

Floods Take Toll on State Croplands

Farmers Not Getting Fair Shake, Director Says

By Wayne Singleterry

Swollen streams and consistent heavy rainfall have decimated Oklahoma croplands, causing millions of dollars in damage to most of the state's major agricultural products, Anna Belle Wiedemann, director of marketing for the state agriculture department, said Saturday.

Agriculture officials surveying the results of almost two weeks of rain believe wheat, corn, peanuts, and maize farmers will ultimately pay a high price for all that moisture, Wiedemann said.

Cropland in Canadian, Blain, and Logan counties, and around Pauls Valley were the hardest hit. In addition to the flooding from upstream runoff, most farmers in those areas have had 10 to 12 inches of rainfall.

"We don't have an estimate yet, but it's going to go into the millions of dollars. This will be the lowest wheat crop we've raised in years," she said.

"We feel the farmers aren't getting a fair shake right now, with the rains or the market," she said.

As quantity decreases, quality suffers, too. "Because of the excess water, the wheat is beginning to deteriorate."

If Oklahoma gets another big rain in the next few days, the test weight and protein content of ripening wheat kernels will diminish. Normal, healthy kernels will usually weigh about 62 pounds to the bushel.

When the weight gets down to around 58 to 59 pounds per bushel, then it begins to lessen the grain's quality, Wiedemann said.

"It makes fewer bushels to the acre, so they are beginning to lose bushels per acre," she added.

With corn, the buyers like a bright yellow berry. Because of all the moisture, Oklahoma's corn ears are becoming "bleached out blondes."

Maize and peanuts that were already in the ground "will have to all be replanted." That's particularly expensive for peanut farmers.

"They've got a great loss," Wiedemann said.

Seed peanuts cost about 84 cents a pound and most farmers plant up to 20 pounds of seed per acre. That doesn't count the costs of fertilizer and other nurturing chemicals.

Farmers in the southwestern part of the state haven't received as much rainfall, but what they have gotten has hurt their row crops, she said.

One crop, alfalfa, which is a big crop planted

throughout central Oklahoma, has been helped.

A lot of farmers were having to spray for army worms, but the water washed many of those dreaded pests away, she said.



— AP Laserphoto

James Bittle, left, Don Gilliam, center, and Butch Riegel waded through knee-deep water Saturday afternoon with a boatful of provisions for store owners in Pauls Valley.

Flooding by State Lakes Inevitable, Officials Say

TULSA (AP) — Officials say downstream flooding caused by both Altus Lake and Tom Steed Lake being filled beyond capacity with heavy rain is inevitable.

tem in October the way it was intended to work and it worked the way it was designed to," Pales said.

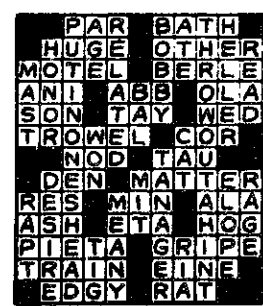
"The difference between last October and now is that we had a flood of record then and we don't today."

Officials also were watching Waurika Lake, which has 88 percent of its flood pool capacity remaining, and the sprawling Lake Texoma on the Red River between Oklahoma and Texas, said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spokeswoman Ruth Pales.

Because of the size of Texoma and its ability to hold floodwaters from the Red River basin, she said engineers "don't foresee any problems" with the huge lake.

Crossword by THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 42 One kind of burglar
 - 1 Hebrew letter
 - 43 Nigerian city
 - 4 Subside
 - 7 Deal out
 - 8 Director
 - 10 Compare
 - 11 Jayne Meadows
- DOWN**
- 1 Symbol
 - 2 Steinfeld
 - 3 Try out
 - 4 Bring joy
 - 5 Barbara



Saturday's Answer

- Geddes**
- 13 Familiar verb form
 - 14 Make lace
 - 16 Actress
 - 17 "Thrd"
 - 18 Lacerated
 - 19 Suggestion
 - 20 Parsonage
 - 21 Morpheus'
 - 22 realm
 - 23 Hellion
 - 24 Heavenly
 - 25 Have coming
 - 26 Basque hat
 - 27 Parsonage
 - 28 Medicinal plant
 - 29 Pet form of Ann
 - 30 Rooney's first mate

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to hold floodwaters from the Red River basin, she said engineers "don't foresee any problems" with the huge lake.

