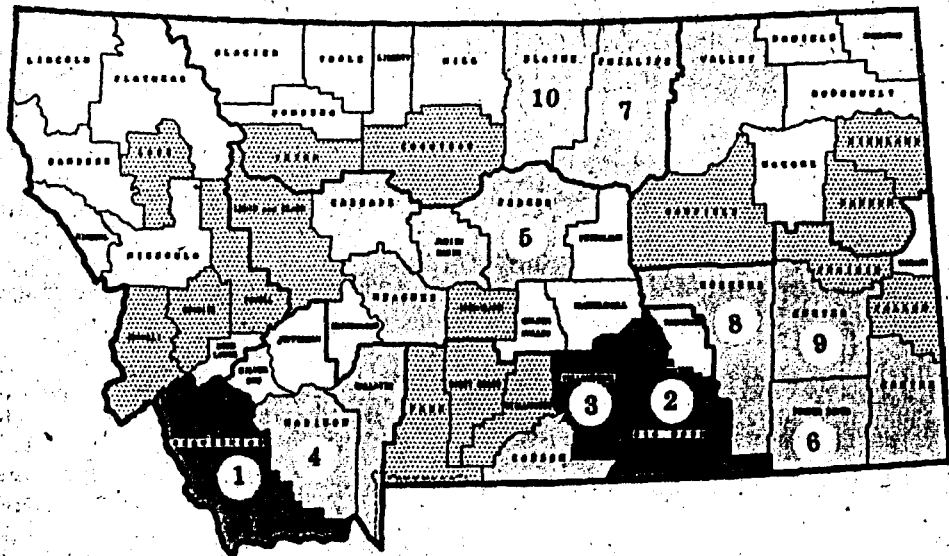


Drought of '88: How bad was it?

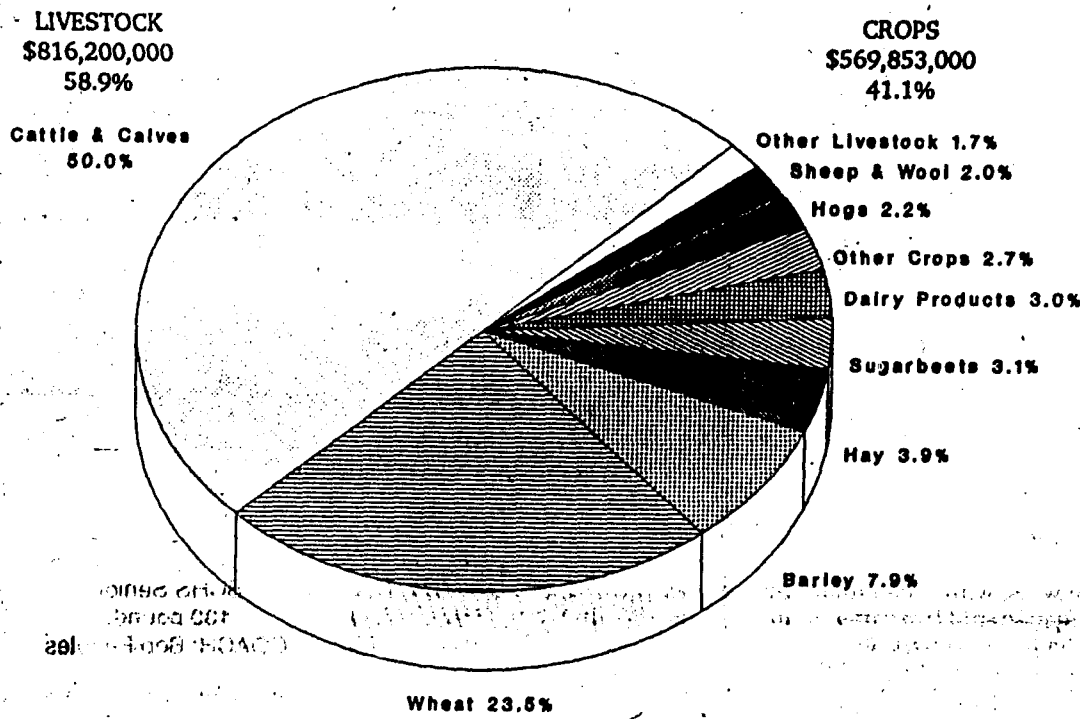
CATTLE & CALVES
NUMBER OF HEAD JANUARY 1, 1988



Numbers show ranking of top ten.



