

Farmer grows alfalfa; sprouts big business

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — Chicken feed sprouted the seeds of a new business venture in Bob Phipps' mind, but the tiny population of his home state forced him to leave North Dakota and head to Texas to watch his idea grow.

Today, seven months after Phipps left Bismarck, N.D., his Energy Sprouts Inc. is selling more than six tons of alfalfa and bean sprouts each week. And the entrepreneur says South Texans are gobbling up more and more sprouts every day.

"We started out growing wheat sprouts for chickens in North Dakota," Phipps said. "A guy told us to try alfalfa, so we did and it turned out really good. Then the supermarkets started wanting our stuff."

"Business went fine, but there just weren't enough people up there to eat our product. There's only 650,000 people in the whole state. We couldn't

make a go of it there so we sold our business."

Phipps turned his eye toward San Antonio, where his sister lived, and found that South Texas supermarkets were purchasing alfalfa and bean sprouts from as far away as California.

"The produce buyers here like a fresh product, so we saw the opportunity to supply it," he said.

"Our initial start-up costs were about \$75,000 and it costs about a quarter of a million dollars to keep it going at the volume we're having now, selling about 12,000 pounds a week. We hope to sell about \$400,000 this first year."

He claimed local grocery chain stores reported an increase of 30 to 40 percent in the sale of sprouts when they started buying from his company, apparently because consumers liked the fresher product. Energy Sprouts Inc.'s biggest competi-

tor is now a supplier in Houston. Phipps grows the alfalfa sprouts, which are thin and light and used primarily in salads and sandwiches, and bean sprouts, which are thicker, chewier and used in eggrolls and Chinese dishes, in a 3,000-square-foot warehouse in San Antonio.

There, pounds of seeds are placed in mechanical drums where they sprout after being automatically watered and rotated for three and a half days.

The sprouts, which for years have been used in health food store concoctions, but are rapidly gaining wider use, are washed, dried, packaged, weighed and cooled, then shipped to local supermarkets which in turn ship them to branch stores as far away as Lubbock and Dallas, as well as Arkansas and Louisiana.

"They've definitely caught on here," Phipps said. "Produce experts are saying the sprout business is in the same position the mushroom business was five years ago before it really caught on."

In addition to the more traditional alfalfa, bean and soybean sprouts, the company also markets a Chinese vegetable mix and "zesty" sprouts, a spicy combination of alfalfa and radish sprouts.

Warped



A&M women ranked ninth

Aggies hosting rodeo

by Amy Polk

Battalion Reporter

It's rodeo time again in Aggie-land — this weekend, the Texas Aggie Rodeo Association is sponsoring the 1982 TAMU Intercollegiate Rodeo.

Jane Armstrong, faculty adviser for the association, said contestants from the southern region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association — which includes colleges and universities from Texas and Louisiana — will compete in

bareback, saddle bronc, bull-riding, tie-down calf-roping, team-roping, goat-tying and barrel-racing.

The events started Thursday night and will run through Saturday, beginning at 7:30 each night at the Texas A&M Equestrian Arena on FM 2818.

The top two individuals in each event and the top two men's and women's teams from each region will qualify to compete in the NIRA national finals in Bozeman, Mont., in June, Armstrong said.

Texas A&M students have done well this season, Armstrong said. According to the March issue of College Rodeo, the Texas A&M women's team is ranked first in the southern region and ninth in the nation.

Dan Mundorf, a senior agricultural education major from Three Rivers, is ranked fourth in steer-wrestling.

Corley Coppus, a freshman business major from Dilley, has several high rankings, including third place in the national standings for barrel-racing and regional leader in barrel-racing and the Women's All Round.

Coppus started riding at the age of 3 and was 5 years old when she entered her first rodeo. She began riding with the Texas Youth Rodeo Association and started riding in open

rodeos, where money is awarded, at the age of 9 or 10. Her favorite event is roping.

"I practice every day about two to three hours a day," Coppus said.

Rodeo association members are busy, and Coppus is no exception.

"This semester we have a rodeo every weekend til the semester is out, starting last weekend," Coppus said. "I'll go to all of those and then during the summer, I'll make two or three rodeos a weekend — if I can."

Both of Coppus' brothers have ridden in rodeos. Her older brother, Mitch, is a professional roper.

"I used to get real nervous before I rode, but after doing it so much it's not as bad — but there

is still a feeling there," she said. "You get excited, and ready to go out there and to show everybody else."

Coppus said she enjoys the rodeo circuit because she sees many of the people she used to ride with a few years ago.

"You really look forward to seeing all your friends again going out and having a time after the rodeo," she said. "Sometimes that's more than you think about more than you do riding."

Coppus said she likes the thing about rodeoing.

"I love horses; I like to ride," Coppus said. "I really like to watch the men roping and team-roping. It takes a lot of skill to be able to do that. I think it is beautiful."

Greek Derby Day to benefit children

by Charlotte Boyd

Battalion Reporter

The Sigma Chi Fraternity expects to raise over \$3,000 for the John Wayne Wallace Village for Children in their sixth annual Derby Day competition Saturday.

The derby is made up of 11 events ranging from the relay, dressing and undressing out of a suitcase, to the buffalo relay, running a teaspoon of water without spilling it. No admission is charged.

The competition begins at 8 a.m. next to Texas Speedway. Winners will be announced Saturday night at the Derby Dance, which is open to all at the National Guard Armory. A band from Austin provide music and admission is \$3.50 at the door.

John Wayne was a Sigma member and the Brown, Colo., children's village school with the goal of accelerating the progress of students with learning disabilities or emotional disturbances so the return to public schools.

"All Sigma Chi chapters throughout the U.S. and Canada will sponsor a Derby Day in their campus for this mentally retarded," Callie Sigma Chi member, said.

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