



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Local farmers raise sunflowers

Using corn planter with special seed meter



Morrow County Museum head Merle Cowett (center) welcomes the Heppner Chamber of Commerce to lunch at the museum recently. With him are Peggy Fishburn, museum treasurer and Kathy Cutsforth, secretary. County Extension Agent Larry Lutcher (left) was the featured speaker at the Oct. 21 meeting. -Photo by David Sykes

By David Sykes

Several local farmers are trying their hand at producing sunflowers commercially, OSU Extension Agent Larry Lutcher told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce recently.

“At last count we had about 500 acres of sunflowers in Morrow County,” Lutcher told the chamber, which was holding its quarterly luncheon meeting at the museum in Heppner. Lutcher said sunflowers do well in our dry environment, and some local farmers were getting into growing and harvesting the plants for their seeds.

Lutcher provided insight into how the crop is produced. “The sunflowers are planted with a corn planter, and inside a corn planter is a seed meter,” he explained. “That meter is swapped out for a sunflower one that picks up one seed at a time and drops it into a hole and it feeds by gravity into a furrow opener that runs an inch or two below the soil surface. It’s a very accurate planting operation,” he said.

Lutcher said the sunflowers are planted three feet apart with about 16,000 plants per acre. After harvesting, the seeds are hauled to the market in Madras where they are crushed and made into polyunsaturated shortening, salad dressings, cooking oil and margarine. “It’s a very healthy product,” he added.

The price farmers are getting in Madras is 30 to 40 cents per pound and they can expect to get 750 to 1,000 pounds average per acre in our area. He said there is an open market for the seed and no contract is required. “We think it’s going to continue,” Lutcher said of local production.

Lutcher also talked

about the impact the dry weather had had on our recent wheat crop. “Most locations in Morrow County got four inches of rainfall last year. Usually we get 9, 10, 11 or 12 inches,” he said. “It was pretty abysmal, and people are worried.” Morrow County normally averages about 35 bushels an acre for dry land wheat, and last year the county got 23, he said. “And there were 12 to 18 in many fields,” he pointed out.

Lutcher said the only “saving grace” in the wheat crop was that the post-harvest price had a pretty good increase. “Eight to 10 dollars a bushel can take the sting out of it (bad harvest),” he said, adding that was about double what farmers were getting last year.

Local farmers are about 75 percent done planting now, Lutcher says, and they are, of course, hoping for more rain in the coming year. “We are hoping for a wet winter.” He said predictions are optimistic too. “It depends on who you listen to, but the Farmers’ Almanac says Morrow

County is going to have a typical winter, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) experts are saying there will be a greater than average snowfall in December, January and February. “So that would be great,” Lutcher said. NOAA bases their prediction on an expected La Nina effect expected to have high pressure in the north that should bring moisture in from the Pacific Ocean. “We are hoping for that prediction,” he said.

Lutcher also spoke about a recent soil judging event put on by the extension. He said 75 high school students from Ione, Heppner, Echo, Boardman, Pilot Rock, Irrigon, Stanfield, Hermiston and Pendleton came to the Future Farmers of America event. In soil judging events, long deep pits are dug and then the students go down into the pits to examine and study the different soil layers and types of soils, which he said this year uncovered some very interesting layers.

Lutcher said he got a lot of help this year from Mike

Proctor and Greg Close from the county OHV park in getting the holes and site prepared for the students. And he added that the students were very polite and well behaved at the event.

Edmundson chosen as OGA director of the year



Pat Edmundson (right) was presented with her award last week. -Contributed photo.

Pat Edmundson, Heppner, was recently chosen as director of the year for her continued support of Oregon Golf Association (OGA) programs, her commitment to the dual roles of handicap chair and director at Willow Creek CC and for her many years of dedicated service and travel.

The press release stated, “In her time as a representative of the OGA, she has gone above and beyond to support and spread awareness of golf in the community, even when it meant traveling all the way from Heppner. In 2020, when the World Handicap System unveiled its new program, she took on the challenge, educating herself and her fellow golfers. Pat is a retired schoolteacher, and as such is a person who is very detail oriented, a good communicator and a “cross your t’s and dot your i’s” type of person.

She always wants to leave things better than she found them – which she does – and has been a wonderful ambassador for Willow Creek Country Club, golf, for the handicap system and for the OGA.”

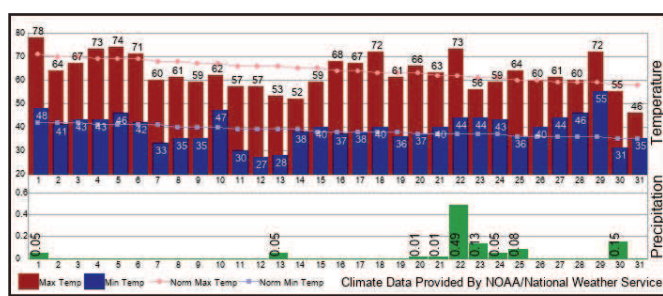
OGA directors are the official representative from each respective club to serve as a liaison to the Golf Association and the Executive Committee. They are the lifeline of communication from the OGA to its member clubs. In addition to expressing club concerns to the OGA and voting on behalf of their club before the board of directors at annual and special meetings, directors serve by relaying all information about OGA membership, events, championships, services and volunteer opportunities to their members and golf professionals and club executives at their courses.

Temps near normal in October

According to preliminary data received by NOAA’s National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged near normal during the month of October.

The average temperature was 51.2 degrees which was 0.1 degrees below normal. High temperatures averaged 62.9 degrees, which was 1.3 degrees below normal. The highest was 78 degrees on the 1st. Low temperatures averaged 39.4 degrees, which was 1.0 degree above normal. The lowest was 27 degrees, on the 12th. There were four days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled



1.02 inches during October, which was 0.12 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation, at least .01 inch, was received on nine days with the heaviest, 0.49 inches reported on the 22nd. Precipitation this year has reached 6.52 inches, which is 4.56 inches below normal.

The outlook for November from NOAA’s Cli-

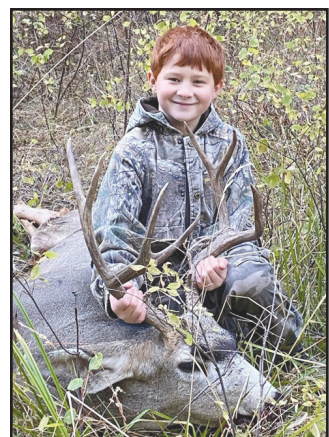
mate Prediction Center calls for near normal temperatures and above normal precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner fall from 57.0 degrees at the start of November to 45.0 degrees at the end of November. Normal lows fall from 35.0 degrees to 28.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.60 inches.

~ G-T Trophy Corner ~

The Heppner Gazette Times would like to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Please send a photo along with your name, age, town you live in, location of the hunt and a description of the animal to editor@rapidsolve.net, upload to Heppner.net or text to 541-980-6674.

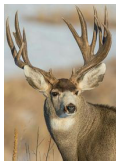


Morgan Cutsforth, 15, Heppner, shot this 6-point elk at 974 yards with her T65 338 Raptor cartridge.



Carter Adams 9, of Heppner, shot this mule deer buck in the Heppner unit. It was his first buck and he got it with one shot.

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, mail them to PO Box 337 in Heppner, email them to editor@rapidsolve.net or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.



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The home of Debra and Mitch Bloecher at Blake Ranch was damaged by the high winds on Sunday, October 23. -Contributed photos.

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