

Other Viewpoints

Drought deficit not cured by snow

The Weather Channel named it Q. Others referred to it as the Blizzard of Oz. Regardless of what it was called, last week's winter storm blasted Kansas with heavy snowfall that closed schools and businesses, hampered driving and left people digging out. Less than a week later, we were left to brace for more. The forecast called for another major winter storm – this one dubbed Rocky – to strike Sunday night in the Sunflower State. Storm Rocky was expected to pack a particularly wicked punch, with more ice and wind than Q, along with plenty of snow. Any new snow would blanket what Q left in significant totals throughout the state, including a decent amount in south-west Kansas.

Of course, more of the same would be welcome as a way to combat the drought. Even though such snowstorms create hazardous conditions for motorists in particular, there's no arguing the benefit of the moisture in a painfully dry part of the country.

Whenever snow falls, much attention is placed on the state's winter wheat. The snow from Q – a wet, heavy kind that has a way of absorbing into the ground more effectively – helped the region make strides toward erasing a lingering deficit in precipitation for the year. Snow from Storm Rocky will help, too.

But there's still a long way to go before the wheat harvest. Another dry spell could negate much of the positive precipitation of late. Combine this year's lack of moisture before last week's Storm Q with a two- or three-year deficit in precipitation, and it remains a grim picture.

Subsoil moisture levels need a boost to ensure a successful wheat crop. Farmers – and communities powered by agriculture, this one included – need to see more snow or rain raise moisture levels in the subsoil.

As inconvenient as a major snowstorm can be – and people still must use caution when heading out – it's impossible to overlook the importance of the precipitation.

And regardless of what unique name a winter storm may receive, one thing's for sure: The more wet, heavy snow it has to offer, the better.

– The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

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155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

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State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

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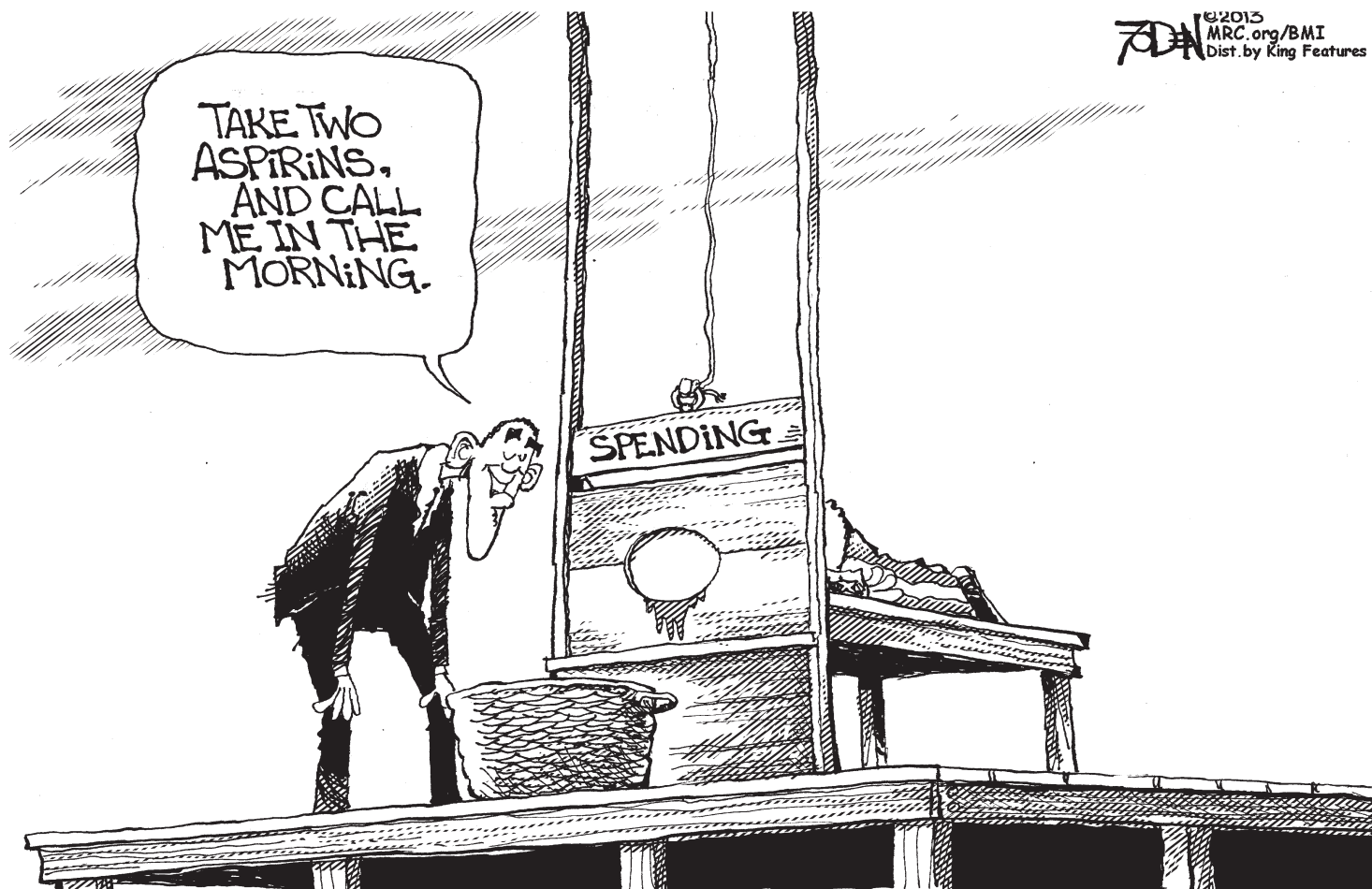
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72.



