

Bunny barns in Fuller Canyon

Area rancher, builder begin new enterprise



Dexter Miles with "friend" who models the "bunny boxes" which can be put into cages for the nesting does.

Fuller canyon area rancher, Dexter Miles has expanded his grain and hay ranch to include an estimated 500 rabbits. Miles, who has been in Morrow Co. since 1951 and the Fuller canyon area since 1971 says the reason for expansion at this time is that a new processing plant, Ore-Best, opened up in Oregon City last fall which hopefully will help to stabilize the price and the market for rabbit fryers.

Morrow Co. has some "backyard operations" of 70 - 100 does, but Miles plans five barns, 12' x 150' which will house 100 does and 12 bucks each. This number was not arbitrary, but based on research which indicates the amount of work to provide a full time job and the size return to support the payroll for one man, reports Miles. "And we hope this is true," he continued.

He plans to raise primarily New Zealand White rabbits with a few Californians. He says the all white pelts are preferred because they can be dyed any color desired.

The pelts are secondary; however, the low fat, low cholesterol white meat is becoming more in demand for diet conscious people according to Miles. Four "working does" are theoretically able to produce the same amount of meat as a beef cow in one year.

Miles is building the barns with the help of his sons, Craig, Darrel, and Larry Duffey and David and Mel Piper. Miles says that Mel is primarily responsible for the barn's

which allows the rabbits to drink fresh water a drop at a time. In the winter, the water will be heated to prevent freezing.

The rabbits are fed four, six or eight ounces of food each evening, depending on which stage they are in, says Miles. The rationing is necessary for economic reasons as well as to control the growth rate of the rabbits so that they reach the optimum fryer size. Larger rabbits and "burned out" breeding stock must be sold as stewers for a lower price. The rabbits will be sold live to Ore-Best which tentatively will send a truck to the rabbitry every week.

Piper predicts the first litter about the middle of May. One week before the does kindle, he says they will be contained in one-half of their cages where a "bunny box" has been placed, so that they will begin building their nests. After the does kindle, they may be bred again in 14 days. This means that a "working doe" should produce a litter every 45 days. Piper projects eight to ten weeks as the time for a rabbit to reach optimum fryer size.

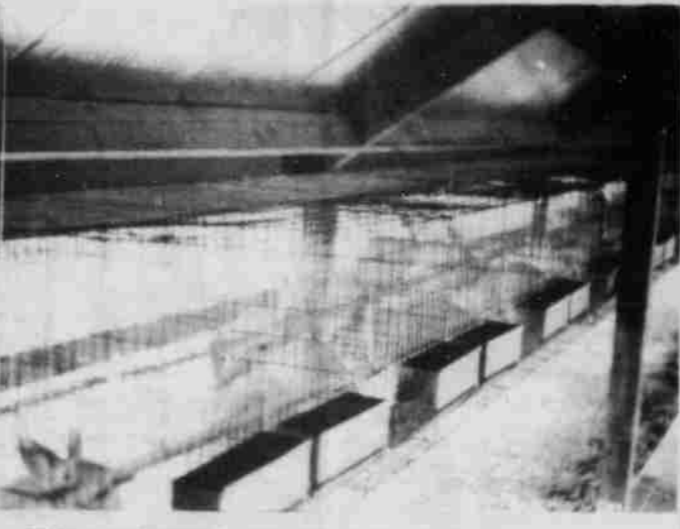
When the doe is confined to the nest half of the cage, the first litter will remain in the other half of the cage, Miles points out, because rabbits are territorial animals and tend to become confused if they are moved around too much.

Miles and Piper seem to have done a lot of research and preparation for this new venture. Not only have they designed cages which allow them to haul a large number of rabbits in a small space, but also a lighting system and a radio with speakers to settle the rabbits and deter predators.

