

The Rockies Meat graders cleared of Cattle King charge

Associated Press
DENVER — Two U.S. Department of Agriculture meat graders accused of helping Cattle King Packing Co. cover up sales of substandard beef to the nation's lunch program were found innocent by a federal jury here Thursday.

The jury took only 30 minutes to acquit Charles Murphy and Dale Kroes of charges they advised an executive of the defunct slaughter house in Adams County to destroy test results showing false weights were used.

Kroes and Murphy testified they were set up by a Cattle King executive because of their part in investigating the fraud.

Earlier Thursday, another Cattle King executive, Marshall Stein, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor rather than face trial on 21 counts of selling substandard and contaminated beef — and agreed to testify against other defendants in the case who face trial next month.

Stein pleaded guilty to helping cover up the fact that an unspecified number of packages of ground beef sold to the military were labeled as weighing 4 pounds when they actually weighed 3.12 pounds. He faces up to six months in jail and \$500 fine.

Charges against the USDA graders were based on a conversation last September with former

'Beef still king,' CCA chief says

Associated Press
PUEBLO — National Cattlemen's Association President John Weber predicts an improved beef market by fall if corn and soybean crops are adequate and that high interest rates are the stockmen's biggest problem.

Weber, who runs a cow-calf operation along the California-Nevada state line near Ventura, Calif., told the annual meeting of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association on Thursday that if the corn and soybean crops are short, "it will hurt the cattle industry."

"By fall, I expect an improved market," he said, adding that feeder operations need \$60 per hundredweight to break even now.

"We have to respond to public demands. Our competition (hogs and poultry) is ahead of us but we are responding. The dollar price is a big factor, but beef still is king," Weber said.

Weber called high interest rates the industry's No. 1 problem. "We have used up our equity during the last few years. If the interest rate remains high, there is no way some of us can survive," he warned.

Cattle King executive Bruce Ryan, who was wearing a hidden micro-telephone transmitter. The conversation was recorded by a USDA special agent outside the plant.

Federal prosecutors claimed the tape revealed Kroes and Murphy told Ryan to destroy test results that might incriminate the company after the USDA official caught the firm trying to slip underweight cuts of meat into the lunch program hamburger graders. Murphy used his authority to halt production at the plant until a more thorough weighing process was in place.

Much of the conversation was unclear because of background noise and because several people spoke at once.

Ryan admitted under cross-examination that he quarantined with Murphy after the USDA official caught the firm trying to slip underweight cuts of meat into the lunch program hamburger graders. Murphy used his authority to halt production at the plant until a more thorough weighing process was in place.

2 die as plane engine stalls

Associated Press
BROOMFIELD — Two people were killed Thursday when their single-engine plane lost power and spun into the ground after takeoff from the Jefferson County airport, a federal investigator said.

Gregory Feith, investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board, said witnesses told him the single engine Mooney 201 had just taken off when the engine stopped.

Witnesses said Feith the crash continued on in level flight very slowly, before turning to the left, pitching up and spinning into the ground near field.

Killed were the pilot, Virginia Thomas Cookson, 54, of Broomfield, and the passenger, Scott Thomas Lynch of Boulder.

Feith said the pilot had a private license and was instrument rated. Investigators said the plane was en route to Sterling, 31 crashed just 1.2 miles northwest of the airport about 8:20 a.m. The crash site was one mile southeast of Superior, a community south of the Boulder-Turquoise and west of here.



Officials investigate wreckage of single-engine plane which crashed near Broomfield. Two people died in the mishap.

Charges filed against banker accused of taking \$173,000

Associated Press
PUEBLO — Felony theft charges were filed here Thursday against Roy L. Gordon, accusing him of stealing more than \$173,000 from the Greenwood Valley Bank in Colorado City while serving as its president in 1981 and 1982.

District Attorney Gus Sandstrom filed the charges in Pueblo District Court and obtained an arrest warrant. Bail was set at \$50,000.

Gordon, 47, is a resident of Pueblo, it is believed to be in Arizona. Sandstrom said the arrest warrant information will be fed into a national computerized network and circulated to law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

The scheduling of a first court appearance here awaits Gordon's arrest and return to Pueblo.

Six of the seven thefts charged in several accounts of more than \$10,000 each, making three Class 3 felonies. Conviction on each felony charge could bring a maximum prison term of 20 years. The seventh count involved an amount of less than \$10,000, making it a Class 4 felony.

One of the transactions cited in the seven-count complaint linked Gordon to Ronald Ramsey, then owner and president of the defunct First Savings Industrial Bank of Pueblo.

Ramsey at one time faced as many as 18 criminal charges stemming from his activities as head of the industrial bank, but, by the time he came to trial here last May, the number had been cut. He was convicted of one felony theft count involving an \$80,000 loan, plus two related misdemeanor counts.

The Colorado City bank earlier won a \$160,000 judgment against Gordon during his personal bankruptcy, which he filed after leaving the bank in 1982. The referee in those proceedings issued specific findings of fraud against him.

The bank also has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Denver against Hawkeye Security Insurance Co. of Des Moines, Iowa.

Berg killing labeled 'assassination'

Associated Press
DENVER — Denver police officials investigating the murder of KOA Radio talk-show host Alan Berg say they now consider the killing a possible "assassination" that might have involved a terrorist group.

"This is, essentially, an assassination," said Capt. George White head of the squad probing Berg's June 18 attack-slaying on the driveway of the private talk-show host's Denver condominium.

BLM battles lightning-caused border fire
Sanctuary zone

The Mouth District of the Bureau of Land Management hopes to put out "one or two hot spots" today on a lightning-caused fire that has been burning since Tuesday on the Utah-Colorado border.

BLM spokeswoman Mary Flunk said 200 acres of ground had been burning but it had mostly burned out by this morning. Fire crews were to be used today

apartment.

"Whether or not it was done for political reasons, we don't know," White told The Denver Post. "Only the killer knows."

Don Malina, chief of the department's investigations division, also said he believed the crime was an assassination, and said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking into possible "international and other national implications."


He said information is being sought about several domestic

right-wing groups and international terrorist groups.

But police cautioned that they have not focused their probe on any particular group, nor have they ruled out the possibility that there may be other people responsible for the slaying.

"We haven't eliminated Jew Citzers," but there are a lot of reasons to suspect one of these groups," White said.


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