

Making tracks for the Shack

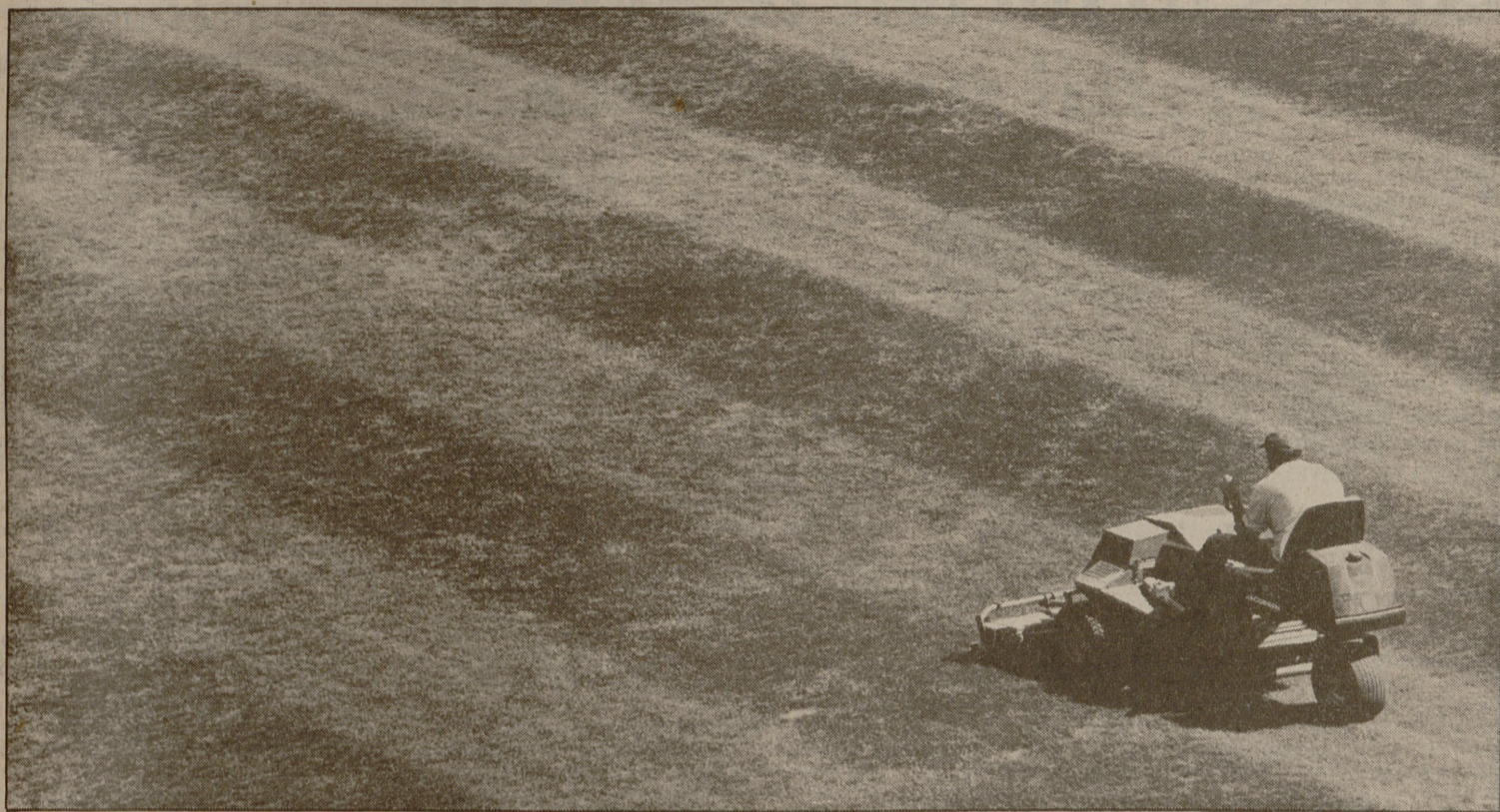


Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Paul Gorney, a Texas A&M Ground Maintenance worker, mows Olsen Field Wednesday morning so that it can be fertilized.

