



COLBY FREE PRESS

Skunk reports surface

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

The Colby Police Department has been receiving calls about skunks coming into the city and wanted to make sure people are aware of the situation and what can be done, said Chief Randy Jones.

"As warm and dry as it's been in recent weeks, people are starting to let their pets out for the day," he said.

"Along with that, owners are also placing food and water outside as well."

Although Jones said there is nothing wrong with leaving animals outside, he did say the food and water can also attract other animals, like skunks.

The problem with some of the skunk reports is that the animals have not been healthy and could be carrying rabies. In order to protect the family pets, along with children and other adults that could be bitten or scratched, Jones said he strongly urges residents to make sure their animals are properly immunized.

Kami Bowers, a registered veterinary technician at Colby Animal Clinic, said puppies and kittens should get their first immunization shot at six to eight weeks old.

Four weeks after that, animals should get a booster shot and four weeks following the booster, they need a third booster and rabies shot.

"One year after an animal has had its third booster and first rabies shot, they need to be immunized again and rabies shots are recommended every other year after the first one," she said.

Jones said rabies have been reported in other parts of the state and, while Colby is far from epidemic levels, residents should have their animals immunized.

"If people see skunks or other nuisance animals in their neighborhoods, they should call the police department at 462-4460 to handle the situation," he said.

For information on immunizations or rabies, call the Colby Animal Clinic at 462-8621.

Twice in one day



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

The City of Colby's sanitation department is running each route twice daily picking up grass on the first run and household trash on the second. The reason for making two stops daily, said Gerry Bieker, director of public works, is only temporary and will be remedied once the new dual compartment trash truck arrives in June. Many residents have been calling his office inquiring about the two separate runs and

wondering why some people had their grass clippings picked up and not the garbage. Bieker said he believed the issue needed clarification. **ABOVE:** Kyle Brogan (left) and Rex Buford picked up grass clippings earlier today in the Brookside/Lane area of town. Steve Gilbert, driving the truck is not pictured. Later, they will be returning for household garbage.

Study says average Kansas farm income down

MANHATTAN (AP) — Kansas farmers made less money last year as government payments dipped and the cost of fuel and fertilizer increased, according to a Kansas State University-sponsored study released Tuesday.

Average net farm income of \$27,995

in 2001 was more than \$10,000 less than in 2000 for the nearly 2,000 farmers participating in the university's Kansas Farm Management Association program.

Farming was most profitable in southeast Kansas, with average net farm income of \$38,788. South-central

Kansas farmers earned the least, at \$11,996.

In between, average net farm income of \$27,643 was reported in northwest Kansas, \$28,999 in north-central Kansas, \$33,717 in northeast Kansas and \$13,446 in southwest Kansas.

Farmers were hit last year with soar-

ing natural gas costs that made irrigation more expensive and contributed to the closing of some fertilizer plants. The remaining fertilizer supply then became costlier.

Dry conditions also forced some farmers to make the costly decision to tear up wheat fields.

Kansas Cattlemen's Association has new president in Ken Winter

BREWSTER — After several decades of experience in the family's beef cattle business, Ken Winter is getting more involved politically, according to Dawn Schultz, Kansas Cattlemen's Association secretary, who told the Colby Free Press that Winter has become the association's new president.

The KCA is headquartered at Brewster and anyone desiring information about this 800-member group can call Schultz toll-free at (877) 694-2906.

Winter can be contacted at (620) 225-4128, or e-mail kww@winter-feedyard.com.

"I became frustrated with the current system to the point that I felt like if I wanted to make a difference I would have to speak up," the new president said. His Dodge City office is lined with bookshelves containing volumes on leadership, faith and success, and outside the window is the 30,000-head feedyard he owns and manages. He also is involved in a large stocker cattle operation and works closely with public livestock auctions in Dodge City, La Junta, Colo., and Enid, Okla., owned

by his uncle Ray Winter and sons Weston, Brian and Mark.

Winter has started sharing his views through paid newspaper advertisements and as a spokesman for the state's newest cattle industry group. He describes himself as simply "concerned and active."

Producing beef requires more organizational and political involvement than when he first came back to the family business with an animal science degree from Kansas State University in 1973, he said.

"Looking back, it seems like we slowly but surely lost control of our organizations and the direction that they were headed," he said. "Livestock organizations have moved away from championing the interests of independent producers and fallen into the lap of the corporate entities."

A couple of years ago, after losing faith in the Kansas Livestock Association which he had supported for years, Winter got involved with a fledgling organization called the Kansas Cattlemen's Association with offices in

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Brewster. Today he serves the 800-member group as president. KCA primarily appealed to him for two main reasons: mail-in balloting is used to increase participation in the voting process, and the Internet is used to distribute more comprehensive, balanced and timely information.

"They give you both sides of an issue," he said. "They don't pre-program your thinking."