CASH RECEIPTS FROM MARKETINGS OF COMMODITIES, MONTANA 1988



1 Details may not add because of rounding.

Just how bad was the drought of 1988?

What effect did it have on area farmers and ranchers?

Those are questions answered in the Montana Agricultural Statistics just released by the Montana Department of Agriculture.

In Beaverhead County only 7.85 inches of rain fell for the entire year, compared with 14.04 in 1987 and 9.53 as an annual average. The area had 73 frost-free days, compared with 106 the year before and 99 normally.

The actual amount of money, statewide received for livestock, including cattle and calves, actually rose, from \$730 million to \$816 million, and the value of crops rose from \$543 million to \$570 million.

That increase, according to the department, was a four percent increase in agricultural income for 1988, which included a two percent increase in crop sales, a nine percent increase in livestock sales and a 10 percent increase in government payments.

In 1988 Beaverhead County ranked number one of all counties in all-hay crop production; number 19 in barley; number 31 in all wheat and number 44 in oats.

In livestock numbers and cash receipts, it ranked number one in cattle, number six in sheep, and close to bottom of the 56 counties

at number 50 in production of hogs.

The county ranked number seven in cash receipts for all products, number four in livestock and products and number 27 in crop production receipts.

In 1987 Beaverhead County farmers harvest 134,810 acres of irrigated crops, versus 12,300 acres of non-irrigated cropland. This compares to 154,890 acres of irrigated land harvest in 1988 and 9,700 of non-irrigated land.

In 1987 Beaverhead county farms harvested 123,000 acres of hay, for an average yield of 2.2 tons per acre and a total of 271,000 tons. Of that, all but 3,300 acres was irrigated crop land.

The next year, during the drought, Beaverhead county farms actually harvested more acres, 145,000, but had a lesser yield of two tons per acre, for a total production of 287,000 tons.

Of that, alfalfa hay was harvested on 47,000 acres in 1987 and 54,000 acres in 1988. Again, sliding production per acres resulted in a drop in efficiency, from 3.3 tons per acre in 1987 to 2.9 tons the next year. That drop in production, meant a flat growth pattern in alfalfa hay, from 157,000 tons to 156,500 in 1988.

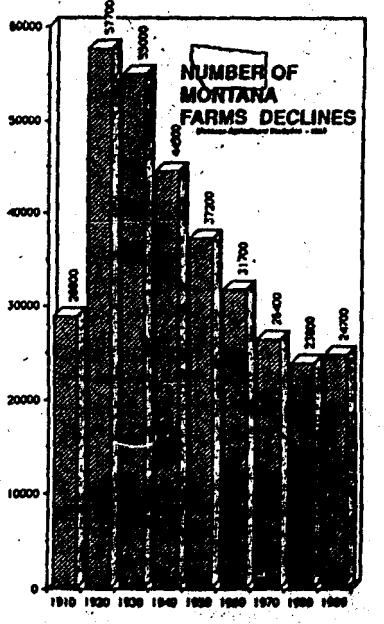
Livestock inventories in Beaverhead County dropped from 155,300 in 1987 to 150,000 in 1988, the department said. In neigh-

boring Madison County, livestock inventories dropped from 107,509 to 98,000.

In contrast, however, the numbers of beef cows and heifers that have calved increased, from 75,700 in 1987 to 82,100 in 1988.

In Madison county, the trend reversed, dropping from 56,800 in 1987 to 55,000 the next year.

In stock sheep and lambs Beaverhead county dropped from 19,500 to 18,200 in 1988, and in Madison county, the numbers were similar, 17,500 in 1987 to 15,700 in 1988.



Silverbow woman wins contest

Patricia Rauch of Silverbow has won \$500 toward her spring semester tuition at Western Montana College for her prize-winning Norwest Bank essay. The title of her paper was "Teachers... Shaping Montana's Future."

Rauch, a commuter student, is a fifth-year senior with a double major in English and Art education. Her essay was chosen from a group of 12 essays submitted by Western students. The contest, sponsored by Norwest Bank of Dillon, was created to recognize Western students and education.

"I was thrilled when I found out I had won the essay contest," Rauch said. "The essay topic was important to me because I believe teachers are vital to our future."

Patricia, the wife of Bill Rauch, has six children and one grandchild. She returned to college to "do something I enjoyed...college has given me the opportunity to do what I want to do for my career and myself." She plans on pursuing a teaching career after graduation, with hopes of teaching drama and/or art in the middle school or secondary school system.

She has been honored as a Western Emerick scholarship recipient and recently appeared in the Butte community theatre production of "Nonsense." She is also a member of the Broadway 215 organization and the local Toastmasters group.

