

Get ready to bake holiday foods

PINOCHLE

It was fun and games as the faithful gathered for the November Pinochle Tournament. It was only four more days until Thanksgiving and Turkey Talk filled the room. There was even snow in the forecast which would seem to make the holiday even more significant.

There are twenty-five points possible in a hand of pinochle which would add up to one hundred points in a round of four hands and would add up to eight hundred points in eight rounds. Now when you add the meld points to that, which could be as much or more than game points, it would seem like eight rounds could easily produce over a thousand points; however there has only been three tournaments that have produced over eight hundred points; therefore, an eight hundred point game is the goal of the evening, and with that in mind, forty and four took their seats in quest of the title, "Pinochle Champions".

The bidding seemed aggressive from the beginning as control of the trump suit is always an advantage; but it was coming at a price as most seemed determined to bid to the last. There were the usual sounds of success as the first round progressed but as the scores were recorded, it was the team of Mary Jane Wahlmeier and Jackie Porter who took the honors with what was to be the highest single round score of the evening. The girls were on a roll, but it was the team of Nitzi Vontz and Dee DeSaie who took second round honors, but M. J. and Jackie were still in the

lead. Only three teams were recording a one hundred point average at the end of the second round. The team of Darren McMullen and Jason Anlong took third round honors which boosted their average up to one hundred points a round but it was the team of Weldon Brooks and Elden Vincent, scoring over a hundred points each round who moved into the lead. A break was signaled for the end of round four and the level of intensity increased again as a push for a competitive score at the half-way mark is always a good thing. The team of Eldon Billips and Billy Keiswetter took fourth round honors but it was the team of Brooks and Vincent who held the lead, and was now the only team with a one hundred point average after four rounds. The team of Billips and Keiswetter were in second place, McMullen and Amlong were in third, Dee and Thelma Bushnell were in fourth and rounding out the top five was the team of Doug and Brett Gallentine.

With only one break in a Pinochle tournament, most teams were in high level planning as from here on out, every round was most important. The fifth round started with renewed vigor as once again the bidding reached a high level. The team of Doyle and Todd Brooks took fifth round honors but the team of Brooks and Vincent, hanging tough, retained the lead. But now every team was below a one hundred point per round average. The crucial sixth and seventh rounds were coming up and everyone was taking stock of the situa-

tion as a set now could be a disaster and to pass up a good hand would be a lost opportunity to stay in the running. The team of Coy Christy and John Hildebrand took sixth round honors, but the team of Brooks and Vincent held the lead for the fourth time in a row but were playing it cautious, knowing that there is no sure thing in card tournaments.

The seventh round was coming up and those who were low in score but still had a possibility were gunning for the bid as two good rounds could do the trick. Those near the top were playing it safe and hoping for good high cards and plenty of meld. The rounds seemed to be getting longer as each hand was played out and as the seventh round came to a close, the team of Joe and Jordan took the honors with the highest single round of the evening, but it was the team of Billips and Keiswetter who moved into the lead.

Top ten teams in order were: 1. Elden Billips and Billy Keiswetter; 2. Weldon Brooks and Elden Vincent; 3. Darren McMullen and Jim Amlong; 4. Margaret Magers and June Jolly; 5. Nitzi Vontz and Dee DeSaie; 6. Myron Veh and Dick Hemphill; 7. Jack Mechsner and Dave Sheley; 8. Bill Glennemeier and Rodney Stapp; 8. Joe and Jordan Durham; 10. Arnold and Dorothy Zillinger. Other teams not previously mentioned were: Larry Harmon and Julia Roeder; Jerry Darling and Wade Ambrosier; Lynn Thiele and Barry Madden; Doug and Brett Gallentine; Donna Millan and Barbara McKie; J.D. Daffer and Duane McEwen; Joyce Sumner and Eleanor Jensen; Dee and Thelma Bushnell; Jake Durham and Roger Wahlmeier.

About 85 percent of American families will bake holiday cookies, cakes and breads during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Baking can add a personal touch to meals and gifts of food. Family recipes are handed down from generation to generation, and they bring people together.

To start getting ready for all that holiday baking, clean the kitchen and invest in fresh ingredients. It may be tempting to economize and use spices left from last year, but fresh ingredients usually improve results. Buy fresh flour, sugars, leavening agents such as yeast, baking powder and baking soda, and spices.

Here are some kitchen tips:

- Clean out the refrigerator, and discard outdated products to make room for proper thawing and chilling of holiday foods.
- Invest in inexpensive freezer and refrigerator thermometers to check temperatures and protect food. The internal temperature of the refrigerator compartment should be 34 to 40 degrees, and a free-standing freezer, 0 degrees. A refrigerator's freezer compartment is unlikely to be that cold, however.
- Place a new, partly opened box of baking soda on a refrigerator shelf to absorb odors and keep the aroma from leftovers from invading fresh foods. To retain moisture and fresh flavors, cover foods before refrigerating.
- Clean the oven, and if cookies seem to take significantly more or less time to bake, check the temperature with an inexpensive (about \$5) oven thermometer.
- Gather favorite recipes and check ingredients while making a shopping list.
- Read supermarket fliers and stock up on lower-priced holiday specials such as baking ingredients and seasonal foods like canned pumpkin, chicken broth, rice or beans that can be used after the first of the year.
- Stock up on food wrap and containers for storing leftovers and

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wrapping gifts of food. Buy extras of much-used items, such as hand soap, dishwashing detergent and cooking sprays, to reduce last-minute shopping trips.

