 Farm Program.

The subject of worker protection procedures outlined by Morrison — which call for detailed record keeping of chemical applications and strict worker safeguards by April 15 — seemed to be providing more changes for producers this year, however,

than any other subject discussed Tuesday.

Morrison encouraged farmers to obtain a reprint of the worker protection rules — sold by the U.S. Printing Office for \$8.50 — by buying a less expensive reproduction, postage paid for \$1.95 from Gemplers, Inc., PO Box 270, Mt. Horeb, Wis., 53572, 1-800-382-8473.

If the new worker protection standards go into effect as planned, farmers must initiate thorough record keeping methods concerning chemical applications. They

must also provide personal safety equipment and meet other safeguards for chemical handlers and applicators — one requirement Morrison said is causing the most consternation among farmers.

The Texas Farm Bureau has opposed the EPA on the plan, claiming it is too much regulation too fast. It has petitioned the EPA to delay implementation for one year, but apparently to no avail so far.

On the issue of non-point source water pollution monitoring, Moore cautioned Hale County producers that they

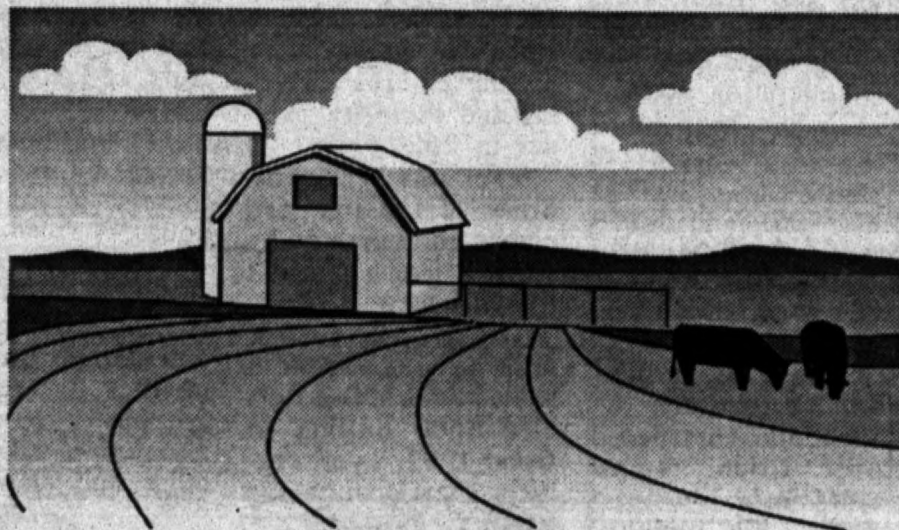
will probably face further pressure from federal regulators when and if the Clean Water Act is re-invoked, as it is expected to be, in the near future.

"There is a move to re-authorize the Clean Water Act, and I assure you agriculture is one of the targets," Moore predicted. "It may not be done this year. It may be done after the elections. But we are getting closer and closer to placing controls on ag activities that they think are creating pollution of one type or another."

Increased Controversy about Agriculture

Almost all environmental issues impact or influence agriculture in some way.

- ◆ Chemical use
- ◆ Disposal of animal waste
- ◆ Sustainable agriculture
- ◆ Water quality
- ◆ Hazardous waste
- ◆ Greenhouse effect
- ◆ Acid rain
- ◆ Land use
- ◆ Soil erosion
- ◆ Biodiversity
- ◆ Endangered species
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- ◆ Air quality
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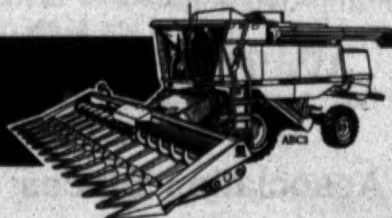


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No frills, carhops and low cost keeps sonic sizzling

By WORTH WREN JR.

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Let the other fast-food chains experiment with oversized hamburgers, under-sized burgers or burgers without any beef at all. Let the other chains jump on the low-fat, low-cholesterol bandwagon, gamble on salad bars or test international markets.

C. Stephen Lynn will stick to Sonic's basic recipe for success — a no-frills menu featuring burgers, battered chicken sandwiches, Coney hot dogs and Tater Tots; quick service with old-fashioned carhops; and low operating costs.

"People keep looking for sexy, sizzly solutions to business challenges," Lynn says. "A good hamburger cooked right is just a good hamburger, but America loves it."

As president and chief executive of Oklahoma City-based Sonic Corp., Lynn should know.

After a near meltdown in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the chain has entered its 40th year with 1,220 drive-ins in 25 states.

For its second fiscal quarter, which ended Feb. 28, Sonic Corp. reported that its net income increased to \$1.56 million, up from \$1.14 million for the comparable period of fiscal 1992. Revenues jumped to \$17.1 million from \$13.5 million.

Those results do not include sales from the company's franchised operations.

Sonic Corp. controls 137 company partnerships. It is majority partner in 111 drive-ins and minority partner in 26.

