

Slow inches are falling in the Shortgrass Country on this first of June morning. It's the best opening of summer we've had since the first mate on Noah's Ark called for thunderstorms in our area.

The San Angelo weather bureau chumped off and predicted a 100 percent chance of rain yesterday. It was such an outlandish prediction that even the radio disc jockeys made some fairly good jokes about it.

Here at the ranch, we'd started to be dry. March rain had brought up more grass and weeds than this country will ever support. April was fair but May winds knocked the blossoms from the land.

Over at the Whiskers outfit, he was hurting from another cause, Whiskers was holding so many steer calves to ship to Colorado that he'd cut most of his country into trails.

I might have told you that when we helped him make lambs, we had to drive the sheep along selected routes to keep off the calves' bedgrounds. He had so many steers in one pasture that I suggested we put a back net at the waterings like they have at baseball fields to keep his cattle from being shoved over the fences.

But once it rained, Whiskers made a fast recovery. On the first morning of the showers he reported 3/10ths of an inch from a cloud about the size of a Shetland pony's shadow.

In his haste, he failed to brief Mrs. Whiskers. At the same time he was keeping the crystal hot on his base radio, running the news, she was talking on the phone, reporting a scant 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch.

Whiskers had been so busy working cattle that he had forgotten how well we all know his tricks. He was a tank commander over in Germany once. They tell me that the bigger the equipment, the bigger the ideas are. Whiskers outfit was called heavy armor.

I didn't object to him adding the 2/10ths of an inch. What made me mad was lying to his close friend and neighbor.

It's accepted conduct to tell your banker a smoky on the rain. Also, it is normal to stretch a lamb crop 40 percent and to add 50 to a 100 pounds to a calf's weight. But that's for town consumption and coffee house contests, not for a neighbor a short pickup rode away.

Whiskers was spoiled from going too far away to sales and conventions. Like a lot of amateur story tellers, he confused the courtesy extended strangers for credibility.

Whiskers has most of his steers shipped to Colorado. The San Angelo Weather Bureau had better get off those 100 percent predictions or there'll

be a shipping of men over there. And I am going to back-audit Whiskers' report for awhile. Habits like that are hard to change.