

Crop loss leads to new ideas

Over the last five years, dryland corn production has been anything but consistent.

Most farmers have experienced complete crop failures most of these years. These failures led us to question whether there are better ways to grow dryland corn that minimize the risk of crop failure.

One method being evaluated today is to plant corn skipping a row or rows. Skip-row practices were used years ago with grain sorghum. However weed control in the skipped row was a big problem without a broad spectrum postemergence herbicide. Now, with the advent of Roundup Ready corn, a treatment method is available.

Skip-row corn, when compared to the same crop planted every row at the same population, will likely yield less in years when moisture is OK. In a skip-row scenario, young plants are spaced closer together. This will cause an increase in plant competition early in the growing season, decreasing how robust the plants become. However, the skip-planted row will not have a crop growing in that space, and if kept clean of weeds, it will likely have more moisture at the end of the growing season when corn is filling out the kernels.

In 2003, research from the University of Nebraska North Platte indicated skip-row dryland corn produced 32 percent better yields than did conventional planting. In these trials, two rows were planted and two skipped.

Another treatment, where every other row was skipped, produced 17 percent better yields than the traditionally planted field. The treatments yielded 54 and 48 bushels per acre respectively compared with 41 bushels per acre for the conventional planting. The area around North Platte was dry that year, similar to northwest Kansas. In 2004, three Kansas sites evaluating skip-row corn, Tribune, Quinter, and Belleville, were established in Kansas. Unfortunately for the study, rainfall was sufficient for crop growth, with yields of over 115 bushels per acre recorded at each site. As you might expect in these conditions, corn planted every row, at the same population, typically did better.

All in all, there is some research suggesting a benefit for corn planted as skip-row in dry conditions, whereas with sufficient moisture, corn planted every row should do better.

Skip-row corn comparisons will continue at sites throughout western Kansas next year. As of right now, there are no results from Kansas that would suggest a benefit. However, farmers should keep in mind that moisture was sufficient for optimum crop growth this past year.

If you want to try skip-row corn, there are a couple of suggestions to keep in mind. If one row is planted and one skipped, half the rate of corn indicated on the seeding chart of the planter is being planted. If two rows are planted and one is skipped, then two-thirds the rate of the seed as indicated by the seeding chart is being planted.

A post emerge application will be needed to control weeds in the skipped row. I would strongly suggest using a Roundup Ready corn hybrid so glyphosate can be applied at this stage. For fields where a post emerge application will not be needed, thought, a glyphosate application will just add to the cost.

Results of the skip-row corn at Quinter, Tribune, and Belleville can be viewed by going to the website www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2/ and clicking on the skip-row icon, or visit your county extension office to pick up a copy.

Brian Olson is Kansas State University extension agronomist for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties.



About ag
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About 60 people showed up to enjoy the annual Christmas Dinner, which was sponsored by the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce Saturday. The dinner was served buffet style with the Chamber providing tur-

key, dressing, potatoes and gravy, vegetables and rolls. Those who attended to enjoy the Christmas feast were asked to bring a salad or dessert.

— Telegram photo by Veronica Monier

It's cold, then hot for holiday

The saying goes 'if you don't like the weather in Kansas, wait a day or two and it will change'.

That was certainly true last week as temperatures dropped below 10 degrees on Thursday, but then climbed up to over 50 degrees two days later in time for Christmas.

And the temperatures were by no means record setting.

Meteorologist Logan Johnson with the National Weather Service in Goodland said the area high for the last ten days in December was 72 degrees on Dec. 24, 1964. The record low, he said, was -27 degrees, which was set on Dec. 22-23 in 1989.

The fair weather that Norton had on Christmas is expected to continue throughout the week and into the new year. Temperatures are expected to drop Sunday with a small chance of snow.

Mr. Johnson said the forecast for this week is looking to be pretty warm and dry.

He said people should expect highs between 50 and 60 degrees pretty much every day this week. There is a slight chance on rain Wednesday night and Thursday, but he said it was a very slight chance.

The extended forecast for Norton is:

Tonight — Mostly clear, with a low of 28.

Wednesday — Partly cloudy, with a high around 60 with winds.

Wednesday night — a 20 percent chance of showers after 7 p.m.; partly cloudy, with a low around 36; with southwest wind.

Thursday — A 10 percent chance of showers before 7 a.m.; partly cloudy and breezy, with a high near 55.

Thursday night — Mostly clear, with a low near 28.

Friday — Mostly sunny, with a high around 50.

Friday night (New Year's Eve) — Partly cloudy, with a low around 26.

New Year's Day — Partly cloudy, with a high around 51.

Saturday night — Partly cloudy, with a low around 27.

Sunday — A slight chance of snow after 7 p.m.; mostly cloudy, with a high near 36.

Sunday night — A chance of snow, mainly after 7 p.m.; cloudy, with a low near 17.

Monday — A chance of snow.

Tax money in but, who's paying?

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The Norton County should receive about \$250,000 in sales tax this year, County Treasurer Cynthia Linner told the commissioners on Monday.

However, she couldn't tell them from where the money is coming due to a state statute, she said.

Mrs. Linner told the commissioners that her office received almost \$24,000 in sales tax revenue last week for October collections.

It takes about two months to get sales tax money, she said, because those submitting it to the state have 30 days to turn in their money and the state has another 30 days to turn it over to the counties and cities.

The county has been getting between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a month most of the year, she said.

