

LEAF TIP:

Warehouse sales start, Nov. 19

LEXINGTON — Tobacco sales at warehouses across the eight-state Burley Belt will begin on Nov. 19, according to a schedule approved Oct. 9 by the Burley Sales and Marketing Committee.

The markets will close three days later for Thanksgiving Day, but will reopen, Nov. 26.

According to George Leer, BSMC chairman, the first official day that farmers can weigh their burley at warehouses is Nov. 9.

After Thanksgiving, the markets will operate Monday thru Thursday until the close of business, Dec. 13.

After the Christmas break, sales will resume on Jan. 7 for four days each week until the 1990 crop is sold.

But markets will be closed Jan. 21 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is the last year, however, that the 40-year-old BSMC will set marketing dates. Beginning next season, a new Federal Marketing Committee for Burley, established this year by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will determine sale dates. The new committee will be composed of 21 growers, 10 warehouse representatives, and 8 members from tobacco companies.

Source: Kevin Osbourn, Lexington Herald-Leader

Nearly 1 of every 7 dollars is a 'burley buck'

By RANDY GREENE
For the Burley Tobacco Growers Co-operative Association
LEXINGTON — "Farming is the main source of income here," said Howard Hall, superintendent of schools in Bracken, a county of about 7,800 northern Kentucky residents along the Ohio River.

Indeed, farmers' earnings account for nearly one in every five dollars within the county's economy.

Specifically, the county's total "effective buying income" in 1989 was \$68.43 million, according to Felisa Roberts, market research director for the Lexington Herald-Leader, who compiles such statistics for the Kentucky Press Association.

"Effective buying income" (EBI), she explained, is personal earnings that are often called "disposable income," or money that's available after taxes for people to spend.

By comparison, Bracken farmers took in \$15.2 million in total farm receipts during 1989, according to the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service.

Local records confirm virtually the same amount for total farm receipts in 1989, according to Tom Stephenson, Bracken's 4-H extension agent.

So a two-year average for farm earnings of \$15.2 million represents 22 percent of the county's total EBI of \$68.43 million, or about one of every five dollars available for local spending.

Ag dollars, therefore, are crucial to Bracken's overall economy.

With not much industry here, to speak of, our people really depend on farming," said Glenn Gear who operates Brooksville Farm Supply in the county seat.

David Appleman, working at the county's largest financial institution, agrees. Farmers assume about 50 percent of the commercial loans at First National Bank of Brooksville where he works, Appleman said.

Moreover, the majority of Bracken farm dollars comes from burley tobacco sales.

The impact of tobacco dollars
Unlike the average Kentucky county where 76 percent of crop receipts rely upon tobacco, based on KASS figures for 1988, Bracken Countians devote nearly 93 percent of their total crop production to burley.

This means that about one-seventh of Bracken's population — the 1,062 burley quota or lease holders — earn a significant portion of its total EBI.

In 1989, the county's actual net marketings of burley resulted in \$9,753,107 of income to the county, according to Stephenson.

So tobacco sales represented 14 percent of Bracken's total EBI for 1989 of \$68.43 million, or about one of every seven dollars available for local spending.

"Actually, I thought tobacco sales accounted for much more," said Dwayne Jett, the county's judge-executive.

"The Jett, the county's judge-executive, "It's still 'number one' in the minds of our farmers."

What tobacco dollars buy
Beyond statistics, though, what do burley dollars mean to farm families?

Checks from annual burley warehouse sales in nearby Maysville and Cynthiana enable Bracken farmers to buy pickup trucks, tractors, and cars — the large ticket items," said Appleman, the banker.

And even though most tobacco growers also have jobs off the farm, according to Steve Hamilton, another First National employee, those non-farm incomes

"Just help them pay month-to-month bills."

As well, for Bracken farmers who use bank credit, "if they couldn't pay back short-term commercial loans with tobacco checks," said Hamilton, "then they'd have to borrow money for longer terms at higher rates."

Suppliers of farm products also know the importance of tobacco dollars. Glenn Gear, who runs credit accounts throughout the year so that Bracken farmers can buy supplies for all their operations, said, "We do on the hopes that their tobacco checks will pay off the debts."

"That's why I feel everypody," tobacco is this county's backbone," said Judge-Executive Jett. "We couldn't get by without it."

Bracken County, Kentucky A place where burley tobacco reigns

By RANDY GREENE
For the Burley Tobacco Growers Co-operative Association
LEXINGTON — Nestled to the east of Kentucky's northernmost point is Bracken County. "Polar Bears" is the nickname for its school teams in Brooksville. Their peers at Augusta High are the "Panthers."

And as these designations imply, Bracken Countians are competitive folks — particularly when it comes to farming.

Founded in 1797, the county's first route to the world was the Ohio River, running its northern border.

Picturesque Augusta — a town of gracious historic homes at river's edge — is a legacy from that era. Homeowners there include the famous singer Rosemary Clooney and her brother, newsman Nick Clooney.

In terms of farming, Bracken is similar to other counties along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, and West Virginia, because many growers use the fertile river bottomlands to raise tobacco.

In addition, Bracken burley growers — like their counterparts in all five of these river states — are represented by the Burley Tobacco Growers Co-operative Association, in Lexington.

But Bracken County residents have a new distinction. Once it's completed in November, the "AA Highway" will connect this hearty county to the greater metropolitan area of Cincinnati, which annually extends deeper into northern Kentucky.

"It's a much better highway than anything we've had," said Howard Hall, superintendent of the county's schools.

"Because of it, we'll soon be the bedroom community of Cincinnati," said Dwayne "The Jett," the county's judge-executive.

Yet farming remains No. 1. With the exception of two factories in Augusta (one that makes plastic

products and another producing auto accessories), though, industrialization has not yet altered the farming way of life that has characterized Bracken Countians for nearly 200 years.

"Agriculture remains our primary industry," according to Tom Stephenson, the county 4-H extension agent.

In fact, there's one farm for every eight persons living in Bracken County. Or one farm for every third household.

Or one farm for every two subscribers to the county's only newspaper, in actual numbers, Bracken County boasts 1,062 farms, according to Stephenson.

By comparison, there are 7,738 Bracken residents, according to the 1990 Rand McNally Road Atlas.

The county has 2,700 households, and the Bracken County News in Brooksville has 2,203 subscribers, according to the most recent Kentucky Press Association estimates.

Number of farms has increased
More significant, though, in contrast to nationwide trends, farm numbers have steadily increased in the county over the last eight years.

For 1987, the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service listed 734 farms in Bracken County.

At the time, that figure represented a loss of only 18 farms, or a 2 percent decline, compared to KASS's 1982 census — which showed that Kentucky as a whole lost about 9 percent of its farms during that five-year period.

So Bracken's solid increase in 1990 to 1,062 farms is consistent with its recent history.

Indeed, the increase is noteworthy because most everywhere else in the

Continued on Page 7

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