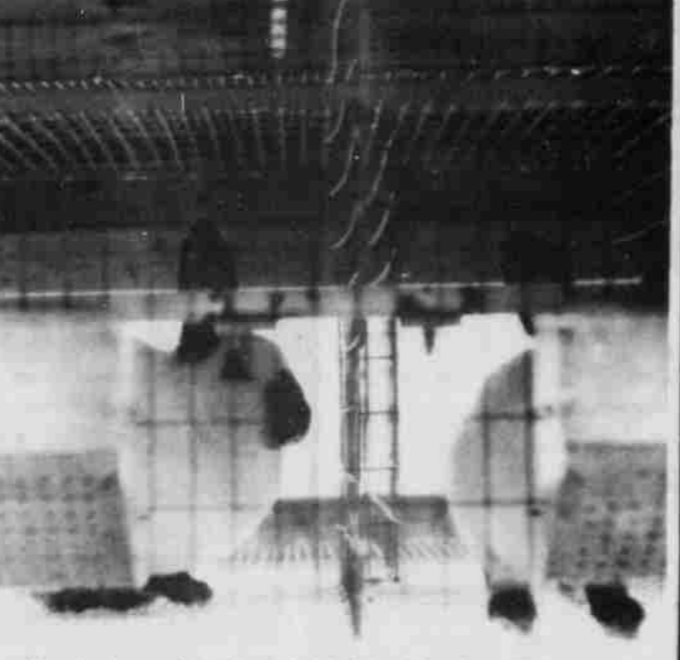
At this point, Miles says that they have no plans for direct sale to local markets, but they will not turn down any as long as it does not interrupt their quota to their processor. Miles says they are also interested in cooperating with smaller raisers in the area. He says that he sees this not as competition but as a benefit to the industry, and "only time will tell..."



Mel Piper modified several barn designs to come up with the result he has built here.



This row of young does is now being cared for in one of the completed barns.



Two bucks peek out from behind their feeders. The pipe in the foreground is their fresh water supply.

The Fifth Quarter

Sports by Mike Oths

Allow me at least one more week on the college basketball scene before I turn my crystal ball toward the baseball diamond. As always, the NCAA Tournament has had its share of "stories," and its share of non-stories. Some seasons, we have what I would refer to as "Coach" tournaments. The year that Ray Meyer finally made it to the Final Four, the year that Marquette won the title for a retiring Al McGuire, John Wooden's last season, and Dean Smith's first title (two years ago) were all "Coach" tournaments. Some years we have "Individual" tournaments. Last year was a good example, as we all watched to see if Ralph Sampson could get his title. Another "Individual" tournament was the year that matched Larry Bird and Indiana State against Michigan State with Magic Johnson. There are also "power team" tournaments, "upset" tournaments, "Cinderella" tournaments, etc.

The labels that get attached to the NCAA are mainly the work of the networks, which need to add some continuity to their rather lengthy telecasts. Nevertheless, the themes are very real for those of us who follow the tournament carefully.

This year's NCAA blowout hasn't really fallen into a neat category, yet. The obvious first candidate to dominate the media during the month of March was Ray Meyer's swansong at DePaul. Had the Blue Demons stayed alive, the Coach's retirement party would have undoubtedly overshadowed the games themselves. The Kentucky-Louisville rematch—a very hot item last year—has become old hat, drawing little recognition beyond the fact that it was a power match-up in the Midwest Regional.

The Cinderella theme was very close to grabbing the Brent Musburger Emmy award. The Dayton Flyers, with a lineup about the size of Parkrose High School, very nearly crowded their way into the party in Seattle. I could write about this topic for several days, so suffice it to say that Patrick Ewing and his Beasts from the East put a decisive caper on the Cinderella story (Virginia is sort of Cinderella, but not really.) Maybe we can call this one the "Bit-Time Wrestling-Macho" tournament. With the aforementioned Mr. Ewing and his not-so-merry men, the Kentucky gang of overgrown tight-ends, and Akeem the Dream and his bonecrushing slam-dunk artists from Houston, this tournament might break the record for broken heads, broken backboards and George Foreman-type stares.

A clue: if the Coaches mix it up, make NCAA Observations: Those who are screaming for Ralph Miller's hide are the purest example of fair-weather, what-have-you-done-for-me-lately types. Fortunately for Beaver fans, Ralph won't listen to a word they say. Take it from a pure Duck fan, I'll contribute the first ten bucks if Ralph will retire tomorrow. Unless, of course, O.S.U. fans expect John Wooden to come out of retirement to take up residence at Gill Coliseum.

Lefty Driesell sure went from Renaissance man to mere mortal in a hurry. Ditto for Jim Valvano at N.C. State.

