

Ferrets may join dog fight

County, ranchers cross swords over prairie dogs

By **TOMBETZ**

The Goodland Star-News

A prairie dog war embroils Logan County, where at least two landowners want to keep some of the squirrels, but the county commissioners vow to eradicate them.

There's more at stake than just a couple of rodent-infested ranches, though. The landowners have invited federal officials to restock the rare black-footed ferret on their pasture.

In the wide-open west, where stockmen view prairie dogs as field-ruining vermin, nearly as welcome as rattlesnakes, others fear having an endangered species that lives with and eats prairie dogs will force the end of any attempt to control the pests.

To put it mildly, they're against it.

That's why a county-hired exterminator tried to enter land owned by the two renegade ranchers last week to poison the critters. To add insult to injury, county commissioners planned to send the landowners the bill under a state law with allowed the county to kill prairie dogs for landowners who won't.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been working with Larry Haverfield and Gordon Barnhart, who have spreads south of Russell Springs, to see if the black-footed ferret could be reintroduced on their ground.

The Logan County commissioners have been a major roadblock in the effort, turning down prairie-dog management plans for both men. Mr. Haverfield has 6,000 acres and Mr. Barnhart 1,500.

Last week, Mr. Haverfield said, a Wyoming company called Diamond Dot had sent Troy Hausauer to Barnhart's land to start poisoning the prairie dogs. Mr. Haverfield said the Wyoming firm was hired by the county. He said he told Mr. Hausauer and a sheriff's deputy that the land was going to be used by cattle the next week.

"Barnhart's daughter found a lot of poison on the surface," Mr. Haverfield said Saturday. "They poisoned about 20 acres, but I put Barnhart in touch with the boss, Mitch Esponda, and I don't think they will be coming back on our land."

Mr. Haverfield said Jerry Wilson, an investigator from the Kansas Department of Agriculture, was out to check the land this week.

"We found out who you call when they come in on you," Mr. Haverfield said.

Mr. Haverfield said he and Mr. Barnhart have been working with the Fish and Wildlife Service for about a year to keep their prairie dogs and plan the reintroduction of the endangered ferrets, so elusive and rare they once were thought to be extinct.

The service planned an open house Tuesday in Oakley from noon to 6:30 p.m. to talk about the plan, Mr. Haverfield said.

"We have lots of wildlife on our ranch," Mr. Haverfield said. "Yesterday I saw a flight of about six hawks flying together north of the house, and saw two eagles sitting on a windmill several miles northeast of the house."

"We run a lot of cattle, and want to bring in the ferrets to help control the dogs. Barnhart and I have about 7,500 acres of land with prairie dogs."

"The neighbors and the commissioners are worried that bringing the ferrets will keep them from farming. The federal wildlife people are hoping that the open house will give people a chance to learn more about what we are trying to do."

Mr. Haverfield said the open house will be a great educational opportunity. A live ferret is coming from Wyoming on the way to the Hutchison Zoo.

"We have a great many people interested in bringing the ferrets back," he said. "There is a lot of emotion behind the opposition, and it is hard to get the right information out."



Dinner is a hit

SPOON IN HAND, Esther Langness (above) enjoyed mashed potatoes and gravy at the community Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday at St. John's Lutheran Church. Edwin Black (right) went through the line to get food at the dinner. The church served over 120 people a traditional turkey-and-ham dinner for the holiday.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



* Pantry used more this year than last

(Continued from Page 1A)

out of some staple items like sugar, canned vegetables, laundry products, cleaning products, personal hygiene, toilet paper and fruit. She said the pantry could also use canned meats like tuna. They also take filled punch cards that people don't use to help get discounts at the grocery store.

The amount of food the person receives depends on how many people are in the family. She said she tries to put enough of one item in the box for a meal for the family.

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* Stores keep busy

(Continued from Page 1A)

This year, said Mr. Anderson, it seems to be the whimsical stuff that people like, including moose and reindeer items.

Down the street at Addleman Drug, owners Rusty and Sharon Addleman have a lot of gift ideas. Mr. Addleman said he didn't think business was any better or worse than the last few years. The light parade, he said, brought a lot of people downtown. Mrs. Addleman said she thought Friday was a good day.

This year, she said, they have some new items, including moving pictures, additions like chocolate-covered sunflower seeds and scarves in Kansas State University, University of Kansas and Decatur Community High School colors, and a new fragrance line called Xela, aroma therapy sticks for the house.

Across the street at Ward Drug, owner Kurt Vollertsen said he was pleased with the traffic Friday and Saturday. Friday was really good, he added, with the parade capping everything off, and people stayed around after it was over.

Mr. Vollertsen said the store is offering scent diffusers again this year and also the Willow Tree collectibles line, which is growing.

* Cable service changes

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pany had planned to drop the Bunker Hill station and the only Denver station it offers.

Currently, he said, Eagle offers KWGN, "the WB," out of Denver. He said in order to carry the station, they have to get a waiver for the Wichita Direct Marketing Area. Mr. Miller said they can't control the programming, and the Wichita station has first right of refusal on the service. Mr. Miller said the company is working on the waiver and the paperwork needed to keep the Denver station.

"Eagle Communications," he said, "is always interested in helping customers with the best programming possible. We are eager to make the changes to better serve the customers."

pantry also receives a food voucher for Raye's Grocery for items like milk, eggs and bread. The Ministerial Association then pays for those items.

Besides food items, she said, the pantry also accepts cash donations to help pay for the food vouchers.

The pantry is at 109 N. Griffith.

Samway
5x9
Full color
oh/adv
Ad is in GDN