Tom Steed Lake in Kiowa County north of Snyder, filled to more than a foot higher than its highest spillway Thursday and water was rushing downstream unchecked toward the North Fork of the Red River, Pales said.

At Altus Lake, engineers were releasing about 2,000-cubic-feet of water per second (cfs) into the North Fork, causing the river below the dam to spill over its banks, she said.

With more heavy rain predicted for the area, she said engineers will be releasing the "max that they can and still do minimal amounts of damage" downstream.

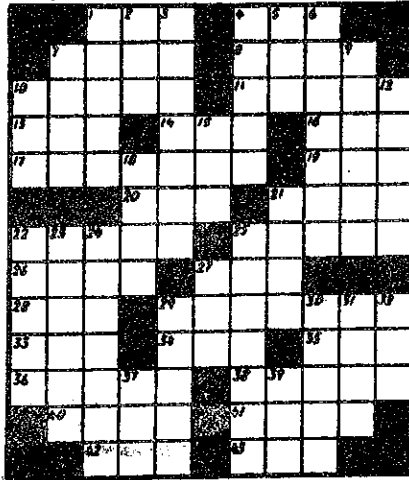
Engineers were releasing 32,000 cfs Thursday from Keystone reservoir to accommodate inflow from the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers.

"You can see 12,000 cfs any day of the week being released for hydropower," said Robyn Bowman, spokeswoman for the Corps.

Officials were forced to release 10 times as much water in October after more than 20 inches of rain inundated northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas.

Widespread flooding resulted from the combination of heavy rain and release of floodwaters from lakes. "We operated the sys-

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 14 Make lace | 9 Goad | 22 Morpheus' realm | 31 Medicinal plant |
| 16 Actress Thompson | 10 Endearing term | 23 Hellion | 32 Pet form of Ann |
| 17 "Third" set of teeth | 12 Consumer advocate | 24 Heavenly | 37 Rooney's first mate |
| 19 Singular | 15 Rainbow shape | 25 Have coming | 39 Help |
| 20 Grampus | | 27 Bewitch | |
| 21 Puncture | | | |
| 22 Wonder | | | |
| 25 Railroad car | | | |
| 26 Smooth consonant | | | |
| 27 Biddy | | | |
| 28 Work unit | | | |
| 29 Wedding figure | | | |
| 33 Before | | | |
| 34 English river | | | |
| 35 Wing (Lat.) | | | |
| 36 Opposite | | | |
| 38 Spoke too much | | | |
| 40 Split | | | |
| 41 Clamping device | | | |



See Next Page for Sunday's Answer



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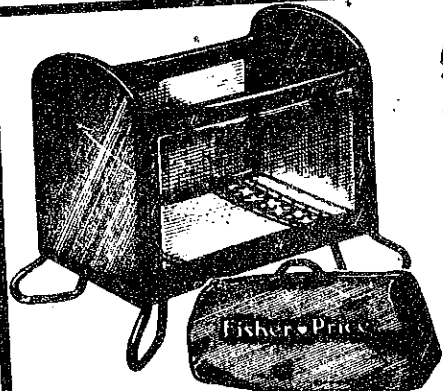
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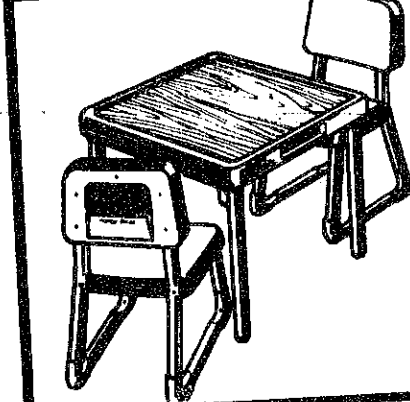
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MONDAY - SATURDAY 9:30 AM - 9:30 PM

May Flood Less Costly Than Fall's

By Chris Casteel

Heavy rains and floodwaters caused some structural damage to state roads last week, though nothing yet to compare to the \$8 million in damage wrought by the floods last fall, state highway officials said.

