

IN BRIEF

Judge throws out suit over raw milk

HAGERSTOWN, Md. — A judge threw out a dairy farmer's lawsuit challenging a Maryland ban on "cow-sharing" agreements aimed at skirting a prohibition on retail sales of raw milk.

Kevin Oyarzo of Buckeystown had sought to let people buy into his herd and receive unpasteurized milk in return. Some states, including neighboring Virginia, allow such arrangements to help meet a growing demand for raw milk.

Frederick County Circuit Court Judge Julie Stevenson Solt rejected Oyarzo's argument that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene acted improperly by issuing emergency regulations prohibiting cow-sharing after Oyarzo told the agency of his plans last summer.

Public health regulators say raw milk can contain harmful pathogens that are killed during pasteurization. Raw-milk proponents say the heat of pasteurization also kills healthful components in milk and degrades the flavor.

Oyarzo's lawyer, Paul Walter, declined to comment on the ruling, saying he needed to first read it and then consult with his client.

Crop conditions favorable in Kansas

WICHITA, Kan. — Crop conditions remain favorable as Kansas farmers prepare for anticipated bountiful harvests of corn and sorghum, Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service reported Monday.

In its weekly crop update, the agency rated corn condition in Kansas as 57 percent good to excellent, with 31 percent reported as fair.

About 12 percent of the crop was rated in poor to very poor condition.

The latest crop weather report comes on the heels of last Friday's crop forecast that pegged Kansas corn production at 448.8 million bushels, up 30 percent from a year ago.

Kansas growers planted 3.7 million acres of corn this season, up 350,000 acres more than a year ago.

That is the highest planted acres of corn in this state since 1943, reflecting high corn prices amid growing demand for corn for the ethanol industry and livestock feeding.

How much water does ethanol take?

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. — The growing thirst for ethanol takes a lot of water to quench, but less than many people believe and not enough to cause serious problems, experts told farmers.

Last year in Nebraska, the nation's third-leading ethanol producer, it took 2 billion gallons of water at 15 ethanol plants to churn out 676 million gallons of the alternative fuel, Derrel Martin, an irrigation and water resources engineer said Thursday.

But roughly 900 billion gallons of rain water falls annually in Lincoln County, Martin said, addressing the public perception that ethanol production takes an inordinate amount of water.

"These plants are not consuming a huge amount of water," he said.

Martin spoke during an agriculture conference in North Platte that focused on water.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FARM & GARDEN



Anita Hasbury-Snogles sits upon her horse, Roo, while viewing the landscape in Nebraska. She and her husband, David, have encountered extremes in the weather during their trek, from bone-dry heat in Montana to monsoon-like conditions in Iowa.

From dry to wet and back again

I know, I do seem to keep harping on about the weather (it's an ingrained British trait, I can't help it) but this week has seen us in a classic case of how quickly the climate changes from one part of the country to another.

We finally escaped the clutches of Montana last week when we took our youngest son Ollie to the airport at Scott's Bluff, Neb., to catch a flight to Houston. Montana is such a big and beautiful state that it seems to take forever to actually traverse it (they don't call it Big Sky country for nothing!), but eventually we did, and we managed to settle down to a few days at the Flying Bee Ranch in Bayard, Neb., courtesy of the owners, Louise & Conrad Kinnaman.

We had heard of the Flying Bee Ranch from our friends at the Best of America by Horseback TV show, who had featured Flying Bee on one of their programs last year. The program showed the scenery around the ranch to be absolutely stunning and we thought we would try it ourselves just to see if it was as good as it seemed on TV.

We were definitely not disappointed. We rode our horses, Max and Roo, up some challenging trails, until we reached the very top of the surrounding mountains. Hard though it was for the horses to get there, the view was well worth it — a stunning panorama across the mountaintops for miles in either direction greeted us.

Even more incredible was that when we did reach the top of the trail, we found a herd of cattle perched there at a watering hole provided by the ranchers. We certainly didn't expect to see that, but it was kind of neat how the water is pumped up from deep in the mountain and then cascades down a number of adjoining circular troughs to satisfy all the thirsty residents. Max and



DAVID AND ANITA HASBURY-SNOGLES

Roo were sufficiently thirsty to banish all concerns over approaching strange cattle, and they dived straight in to the nearest trough to get a good, well-deserved drink.

One other thing we were lucky enough to participate in at the Flying Bee was an actual cattle roundup. OK, it wasn't a huge cattle drive across half of America like you see on TV, but it was still a cattle drive — moving quite a few head from one pasture to another on horseback! Yee haw, Anita and I had finally become real cowboys (or should that be cowpersons these days?), and our horses were able to do the sort of things horses were meant to do all along.

It was all done pretty much at a walk, although the cattle would break into a trot every now and then, and Max decided near the end that he fancied shooting off at a gallop.

All in all, we had a great few days at the Flying Bee, and dry as it was and had. The wind blew so hard a couple nights that that we thought the trailer was going to topple over. Once again, we had been hearing about how poor the rains had been this year and how much of a fire risk there was in the state in general.

Neighboring Montana was already on emergency alert, and we had seen one or two forest fires for ourselves on our travels along the freeway.

It was a bit of a shock therefore to find that in the



David's horse Max receives an ointment treatment after being bitten on the legs by insects. The travelers also put medicine in his feed to bring him back to full health.

next state we visited, Iowa, there were notices up in many of the parks announcing that the trails were closed as a result of too much rain! Just a few hundred miles east, the conditions had gone from bone-dry to monsoon-like, and as a result of the humidity in the air, we found the temperatures in the 90's to be more uncomfortable than Nevada, where it reached a 112 degrees.

We also found the bug/fly situation to be far worse than we had encountered thus far — hot humid weather coupled with a myriad of flies and biting insects does not make for a pleasant time.

One morning we woke to find poor Max had been severely bitten all over his legs — we don't know by what, but speculation is currently running around ants or turkey ticks, and the poor chap's legs swelled up like elephant feet.

Of course we treated him as best we could and gave him some anti-histamine in his feed, but it will still be a few more days until he is back to normal. The ointment we put on his legs to help him heal and keep the flies off, is bright pink in color which makes him look rather fetching, although it does leave your hand stained as if you had just robbed a bank.

Well, after an overnight stop in Illinois, we are currently camped back at the Mid-West Trail Ride in Norman, Ind., to see our friends Kim and Jeff Humphries for a few days, before we make our way back to Kentucky. Surprisingly, they are suffering from a lack of rain with the nearby creek virtually bone dry, and yet other parts of the country are suffering from too much water — it really doesn't make sense does it, why can't we have a more even spread of rainfall

(and less bugs please!)? Oh of course not, that would make life far too easy wouldn't it, and where's the fun in that? Until next week

David and Anita Hasbury-Snogles are British residents riding across the United States on horseback to raise money for charity. Visit HorseQuestUSA.org for more information. David can be reached at david_hasbury@yahoo.com.

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4	●	●	52	69
13	21	42	●	67
14	24	32	59	68

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