



Table Tennis players from Haiti and Thailand thrilled a scant crowd at the Heppner High School gym last Saturday night with their top-notch play. Referee Tom Modica added his touch to the World Championship match.



## 1977 drought cost Oregon ranchers \$million, according to OSU survey

The dust has settled, and the official figure is in: Oregon's cattle ranchers took a beating of more than \$85 million during the drought of 1977.

W. Edward Schmisser, Oregon State University agricultural and resource economist, presented results of a drought impact survey to members of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association during the group's annual meeting at the Portland Sheraton Friday.

Highlights of the survey, to which nearly one-quarter of the cattle producers in 18 eastern Oregon counties responded, revealed that:

—Eighty per cent of the ranchers suffered some economic loss because of the drought.

—More than 130,000 animals were sold because of drought conditions. The sales represented an estimated \$40 million loss to ranchers due to smaller calf-crop, selling feeders at lower weights and selling breeding stock at slaughter prices.

—Ranchers bought 210,000 tons of additional hay, 20,000 tons of grain and 13,000 tons of supplements that would not have been needed during a normal year.

—Twenty per cent of the ranchers hauled additional water to their animals, up from the seven per cent who normally haul water. Total water hauled was 40 million gallons over 500,000 miles. Hauling took an additional 78,000 hours of labor and cost ranchers more than \$325,000 in extra gas, labor, vehicle maintenance and depreciation.

—That \$85 million figure excludes losses to grain crops and any additional losses due to the health of the animals or breeding problems brought about by the drought. Additional interest payments on loans that ranchers had to take out also were not included in that total," Schmisser said.

Yet few of the ranchers indicated they would quit the business following the hard year. In fact, more than 80 per cent of those who reduced herd size during the drought plan on rebuilding herd numbers.

"Of those rebuilding, half the ranchers plan to rebuild their herds within the next two years, and another 35 per cent said they will take between two and four years to rebuild. And most of those who plan to rebuild will raise most of their

own replacement animals," Schmisser said.

This latter rebuilding group, Schmisser cautioned, may find themselves reaching peak production after cattle prices have peaked.

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