While the commissioners were appreciative of knowing how much money they received, they would like to have some idea of who's paying the money so that they can have a better idea of where to turn on economic development.

Mrs. Linner asked the state for a report on where the sales tax is coming from but when she received it she had to sign a form that forbade her to give the information to anyone. City clerks can get the same report, she said, but they

can't give it to anyone either.

The commissioners asked County Attorney Doug Sebelius to check into the statute that was cited on Mrs. Linner's form and he said that she was right, she couldn't release the information to them even in closed session.

"Here you have a record of the sales tax and you can't give us information?" Commissioner John Miller asked.

"Yes," Mrs. Linner said. "State statute says that if I give you this information I'm ousted. I lose my job."

"What value is (this information) to us," Commissioner Dean Kruse asked.

"For economic development," Mrs. Linner said. "This would tell you where sales are occurring and in what format sales are occurring and you can build on that."

"Is it retail sales, is it the dealerships going out?" Commissioner Leroy Lang wanted to know.

"What about the city," Mr. Kruse asked. "Is the city going to be able to use this information."

"No," Mrs. Linner said. "They're (city clerks) in the same boat I'm in. If they tell you or anyone they lose their job."

"It's just amazing that this can happen," Mr. Miller said. "From everything we're taught in county government schools, this is public

record."

"It may be a statute on the books that haven't been revisited in a number of years," Mrs. Linner suggested.

"I just think it's highly unusual," Mr. Miller said. "We always have to be so careful not to hide anything. And the state of Kansas has this."

"I don't want to know who, I just want categories," Mr. Kruse said.

Mrs. Linner said her report, which is on a computer disk, lists the names of individuals and companies who pay sales tax. It's not broken down into categories.

It is not those who actually pay the tax, she said, it's the businesses with sales tax numbers, who remit the taxes to the state, who are on this list.

"I wouldn't care about the individual names at all but if you could categorize it out," Mr. Miller said. "Here we're going to spend a budget at a minimum of \$100,000 between the city and the county on economic development and you have something that would help."

Mrs. Linner said that the best way to work now would be to walk down the individual main streets

of the cities and talk to merchants.

"At this time, that's the way it needs to be done," she said.

"It's just ridiculous," Mr. Miller said. "We have to be so careful in executive session."

County Clerk Robert Wyatt suggested that the commissioners call the state revenue department and ask if there is another way to get the information they want without getting individual names.

In other business, the county:

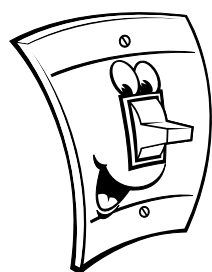
- Set the limit of millings an individual can buy from the county at 1,000 tons. Mr. Miller said he didn't think any one individual should be able to buy more than a 1,000 tons of millings because the county needs to take care of its roads as well.

- Set an end-of-month meeting for Thursday to pay bills and take care of other business.

- Went into a 10-minute closed session with County Attorney Doug Sebelius to discuss non-elected personnel.

- Appointed Steve Berry of Lenora and Warren White of Norton to fill the two vacancies on the Norton County Hospital Board.

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Norton County Weather for Dec. 28th - Jan. 3rd

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
55/28	58/30	48/24	50/26	48/28	38/25	35/20

Normal High 40
Normal Low 16
Sunrise 8:00 to 8:01am
Sunset 5:23 to 5:28pm

A shot of Arctic air last week brought a white Christmas to Corpus Christi Texas, which hasn't occurred since 1895! In Northwest Kansas we saw sub zero temperatures and a little snow before Christmas Eve, but Christmas weekend was nice! The mild late December weather will continue into the New Year. There are two systems to keep an eye on in the extended forecast, one Wednesday night into Thursday and a second Sunday night into Monday. The first moves quickly from SW U.S. into the Northern Plains, which indicates a dry slot for us. The second may be a bit slower and further south with colder temperatures and better precipitation chances early next week.

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PROPERTY TAX REPORT

At Rural Telephone and Nex-Tech, we aim to be good corporate citizens of the region. We understand the need for property taxes to help support our schools and other public resources. For the year 2004, we paid **OVER \$1.4 MILLION** in property taxes in the following counties.



Barton.....	\$14,515	Phillips.....	\$83,383
Cheyenne.....	\$231	Rawlins.....	\$1,191
Decatur.....	\$13,987	Rooks.....	\$103,908
Ellis.....	\$164,212	Rush.....	\$333
Ford.....	\$1,052	Russell.....	\$2,086
Gove.....	\$68,774	Saline.....	\$319
Graham.....	\$167,172	Scott.....	\$31
Jewell.....	\$766	Sheridan.....	\$24,362
Logan.....	\$895	Smith.....	\$75,601
Neosho.....	\$15	Thomas.....	\$6,253
Ness.....	\$25	Trego.....	\$118,496
Norton.....	\$446,042	Wallace.....	\$27
Osborne.....	\$115,240	Total.....	\$1,408,916

These property taxes together with the dollars we spend on services, payroll and upgrading our plant facilities help support the local economy.

We'd like to thank those of you who continue to put your trust and hard-earned dollars into products and services from Rural Telephone and Nex-Tech. We realize you have a choice when making purchases such as directory yellow page advertising and other telecommunication products and services. When you choose Rural Telephone and Nex-Tech, you're keeping your dollars in the local economy supporting **YOUR SCHOOLS** and **YOUR PUBLIC RESOURCES**.

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