

'Every year is different'

(Continued from Page 1)

won't really compare '76 and '87. "There's no back moisture this year," he said. The August rains produced a lot of weed growth and forced Martin to cultivate. That work on the soil lost the moisture. Then two months of Indian summer with that warm, dry weather just complicated things more. "Between the bugs and hot weather, it put a hard stress on the wheat," Martin said. "The last little rain we had wasn't much to work with. I haven't even checked my sprouts in parts." Martin pulled his rain charts and the story was there. (See adjoining article.) And, on top of the lack of rain, the "temperature is

aggravating. No carryover. We've had freezing nights every night for two weeks and that's a deciding factor. When it thaws in the day, it draws the moisture out." Is there a way to plan for this? Nope. "Every year is different," Martin answers. "That's the reason a farmer can keep records every year and it won't make any difference. It's always different." Another North Lexington area farmer adds another chapter to a growing horror story. Wind. Roy Martin said he was sitting on a "powder keg." This writer didn't understand that statement until Fred Nelson said the county wheat growers have avoided the worst problems...wind erosion.

Rain records tell dry story



Don Gilliam

Three and a half months ago, everyone in Morrow County could be heard screaming at the top of his and her lungs. "Stop the rain!"

Today, in the middle of December, it's a little different story. Every farmer, and every citizen for that matter, should be pounding drums or something to get old man weather to get together with Mother Nature and drop a bombshell full of water on this rain forsaken land.

And people have a good deal to yell about. This is the driest three month seeding period since 1911 according to moisture records taken in by Don Gilliam, his father and his grandfather over the last 64 years!

It's not that people enjoy wading around in the gutters. But if they want to see a prosperous economy in this county come harvest time, they'd accept the wet gutters for some moist soil and fertile wheat.

The records just don't lie. The normal rainfall, averaged out over the last 64 years, is 3.46 inches for the months of September, October and November. This year, we've been graced with .97 inches of rainfall in Heppner.

In the north Lexington area, those figures are even more

staggering. At Roy Martin's ranch, and Fred Nelson will echo, the rainfall for the three month period has been a measly .77 inches.

According to Heppner rain charts from Gilliam, the normal precipitation for September is .73 inches; we've had .27. The normal for October is 1.29; we've had .24. The normal for November is 1.44, the rainiest month of the year usually; and, we've had just .46 inches.

Gilliam's records have to be pretty accurate and static. He says the recordings have been taken within 100 yards of the same spot since 1911. Gilliam's grandfather started the work for Heppner in 1911. His father took over 23 years later in 1934. And Gilliam took over 33 years later in 1966.

It's not the driest November on record, but it is the driest three month fall seeding period.

The 1976 total of .46 inches compares to .31 inches in 1956 (the lowest), .45 in 1959 and .48 in 1969.

In 1967, although there was a total annual rainfall of 8.64 inches, the three month period farmers are worrying about received 1.99, over an inch more than this year. That's the closest three month comparison.

What can we expect? Who knows. The normal annual rainfall for December is 1.38 inches. With a half of the month already torn off the calendar, this country has been sacked with just .13 inches so far.

The normal rainfall for a five month period, starting in July and ending in November is 4.16, based on Gilliam's 64 year figures. That period in 1976 had had 3.48 inches, most of that coming from August's unusual and untimely and practically useless rain.

At the Roy Martin ranch in North Lexington area, the figures are just as bad and maybe even a little worse.

The 1976 Sept.-Nov. total of .77 inches at Martin's is only comparable to 1974, in modern times. In 1974, the ground took on .89 inches. Other three month periods over the last six years are 1975: 1.71 inches; 1973: 5 inches; 1972: 1.77 inches; 1971: 2.72 inches; and in 1970: 2.04 inches.

The average since 1970 in that three month period has been 2.30 inches of rainfall. This year, the total is .77 dry inches of rain.

Martin, in the 1930s, was forced to move from his home because of devastating winds that literally blew his land and home away.

