

MAY 14, 1981

Abundant spring rains have fattened the Shortgrass herds and flocks. Sheep, in particular are languishing in pones and layers of fat. For the first time in anyone's memory, ewes nursing twin lambs look like their barren sisters. The summer heat is going to be a spectacle to watch as these obese old nellies try to cool off in the shade of a sparse leafed mesquite tree.

Market quotes have already picked up the superior flesh condition. Like the Y 4 cattle, the extra fat is causing a discount. I fear that tons of tallow are going to be wasted. John D. Rockefeller, you know, was the one who cashed in on the change from candles to kerosene. It seems that no one in this energy expensive age is willing to admit that we may be going back to the old order.

For certain, our country can't be counted on to produce this much fat every spring. The packers had better check with the oilmen and see how they feel about all the natural gas they flared and wasted in the '40s and '50s. As good cooks as the German people are, it wouldn't be too far fetched to convert a Volkswagen motor over to beef suet. Granted the sizzling sound of the fat flying might be worse than fumes from fossil fuel, but as strong as those fast food hamburger joints smell on the interstates, I don't believe the air control boys would ever notice the difference.

I know that the Japanese people appreciate the value of fat. Just from looking at the pictures of their wrestlers, you can tell that they would know better than to dock a fat ewe.

I remember once discussing the wool market with an Australian that was selling a super fine wool (100 micron) to make the robes for the emperor of Japan. It was a late evening, informational type business meeting. The exact details are lost in time, but I do recall that we both lamented that those huge Japanese wrestlers didn't wear trunks made from wool. It would've been like getting the contract on the cooling robes for the circus fat ladies association.

Yesterday I mad the sheep sale in San Angelo. The lamb offering ranged from cash-in size 70 pound springer lambs to grass flushed over 90-pound heavyweights. The big drawing card, however, should have been a string of 1400 head of yearling ewes. I'd expected to see a mob of ranchers clamoring for these young sheep. Once 1400 yearling ewes would have attracted more herders that the March rodeo and fat stock show. But the scene for the most part was one of serious traders absorbed in the losses of a tough winter market that seems to continue through the spring. I was really disappointed, because in other years a half-inch of rain caused so much excitement over sheep that the earth trembled from the action that ensued.

The spring days pass over fields of wild flowers and fresh mints. The vigor of new growth seems to send a charge through the people. The market is hard to take, but with so much rain, we are on the march upward. What a great time to be alive.