Opinion

Guest editorial

$152 million in land lost in last decade

By Willmer Halcomb, S.C.S.

The agricultural value of production lost due to the disappearance of prime farmland in Kentucky during the past decade equals more than $152 million, U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) officials have revealed.

This estimate is based on average production value for the state's two major cash crops, corn and soybeans. According to the Kentucky Crop and Livestock Reporting Service in Louisville, at today's prices each acre carries an average cash value of production of around $225.

From 1969 to 1979 Kentucky lost 123,181 acres — 12,318 acres annually — of its most productive farmland to urban and industrial or other development, SCS statistics show. The special survey was conducted by local SCS field offices in all 120 Kentucky counties this year.

Six counties near urban centers account for almost 41 percent of the loss: Fayette, 16,250 acres; Jefferson, 12,000; Bullitt, 7,000; Oldham, 6,056; Christian, 5,000; and Scott, 3,930.

"It takes two to three acres of marginally productive land to equal the production on one acre of prime farmland," SCS State Conservationist Glen Murray said.

Around 27 percent, six million acres, of Kentucky's 22 million acres of agricultural land in crops, forest and pasture, is considered "prime" or best suited for producing food, fiber, feed and forage.

"Prime agricultural land has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops," Murray added.

"Losses of this land to urban use," he added, "are usually considered irreversible and could have a long-term impact on the state and individual counties."

For example, Christian County has lost more than 5,000 acres of prime farmland. The value of production lost equals $5.8 million during the last decade.

Some counties have lost a significant percentage of their prime farmland to urban development in the last ten years. Fayette County lost one-third of its prime farmland; Pike County, 29 percent; Jefferson County, 25 percent; and Oldham, nearly 16 percent.

"Prime farmland provides the largest share of total crop production in the country as well as a substantial portion of the commodity export market," Murray said.

Continuing production on prime farmland not only helps balance the foreign trade deficit, but assures the least damage to the environment, he explains.

Estimated corn yields in 1978 on prime farmland in Shelby County averaged 125 bushels per acre compared to 89.5 bushels on non-prime farmland. In Warren County yields of 112.5 bushels of corn could be expected on prime farmland and 86.9 on non-prime farmlands assuming equal management levels.

"Food shortages are a possibility if we continue to lose our best agricultural land to irreversible uses. Nationally four square miles every day, nearly one million acres a year, are being changed to other uses," Murray said.

Prime farmland losses and economic effects were studied recently in Kentucky and nationally under the 1977 Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act. Proposals to control degradation are now before the public.

Citizens are being asked through March 28 to help design and select ways to limit resource losses. Decisions on U.S. Department of Agriculture policy directions will have far-reaching effects on Kentucky's conservation program.

Down Memory Lane

Frey accepts salesman's job; ground too frozen to plow

Thursday, March 31, 1960

Salesman Billy Frey left Sunday for Charlotte, N.C., where he has accepted a position with the United Knit Mills as Sales Representative. He had been associated with Giffin Manufacturing Company for 12 years.

Miss Peggy Bryant is an entrant in the Miss Maysville Contest set for Friday night. Miss Bryant is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Mason Bryant and a 1956 graduate of Nicholas County High School.

Miss Lucy Terrell of Carlisle, Route 2, will serve as registrar for the East Union Christian Church in connection with the 125th Kentucky Convention of Christian Churches at Georgetown April 26-28.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. J.T. Bow, March 13, a daughter, Jadene, in Lexington. — To Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Franklin Howard, a daughter, April Elaine, March 26 in Cynthiana. — To Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Garvin of Aiken, S.C., a son, William Walker, March 25.

MARRIED — Miss Janice Faye Biddle to Bobby Dean Feeback, March 19 in Frankfort. — Miss Wanda Lee Alexander, Fayette County, to Ronnie Dale Rutledge, Georgetown, Friday in Berea.

DIED — Everett Holbrook, 63, Thursday at his room in the McGinley Rooming House. — Thomas H. McRohan, 81, Bourbon County, Sunday in Lexington. — Mrs. Nola Sutton McCue, 88, Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla. — Earl D. Fryman Jr., infant son of Earl D. and Norma Lee Fryman, Cynthiana, Monday. — Charlie Baker, 78, at his home in Castlewood, Va., last week.

Thursday, March 28, 1940

Interest from the $100,000 Mathers educational fund will be available within a short time. The money is to be handled by the Fiscal Court or a committee. In the will of Dr. C.W. Mathers, $100,000 was set aside as a trust fund with the interest to be used to educate indigent boys and girls of Nicholas County.