"If we'd have had wind right now," Nelson said, "the whole county would be moving."

Traces of Mother Nature blowing her stack are already evident. Thanksgiving Day and Dec. 8 were hard blowers. They caused minimal damage, but they dried the earth out more and just set up another windy problem.

"The worst hazard is the blow potential," Nelson said. "The thing that's saved us so far is that we haven't had below zero weather and wind."

Nelson said he looked at some late seeded wheat and the sprouting doesn't look very strong. He just hoped for harvest time.

In 1935, he said, making a comparison, he and his father turned over much of their wheat land to 50 cents an acre sheep pasture because they couldn't even get their seed back.

Nelson agreed that the August rain was lost to cultivation, but said deep furrow seeding could stand colder weather. But, he added, it still needs moisture.

Standing in a furrowed field in the North Lexington area is scary to farmers. It's mid-December and a walk through the field stirs dust.

Clouds form almost every day, but in a couple hours it seems they're gone and blue skies are back.

This writer hopes that nobody will have to read this story. If it rains between the time this is pecked out and the time it hits the streets, then everyone can just thank their lucky stars or whoever.

A prayer probably wouldn't hurt.



Fred Nelson, a North Lexington farmer, checks an unusually moist area of soil.

Rules and Regulations of Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District

- The Board of Directors shall at all times have full and complete control of Heppner Masonic Cemetery and such other cemeteries now within the boundaries of Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District, which are owned by the District, or which may hereafter be acquired. The Board of Directors shall control the use, care, management, restrictions and protection, including improvements and embellishment of the grounds, which may be deemed requisite and proper to secure and promote the general interests of the cemeteries.
- All maps, plats, books, interment records, surveys, etc., will be kept at the office of the Secretary of the District or his assistant.
- Visitors are reminded that these grounds are sacredly devoted to the purpose of interment of deceased human bodies and that a strict observance of proper decorum will be required. All visitors are expected to respect the solemnity of the place and to strictly observe these rules and regulations which have been established and adopted by the Board of Directors for the purpose of securing proper use, quiet and good order at all times within the grounds.
- Funeral designs and floral pieces will be removed as soon as they become unsightly or interfere with the care of the Cemetery. In no case will responsibility be assumed for articles which may be placed or left upon the lots.
- Lots will be sold by the Secretary of the Board or his assistant. All lots are conveyed by deed for burial purposes only and are sold subject to these rules and regulations. No lot may be sold, transferred or assigned by the owner without the consent of the Board of Directors.
- A statement of every burial must be given to the Secretary of the Board or his assistant, giving the name of the person interred, the owner of the lot and the date of interment, so that a correct registry may be made. No disinterment shall be permitted except with the consent of the Board and under strict compliance with the laws of the State of Oregon.
- The temporary marker placed on the grave at the time of the funeral may be removed at the end of three (3) months and such grave, not otherwise marked, shall be located from the records of the Secretary or his assistant.
- No money shall be paid to any employee of the cemeteries, other than by the District, as a reward fee or wage for service performed. Employees are forbidden to take orders or instructions for work unless issued by the proper officers of the Cemetery District.
- All complaints must be addressed to the Secretary of the District in writing.
- All open and closing of graves, grading and digging, shall be done only by employees of the Cemetery District.
- All that portion of the Heppner Masonic Cemetery lying South of Lots 53 to 72 in Block 18, lying South of Lots 28 to 36 in Block 20, lying South of Lots 36 to 40 in Block 17, lying South of Spaces 7 and 50 in Block 15, all as set forth on the old plat of Heppner Cemetery, shall be designated as the "New Cemetery" where an endowment plan has been adopted and perpetual care is required. All that portion of the entire Cemetery lying North of the above designated line shall be known as the "Old Cemetery".
