

County-Grown Hay Makes Winter Diet At Ringling Circus

By HELEN HOLT
News Editor

It started with a small insertion in New Holland magazine, advertising his services as a grassland and hay producer. Thirty five years and several hundred thousand bales later, Thurman Paynter is still selling Warren County grown hay to Ringling Brothers Circus winter headquarters in Florida.

Workmen from the famous entertainment organization were in the Afton community where Paynter lives just a few weeks ago to pick up several thousand bales. They brought collapsible car carriers from Orlando, Fla., to do the job.

The men won't be back for another month or so but meanwhile, elephants, camels and other grazing circus animals are already in the midst of consuming the rich smelling hay.

"One time I asked one of the men who had come up here how much hay does a big elephant eat," Paynter said. "He told me 'We ration them. An elephant gets six bales a day.'"

"So then I asked him how much water that elephant drinks. The man said they ration that too: 120 gallons per day."

"It's all done on a scientific basis," Paynter said. Through his long association with Ringling Brothers, Paynter has been able to visit the animals' winter quarters and see for himself the hulking creatures that so relish the specially grown hay.

"It's a beautiful place," Paynter recalled, "a great big place. It's as big as Warrenton, I suppose."

Because they are circus animals, the elephants, camels and show horses typically found under the big top are trained to certain habits. Freedom is not one of those habits and Paynter said all were enclosed in large lots or stables with no grazing pasture provided.

Subsequently, the large purchases of hay are as much

a necessity as water, even though the Florida weather permits year-round growing periods for grasses.

The Ringling Brothers managers buy their hay from sources other than Paynter, the local farmer acknowledged. Few farmers could keep up with the pace of six bales per day per elephant during a four or five month wintering period.

In fact, for Paynter who produces about 50,000 to 60,000 bales of hay each year, the demand would absorb about half his supply.

That situation would diminish his trade with other unique hay buyers, most notably the northern owners of highbred racehorses. Paynter said he has sold hay to a number of such horses, one of whom brought in \$135,000 in prizes during a recent racing season.

Jockeys, who actually buy the hay for their mounts use an unusual method of purchasing, Paynter said.

"They come down here and open the bale up, look at it, smell it, just like they were going to eat it themselves," he declared.

Selected bales are then put in a closed can which is locked tight and carried away.

This practice intrigued Paynter and he asked the jockeys why they treated the bales in such a manner.

"They told me that somebody might throw dope—drugs—into the hay which the horses would eat," Paynter said. Certain drugs could dull, sedate, overexcite or even kill a horse.

When prize racers are at stake, no one wants to take such a chance, the jockeys told Paynter.

Paynter has been dealing with racehorses just about as long as he has with circus animals. Although other hay producers are scattered throughout this area east of the Mississippi, Paynter has found himself in a competitive market where the quality of hay means a lot in keeping a customer.

"I don't have a contract with any of them," Paynter

said. "I just sell the kind of hay they like."

His brand, which he raises on his own land as well as on a large portion of rented land, is a fescue and clover mixture. In North Carolina, fescue is a big grower and is preferable to the alfalfa type hay commonly grown in the North.

Because of its oil base, alfalfa is not popular with owners of animals who are in the public eye. The oil loosens up the animals' bowels which, more often than not, subsequently makes something of a mess, Paynter explained.

"The trainer, at one of these donkey basketball games told me once that with fescue, you can sweep up behind the donkeys, but with alfalfa, you've got to mop up behind 'em," Paynter said.

For his own purposes, Paynter has no circus animals or superlative racehorses to tend. He and his wife, Bessie, maintain two chicken houses with several thousand layers inside while in and around the Paynter's yard and business establishment roam a few dogs.

Otherwise, Paynter will stick to the machinery and leave the animals to themselves. He bales hay during the entire year, except during April when new vegetation is pushing forward, and he keeps a crew of 10 men busy whenever the baling starts up again.