Recent baseball games have created ruts in the field that the new grass will replace.

Farmers get new market

Non-smearing soy ink passes 'rub test'

AUSTIN (AP) — Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, rubbing a white-gloved hand across a newspaper page, Wednesday hailed non-smearing soybean-based inks as a new and growing market for Texas farmers.

"What we have here is a product that melts in the readers' minds, not in the readers' hands," Hightower said.

Hightower said an expanding number of newspapers, magazines and commercial printers are replacing petroleum-based inks with soy ink, particularly for color printing. Soy ink also is gaining favor in state government printing operations, he said.

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— Jim Hightower, Agriculture Commissioner

"U.S. Printing Ink, a Dallas-based national distributor of news inks, reported that demand for soy inks is up by nearly one-third over 1989, and

the firm now uses at least some soy formulations in all of their products," he said.

He said the increasing use of soy inks is one reason that soybean production in Texas has exploded in recent years.

In the early 1960s, Texas had little commercial soybean production, only 82,000 acres harvested in 1965, agriculture department statistics show.

By 1989, Texas soybean output had increased 500 percent, to 415,000 acres. Texas produced 12.45 million bushels, or 740 million pounds, of soybeans last year in more than 40 counties.

Research began on soy ink following the 1973 OPEC oil embargo as newspaper publishers sought an alternative to inks based on increasingly expensive imported petroleum.

The soy-based ink is one market that should continue growing, Hightower said.

"In the last five years, soy inks have captured 30 percent of the 100 million pound per year color news-ink market. Approximately 112.5 million pounds of soybeans are crushed annually to supply the 30 million pounds of soy ink sold to printers across the United States," he said.

Four Texas newspapers so far use soy inks exclusively for color printing — the Houston Post, the Odessa American, the Paris News and the

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McAllen Monitor, he said.

"This product works for publishers" because of its high reproduction quality, particularly for color newspaper photos, and because it won't rub off on customers' hands, he said. "Farmers like it because it is an additional market for these soybeans and it is a growth market ... Readers like it because it passes the old 'rub test.'"

Quipping about news coverage of his own political battles, Hightower added, "Political opponents have been trying to smear me. Now we have come up with a product that will not allow me to be smeared in the newspapers of the state of Texas. So farmers like it, the publishers like it, consumers like it and Hightower likes it."

Court denies appeal for compensation

AUSTIN (AP) — A woman's attempt to recover workers' compensation benefits for an injury she received while playing softball at a company picnic was denied by the Texas Supreme Court.

The court Wednesday refused to consider an appeal by Cindy Annette Mersch of Irving, who had to undergo three corrective surgeries for fractures and ligament damage she suffered in 1986.

Mersch, who was 24-years-old at the time of the accident, was injured when someone slid into her at the softball game, according to court documents.

Mersch said she was entitled to workers' comp benefits because she would not have been at the North American Mortgage Co. picnic had she not worked for the company.

But a state district judge and appeals court in Fort Worth said the softball game was voluntary and refused to allow Mersch to receive benefits that are awarded to injured workers.

The Supreme Court, by denying Mersch's appeal, upheld the previous court decisions.

Li asserts strong leadership

Chinese government curbs pro-democracy protests while dodging questions about Tiananmen Square

Associated Press

A confident, smiling Premier Li Peng asserted Wednesday that China's leadership is united and strong and that the public does not want a renewal of the massive pro-democracy protests of last year.

Li's comments to reporters were his first since the protests were crushed in June. Also Wednesday, the Chinese Parliament wrapped up its two-week annual session with measures calling for freer business practices but tougher law and order policies.

