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'77 corn climbs to new high Record crop at 6.4 billion

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Agriculture Department Monday estimated the 1977 corn crop at a record 6.357 billion bushels.

The new estimate, published in a final 1977 crop summary, left production of the livestock feed grain which plays a key role in the outlook for meat, milk and poultry, 1 percent above the 1976 record harvest of 6.266 billion bushels and 9 percent above 1975.

This was the third consecutive corn production record. The 1977 summary for all crops combined showed that farmers last year produced the biggest volume of crops in history, 29 percent above the 1967 total. The previous record was in 1976 when output was 21 percent above 1967.

Monday's crop report also estimated the 1977 soybean crop at a record 1.716 billion bushels, up 33 million from a November forecast and 33 percent above a year earlier. Grain sorghum production was estimated at 790.6 million bushels, up 11.3 million bushels from the November estimate and 10 percent above last year. The crop, was, however, 14 percent below the record set in 1973.

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The bumper crops depressed farm prices sharply earlier in the marketing season and helped touch off a farm strike movement. Despite some price recovery in recent months, the administration is still considering use of a production control program to reduce planting of corn and other feed grains this year.

The small decline in the corn estimate from the November forecast, less than a sixth of 1 percent, relieved fears that heavier losses might be caused by storms which delayed the windup of the harvest last month.

With big 1977 crops promising ample food supplies for 1978, Agriculture Department officials have predicted that retail food prices this year will average four to six percent above 1977 following a gain of 6.5 percent last year.

Final 1977 summaries of wheat, cotton, rice and a number of other crops were issued earlier. They showed the wheat crop at 2.026 billion bushels, down 5 percent from 1976. The cotton crop, however, was estimated at 14.5 million bales, up 37 percent from 1976.

Monday's crop report said that the big harvest last year came despite droughts in parts of the Southeast, Midwest and most of the West.

Officials said the record crop came because farmers got higher per-acre yields to more than offset slight reduction in harvested area. Overall, however, America farmed last year harvested 331 million acres of major crops, up 2 percent from 1976 to the highest level in two decades. Most of the acreage gain came in soybeans, cotton, oats, barley and sunflowers.

The report said total 1977 production of animal feed grains - corn, barley, grain sorghum and oats - was estimated at a record 222.1 million metric tons. This compared with 1976 harvest of 213.3 million metric tons.

Final per-acre yield estimates for leading crops included: Corn 90.8 bushels compared with 87.9 in 1976; soybeans 29.6 bushels compared with 26.1; sorghum 50 bushels compared with 48.9.

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Lungfish may hold secret to suspended animation

United Press International
NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Pennsylvania scientists are trying to learn the secret of suspended animation by studying an air-breathing fish that burrows in to mud and slows its body functions in deep sleep for up to two years.

"Our ultimate interest is reproducing suspended animation in humans," said Dr. Alfred Fishman, professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. "It's not beyond the realm of imagination."

"We would like to have a way by which we could cause a suspension of life at a lower metabolic level," Fishman told an American Heart Association meeting Monday that the potential of suspended animation for medicine alone would be great. Life functions of critically ill people could be slowed so doctors could concentrate solely on the ailment and surgeons could operate

with little interference from breathing, heart operation or other functions.

Fishman and colleagues have been studying the strange fish for years to see how it slows its metabolic operations and survives for long periods without food or water.

The creature is called a lungfish because it can either breathe water using gills or air using lungs, depending on the conditions of its often-changing tropical environment.

Under ordinary circumstances, the African lungfish inhabits the shallow waters of lakes and rivers in central Africa. During hot, dry seasons the 4-foot creature escapes death by disappearing into mud and hollowing out a chamber in which it may nestle for months until water returns. When encased in its subterranean nest, the lungfish becomes dormant. Its heart and respiratory rates

slow down, its kidneys stop functioning and its oxygen intake drops.

This process is called aestivation. Little is known about it, but Fishman said aestivation may be merely a more intense level of hibernation, which appears to be a deeper level of ordinary sleep.

The scientists study lungfish flown to Philadelphia from Africa, but the fish also are found in Australia and in the Amazon region of South America.

The fish have been hooked up to instruments to monitor body functions during aestivation and the researchers are now seeking a biochemical brain factor that may be responsible for inducing aestivation. "The ideal thing would be to find a factor that you could inject intravenously to just keep the patient under the influence of this deep sleep — suspended function — until you want to let the patient out when you just discontinue intravenous infusion," Fishman said.

Reporter saved from jail sentence

United Press International
AMARILLO — A state district judge Tuesday declined to jail a television reporter who had refused to reveal sources of information used in broadcasts about corruption in Potter County government.

District Judge Arthur Tipps of Wichita Falls, presiding in the removal trial of suspended Potter County Attorney Kerry Knorrpp, had said Monday he would order Mark Baker of KVII-TV jailed five

days unless he named his sources as requested by a defense attorney.

In 1976 Baker reported a grand jury was investigating misuse of county funds by Knorrpp, indicted on the charge several months later.

But Knorrpp's lawyer, George Gilkerson, of Lubbock told the judge Tuesday the defense was not in a position to pursue a contempt citation against Baker if the newsman appealed. Tipps dismissed the

witness without further questioning.

Baker said the identity of the source "has no relevance at all to this damn case" and said pursuit of the issue by attorneys for Knorrpp was harassment in retaliation for the reporter's coverage of the case.

Baker reported on Nov. 4, 1976, that a grand jury which returned a bribery indictment, but Knorrpp was named in March of 1977 in an indictment alleging misuse of more than \$6,000 in county funds — the charges upon which his removal suit was later filed.

Knorrpp, whose removal trial started last week, also has been indicted for attempting to influence grand jurors and has been sued by a West Texas State University fraternity chapter which claimed property jointly owned by Knorrpp and the organization was used by the official to secure a bank loan.

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