Once, however, he did consider buying a monkey. It was during his visit with Ringling Brothers in Orlando that he considered having such an addition to the family. But the monkey keeper changed his mind.

"I wanted to buy a monkey and I told the fellow so," Paynter remembered. "But he told me, 'No, you don't want to buy a monkey, not unless he's broken.'"

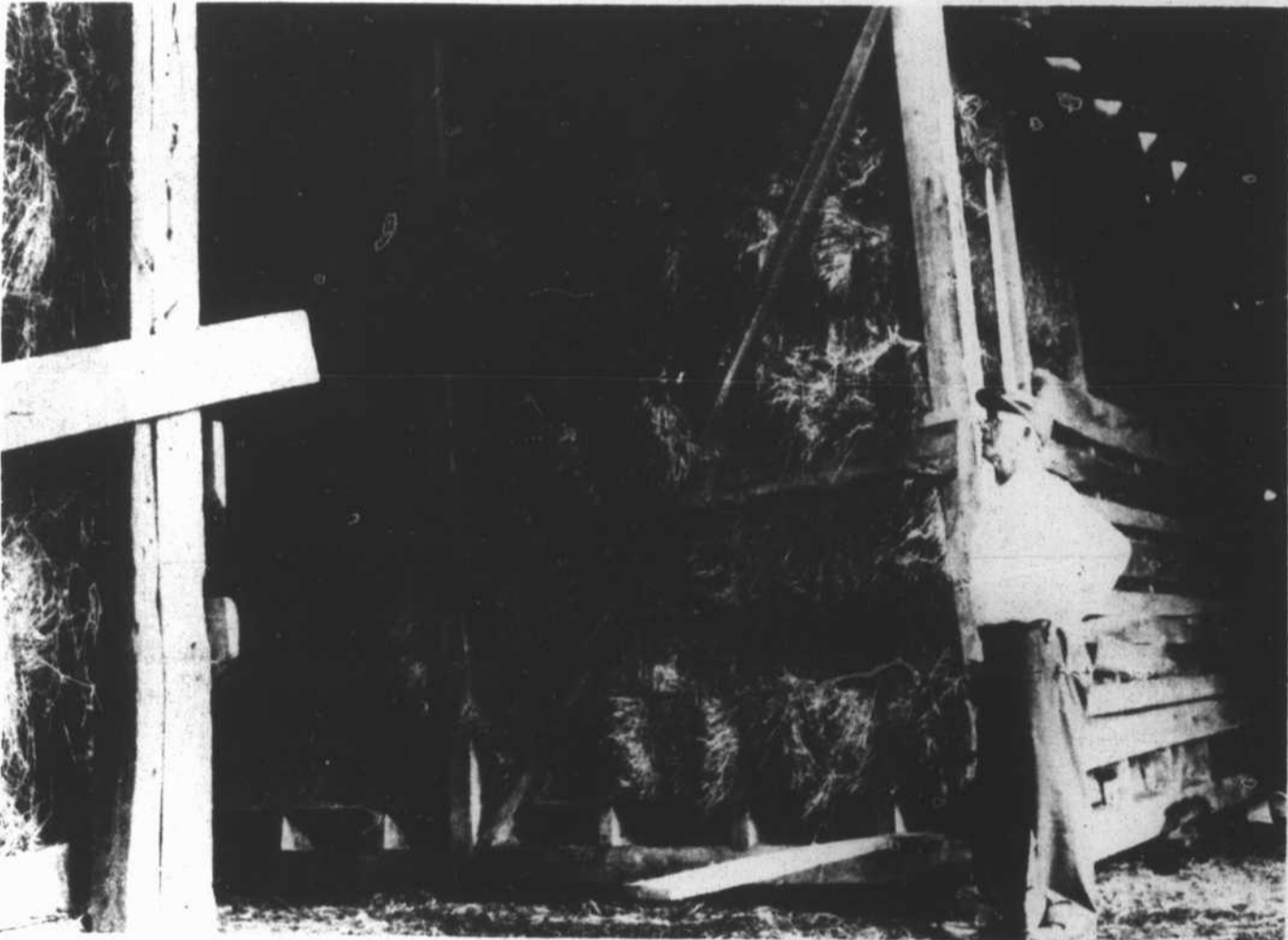
"So I asked him what a broken monkey would cost and he said \$300 to \$500 apiece. But he said he would let me have an unbroken monkey for \$50."