Kip Smith, Department of Transportation spokesman, said the agency has identified less than five major problems so far, most in central Oklahoma.

"We've got at least four structures damaged to some extent," including a hole in State Highway 37 near Newcastle and a washed out portion of U.S. 81 near Enid, Smith said.

"There are some little washouts here and there. Probably by the end of next week, we should know the extent of it."

Smith said the damage on SH 37 will affect many people who commute to Oklahoma City.

But, he said damage estimates so far are "nothing compared to the October floods."

Vernon Bradley, DOT assistant director, said the flooding last fall caused widespread damage to the highway system that cost \$8 million to repair. The department was reimbursed with federal emergency relief money for about \$6.5 million, though it was March before the money came through, he said.

Counties are also eligible for federal assistance and, because of the earmarking of money from a recently passed gas tax increase, will have a bigger pool of funds available for local repairs of roads and bridges.

Generally during heavy rains, Smith said, water rushing over roads cuts away the dirt

City's High Waters Raise Memories of 1923 Flood

EDITOR'S NOTE:

George Smith of Oklahoma City compiled this account of the 1923 flood from old newspapers, after discovering the event seemed to have been missed in Oklahoma history books. His story seems most appropriate after last week's floods.

By George Smith

The banner headline of the *Daily Oklahoman* read:

**FLOOD CREST
POUNDS INTO CITY —
KILL LOOTERS,
ORDER TO GUARD.**

The date was Tuesday, Oct. 16, 1923.

It had been a wet year for Oklahoma City. In June, a record depth for the North Canadian had been set at 16 feet.

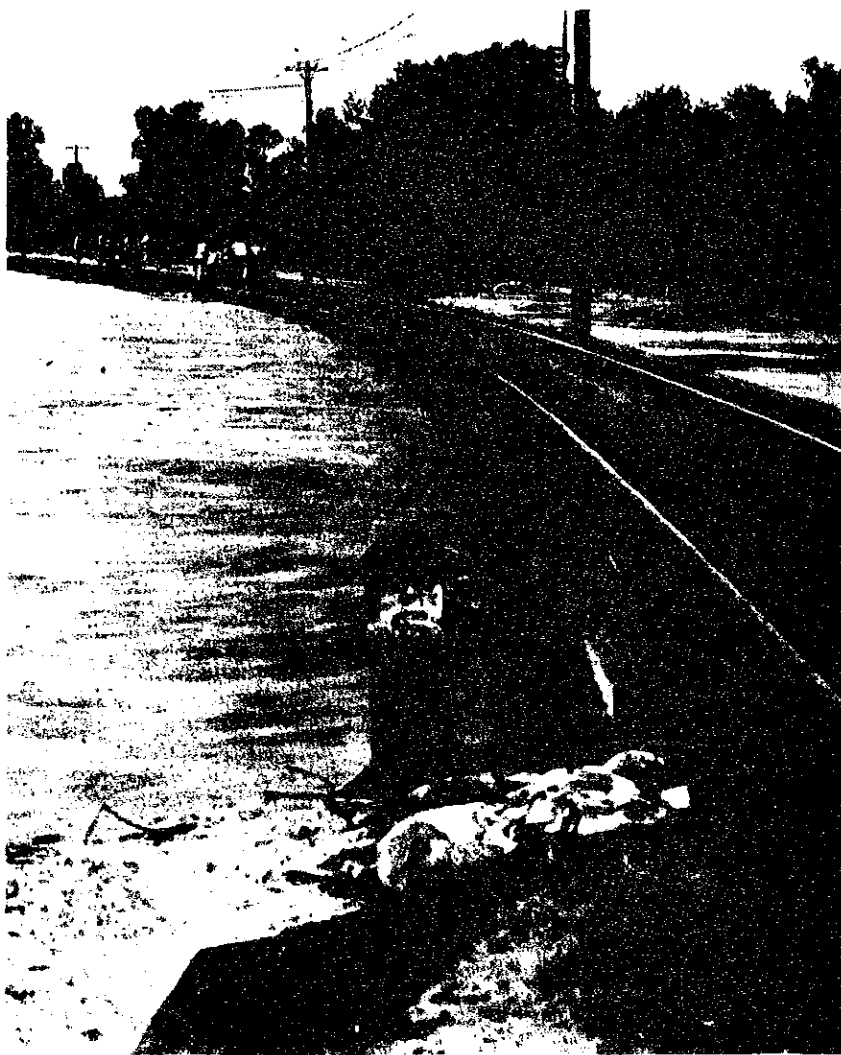
And it started again early in October. By Oct. 12, high water cut off direct street car service to Packing Town, (now Stockyards City) although you could still get there by taking the trolley to Capitol Hill and the South Cross Town.