As president, Winter wants to help expand the organization's membership roster along with its political clout. "I think KCA today probably looks very

similar to the way KLA started," he said. "It is very producer-oriented, and its first concern is to take care of the independent producer."

Combating undue corporate influence, market concentration and the packers' use of captive supplies are key concerns for Winter and the KCA. He said he remembers when he and his father Ross first heard about captive marketing agreements roughly 15 years ago.

"One day we had one of the packing firms ask for an opportunity to sit down and talk to us about an arrangement of

mutual benefit," Winter said. "If we would guarantee all of our cattle to them, they offered to pay us more than what the open market was trading. When the discussion was over, Dad made the comment that it would mean a lot of additional money to us and our family in the coming years, but he didn't think that direction would benefit the industry."

Then he said, "Dad thought it would take cattle out of the open market and place them in the hands of the packers to use in putting downward pressure on the actual cash market. After talking to all of our customers, he decided that wasn't what he wanted to do. In essence, he went back to the packer and said, 'You can have every one of our cattle if you are the high bidder.' And we have been cash sellers ever since."

Over the years, however, many feeders were unwilling to decline such attractive offers. The result: rising levels of industry-wide concentration and frequent claims of price and futures market manipulation, just as his father predicted.

"I support banning packers from owning livestock," Winter says now. "It's not necessarily a cure-all to our problem, but I believe this is a good preventive measure to keep us from becoming like the poultry and the pork industries. The more cattle the packer owns or feeds in commercial yards, the more control he will eventually have."

"Control of production leads to diminishing profitability," he said. "What we are doing is putting more pounds of beef on each carcass in order to participate in some of the programs," he said. "When we put more pounds on we assume possession of the cattle longer. We shoulder more of the responsibility than we did before, and when we send them in, we stand all discounts for the things the packer doesn't like. I don't know that all of that is necessarily bad, but if we are taking more risk, we should be compensated differently and not just getting paid less in return." Winter also supports country of origin labeling, which would require all beef to include source verification at retail.

Briefly

Showers reenter picture

In the world of weather, Friday is a long way off, but the National Weather Service sees a 30 percent chance for showers for the Colby area that evening. So there is some hope at the end of the week. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows around 30, variable winds 5-10 mph. Thursday, mostly cloudy and breezy, highs in the lower 60s, winds 5-10 out of the south, increasing late in the morning to 15-25. Thursday night, mostly cloudy, lows in the upper 30s. Friday, cloudy, highs in the middle 60s, with a 30 percent chance for thunderstorms and showers in the evening. Colby's high Tuesday was 86 and the overnight low this morning was 39. The soil temperature at the 4-inch depth is averaging 60 degrees. The records for April 24: 94 in 1906 and 25 in 1958. *(The temperatures and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)*

Youth workshop scheduled

Logan and Thomas County are sponsoring a hazardous occupational training workshop on Wednesday and Thursday, May 1 and 2, from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Thomas County Extension Office. The event is open to all youth ages 14 and 15 who will be operating farm equipment for people other than their parents, said Dennis Chandler, Thomas County extension agent. Registration is \$8 and supper will be provided. For questions, call either the extension office in Oakley at (785) 672-3245 or in Colby at (785) 462-4582.

State treasurer candidate coming

Sen. Lynn Jenkins (R-Shawnee County) will be in Colby on Thursday between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. at the Deep Rock Cafe, 1170 S. Range, to discuss her candidacy for state treasurer. Everyone is invited to "come and go" for coffee, said

Paul Steele, organizer of the event.

Golden Plains plans enrollment

Golden Plains School will conduct kindergarten enrollment and screenings for next year's kindergarten students on Thursday, April 25, from 1 to 3 p.m. Parents of children who will be five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2002, should call the school at (785) 386-4560 for an appointment.

County hosts bike, safety fair

The Thomas County Health Department will be sponsoring a free bike Rodeo and Safety Fair from 4-6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, at the Thomas County Office Complex. The event is open to children ages 6-12 with supper served. Keyna Baalman, Colby Police dispatcher, will instruct the children on aspects of bicycle use and safety. The bikes will

be inspected for any servicing they might need and the health department will register each child's bicycle with the police department. To register, call 462-4596 and give the model and make of your child's bicycle.

Rexford plans annual clean up day

The City of Rexford is having its annual clean-up campaign on Saturday, April 27, beginning at 9 a.m., said Kathi Hapke, one of the organizers. For those who would like to drop off old appliances (no freon) can do so on Friday, April 26, when a trailer will be available at Rexford City Hall for that purpose. For those unable to bring items to that location on Friday, Hapke asks that they call (785) 687-3340 or (785) 687-2400 for arrangements. For those who can volunteer time at the clean up, Hapke asks they be at the Rexford Community Building by 9 a.m. the day of the event.