Paynter paused. "I told him then I reckoned I didn't want a monkey after all."

"One time I asked one of the men who had come up here how much hay does a big elephant eat. He told me, 'We ration them. An elephant gets six bales a day.'"



Paynter looks out over his businesses which, in addition to hay baling and farming, include Paynter's Enterprises, a metal working operation.



Thurman Paynter, an Afton farmer, businessman and hay producer, stands dwarfed by the stacks of hay bales which he has put up for sale. Several thousand of these bales will go to Florida where Ringling Brothers circus animals are resting in their winter quarters.

Salary Hike Approved By Warren Board

(Continued from page 1) federal, and 10 per cent state and local.

McIntyre reminded the board that for every dollar put into family planning, the more the welfare bill is reduced.

Increased good health of families with children and the children themselves is also assured.

In other business, county tax supervisor Janice Haynes asked that the board consider abolishing the tax listing position for Roanoke Township.

She informed board members that only 18 persons had listed at the part-time tax office, open for four consecutive Saturdays during the tax-filing season.

Mailing was suggested as a more practical means of listing.

The board advised Mrs. Haynes to gauge the feelings of tax listers in Roanoke Township before altering the present system.

Mrs. Haynes also recommended that the county adopt a consistent fee for

male and female dogs listed by their owners.

Stating that the dog tax has been reverted to a dog license, Mrs. Haynes said the fee should be equal for both male and female dogs.

With fees set at \$2 for female dogs and \$1.50 for males, Warren County last year collected \$4,457 in total dog revenues. Mrs. Haynes said the figure would be upped to \$6,762 if a uniform license fee were adopted.

The matter was tabled for later consideration.

The board did, however, agree to hire Archie Davis of Halifax County to do the county's tax listings or "pick-ups" next spring.

Mrs. Haynes said she believed the property appraisals could be made during a 10-day period. Davis works with the Halifax County tax office which has agreed to relieve him of the duties for one week next spring, she said.

In other business, the board:

—Heard a road paving request for SR 1637 by George

Feudale. The request for better drainage and gravel will be forwarded to the state highway office.

—Heard a letter from Branch Banking and Trust which alerted the board to administrative problems in handling the food stamp sales authorized for banks and post offices.

—Read a letter from Tom McDaniel, M.D. who said he was "aghast" that U. S. District Court Judge James McMillan could take a negative attitude towards counties, including Warren, who have sought to reduce the welfare rolls.

—Heard but did not act upon a complaint lodged by Willie Spruill regarding a tax he had to pay on tobacco poundage which he did not own. Spruill told board members that he had been taxed for a tobacco allotment for a land parcel he recently purchased and split with another buyer. The board, however, said it was unable to act upon the tax set, as it had been established through state law.

—Signed a proclamation submitted by Tom Peele declaring Nov. 18-24 as Farm-City Week.

—Corrected an accounting error of \$336.77 in CETA administration of Title II funds.

—Determined that Warren County would observe Veterans Day on Nov. 11 as will be done by the state rather than on Nov. 25.

—Appointed Dr. Kirit Trevidi to the Warren County Health Board.

—Tabled a request to appoint a member to the Franklin - Vance - Warren Board.

—Heard a CETA update reporting that \$425,965.82 will be extended to Warren County through Sept. 30, 1978, for the hiring of 46 employees.

—Reviewed a road petition for SR 1629, ranked by the state highway department at 89 in priorities.