Bess Lee Snapp, 54, of Barterville was killed instantly and his three companions were injured seriously Saturday night when the car in which they were riding left the Paris-Lexington Highway and crashed into a utilities pole.

Farmers Tuesday reported the ground as being frozen too hard for plowing. The weather the past week has been the coldest on record for this late in March.

Classes in dancing and expression under the direction of Mrs. Sageser Kash will be held beginning April 3 in the Armory building. Mrs. Kash has had previous experience in the field as a teacher. Prior to that time she worked as a professional dancer on the stages of New York and Boston theatres.

Mrs. Charles Mathias of Carlisle was elected first vice president of the Seventh District Congress of Parents and Teachers at the spring meeting in Mt. Sterling last Thursday.

MARRIED — Miss Ruie Rigsby of Salyersville and Oris J. Johnson, March 23, in Lexington.

DIED — Mrs. Ella Prows Criswell, at her home in Liberty, Ind. Sunday. — William Henry Francis O'Neal, 78, at his home on the Maysville-Lexington Road near the Bourbon County line. — George W. Johnson, 66, Millersburg businessman Monday. — Mrs. Docia T. Blount Kerns, 55, at Lexington, Sunday. — Thomas L. Peters, 71, at his home in Owingsville, Friday. — Mrs. Maggie Rooney Connors Gross, 72, Saturday at her home on Morgan Street. — Gilby D. Myers, 65, Saturday morning at Johnson Memorial Hospital.

Italy has more local radio and TV stations in proportion to its population and size than any other country.

Agree or Not

Fixing 'our' mansion

By S. C. Van Curon

FRANKFORT — While the legislature is struggling toward a dramatic but predictable finish with the governor winning his tax program, there are some mundane but important affairs that ought to be discussed for the future of the commonwealth.

One of the problems that never seems to go away is the question of what to do with the governor's mansion? Every four years repair work is done, and every four years the new governor's wife wants to change it...from different furniture to painting the woodwork and walls and putting new art on the walls.

Each new first lady seems to want to leave her mark on the mansion.

First off, the governor's mansion is the property of the Commonwealth of Kentucky (the taxpayers). It is provided as the temporary home of the governor for the brief four-year period he is here.

Theoretically, this is the reason there are statutory provisions for a Mansion Committee to look after maintenance and improvements. This is supposed to provide a continuing program to keep the mansion as a stable showpiece as the temporary home of governors.

In effect, the committee doesn't seem to work that way. The Finance Department seems to listen to the governors or their wives in making improvements and furnishing the mansion.

The first floor of the mansion is public and visitors come and go on designated days of the week. Living quarters for the governor and his family are upstairs. The upstairs is private.

Thus, logically, it would seem that the committee would have full say as to what happens in the way of furnishings, maintenance, repair and art on the lower floor.

It would seem logical that the furniture on the lower floor should be the finest that reflects some of the history and the romance of Kentucky. In other words, the lower floor of the mansion should be a real showpiece.

Let the governor's family do whatever it wants in the way of furnishings, painting, remodeling within reason, in the upstairs living quarters, for this is really their home for four years.

The mansion is part of the history of Kentucky, and it should remain so, not just a changing place of residence to be redone at the will of the temporary resident.

The new budget appropriates one million seven hundred thousand dollars for repair and refurbishing the mansion. A big amount is spent every four years.

It is true that the electrical system needs to be completely new, and the plumbing should be modernized. The limestone outer structure is solid. Maintenance and refurbishing is what is needed.

A continuing committee should have charge of taking care of the mansion's maintenance and furnishings of the lower floor.

Kentuckians could be encouraged to contribute funds to obtain the unique furniture and art work telling the history of Kentucky in an elegant and proper manner.

There was an idea advanced during Gov. Julian Carroll's administration to build a wrought iron fence around the mansion as a security measure. Other ideas of landscaping were advanced.

Then, there is the matter of airplanes and their usage for the governors. Planes always seem to bring political discussions and criticism. But this is another story.

Planes should also be available for the governor and should be under the charge of a special office that sees there is no abuse of the privileges, but to see that the governor has the necessary transportation when needed.

Mercury vapors

by Warren R. Fisher

Turner's weather conditions

If the changeable weather and the weatherman have you down for the count, don't give up hope, M.L. Turner of Stephens City, Va., offers help through a device he's invented called the "Modern Weather Indicator."

