

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

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Health note

Parents notified of suspected case of viral meningitis at Central School

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

A Perquimans Central School student was diagnosed with a probable case of viral meningitis last week.

School officials sent home a letter to parents last Thursday notifying them of the contagious illness in which there is inflammation of the tissues that cover the brain and spinal cord. While the virus that causes viral meningitis is contagious, most infected persons have just a cold or a rash with a low-grade fever. A very small percentage actually develops meningitis.

Brenda Lassiter, Perquimans County Schools' public information officer, said the child was hospitalized for observation.

Symptoms with viral meningitis may include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting. Viral meningitis can be serious, but rarely fatal. Most recover on his or her own under a doctor's care.

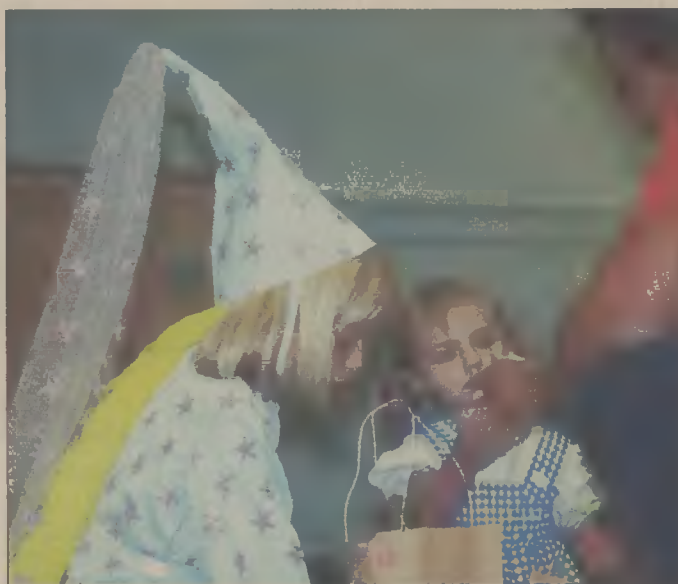
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus that causes viral meningitis is most often spread through direct contact with respiratory secretions like saliva or nasal mucus. The best way to prevent spreading the virus is good personal hygiene (washing hands) and cleaning the contaminated environment.

The local school system has already been busy cleaning classrooms and other areas in the schools in a proactive measure to prevent an outbreak of MRSA, a staph infection that is resistant to most antibiotics. Several students in surrounding counties have been diagnosed with MRSA, but none have been reported in Perquimans County schools as of Monday.

"We have taken extra precautions...spraying throughout the school buildings with the recommended solutions for disinfecting and sanitizing," Superintendent Dwayne Stallings noted in the letter sent home to parents last week. "We will continue these efforts to minimize the potential for the spread of staph or any other viruses."

Lassiter said the letter was also sent home with parents in an effort to help parents receive the most up to date and accurate information about MRSA. Some parents were confused after hearing news reports of MRSA cases reported in other schools in surrounding counties.

IT'S HALLOWEEN!



Perquimans Weekly Photo by CATHY WILSON

LITTLE ONES DRESSED in a variety of costumes filled Hertford Baptist Church Sunday evening during their Family Fall Festival. Many of the area's youngsters will be trick-or-treating on Halloween. Area law enforcement encourage drivers to be extra alert and cautious, looking out for the little ones as they make their rounds.



Cotton, corn yields spotty in county

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

One word pretty much sums it up: Spotty.

Cotton and corn yields were good in some areas of the county this year, while not so good in other areas. Rain fell in a few locations in the county, but missed others. And, winter wheat is going in the ground in various county fields, but not so in most.

This year's agricultural picture so far is...spotty.

Local cotton growers are picking cotton by the modules, and yields have been pleasing to most growers.

"What I'm seeing, the yields are ranging from 300 to 1,300 pounds per acre," said Lewis Smith, director of the county extension office. "Some yields are good, some not so good. And, some are as good as they've ever been around here."