—Tabled until the next meeting a recommendation to appoint someone to fill an expiring term of a Warren County Planning Board member.

Newcomers Fill Board Seats

(Continued from page 1) 270 votes, Richard Hunter with 235 votes and A. A. Wood with 309 votes the largest number received in the field of new challengers.

Veteran commissioners B. G. White and Gordon Hithcock received 331 votes and 226 votes, respectively.

Candidates defeated in their bids for the seven commissioners' seats included Aaron Allen with 175 votes, A. J. Ellington with 114 votes, incumbent commissioner Billy Lanier with 196 votes, incumbent Bill Leary with 143 votes and incumbent Sam Massey with 138 votes.

The Warrenton precinct's voters, along with the rest of the county, cast favorable ballots for the \$300 million highway and \$230 million clean water bond issues. All five proposed constitutional amendments were also approved by all 14 precincts.

All elected commissioners and the mayor will serve two - year, unstagged terms.

With this election, Miles enters his 11th term as mayor, being first elected to the post in 1957. He served on the town board of commissioners from 1949 until the election as mayor.

Miles stated Wednesday that he "certainly appreciates the fine support everybody has given me in town and this vote of confidence. I hope to keep things moving

ahead in Warrenton." Miles also said he was pleased with the voters' choice of town commissioners, calling the new board "a good board...interested in working for the community."

Littleton Vote

(Continued from page 1) one seat, with returning Commissioners Roger Gup-ton, 234; Joseph Newsom, 211; Fred Owens, 212; and Claude Wilson, 142.

Newcomer Justice Kidd, who put in the only bid for the commissioner's seat vacated by Rollins seeking the mayor's post, received 187 votes.

In statewide elections, the voters of Littleton's two precincts favored the \$300 million highway bond issue by a 272 to 151 margin.

The \$230 million water bond issue was likewise approved by 304 votes cast in favor and 124 against.

Defeated by Littleton voters was the proposed constitutional amendment allowing the governor to succeed himself. Littleton broke the general voting trend by casting 218 votes against the amendment as opposed to 190 cast in favor. The remaining four proposed amendments were approved, with 339 votes cast in support of both the homestead exemption and insurance amendments, 249 for municipal electrical ownership and 307 for a balanced state budget.

Unofficial Election Returns Show Precinct Voting

Precinct	\$300 Million Highway Bonds		\$230 Million Clean Water Bonds		Amendment 1 Homestead Right		Amendment 2 Insurance Right		Amendment 3 Succession		Amendment 4 Electrical Ownership		Amendment 5 Budget	
	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against
River	84	31	84	31	97	12	99	7	48	65	70	31	85	25
Sixpound	95	38	101	32	117	9	117	6	67	51	72	27	90	21
Hawtree	76	36	78	34	89	17	88	15	59	49	58	42	83	19
Smith Creek	35	21	34	22	50	4	51	3	26	30	24	24	41	9
Nutbush	68	33	65	37	81	14	83	14	49	49	51	42	74	23
Sandy Creek	81	36	87	34	103	15	100	17	31	47	73	38	83	28
Shocco	62	25	65	20	70	8	76	7	54	34	43	34	68	11
Fishing Creek	73	41	78	35	84	17	76	23	51	55	50	44	76	22
Judkins	68	8	61	13	65	3	66	2	44	26	41	19	58	4
West Warrenton	341	114	369	99	385	42	372	41	241	202	252	121	328	74
Fork	36	32	39	29	52	11	52	8	24	42	32	27	36	18
Roanoke	31	6	34	3	31	4	33	2	30	7	27	6	29	6
Norlina	201	109	208	99	253	31	256	29	159	131	159	97	219	51
East Warrenton	199	89	227	65	251	27	243	29	140	145	150	88	208	44
TOTALS	1450	619	1530	553	1728	214	1709	213	1018	933	1102	640	1478	355