

The Heppner Gazette-Times

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper



	January 7 - January 13		Rain	Snow on
	High	Low		Gr.
Tues.	51	24	Trace	1"
Wed.	56	35	.04	1"
Thurs.	41	28	.0	1" foggy
Fri.	44	29	.0	1"
Sat.	50	25	.0	1"
Sun.	37	27	.0	1" foggy
Mon.	34	25	.0	1" foggy

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Twister wreaks havoc at airport



Hangar at Lexington airport

Sometime late January 7 or in the wee hours Wednesday morning, a twister picked up the roof on two-thirds of the storage hangar at the Lexington airport, carried it across a parking apron, and dropped it in a parking area for ground spray equipment, tanks and trucks, belonging to Gar Aviation.

Mel Boyer estimates that about \$2,000 damage was done to his equipment. One truck was damaged and a tank trailer was mashed when a portion of the hangar roof landed on it. Another truck parked in the same area was untouched. "We consider ourselves lucky that the damage was comparably minor," he said.

The county didn't get off so lucky, though. The twister lifted the custom steel truss and tin roof from 3 1/2 bays of the county-owned six-bay hangar. Morrow County Judge Don McElligott said that damage has been estimated at \$10,000 for which the county has no comprehensive insurance coverage. The county will have to rebuild the hangar, he says, but since no funds

exist in the current budget for repairs of this nature, an emergency meeting of the airport committee will have to be called in the near future to determine the best way to complete the repairs.

Boyer, whose home is adjacent to the airport grounds, said that he returned from a meeting late Tuesday, Jan. 7 and was awakened by a noise sometime during the night, but didn't think much about it because there didn't seem to be any wind at the house. He discovered the damage at the airport Wednesday morning. Judging from the type of damage, he says, the wind was apparently well over 100 miles per hour in a swath about 100 ft. wide. Wreckage hit the ground and deflected to the left which is the normal tornado pattern in this hemisphere. It was definitely a freak, Boyer said. The roof was lifted off the hangar and one partition torn out, but the walls remained standing and none of the airplanes were touched.



Wreckage from hangar roof at its new location

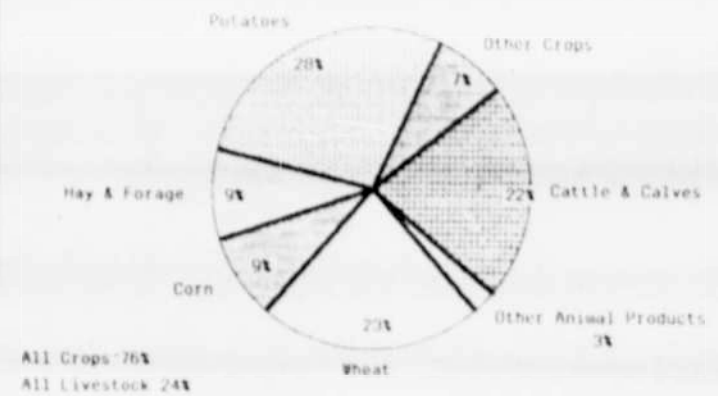
Ag commodity sales down

Agricultural commodity sales in 1985 in Morrow County were down nearly 10 percent from 1984 sales to less than \$96 million, says Morrow County Extension Agent Fred Lundin. In 1984 the total agricultural sales for the county was \$107 million, and in 1983 was \$105 million.

The total of all crops sales was \$72.4 million. Sales of potatoes (\$26.9 million) led crops commodity sales, followed by wheat (\$21.6 million), hay and forage (\$8.9 million), and corn (\$8.2 million).

Cattle and calves sales were \$21 million, and other animal products \$2.4 million.

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY SALES MORROW COUNTY, 1985p



Snow cover not a pretty sight for area's hay and cattle ranchers

Winter came early this year in Eastern Oregon and though most of us may grumble at the inconvenience, cattle ranchers who are operating on an already slim margin are finding that margin cut even more because the snow has covered normal grazing and ranchers already have had to feed hay that was purchased for use in January and February. Because more ranchers are feeding more, less hay is available and prices, when you can find the hay, are much higher than normal.

Wilkinson who ranches on upper Willow Creek says he has raised most of the hay he needed in past years. This year he had allowed to buy 200 tons to carry him through the expected January and February feedings. He stopped growing his own hay this year, he said, because electricity for sprinkler irrigation was costing him more to raise the hay than to buy it. He has recently made additional hay purchases from Hammond, Idaho, and Lime, Oregon, and Butter Creek. He expects that the additional purchase of hay alone will raise his cost of keeping the animals through the winter by \$20 per head, double that of a "normal" winter.

Every ranch is different, emphasizes Jim West, a Rhea Creek area rancher. Many ranchers expect to feed two months during a normal winter but we don't expect to have to feed at all during a normal winter. So far, this year, West has had to feed some bunches of cattle for a month. His cost of wintering an animal is increased by about \$1 per day per animal. Also adding to the cost is the added labor to take care of the animals, iced over creeks have to be chopped daily for the cattle to be able to drink and troughs have had to be kept open.