Most of the cotton from the county is ginned in two gins: Albemarle Gin in Chowan County and the Ward and Nixon Gin in Winfall. Some farmers from the northern part of the county travel to Gates County to gin their crop.

Typically, cotton does better in hot, dry weather, but needs water at certain critical stages of growth. Apparently, the acreage with the higher yields received rain when it needed

it, while some other fields weren't as fortunate.

According to the Farm Service Agency, local growers planted 11,655 acres of cotton in Perquimans County this year, down nearly 47 percent from the 21,964 acres planted in the county last year.

Local growers apparently swapped the lost cotton acreage for cornfields since 22,000 acres of corn were grown here this year, up 47 percent from the 11,600 acres of corn grown in 2006.

Corn yields overall this year were much better than expected, even with drought conditions, Smith said. Again, while not much rain fell, the rain that did fall, fell at timely plant growth stages.

Smith also attributes better corn yields to better crop genetics that produce plants with tolerances to the moisture swings this area has experienced.

In both corn and cotton, Smith says crops utilized what rainfall they did receive to the fullest, and apparently got help from above.

"A lot of growers are giving thanks to God," Smith pointed out.

The winter wheat crop, however, is a different story.

Normally, about 60 percent of the county's 14,000



Perquimans Weekly File Photo by CATHY WILSON

COTTON HARVESTING IN PERQUIMANS County is bringing average yields ranging from 300 to 1,300 pounds per acre. Last year's estimated average cotton yield was 864 pounds per acre.

acres of winter wheat is usually in the ground by this time. This year, however, the drought has caused some farmers to delay planting due to lack of enough moisture in the ground for germination to occur.

"Maybe 10-15 percent of the wheat crop is in the ground at this point," Smith said before last week's rainfall. "We're really reaching the prime time to plant, but I'd tell farmers not to panic yet. Just hold on. They still have time to wait for good soil conditions. Considering the cost of wheat seed and planting, they have until mid November to plant. I've seen some years where they waited until December 1 to plant with

good results." Smith expects to see a 25 percent increase in winter wheat acreage locally because of the price wheat is bringing at market.

"It's an excellent price over what we've had the last five to 10 years," he said.

Farmers have the opportunity to sell their old crop wheat, (wheat that was harvested in the spring and stored in grain bins) for \$7 a bushel this year.

"That's as high as I ever remember seeing," Smith added.

Winter wheat is an attractive option for local farmers with cotton acreage. The crop takes less work and involves less variable expenses to grow.

Vet's marker site set

SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

The Veterans Monument Committee has submitted a written request to the County Commissioners asking that the monument be placed to the far right-hand side of the court house lawn.

County Manager Bobby Darden confirmed Monday that he received a request from the committee asking that the county work with the town of Hertford to move the monument placed on the court house lawn honoring Dr. John Harris to the Harris gravesite in Cedar Wood Cemetery. The veterans monument will be sited in its place.

The committee had originally recommended that the monument be placed in front of the court house to the right side just off the sidewalk. But public outcry arose contending that the monument would detract from the historic court house, close the green space in the center of town which is used for public events, and damage tree roots of an old oak on the court house lawn. Darden said committee members listened to public sentiment, and compromised on the proposed location.

Commissioners will vote on the issue on Monday.

The monument is complete and ready for installation. Work is expected to take place next week. A dedication ceremony is set for Nov. 12.

Pirates top Camden

All the prognosticators picked Camden, because on paper, the Bruins were capable of defeating the Pirates by two or three touchdowns.

But football isn't played on paper, it's played on a 100-yard field, and on the field Friday night, the Pirates pulled off the upset over visiting Camden on Senior Night. See page 7 for details.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 77
Low: 54
PARTLY CLOUDY

FOOTBALL FRIDAY
High: 67
Low: 51
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 71
Low: 45
PARTLY CLOUDY