- In the New Cemetery, the Board hereby prohibits enclosures or curbs of any kind. Permanently placed ornaments, chairs, glass vases, artificial flowers, toys or any other article that may be considered objectionable in the care of the cemetery are prohibited and the Board reserves the right to remove the same with or without notice to the owner. In no case will responsibility be assumed for articles which may be placed or left upon the lots.
- Perpetual care as herein referred to shall consist of keeping the ground sown to grass, which shall be kept watered and cut and all avenues surrounding them properly designated and free from obstructions. All markers shall be kept in proper position, and no one shall be permitted to make any alterations or additions to the now existing monuments or markers, or surface of soil, without first obtaining permission from the Cemetery Board.
- In the New Cemetery only one grave marker, not more than 12 inches by 24 inches in size will be permitted on each grave, except that a double-sized marker may be used on two adjacent graves. All stones must be set flush with the surface of the ground in concrete four (4) inches deep with a four (4) inch skirt about the stone, both stone and skirt set at sod level by the employees of the cemetery. No metal or concrete covers for graves shall be permitted.
- In the New Cemetery the planting of trees, shrubbery or flowers on lots will not be permitted, except that planting of trees and shrubs may be done at points other than graves under the supervision of the Board of Directors.
- In the New Cemetery the cost of a single grave space shall be \$125.00 which includes Perpetual Care as above defined but shall not include the cost of opening and closing of the grave. In all burials in the new cemetery, either a steel vault or a concrete grave interliner is required.
- In that portion of Heppner Masonic Cemetery not included in the New Cemetery, there shall be no restrictions as to gravestones, markers, vases or curbs, except that curbs, marker and gravestone bases shall be set flush with the surface of the ground and shall be provided with a four(4) inch concrete apron. The price for lots in the Old Cemetery shall be \$155.00 for a full lot of six spaces and \$95.00 for a one-half lot of three spaces. In the single grave section of the Old Cemetery, spaces are \$55.00 each. In the original purchase of gravespace in the Old Cemetery, a full lot with Perpetual Care may be bought for \$375.00 and a one-half lot of three gravespaces with Perpetual Care at the cost of \$225.00. In the original purchase of a single gravespace in the Old Cemetery with Perpetual Care, the cost shall be \$125.00.
- Perpetual Care in the Old Cemetery may be had on a full lot of six gravespaces for \$262.50 or on a one-half lot for \$162.50. In the single gravespace section of the Old Cemetery, Perpetual Care may be had on a single grave for \$87.50 but Perpetual Care will not be provided on less than one-half lot in other sections of the Old Cemetery where the gravespaces are sold by lots and half lots. In this section of the Cemetery, all new graves shall be provided with a concrete grave interliner or a steel vault. When Perpetual Care is established on a lot in the Old Cemetery, the curbing may be removed and the ground re-leveled in the discretion of the Board of Directors.
- Perpetual Care on lots in the Old Cemetery shall consist of grassing and sodding the lot and alleys about the lot and keeping the grass watered and cut and the stones thereon kept in proper position.
- Annual Care on lots in the Old Cemetery may be had for \$10.00 per year, regardless of size. Such care shall consist of turfing, grassing and keeping the grass watered and cut and, insofar as is possible, keeping the lot free from weeds. Payment for such annual care shall be due to the Secretary of the Board of Directors, on or before the first day of March of each year. Should such payment not be received by April first of each year, such Annual Care will be discontinued.
- The Board of Directors may, by a two-thirds vote, make such amendments, changes or revisions to these rules and regulations as they may deem necessary or proper to secure and promote the best general interests of the cemeteries of the District. It should be understood that regulations pertaining to "Old Cemetery" and "New Cemetery" in the foregoing Rules and Regulations apply to Heppner Masonic Cemetery.

The foregoing rules and regulations, were approved and adopted by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District at its regular meeting on April 7, 1976, effective July 1, 1976.

JOHN PFEIFFER, Chairman
ELAINE S. GEORGE, Secretary-Treasurer
CLARENCE BAKER, Board Member

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