The newspaper picture we have of the device doesn't lend itself to reproduction, so if you can imagine a rope hanging from a shelf with a stone attached to the free end you'll understand Turner's conditions:

1. A dry stone means it is not raining.
2. A wet stone means it is raining.
3. A shadow under the stone means the sun is shining.
4. If the stone is swinging it means a strong wind is blowing.
5. If the stone is jumping up and down it means there is an earthquake.
6. If stone is white on top (it was in the newspaper) it means that it is snowing.
7. If the stone is there but you cannot see it a heavy fog has settled.
8. If the stone has disappeared a tornado has taken place.

—MV—

Old newsprint disintegrates

Earl Hamm handed me a couple of clippings the other evening presumably from an old **Mercury**, though they could have come from a copy of the **Nicholas Advocate.** I tucked them away in my pocket file for later reference.

Old age had almost disintegrated them so I revived their legibility with PMT Saturday afternoon and returned them to Earl on Monday. If I remember correctly Earl said that Jim Markland had given him the clippings.

Of the two sales reproduced

Editor's notes

Overheard

One prominent Nicholas Countian discovering one of the costs of putting a kid through college:

"He's got all my tools with him! I can't even change the durned license plate!"

Overheard, again

The folks at the courthouse were expecting a big crowd Tuesday with about 20 no-city-sticker cases slated for trial.

Or maybe it was 25, or 27. I hear, unofficially of course, that some folks are being forgiven before court time.

But gratitude isn't what it used to be. Some of the folks who were forgiven, I hear again, haven't bothered to buy their stickers yet.

And some city council members get a little upset at the mention of city stickers and parking tickets. Seems as if there has been a lot of "Go thou, and sin no more, your sins are forgiven you." Maybe Carlisle has found a way to do what the folks in Richmond wanted to do a couple of years back — sidestep the new judicial system.

Of course, one of the benefits claimed under the new court system was that a local official can't fix traffic tickets any more.

There's a difference

Two can live as cheaply as one. That's a proverb. Two must live cheaply as one. That's Social Security.

(From Larry Stone's Mulebergers, **Central City (Ky.) Times-Argus.**)

Shoe's switched

I was talking to a local service station owner the other day and asked him if he was having any trouble getting gas.

"No," he said, "they took me off allocation and told me if I needed any more, just call. But after the way they did me I wouldn't buy a gallon more than I have to."

Well, that's being up front about it. Us folks who thought it would only be our grandchildren who saw $2 a gallon gas had better hurry up and get some. Grandchildren, not gas. It's a $1.20 most places and is the end in sight?

Hairy tales

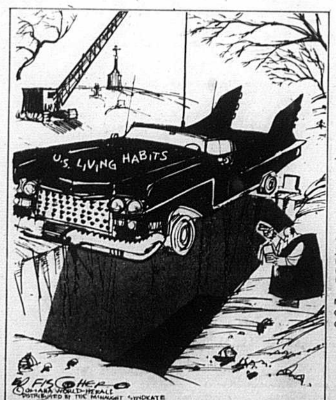
I ran into George Ring the other day. George, who has some face fuzz, looked at my crop and said, "O ho, trying to start one?"

Well, not really. I've had this one for about eight years now but there are some places where it refuses to grow.

In fact, I was thinking of clipping way back and cleaning up my act for a while, like plowing the ground in the spring. I was beginning to look like Dick Tracy's B.O. Plenty around the edges but a midnight session with the scissors solved most of the problem.

I didn't know I was that good a barber but then at midnight most people are usually relaxed, and I was.

But it sure don't look like Kenny Rogers'. I thought by now I might be getting some distinguished silver threads among the black. Alas, the only color change I'm getting is from black to red. But I bet John Y. would have a pretty silver one.



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The tiniest snow crystal is about 1/500th of an inch in diameter — just a pinpoint.

• • •

An ostrich cannot fly, but can outrun many racehorses.

• • •

The U.S. has the most divorces, a rate of 50.09 percent of the current annual total of marriages.

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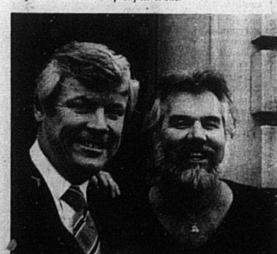

License renewal program schedule is announced

Kentuckians will begin the changeover to four-year drivers' licenses in 1981 under a bill signed into law last week.

According to F.E. Hodges of the Transportation Department's drivers licensing division, the fee for regular operators' four-year licenses will be doubled to $8 from the $4 now charged for a two-year license.

Hodges said a two-year transition schedule will be followed beginning in January 1981 to balance the workload for circuit court clerks' offices around the state.

For two years some individuals up for license renewal will still receive two-year licenses, while others will receive the four-year type.

