

MARCH 23, 1978

March is the showdown month for the Shortgrass Country. Cattle and sheep too weak to live off mesquite buds are going to be goners. Old sisters that think all four stomachs need to be full at the same time might as well check themselves off the count.

We have some old grass, but it's the oldest grass in the world anywhere except the mats in the bottoms of Indian caves. Cows don't get enough food value from it to recover the calories they burn chewing. Sheep ignore the tall fallow strands. I watched a ground squirrel go back to using dirt to keep it from ruining his den. I know a herder is never supposed to complain about grass, but we've had this stuff around so long that I'm tired of it.

Complaining about anything falls on deaf ears. One time when things were mighty hard, we ran out of water for the house in Mertzon. A friend of mine agreed to drill a well on a long term maybe never contract. He drilled 3000 feet to the red-beds without hitting a sand that'd wet his bit.

Neighbors were awfully interested in the well as the water table was lowering everywhere. After the project was declared a failure, one of the most faithful spectators said that he guessed there were worse things that could happen than a dry hole.

At the time, I thought this fellow was the champion smart mouth of the whole Shortgrass Country. Later on, I got to thinking he was right. My friend might have drilled into a rattlesnake den, or hit a big pocket of sewer gas that left a place for snakes to build a den.

His mast pole could have collapsed on the pump house or the tools could have stuck in the hole and caused the pole to fall on the house. Not hitting water just seemed bad because we had eight kids and were so broke that the Fuller Brush man used to cry every time he called on us in fact I was relieved when that old man retired. He'd leave the house bawling like a lady used to do in church in my childhood. He ought to have got a job in a shoe store or a filling station if he couldn't stand the sight of a little poverty.

Spring is going to come. It may not be as good as other seasons, but it'll sure beat the winter. Looks like the March winds are going to carry off that old grass. She's sure going to be bare when it's gone.