It may be more convenient to grow your own hay, West says, but it is not necessarily less expensive. Deer add an additional expense to the already expensive feeding because the snow covers their feed also and they come to the ranches and not only eat the hay but climb on stacks and ruin or scatter as much as they eat.

Ranchers work on a slim profit margin and can keep production

costs down when natural feeds are not covered with snow or ice. January and February are the normal "winter" months, which can mean even more cost to ranchers. "We have to take what the market offers," when we sell an animal, West pointed out. "We can't name our price. It's all part of the ranching business, though, and we expect a year like this occasionally."

Bob VanSchoiack from Lone Rock reports that he has had to buy hay from southern Idaho and Christmas Valley so far costing \$95-100 per ton delivered. "That's five cents a pound and each animal eats 20-30 pounds per day. Just the added cost of the hay could increase the cost to winter an animal by \$25-30. Although he had to feed three weeks during late November and early December, he has been grazing some since December 10, but supplements with protein blocks and range cubes.

Ron and Judy Currin report that they have been feeding some since November and expect to feed "full throttle" in February. Depending on the spring, says Judy, they may have to buy additional hay at an expected price of \$125 plus per ton and are not sure just how far they may have to go to get it. An additional cost of as much as \$25 per animal may be added to their expense.

Clint Krebs responding from a Cecil area ranch expected the greatest winter-caused additional cost per animal at \$70. He raises some hay for his own use and for sale, but says that the hot dry weather last summer brought the yield to slightly below average. Normally, he says, he feeds 90 days per winter, but the severe weather began the feeding period earlier with an additional 40 days of feeding thus far. He had a 110 day supply of hay and will be looking for additional hay. Feeder hay which he sold at \$75 per ton before the storm, he expects to have to replace at prices beginning at \$100 per ton.

Cold weather also has increased consumption from 20 to about 30 pounds of hay per animal per day, says Krebs. Warm weather couldn't hurt, but it won't help us much until

March because grass rarely grows in January and February. It's discouraging because cattlemen cannot pass on their added costs to buyers. With the demand for beef down and the storm caused additional wear and tear on equipment, added fuel, and loss of animals from drowning in ice covered creeks, the storm, he says, "could break the backs of many good cattle people."

Ken Wright, Ruggs, explains that the early winter has not been the only cause of increased hay prices. Normally there is some carryover of the hay crop from one season to the next, but the 1984 hay crop was used last winter, so hay prices were high at the beginning of the 1985 crop year. First crop alfalfa sold mainly to coast and valley dairy farmers which helped to create a shortage locally.

Wright has a larger than average inventory now, he says, because a 900 ton government hay bid fell through November 10 when Congress was unable to appropriate money for the project. Last summer's hay crop, he says, was down slightly at Ruggs because of drought and grasshoppers, but his Echo ranch yielded normal or slightly above.

One hundred dollars per ton for hay which sold for \$80-90 per ton earlier in the season sounds like good news for hay farmers, but that's not necessarily so, says Wright. Snow normally provides insulation from the cold for the alfalfa crops but we can't tell what's under the snow for sure. The cold, thaw, re-freeze process may have hurt some alfalfa stands. In addition to that, during November, hay growers generally spray for broadleaf weeds and grasses and they have still not been able to do that this winter because everything is covered. If the weeds are eradicated while the alfalfa is dormant, the crop is clean in the spring. Nor have crops been fertilized.

It's too early to tell, concludes Wright, but after January and February, we're hoping for a good spring. Of course, that could mean the return of the grasshoppers.

District presents weed control seminar

The Morrow Soil and Water Conservation and Weed Control Districts are presenting a weed seminar, "The A-B-C's of Good Weed Control," January 23 at two locations.

The first meeting will be held at the Greenfield Grange Hall in Boardman beginning at 1:30 p.m. and the second meeting will be held at the Willows Grange Hall in Lone at 7:00 p.m. The programs will be similar in content.

Organized by county weed supervisor Jim Van Winkle, the seminar will address acknowledging, battling, and conquering noxious weeds. He will open the seminar with tips on weed identification and a look at the revised list of the county's "A" listed weeds.

Extension weed specialist Don Rydrych will give an in-depth talk on jointed goatgrass. Dow chemical representative Dave England will show a video on the use of herbicide on broadleaf weeds. Soil Conservation Service range conservationist Allen Bond will explain the relationship of weed control and management, and Oregon Dept. of Agricul-



Jim Van Winkle, county weed supervisor. Extension Agronomist Dave England will discuss the state's number one

threat to the farming economy, Rush Skeleton weed.

A time for open discussion and questions will be provided as well as door prizes, and refreshments.

For further information, contact Van Winkle at the Weed Control District Office, 676-5452.

Bank manager elected assistant vice president

Jackie Gentry has been elected an assistant vice president of The Benj. Franklin Federal Savings and Loan Association, according to Dale Weight, chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

Gentry, who is manager of the Heppner branch office of The Benj. Franklin's Western Division, began with Western Heritage in 1982, where she served as a teller and loan secretary.

A graduate of Blue Mountain Community College, Gentry is active in the Heppner Morrow County Chamber of Commerce.



Delbert "Slim" Emert feeds from dwindling hay supply at his lone cattle ranch.