Oct. 13, a front page story warned of floods in the Panhandle and Woodward, and of continuing rains in that area, but it was overshadowed by the story that Casey Stengel, "Casey the Immortal" smashed a home run in the seventh to win the third game of the World Series for his New York Giants, against the New York Yankees.

Sunday was Oct. 14. The flood was the top story in the paper this day. Woodward was just emerging from the water and told of damage to homes, businesses, roads and railroads. Weather officials predicted the crest would reach Oklahoma City about Thursday noon.

Monday's reports told of water at Canton rising five feet Sunday in 25 minutes to flood the town. The crest had now passed Canton and El Reno was preparing for its onslaught. All railroads in the western half of the state were halted. Army airplanes from Fort Sill were delivering mail to isolated towns.

The safety of the dam at Lake Overholser was causing concern. Boats and trucks were being readied for evacuation of the lower areas of the city just in case. City, county and state agencies were cooperating. Shelter for refugees was offered by the Elks Lodge, the Salvation Army, the Red



Water laps at the edge of the trolley tracks during the 1923 floods.

— File Photo

Many people left their homes with nothing but the clothes they wore.

As the population left, looters quickly appeared, braving the swiftly rising water. Three hundred National Guardsmen were called out to aid the police.

Mayor O.A. Cargill's proclamation to the public advised that they had orders to shoot to kill anyone discovered looting.

By 2 a.m., the river crested in Oklahoma City, at 25 feet, nine feet above the June record.

The *Oklahoman* published two extra editions Tuesday.

As the water rose, two families camped at the circus grounds awoke to find water lapping at their cots. One man waded out to a telephone and all were rescued.

A paralyzed woman and another woman with her 2-day-old baby were saved by ambulances, as well as a family of five who were all suffering from typhoid fever. They were taken to University Hospital.

Most of the animals at the zoo, then at Wheeler Park near Western, had been moved.

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3 FORECAST
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bridges. Generally during heavy rains, Smith said, water rushing over roads cuts away the dirt around them and gets underneath, eroding and washing away the asphalt.

"There were a lot of examples of that during the October floods," Smith said.

"The key to the whole thing is having a good stand of Bermuda grass (along roads). Bermuda grass has a tough root system; it's absolutely the best thing for controlling erosion."

Smith said a herbicide program begun in 1978 to kill weeds along roads so Bermuda grass could survive "completely paid for itself during the October floods."