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Resources made, not born

During the last couple of decades, some environmental groups have been less than kind to agriculture. They have bombarded the public with figures on soil loss, pesticide-related mishaps and alleged failed attempts at using herbicides and other crop protectors. Their figures are oftentimes unverifiable.

Technology is often labeled as the No. 1 environmental enemy by some of these groups. Food producers – farmers and ranchers – view technology as the application of knowledge. As humans, we survive by adapting the environment to our needs.

Take away technology and humans would be just like other primates – confined to tropical regions and subject to extinction due to environmental changes. To survive, mankind has changed his environment while conserving resources and continually creating new ones.

Resources are made not born. Land, ores, petroleum – the raw materials of our planet – do not inherently further human purposes.

Man determines what is useful and how to use it. Topsoil becomes a resource when a farmer prepares the soil and plants wheat seed, for example. Ores become resources when metals are extracted from them.

During the past two centuries, technology has been creating resources more rapidly than humans have been consuming them. By every measure of price and availability, resources have become more abundant.



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

Without science and technology today's farmers and ranchers would be unable to feed the masses. Farmers use technology responsibly and adopt new farming methods and practices by attending training sessions and courses.

But new farm technology is expensive. It is in the best interest of farmers to use it carefully and sparingly. Misuse would add to the cost of production, which would result in an even lower return on their investment.

Farmers use agricultural chemicals only when necessary. When they use chemicals, farmers follow label directions designed for public health and safety. When a rancher uses antibiotics and other animal health products for their stock, they follow proper drug use practices. When new advances in biotechnology are discovered, farmers must abide by stringent testing and monitoring practices that ensure only safe products in the marketplace.

Food produced in the United States is safe. More than four decades of Food and Drug

Administration testing has shown the majority of our fruits and vegetables have no detectable pesticide residues. This underscores that American farmers use pesticides properly. Our grain and cereal crops are among the cleanest and most wholesome in the world.

Countless laws help ensure our food is safe. Billions of dollars are spent to support food and agricultural safety and quality inspection. The private sector, combined with state and local governments, also spends billions on similar activities.

Farmers and ranchers support efforts to evaluate and enhance the current regulatory and food monitoring system. Agricultural producers want to work with all parties toward maintaining safe food, but this industry must avoid policy changes that are based solely on fear or false information.

Decisions affecting the course of agricultural production remain critically important and will have far reaching implications on our quality of life. We must be careful in determining long-term policies. Farmers and ranchers will continue to maximize their production capacity with an ever-watchful eye on food safety, quality and our environment.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Universities mark 150 years of service

The historian James Truslow Adams once wrote: "There are two types of education. One should teach us how to make a living, and the other how to live."

Kansas State University and Emporia State University have been successful at both for more than a century.

This year marks the 150th anniversary for both institutions. Throughout the decades, these universities have made a significant impact on our state and changed lives for the better.

In 1863, K-State opened its doors as America's first land-grant college. Classes began with 52 students, but the university did not remain small for long. Today, nearly 24,000 students from all 50 states and more than 90 countries attend K-State.

Recognized by the Princeton Review as one of our nation's best colleges, K-State has a reputation of academic excellence. Wildcats are also known for their commitment to one another. In 2006, students created K-State Proud to raise money for students struggling to remain at school. Over the last six years, students have raised more than \$550,000 to help their peers continue their studies.

If you ask any K-State alum what they love most about their school, they will probably tell you it's the K-State family. The spirit of camaraderie between alumni across generations is remarkable. The names of several alumni are familiar to most Kansans, including Gov. Sam Brownback, Gen. Dick Myers – the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – and perhaps the most proud Wildcat I know, my friend and colleague Sen. Pat Roberts.

Over the last few decades, I have witnessed incredible growth and success at K-State, which can be largely attributed to the strong



U.S. Senator Jerry Moran

• Moran's Memo

leadership of former President Jon Wefald, who served for 23 years. In 2009, President Kirk Schulz began his tenure at K-State, and has continued to lead the university on to new heights.

For the past 150 years, Emporia State University has been changing lives. Emporia State was founded in 1863 as Kansas' first school for training teachers and originally was known as the Kansas Normal School. In its first year, the president and only teacher, Lyman Kellogg, taught 18 students on the second floor of the district school house.

Today, 6,500 students from 45 states and 55 countries are enrolled at Emporia State. Consistently ranked as a Tier 1 Regional University by U.S. News & World Report.

Whether students pursue a career in education or another field, many continue their studies or return to Emporia State for graduate work. Among the Kansas Regents universities, Emporia State students earn the highest percentage of graduate degrees – one-third of all the degrees earned each year.

Today, more than 75,000 alumni from 50 states and 80 countries are proud to be Emporia State Hornets. Among the many distinguished alumni are Minnie Grinstead, who was the first woman elected to the Kansas Legislature in 1918, and Robert Mott, a World War II veteran who later helped create National Public Radio.

I am confident the new President, Dr.

Michael Shonrock, will make certain Emporia State continues to improve the lives of students for years to come.

To commemorate this anniversary, Sen. Pat Roberts and I introduced two resolutions, both of which were approved by the U.S. Senate, to congratulate the students, faculty and alumni of K-State and Emporia State for 150 years of excellence in higher education.

Happy Anniversary to the Wildcats and the Hornets – may the next 150 years be even brighter than the last.

Jerry Moran of Hays is the junior U.S. senator from Kansas. His committee appointments include Appropriations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Veterans Affairs; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and the Special Committee on Aging. To sign up for his weekly newsletter, go to moran.senate.gov.

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