The nearly 1,100 other drive-ins are owned and operated by independent franchisees.

With 25,100 employees, Sonic's systemwide sales totaled \$600 million in fiscal 1992. Lynn predicts that systemwide

sales will hit a record \$700 million in this fiscal year, which ends Aug. 31.

The key to Sonic's success is its franchise system, which gives local owners and managers broad autonomy, Lynn says.

"Owners run things better than employees," he says.

Paul Martinez, who manages a basic gray, red-trimmed, neon-punctuated Sonic Drive-In at 301 University Drive in Fort Worth, agrees.

Working in what company insiders call "the little gray box," 10 Sonic employees here use about half the store's 1,200 square feet as they fill the 150 to 175 orders typically placed by lunch customers in about an hour.

The daily operation is headed by Martinez, who is store manager and a Sonic "working-partner." Martinez, 25, has a 20 percent ownership stake in the store and also stands

to receive a 10 percent performance bonus. He has been a Sonic worker since age 16, when he began as a part-time carhop at his hometown drive-in in Mineola.

Martinez's Fort Worth partnership with franchise owner Linda Clark gives him a 30 percent share of the store's cash flow, which also means that he shares in covering the operating costs and, if sales drop, the margin squeeze or loss.

It's a time-honored idea: An on-site working partner facing

risks and rewards from an ownership stake. It's also a concept that has disappeared from many other retail chains.

But the idea is promoted at every level of Sonic's management from the corporate parent to the drive-ins.

Lynn credits the franchisees and the company stores' partners for most of Sonic's recent successes:

Since 1986, the chain has posted a net gain of 275 stores.

Average store sales grew at a compounded annual rate of 10.3 percent from \$356,000

in 1988 to about \$523,000 last fiscal year.

The chain still has plenty of room to grow, primarily in southern and southeastern U.S. markets.

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Kenaf: A new source of paper, a new ag 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') 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, Wisc., 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 8½ x 11-inch and 11 x 17-inch wrapped reams; #10, A2, #6¼ 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 17½-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, metallics, soy inks and split-fountain rainbow. "I've passed the sheet through the press multiple times without allowing for drying, and have had no trouble."

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

Take a deep breath.

You're not a failure as a parent. You're not helpless. And you're not alone.

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.

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.

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.

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

Small kangaroo cousins attract Hereford retiree into venture

By GARY WESNER

Hereford Brand

HEREFORD (AP) — Sam Sessions needed something to do after he retired.

So, he jumped into a new fad that is part hobby, part business and part pet.

Sessions had decided that "when a feller gets 76 years old, he can't work as much," so he put aside his life's work with horses.

While the family dog was a good pet, it didn't occupy his time.

Sessions says raising ostriches was out — they are ornery and expensive.

Then in November he bought five wallabies that he is raising out back of his house east of Hereford.

"They're easier to handle to me than a pet dog," Sessions said as he walked among the four females and one male, feeding them pieces of bread and trying to lure them to a bowl filled with apple chunks. "I'm not having a bit of trouble with them."

He said each adult wallaby eats about half a pound of feed each day, plus treats.

"Altogether, I can feed one of them for 20 cents a day and that includes treats," he said. "That's what I like about them. There's no labor involved."

Sessions' longtime friends, Bill and Wanda Rowland of Dawn, also own seven of the little critters.

Both Sessions and the Rowlands bought their Bennett wallabies from the same dealer near Fredericksburg. They plan to work together on their project.

"These are supposed to be the hardest" of the breeds available, Sessions said. They are also, he said, very economical to raise.

"As far as I can see, they're the healthiest animals I've ever seen," he says.

Sessions keeps his wallabies in a makeshift

pen built around an old storage shed he enclosed for the miniature marsupials.

There is a metal self-feeder for their regular feed — Sessions said he buys Purina brand kangaroo pellets — and a heated container for water that keeps it from freezing at night.

On one wall is a small bundle of hay, and there are small nests of hay around the enclosure. The hay not only makes comfortable beds, the wallabies also like to eat it.

Of the four females, Sessions knows three are pregnant. When

See RETIREE, Page 8

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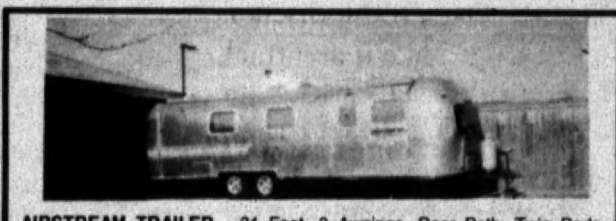
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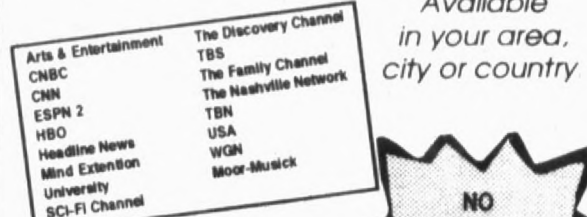
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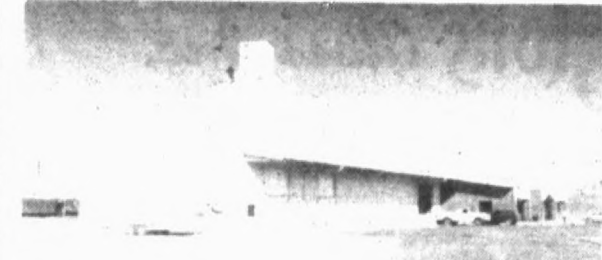
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Texas Farm Bureau pushes through farm policy planks

FORT LAUDERDALE -- Texas Farm Bureau delegates successfully pushed through policies regarding conservation compliance and private property rights in the 75th American Farm Bureau Federation meeting here this week.