The 3,000-seat National People's Congress, which largely rubber-stamps decisions by top Communist Party and government officials, also gave final approval to the basic law under which Hong Kong will be governed after Britain returns it to China in 1997.

Legislators in Hong Kong immediately said the law was not democratic enough and asked that it be amended.

Li was among top leaders on the rostrum at the congress' final meeting in the Great Hall of the People. Afterward, he told the annual post-congress news conference that the session was "inspiring and heartening."

The army killed hundreds and possibly thousands of people in June while crushing the pro-democracy movement.

While other officials have lost their tempers while answering foreign reporters' questions about the killings, Li merely smiled and refused to answer.

"Isn't this question out of date?" he said when asked who gave the army the order to shoot at protesters.

Li predicted that Beijing's Tiananmen Square, at the center of the protests, will remain peaceful Thursday. That is when Chinese celebrate the Qing Ming Festival,

a day to honor the dead.

Exiled Chinese dissidents have urged Beijing residents to mourn those killed in June by strolling in the square Thursday. They urged similar action last Sunday, but Chinese authorities closed the square to the public all day and held an official rally there.

"We do not hope to see a repeat of (last year's) chaos, nor do the Chinese people hope to see a repeat of it," Li said. "We believe Tiananmen Square will pass the day in an orderly way."

Some Beijing work units have barred employees from wearing black armbands or white flowers of mourning Thursday. The city has limited the number of people who can visit crematoriums, where the ashes of the dead are stored.

Li, asked about his chances of being re-elected in 1993, said he did not consider himself "extremely capable" but said rumors in Hong Kong that he was in political trouble were bad guesses.

"The core of leadership in China with (party) General Secretary Jiang Zemin as its nucleus is united and strong, and I believe it commands the support of the Chinese people," Li said.

He rejected a political comeback for Zhao Ziyang, who was ousted as general secretary in June for allegedly supporting the pro-democracy protests. He said Zhao was still being investigated by the party but had not been stripped of his membership. Zhao is living at home in "very good conditions" Li said.

Zhao, who favored negotiations with the protesters, was last seen publicly on May 19, when he visited the demonstrators in the square.

NASA: Tests should not put off launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA said Wednesday testing of the \$1.5 billion Hubble Space Telescope is taking longer than expected, but that should not delay next week's launch aboard space shuttle Discovery.

The space agency had said testing of the telescope would have to be completed by midnight Wednesday for Discovery to lift off as planned Tuesday. That deadline was extended to Thursday morning.

"Tests are going fine," George Diller, a spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said. "There are no problems. But it's going slower than we ex-

pected."

A 52-hour check of the telescope's scientific instruments was interrupted Monday by a power outage that knocked out air conditioning and forced the shutdown of heat-sensitive computers. Testing resumed Tuesday evening after technicians switched over to a newer backup power system capable of withstanding an electric failure.

To accommodate the extra testing time, NASA has rearranged launch preparations, moving up certain things that normally would not have been done until later, Diller said.

Charging of the telescope's nickel-

hydrogen batteries, temporarily interrupted by the power outage, also continued Wednesday. The batteries will be charged until two days before launch, when the shuttle's payload bay doors are closed.

Technicians planned to close out the shuttle's rear engine compartment this week. That involves making final inspections, removing protective covers for flight, installing last-minute items and cleaning the area.

No extra time to solve problems is left, and any further complications will delay the mission, Diller said. NASA on Saturday moved the launch from April 12 to April 10 be-

cause preparations were ahead of schedule.

Discovery is scheduled to lift off at 8:47 a.m. Tuesday with five astronauts who will put the telescope into orbit on the second day of the five-day mission.

Once deployed, the Hubble will orbit 380 miles above Earth for 15 years, free of atmospheric distortion. It will be capable of detecting objects 50 times fainter and with 10 times greater clarity than the best ground-based observatory.

Astronomers will be able to study stars and galaxies so distant that their light has been traveling to Earth for 14 billion years.

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