

APRIL 27, 1972

Eye doctors should begin noticing an increase in their business. As the spring rain vigil has grown in the Shortgrass Country, more and more hombres should be coming down with locked eyelids from watching the clouds.

Not a cloud will float by unnoticed until the rains come. Herders are on the alert from now on. Every evening they are going to be out in their yards staring northward. Their watch will be so thorough it'd give a lighthouse keeper an inferiority complex.

The subject of feeds and feeding is on the forbidden list. Nerves are so edgy that the sight of a feed truck could start a wild stampede. The other morning at the coffee house an old boy mentioned what cake was costing laid down at his New Mexico ranch. For 10 minutes thereafter, you could hear the lawn sprinklers running four blocks away.

The big wool incentive payment should have calmed the people down, but it didn't. When a check comes that 'large, U causes more unrest. Now every night I get to wondering why the government doesn't pay us an extra incentive to make us want to earn the first incentive.

Wool growers can't go on forever operating on a once-a-year payoff. I for one don't want to spend the rest of my life herding sheep, knowing all the time that the only worthwhile government check is going to be the one that comes in April. At the start of the program, once a year was often enough to send out a check, but nowadays money goes too fast to be paid on an annual basis.

The Internal Revenue Service could show the Commodity Credit Corporation how to set up a quarterly system. As far as that goes, Congress ought to be able to take care of that size of deal.

Congress isn't as dumb as it acts. No one who walks in an upright position is as stupid as Congress makes out like it is. They just act that way to keep the voters from expecting too much from them.

Lots of folks do think Congressmen are a bunch of dumbheads, but let them try some day to name a third or fourth term who hasn't been able to spread his own piece of toast with a double thickness of the public's butter. Don't ever underestimate the Washington crowd: Pickpockets aren't born who can get into their hip pockets.

Incentive payments are an unlimited field. There could be calf incentives, canner cow incentives, and special incentives for those of us who are too tired to earn any incentive. The government doesn't have to stop at the lamb and wool level. Postboxes will hold all the checks they'll send.

The government doesn't seem to be decided whether to encourage or discourage the country's sheepmen. On good days, the news from Washington sounds as if they want to use us for lining missile silos. On the bad days, it sounds like they want to aim the missiles at us.

Coyotes and eagles have been the big favorites. 1972 so far has not sounded like the right year to ask for an incentive to go on top of the present incentive. Judging from the tone of the legislation and the edicts. we'd probably be better off brushed up in the thickets, being as quiet as we can. Though we're domestics, we've become about as unpopular as any foreigners ever have. I don't know what we did to make everybody mad, but we sure seem to have succeeded.