TFB President Bob Stallman, who was named to the AFBF Board of Directors from the Southern Region, got fellow delegates from the other 49 state Farm Bureaus and Puerto Rico to approve a resolution on conservation compliance.

Meanwhile, Dean Kleckner of Iowa was re-elected to a fifth two-year term as AFBF president. He defeated Vice President Harry Bell of South Carolina.

Stallman's proposal, which passed an initial hurdle at TFB's annual meeting in San Antonio last month, stated that:

"Government programs developed to address special consideration for environmentally sensitive lands should include provisions to enter into a voluntary contractual agreement with the landowner to implement program provisions."

Stallman, stating that the government program was "a little insidious" in offering "a handful of silver" to farmers, said often time a landowner's economic condition will not allow him the option to enter the contract voluntarily.

C. H. Dowdy of Wichita Falls, who retired from the TFB Board last month and was among Texas' 21 voting delegates, was able to gain adoption of a resolution calling for support in establishing permanent

boundaries for the Red River.

Dowdy's proposal stated that AFBF supports the Texas-Oklahoma Red River Boundary Commission efforts to establish a permanent boundary and also congressional action to implement that boundary.

Dowdy's proposal said "all impacted lands should be returned to private ownership," adding that there has been a "problem finding the boundary lines."

Delegates also approved a resolution calling for a major overhaul of USDA, but said the Soil Conservation Service should not be eliminated.

They said a new "Farm Service Agency" should place a high priority on continuing to provide quality technical and scientific natural resources expertise in the same manner of the current Soil Conservation Service.

In other action, the delegates:

-- supported a constitutional amendment to require the federal government to operate on a balanced budget.

-- said before the Endangered Species Act may be used as a basis for an injunction that would adversely affect private property interests or activities, the party seeking the injunction must post a bond with the court equal to three times the damages that may result from the issuance of such injunction.

--The Clean Water Act should require the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a cost/benefit analysis and a risk assessment before imposing any additional regulatory prop-

osal. Moreover, the delegates said the Act should not expand water quality standards to include the broad category of biological diversity.

-- said safe handling instructions on agricultural commodities should be encouraged. However, the delegates said they opposed negative warning labels on products until there is conclusive proof of the statement's validity.

-- urged that farm property that is restricted by a voluntary conservation easement while actively farmed by the heirs should be exempt from federal estate taxes.

-- called for adoption of a dry matter based system for grain marketing which would price gain based on dry weight.

-- strongly supported enforcement of meat inspection standards.

-- recommended that when USDA offices are restructured, the individual county committees be retained and elected by farmers in the county.

-- supported continuation of a Commodity Credit Corporation honey loan program to provide stability for the domestic bee industry to assure adequate pollination of all crops.

-- called for establishment of hundredweight as the uniform unit measure throughout the rice industry.

-- said full funding of the Boll Weevil Eradication Program should be restored to provide a 30 percent match with producer funding to facilitate the orderly movement of eradication and/or containment across the Cotton Belt.

RETIREE

From Page 7

they were picked out of the litter at the Hill Country wallaby farm, he was encouraged to feel the not-quite-born animals in their mothers' pouches, saying they were about half the size of a squirrel.

Those babies are expected to pop their heads out of their mothers' pouches soon and will be on their own and weaned this spring.

"I'm sure I'll have some sticking their heads out this month," he said.

He said wallabies bear their young in an interesting manner,

A baby leaves the pouch when he is too large to get in, and is weaned by his mother.

If the mother has been impregnated before then, the fetus is delivered and, in about 15 minutes, climbs up the mother's front and into the pouch, attaching to a nipple for sustenance.

It takes about seven months from that point before the baby outgrows his mother's pouch.

Sessions said his male wallaby is capable of breeding with as many as 10 females. The animals live for 15 to 20 years, and he knows "a 10-year-old

female will still breed and raise babies."

Sessions compared his wallabies to cats — they use their forepaws to wash themselves — and to rats — using sharp front teeth to bite through an ice-encrusted water pail.

They can be picked up by the tail safely, and use their tails and large back feet only for jumping and stability.

Sessions said he plans to sell some of the wallabies he raises and keep others for breeding stock.

They cost between \$1,200 and \$1,800 each, or \$3,000 a pair.

Sessions said he enjoys just watching the animals play.

