



Beaver City, Neb., farmer/rancher, Jack Morse (above) admired his herd of plains buffalo. One of two new calves

born recently (below) increased the number. Another birth is expected any day. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Buffalo idea turns into herd

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

All he wanted was one buffalo to fatten up and butcher. What farmer/rancher Jack Morse of Beaver City got was eight buffalo bulls.

That's a lot of bull.

About three years ago, Jack learned from his friend, Lyle Hutchins of Hendley, that the price of buffalo had "gone all to pieces". Jack thought that would be the time to buy, and found Chalfant Buffalo Ranch out of Hill City. But they wouldn't sell just one. It was buy all eight or nothing. What started out as a lark turned into a major operation.

Mr. Morse said buffalo are wild animals and it takes a mighty tough fence to hold them. The feed lot adjacent to the 20-acre pasture, where he keeps them is lined with four-bar, metal pipe fencing. The pasture is enclosed with 5 1/2-inch seven-wire, barbed wire fence. But like Jack said, "They could come right over the top, if they wanted to."

Visitors are cautioned to talk softly, not make any sudden movements and not get too close to the fence. Jack has worked with the big animals enough now that the huge herd bull will eat grass and weeds right out of his hand.

The herd is also conditioned to come running when they hear the

motor start on the feed mill by their pen because they know they will get grain. Jack said 20 acres is not enough for his herd that has increased to 20 with the birth of two calves last month, so he supplements their diet with hay and grain.

When asked if they ever got out, Jack had to laugh.

One did once he said. He thinks that a young bull kind of got "flipped" over the fence by one of the bigger animals. But because they have such a strong herding instinct, he was anxious to rejoin the herd and went right back in a gate that Jack held open for him.

One of the selling points for buffalo meat is its low fat and low cholesterol content.

Jack's wife, Mary said, "Buffalo doesn't taste wild or gamey. I cooked a buffalo roast and took it to a family reunion. Everybody loved it."

Buffalo do not dress out as much meat as cattle do, however, Jack said. They will only dress out about 50 percent, although they weigh about 1,500 pounds when they are ready to butcher.

An avid hunter, Jack takes pride in describing how he used a 45-70 Sharps buffalo rifle to kill the four animals he had butchered this spring.

"It was a real kick to go out there and use a gun like the old buffalo



hunters did," he said.

"There is no way you are going to load a buffalo into a stock trailer to haul to town. You wouldn't have a trailer long. The only way to do it is to drive out there and drop 'em in the open, bleed 'em and haul 'em into the processor. With the acreage I have for them, I have to keep the size of the herd limited."

While most ranchers don't name their livestock, the first herd was special.

"When Jack brought home those eight buffalo," May said. "Our daughter, Elizabeth, and I thought it would only be right to give them reindeer names. You know, Dasher and Dancer and

Prancer."

Jack is a second generation farmer on the land he owns north of Beaver City. His dad, Dale Morse, started the operation after World War II. Jack and Mary's daughter, Elizabeth, is a sophomore at the University of Nebraska/Kearney.

"We have met lots of people since we started this," Jack said. "It's turned into kind of a social thing. People seem to be fascinated by them. The nursing home in Beaver City even brought out a busload of folks to see them."

"This is not a money-making proposition. But it is a fun hobby," he said.

Norton board to decide policy on student drugs

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton School Board will have to decide whether or not to allow kindergartners through fifth graders to self-medicate.

Superintendent Greg Mann said because of a new law, the board will need to set a policy allowing sixth through 12th graders to carry medication, especially asthmatic students. But, he said, K-5 is optional.

He said the board will need to decide if they want to change the policy that is already in place, requiring students to take all medication to the office.

"You need to think about it," he said. "Are they (K-5 students) old enough to self-medicate without harming themselves?"

Mr. Mann said there will be a lot of documentation for the sixth through 12th grade students. The school will need parental permission and also orders from the student's doctors detailing the use of the medications.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from Mr. Mann that it is almost budget time. He said they are planning to work on the budget on Friday, July 2, and Monday, July 5, and that he will be taking the budget document to Topeka for review on Friday, July 9.

- Approved the 2004-'05 student-parent handbooks. The only change is the requirement of additional inoculations for first-time kindergarten enrollees.

- Held a public hearing to explain the proposed revised general-fund budget. As there were no questions, the board approved the revised budget.

- Approved the 2004-'05 membership of the high school, junior high and grade school site councils.

- Agreed to a wording change in the North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperation agreement. Mr. Mann said right now there has to be a majority of eight

of the 14 representatives present to take action. Because that is difficult to get sometimes, the group wants to change it to a majority of the quorum of representatives, making it possible to take action with five people present, he said.

- Accepted Amber Engelbert, Pam Foley, Paul Juenemann and Michael Sprigg as student members of the appreciation plaque committee. The board also directed Mr. Mann to contact the six adults who were recommended until three agree to be on the committee.

- Signed a letter of agreement with Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center in Oakley to continue the district's participation in the Head Start program. Mr. Mann said Head Start provides a valuable service in identifying preschool children with learning problems or developmental delays and helping these children, their families and the district prepare for their beginning school.

He said the program doesn't cost the school anything, but the district gets some enrollment credit for the program's children. The Head Start program is held at the First United Methodist Church.

- Heard from Mr. Mann that North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperation will be giving a 1.65 percent salary increase to its certified staff.

- Listened as Board Member Jeff Nielsen read a letter of apology for his graduation address.

Mr. Nielsen said there has been some controversy over how his graduation address was received and although he can't control how people think, he does take responsibility for it.

He said his intent was to give the listeners a positive experience and if he would have realized how the speech would be received, he wouldn't have said a word.

Methodists give scholarships

Five graduating seniors from Norton Community High School, and three who are continuing undergraduate studies were awarded First United Methodist Church Scholarships on May 9 during the 10:30 worship service.

Graduating seniors receiving scholarships are Curtis Black, Kayla Fahrenbruch, Joel Griffiths, Brian Luft and Kai Mann. Jeff Cox, Nick Green and Drew Sebelius also received scholarships for their college studies.

Students in chemistry contest

Five Norton high school juniors competed in this year's Chemistry Olympiad.

Jessi Dusher, Nick Evans, Jason Green, Justin Shirk and Michael Sprigg took the 60-question, multiple-choice test. There were 43

schools competing and about 200 students.

Jason Green, son of Jim and Connie Green, Norton, qualified for the national competition at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School in Wichita.



Jacob Measles, 11, stood in the hard, but brief, rain shower Norton enjoyed last Friday evening. Jacob is the son of Leah King, Norton. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts



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