Finally, all those whose favorite team in the NCAA is now "Anybody except another ACC team," please join me in line. Additionally, North Carolina's ouster means that Dick Vitale on ESPN will only talk about Michael Jordan, about 67,000 more times.

Vitale's ability to work Michael Jordan's name into every basketball statement reminds me of the way Howard Cosell used to inject Muhammad Ali comments into every conceivable boxing situation.

(NEXT WEEK: The fearless predictor of pennant races calls the shots).

Sheriff's Report

The Morrow County Sheriff's Department at the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner handled the following calls, cases and reports during the past week:

On March 19, a Boardman ambulance responded to U & I in regards to an injured female. She was transported to Good Shepherd Community Hospital in Hermiston.

On March 20, the Morrow Co. Sheriff's Department arrested Ted Sampson, 36, of Irrigon on an Irrigon Justice Court warrant for Failure to Appear on a charge of Permitting Livestock to Run at Large. He posted bail and was released.

On March 22, Don McElhigott of Ione, reported to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office the theft of an electric fence control from the circle on S.K. Farms, Boardman. The theft allegedly occurred between March 14 and 19, 1984. The approximate value of the control is \$70.

On March 24, an ambulance responded to Second Street in Ione and transported a female with unknown problems to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner.

On March 25, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Joseph E. Ramos, 36, of Echo for allegedly Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants. He was released on his own recognizance.

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Sifting through the TIMES

(Editor's note: This revised, sometimes weekly column will be an attempt to highlight a portion of the more interesting and newsworthy—in the judgment of this writer—stories from the pages of Gazettes past.)

10 YEARS AGO
A record school budget of \$1,071,178 (amount outside the six percent tax base support) passed by a vote of 409 to 191. The tax increased 15.1 percent over the previous year. The budget passed by a wide margin in every precinct of the county except Ione where the levy passed by only four votes.

The Office Tavern of Ione was robbed of \$1,000 between 1 a.m. and noon of Sunday before the paper's publication. Bob Oswalt, then owner, reported no forced entry, stating that a strong box and two money bags had been taken. He surmised that someone had hidden inside before closing time and waited for everyone to leave or that he had forgotten to lock the door.

Joseph L. Williams, vice president of Portland General Electric of Portland reported that P.G.E. had filed an Application with the Atomic Energy Commission for a construction permit for eastern Oregon's first nuclear generating plant.

Reo J. Russell and his son, Ronald, were reunited in Lexington after no communica-

tion with each other for 25 years. Ronald and his mother had moved to California after his parent's divorce. Russell wrote a letter to and was aided in locating his son by the Governor of California, Ronald Reagan.

A.S.C.S. Executive Director Sherwood M. Nicholas warned farmers to plan ahead with bulk fuel suppliers to receive a 100 percent allocation of the fuel they used the previous year for spring work.

25 YEARS AGO
Hehisch, Heppner High School's newspaper received first place award from the National Scholastic Press Competition. The newspaper was one of four mimeographed papers to receive this award nationally.

Heppner cable TV added a third channel, KPVT from Portland. The two channels previously available in Heppner were KEPR from Pasco and KGW from Portland.

A front page story clarifies that the consolidation of Boardman and Irrigon high schools was ordered by the Morrow Co. School Board in February. An account from the previous week had been in error.

50 YEARS AGO
It was announced by Lucy E. Rodriguez, president of the Heppner Public Library Association, that the library would be open in its new quarters at city hall.

Wheatland Baseball league which included the town of Heppner, Ione, Condon, Fossil, Arlington and Umatilla was preparing for the opening game of the season. The season included, 10 games. A new rule this year stated that each team could have one "hired" player which was different from the previous year's rule which allowed no "hired" players.

The first annual Morrow Co. Homemakers conference was held at Cecil Grange Hall. It was attended by 126 women representing all parts of the county.

W. Smith arranged the meeting, the theme of which was, "Can food and clothing change the personality?"

The "Ione News" column reported that a fire had destroyed the Murray barn north of Ione.

Over the Tee Cup

Over the tee cup Willow Creek Country Club will begin the golf season with Ladies Day, April 3. According to a spokesperson for the event, cotee will be served at 9:30 and play will begin at 10 a.m.

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