Commission plans visit

Early next year Dillon residents will have an opportunity to tell a special commission, appointed by Governor Stephens, just what they think of Montana's higher education system.

The Education Commission for the 90's and Beyond, appointed by the governor in Montana, will hold public meetings in 17 Montana cities and towns during January and February.

In addition to Dillon, the commission plans to hold meetings in Helena, Great Falls, Lewistown, Wolf Point, Glendive, Miles City, Cut Bank, Havre, Malta, Hamilton, Missoula, Kalispell, Libby, Bozeman, Billings and Butte.

Commission Chairman Jack Mudd of Missoula said the purpose of the meetings is to encourage Montanans to become involved in the future of post-secondary education in the state. While the commission will be looking at issues and concerns

in the state's higher education system of today, the far-reaching question they hope to answer, Mudd said, is "What should Montana's system of higher education look like in the year 2010?" The commission plans to present its final report and recommendations to the governor by October, 1990.

Dillon's representative on the commission is Charlene Loge.

BEAVERHEAD LIVESTOCK AUCTION



7225 Hwy 91 S. Dillon, MT
Yard Phone: (406) 683-2002

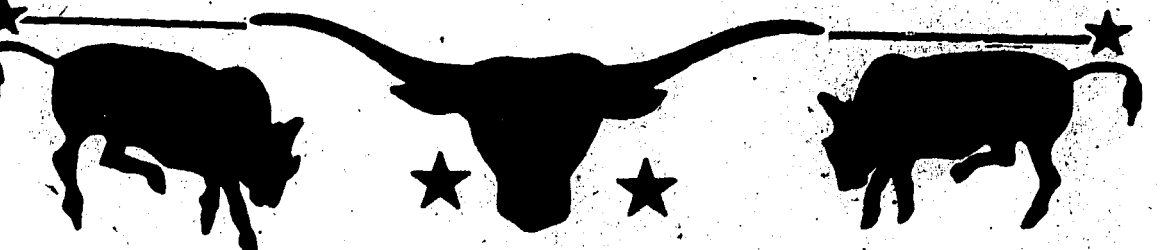
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Utility and commercial cows	41-47
Cutters	39-43
Canners	36-39
Bulls	49-57
Heiferettes	56-62
Feeder steers	71-80
Feeder heifers	70-77
Steer calves	83-93
Heifer calves	81-88

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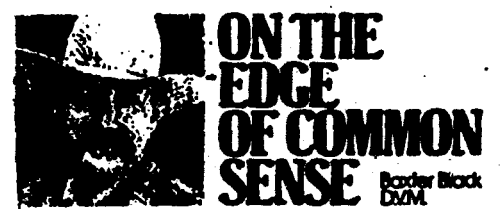
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Christmas chores



Christmas is just another day to a cow. Be she Holstein, Hereford or Maine Anjou, Red Angus, Black hally or Belgian Blue, From Tabor, Texas or Timbuktu!

Sheep, hogs, horses and even chickens, livestock of all kinds wake up Christmas morning and expect to be looked after just like it was any other winter day.

And we, the caretakers of God's herd, stomp out in the cold to tend the stock. Usually before gifts are opened and cinnamon rolls are made.

At the feedlot, the cattle are fed and checked. Admittedly a little quicker Christmas morning so we can get back to our family. Farmers slip out to feed the hogs and chickens. We have a look around before headin' back in.

Cowmen load the wagon and scatter blocks of hay. Dairymen (though they probably wouldn't admit it) get the mornin' milkin' done a little sooner than usual.

Kids put their coats on over their pajamas and race outside to feed the horses, rabbits, dogs and cats and hurry back.

And we do it with a smile. There's an anticipation that's not there most mornings. Doin' the chores Christmas morning gives us a good feelin'. A small accomplishment before we join the family for a satisfying day.

Gatherin' at the horse barn, firin' up the pickup, kickin' a bale off the wagon. Breathin' the cold air. Maybe even a moment to reflect on the good things that have come our way.

Christmas is a low pressure kinda day. The only phone calls you get are gonna be friends and family wishin' you a happy holiday (unless you're the local vet who's lucky enough to be on call). The bank, brand inspection office, BLM, extension service, school board, sale barn and Co-op are all closed for business.

And you're not gonna be able to work on the broken pipe, fix the roof or shoe the horses, even if you felt the need to. Your family will shame you into takin' the day off.

So relax. Do your chores and then kick back. Christmas is a gift...enjoy it.

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