• If short on food storage, invest in stackable containers that also help to retain freshness. Some foods, such as canned fruits, vegetables and soups, can be stored in cool, dry place, such as a closet or basement.

• How long can fresh-baked cookies and breads be frozen? Breads such as Swedish tea rings are made from a rich, sweet dough that can be frozen for up to four weeks. For best results, cool the tearing completely on a rack before double-wrapping it in freezer plastic wrap or bags. Thaw wrapped, at room temperature.

While thawing, ice crystals should not be shaken out.

• To conserve freezer space, some foods can be placed in freezer bags and laid flat on a cookie sheet while freezing. Once frozen, stack or stand the frozen flat packs like books on a shelf to save space.

• To protect food safety and quality, remember that dense foods like fruit and nut breads will take more time to cool down before freezing.

• Finally, don't forget the toothpicks.

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Norton County Weather December 14th - 20th

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
48/23	45/21	43/19	48/23	43/21	45/24	35/19
Normal High	41			Sunrise 7:53 to 7:57am		
Normal Low	17			Sunset 5:16 to 5:18pm		

Warmer weather last week and over the weekend did very little to dry the fields out. However, yesterday's dry cold front and this morning's bone chilling lows have allowed for two good mornings to finish up cutting. The rest of this week temperatures warm back to above normal and the next threat of snow is still a ways off. Medium to long range weather models are hinting at a cold snap with some chances for snow starting the middle of next week through Christmas Day!

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Farmers asking about strip-till

Many farmers are asking questions about strip-till.

Strip-till is a process by which a six to ten-inch strip of ground is tilled.

The basic configuration consists of a coulters, disks and a sub-surface knife for injecting fertilizer. The supposed benefit from this system comes about from the drying and warming of the ground in the spring. This warming and drying provides an ideal environment for seedling crops, while still maintaining the benefits of no-till on the majority of the field.

However, the loss of moisture that occurs when strip-tilling could be detrimental to crop growth when conditions are dry. Another possible benefit strip-till for western Kansas producers, could be the destruction of the soil compaction zone which is prevalent in many fields.

In order to assess the value of strip-till for corn, grain sorghum and sunflowers on dryland acreage, a large field study was setup at Quinter comparing strip-till at various timings compared to no-till. All tillage treatments had 75 lbs/A of nitrogen (N) applied with no additional phosphorus. The treatments were:

- 1.) Fall applied strip-till - 50 lbs/A of N applied as UAN on Dec. 1, 2003 plus 25 lbs/A of N applied as urea 2x2 at planting.
- 2.) Winter applied strip-till - 50 lbs/A of N applied as anhydrous ammonia on Jan. 23, 2004, plus 25 lbs/A of N applied as urea 2x2 at planting.
- 3.) Spring applied strip-till - 50 lbs/A of N applied as UAN on April 19, plus 25 lbs/A of N applied as urea 2x2 at planting.
- 4.) No-till - 75 lbs/A of N applied as urea 2x2 at planting.

The results from the first year were: The field did have higher than normal rainfall between April and September (2004 - 20.51 inches, average - 17.79 inches) which is important to keep in mind when viewing the results.

Far reaching conclusions should not be drawn from this first year's results. Instead, if the weather cooperates, the study will be conducted again for a second year.

The yield from the corn comparison was winter strip-till at

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114.3, spring strip-till at 100.9, fall strip-till at 100.0, and no-till at 93.2 bu/A with an LSD of 8.6. Typically one would not expect such a distinct difference between an anhydrous ammonia application and a liquid UAN application when similar lbs of N are applied. However, this is also why the study will be completed again to see if the same trend holds true. For sunflower, spring strip-till had a high of 2,422 lbs/A, winter strip-till at 2,392, fall strip-till at 2,170, and no-till at 2,090 lbs/a with an LSD of 256. With grain sorghum there was no differences between treatments with fall strip-till at 107.2, winter strip-till at 106.1, no-till at 104.6, and spring strip-till at 104.4 bu/A.

Many farmers have asked why conventional-till is not compared in the study. The major reason is there are long-term studies completed at K-State Experiment Stations that prove no-till is significantly better than conventional-till. So, the goal of this study was to compare strip-till to the best tillage system for western Kansas.

I want to thank Four B&T Farms of Quinter for cooperating with me on this project. I always enjoy working with cooperators who are interested in trying something new. Additional thanks should be extended to Orthman, Quinstar, Yetter, Twin Diamond Industries, Taylor Implement, Hoxie Implement, Monsanto, Pioneer, NC+, T&T Chemical, and Midwest Coop for their support.

To view the results, please go to www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2/ and click on the dryland strip-till icon or visit your local county extension office to pick-up a copy.

Please e-mail me at bolson@oznet.ksu.edu or call (785) 443-1264 if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop production topic.

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