

Upstream battle



SHAWNA HOWELL/Colby High School

Colby High School math teacher Christina Garretson and paraprofessional Brock Fairbrother took part in a recent FFA goldfish race. Participants use a straw to push the fish to the finish line. The activity was one of many the students do throughout the year.

Never too cold to snow in plains

MANHATTAN — “It’s too cold to snow” is a bit of folk wisdom that seems to crop up in central High Plains conversations every winter.

Like a lot of weather-related folklore, it contains a kernel of truth. At the same time, however, it’s wrong, said Mary Knapp, State of Kansas climatologist, who maintains the official Kansas Weather Data Library, based in Kansas State University Research and Extension.

“The truth behind the myth is that cold arctic air masses tend to be very dry. So, when one of those air masses moves south, it typically doesn’t have high enough conden-

sation rates to produce snow,” Knapp said. “For that to occur, the arctic air has to bump into some airborne water source, such as moist air moving up from the Gulf of Mexico.”

Simply put, she added, the weather never gets too cold to snow. But it can get too dry.

“For moisture to fall, the condensation rate in the atmosphere has to exceed the evaporation rate. Whenever that happens, you get precipitation - regardless of temperature. If the temperature is low enough, the precipitation will be in the form of snow,” Knapp said.

The Northwest Kansas League and its member schools is proud to be able to sponsor this message and we would take this opportunity to remind everyone that high school athletic competitions are intended to be an extension of the classroom where student athletes can learn and practice the principles of fair play, respect, team work and sportsmanship. As fans and parents we undermine these values when we constantly harass game officials. Set a good example by your behavior.

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Drought limits Texas cotton

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — West Texas cotton producer Rickey Bearden lost all 4,000 of his dryland acres to drought, and the lack of rain made his irrigated crop just average.

“I’m considerably down from last year,” he said. “Just lack of rainfall.”

Growers across Texas, the nation’s leading producer of the fluffy fiber, suffered from the drought. Despite the dry conditions, Texas is on track to harvest 5.7 million bales, the state’s fourth-largest crop ever, 32 percent below 2005.

The estimates for this year’s crop were released Monday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and were virtually unchanged from last month. They follow back-to-back record years for Texas producers. Last year, the state produced 8.5 million bales, about 700,000 bales more than 2004.

Nationally, the forecast called for 21.3 million bales to be harvested, down 11 percent from last year. Cotton is grown across the nation’s Southern tier from Virginia and the Carolinas to California.

When compared with 2005, yields are down in all cotton-producing states except Arizona, Arkansas, California, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

Monday’s USDA report projected improved yields from last month for Georgia, Louisiana and Tennessee.

Steven Brown, a cotton specialist at the University of Georgia, said he had expected the heat and drought to reduce average yields in this state to about 500 pounds per acre — barely enough to make one 480-pound bale on an acre.

“If the USDA is right, we’re going to make a respectable crop,” Brown said.

The report says Georgia growers should average 765 pounds per acre, 97 pounds more than the November estimate. It’s 85 pounds less than the record 850 pounds last year, but 51 pounds more than the five-year average of 714 pounds.

“We felt like we were on the verge of a disaster,” Brown said. “In mid-summer, it was very, very depressing. It’s good to be better than we thought.”

Growers in Arkansas and Tennessee were projected to have record-high production.

The yield average across the U.S. is 798 pounds per acre, down from 831 last year.

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