"I believe 10 years ago it would have been much worse."

causing concern. Boats and trucks were being readied for evacuation of the lower areas of the city just in case. City, county and state agencies were cooperating. Shelter for refugees was offered by the Elks Lodge, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and at the city auditorium, but only a few families took advantage of the facilities until Saturday evening.

Then Monday, a sudden rise washed out the U.S. 66 bridge and the interurban bridge at 39th Street and carried them down the bypass where they crashed into the dam at the lake. When the dam held, the workers there were encouraged that the flood might be contained. They were destined to be disappointed.

It was about 9:30 p.m. Monday when the water level below the dam rose seven feet in 30 minutes. Although it was too dark to see what happened, almost 300 feet of earth levee just west of the dam washed out, and emergency procedures went into effect in Oklahoma City. Whistles and sirens sounded and police fired their guns in warning. Telephone operators called every phone between Grand (now Sheridan) and the Capitol Hill rise.

Every available ambulance and an army of cars and trucks, privately owned and manned by volunteers, evacuated 15,000 people from an area of 117 city blocks. Opened to the homeless were churches, the Elks Lodge, the Masonic Temple, the Salvation Army, Red Cross, the Huckins and Skirvin Hotels, the railroad stations and numerous restaurants.

as a family of five who were all suffering from typhoid fever. They were taken to University Hospital.

Most of the animals at the zoo, then at Wheeler Park near Western and the river, had been moved in the spring to Lincoln Park, to avoid earlier floods, and deer and elk had been released.

About the only large animals left were the buffalo, which found safety when released by police.

Six hundred hogs, which had been feeding on refuse at the city dump, were not so fortunate.

Although the Walker street bridge washed away, along with the adjacent street car bridge, a nearby shack built of dry goods boxes and tin survived and by Tuesday afternoon had been reoccupied. And the chickens were back in their adjacent pen, which was also undamaged.

All told, eight lives were lost and damage was estimated to \$2.5 million, a lot of money in 1923.

When the water subsided, the North Canadian had cut itself a new channel from Lake Overholser through the western part of Oklahoma City, eliminating many tortuous curves.

Remnants of the old channel still exist in the lagoons at the fairgrounds and the small oxbow lakes near Reno and Rockwell.

It was a day to be remembered in Oklahoma City, not only for the damage, but for the spirit shown by citizens when called on to help those in danger.

Lexington Inmates Help Towns Fight Flood

By Ellen Knickmeyer
Young inmates from a Lexington penal institution manned sandbags side by side with other volunteers in Purcell and Pauls Valley struggling to hold back floodwaters, authorities said Saturday.

"They filled the bags, filled the pickups and trucks with them and got them out of there," Garvin County civil de-

fense worker Sue Sommers said. "They worked hard last night."

About 50 prisoners and six officers left Lexington Assessment and Reception Center Friday afternoon in response to Garvin County Civil Defense officials' call for help — an offer extended by deputy warden Dan Lawrence earlier in the week.

The prisoners worked by the light of headlights until 1 a.m. Saturday, helping to pile about 147 tons of donated sand into bags being used to hold back the flooding Washita River, authorities said.

"They worked right with the townspeople," Lawrence said. "I talked to one of their officers today and it seems like they did a

good job."

The inmate volunteers were youthful, non-violent offenders in Lexington's regimented discipline program, likened to a kind of prison boot camp. A different group of volunteers from the same program had worked Thursday in Purcell, when sand-bagging help was needed along Walnut Creek.

The group working

Thursday in Purcell was given a rest day Friday. The inmates who worked in Pauls Valley had a day off from regular routine Saturday. There were few other tangible rewards for the inmates' efforts, Lawrence said.

"They just go there and do it. I think they got a couple of hamburgers," Lawrence said.

Activists Held
WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Police held seven Solidarity activists in Wroclaw, southern Poland, and warned them against organizing anti-government demonstrations during Pope John Paul II's seven-day visit to Poland, one activist said Saturday.



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