The schedule for 1981 follows:

MONTH OF RENEWAL	LAST NAME BEGINS WITH	TIME VALID
January through March	A through K	4 years
January through March	L through Z	2 years
April through September	L through Z	4 years
April through September	A through K	2 years
October through December	A through K	4 years
October through December	L through Z	2 years

The same schedule will be in effect for 1982, Hodges said.

Hodges said the transition schedule is designed to balance renewals so that about one-fourth of all individuals will renew each year in the four-year cycle from 1983 through 1986.

Following the schedule will be mandatory. "Motorists who will be issued a two-year license under the schedule cannot be issued a four-year license and vice versa," he said.

The schedule will apply only to motorists who were previously issued a Kentucky operator's license. "Starting in 1981 all individuals who are getting their first license or those moving into the state will receive the four-year license regardless of the date or the first letter of their last names," Hodges said.

Church replica

Kyde Allison, Nicholas County's churchmaking handyman, has made another model of an early Kentucky church. This one is the Catholic Church at Augusta, one of the first in this area. Shown with Allison and the church is Rev. Herman Kamlage of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The model has been given to the Nicholas County Library and is available for loan to interested groups. — Mercury photo.

Science Fair winners

Gretchen Judge and Matthew Guthrie won the championship medals at the third annual Nicholas County Elementary School Science Fair held March 22.

Gretchen won the medal in the Biological Science division while Matthew was the overall winner in the Physical Science division.

First place blue ribbon medal winners were Randy Zornes, Jason Metcalfe, Collier Mathes, Joshua Guthrie, Cindy Miller, Robert Sumner, Chris Hollar.

Heather Mathes, Carla Hall, Amy Feeback, Lisa Clark, Johnny Sibert, Lisa Sparks, Debbie Caskey, Rhonda Barker.

Jamey Anderson, Lisa Hinton, Tracey Hillock, Brian Watkins, Marty Seithers.

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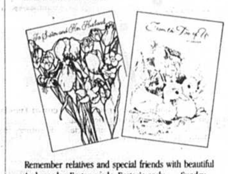

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Jackets reflect on past season

By Kay Conley

It's not quite over for the Nicholas County boys basketball team. On the contrary, there's still a few final words that need to be spoken to wrap-up the Bluejackets' year.

The loss to Bourbon County, stifling all hopes of district advancement, was truly a heartache felt by every Nicholas fan. The players, too, had strong feelings about the defeat.

"I think we did a lot of hard work for such a bad ending," said senior player Pat Letcher.

"We did the best we could do," said four-year guard and co-captain Mark Vice. "It just wasn't enough to win the district."

One cheerleader, who perhaps was as close as the players to the surge of sadness, had this to say:

"I am disappointed that our successful season ended earlier than we wanted it to," stated Clarnita Williams.

Even underclassmen had strong feelings about the 1979-80 season.

"It was great," stated junior varsity cheerleader and freshman Jennifer Hughes. "It certainly was exciting!"

"I think adequate teamwork and hustle made the difference, replied David McGuffey, sophomore starter. "Coach Kenney did a wonderful job. Next year it will definitely be better because things just don't come easy the first time around."

Fans played a very important role in the Bluejackets success. It was they who attended the games and cheered the team on.

Mrs. Sue Kirby, teacher at NCHS, remarked, "Even in defeat our boys were the real winners."

"I'm so proud of them!" stated Susan Ritchie, a senior at Nicholas County.

For five seniors the loss was the end of their high school career. All their hopes had been crushed in that instant by defeat.

"This year Nicholas County had one of the best teams ever," said Mike Hatton, co-captain and leader on the floor. "Even though we didn't win the district crown, we drew the Region 10 winners (Bourbon County) and had a good chance at beating them."

Perhaps John Doyle best summed it up in his few words: "It was a really great season."

As Nicholas looks ahead to next year, the forecast is certain to be as promising as 1979-80.

"We beat nine teams this year that went to their regions and I feel overall we played a very worthwhile schedule," said Coach Kenney. "I am looking forward to next year because in 1980-81 I feel our athletes will truely represent us well."

What else can be said? The Jackets success is a fact and though Nicholas County will certainly miss the players of this year, they're avidly awaiting 1980-81. Nobody does it better than the Nicholas County Bluejackets; just ask any fan.

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• • •

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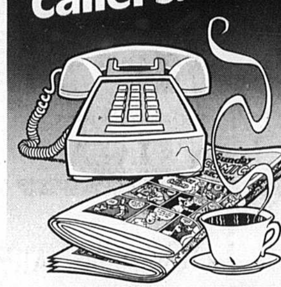

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