

daily nebraskan

Pot prices force users to resort to home-grown

By Mary Kempkes

Inflation strikes all areas of life. The obvious and the not-so-obvious. Items bought at J.C. Penney or in the shadows of a main street.

You won't find President Ronald Reagan complaining about what inflation has done to marijuana sales. But smokers are complaining.

"I know that I can't afford to shell out \$40 every two weeks anymore," said Mike, a UNL student. "So unless I grow my own I'd have to cut it (his smoking) down."

Mike began growing pot last fall as an experiment and started using it when he "came up short of cash one day." Since then, he has grown pot to supplement a regular stash. Mike estimates it saves \$120 a month—more than \$1,200 a year.

Of course, broad figures on marijuana sales are hard to come by. There is no official market, only unofficial. But reduced buying power has forced some smokers to cut back or to supplement their stash by growing their own, even though the cost of marijuana has remained almost constant except for a period last summer when shortages caused by large coastal drug busts and dry weather raised the price by \$10 to \$20 an ounce.

A sampling of smokers at parties shows many have turned to growing their own, even if it's just one plant in a clay pot—the way large-quantity growers started.

Complicated growing system

At first, Mike stuck a seed in potting soil and put it in the window to see if it would grow, he said, but since then he has moved on to more complicated growing systems. Now he has nine plants growing under a combination of fluorescent and grow lights in his closet. The plants are housed in a wooden box Mike lined with foil and mirrors to reflect more light.

Many homegrowers are amateurs and restrict themselves to a couple of plants under an aquarium light in the closet, using seeds from their last ounce. All proceeds are smoked themselves or with friends. Mike said he uses all of his home-grown himself.

Others grow as many as 40 pot plants in an apartment basement for profit.

Joan began growing pot on a large-scale basis in October after a successful try with three plants in her bedroom closet. She found it a fun experiment, she said. Here was a plant she could grow for a hobby and then use later for fun.

"It just seemed like a good project," Joan said with a shrug. "Something to do in my spare time."

Also, the marijuana market was tight last fall when



Photo by Mary Kempkes

Home-grown marijuana grows under a combination of fluorescent and grow lights. The 21 plants are a variety of different types of marijuana.

Joan began growing en masse, said Bob, a friend helping out on the project.

To save and make money

"We started it to save money—and to make money," he said. But home-growers emphasize the fun they have growing the illegal plant.

"I have a small apartment that's full of plants," Mike said. "And these are the only ones that do me any good."

"One of the nicest things about growing marijuana (as opposed to growing ordinary plants)," Bob said as he plucked a withered leaf from a plant and dropped it in a plastic bag, "is that you can enjoy the dead leaves."

Several friends joined in on Joan's project. Some construction required help and Joan needed her roommates' permission to use the basement because if caught, all would suffer. Friends who donated seeds also participat-

ed.

Using large styrofoam sheets, several two-by-fours and four \$12 fluorescent lights, they constructed a five-by-five-foot mini-greenhouse in the basement of her apartment complex. Bob donated a variety of seeds including Sinsemillian, Hawaiian and Panama Red. They seeded 21 plants in cut-off plastic milk cartons and inexpensive potting soil.

A tropical environment

The group left little to chance. Using directions from a guide bought in a local head shop, Joan tried to simulate a tropical environment, keeping temperatures constant at 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

The lights are automatically timed to an 18-hour day—to be used until the plants mature, Joan said, when a

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Committee-bound vet school bill caught in debate jam

By Patty Gallagher

Politicking began early on a bill supporting a UNL School of Veterinary Medicine, as state senators spent 45 minutes in debate Tuesday morning over which committee the bill should be sent to.

The bill, sponsored by 10 senators from outstate Nebraska, provides that \$3 million be appropriated for the period of July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982, to prepare plans, drawings and other specifications for building a veterinary school.

The school would be on UNL's East Campus.

The bill, introduced Friday, was referred to the agriculture committee by the Legislature's executive board. When it came to the floor for approval into committee Tuesday, Sen. Gerald Koch, Ralston, proposed that it instead be sent to the education committee.

Koch argued that "vet medicine is primarily educational," not agricultural. Koch's motion, however, was defeated, 19-26. The bill will remain in the agriculture committee.

After Koch's motion, Sen. Don Dworak, Columbus, offered an amendment to move the bill to the appropriations committee. After some discussion, he withdrew the amendment.

The Dworak amendment seemed to have touched off what is to be the crux of the vet school bill this session. Senators supporting the bill opened questions of the feasibility and need for the school, and

asked whether the state can afford the project.

Before withdrawing, Dworak said his amendment was offered to allow "consideration to how much technical schools, state colleges, as well as other divisions of the university," are receiving from the Legislature.

Responding to a question, Sen. Jerome Warner, Waverly, said that the Legislature "may well have to think in terms of less" than the \$6.5 million price tag on the school.

Warner, chairman of the appropriations committee, voted in favor of moving the bill from the agriculture to the education committee.

He said, however, that he is "inclined to agree it is an appropriations bill."

According to Sen. Loran Schmit, Bellwood, an author of this year's bill, the veterinary school issue is one that should be dealt with by persons familiar with agriculture.

In debate, Schmit said that in his 12 years in the Legislature, vet school bills have gone to the agriculture committee 11 years. The exception was the 1980 bill, which was sent to the education committee.

In support of having agriculture specialists hear the bill, Schmit asked Dworak to quote the number of cattle and hogs in the state. Dworak said he had no idea.

When the question was returned to Schmit by another senator, the Bellwood farmer had exact figures ready.

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Photo by Jon Natvig

This American flag, one of 52 flying over Wyuka Cemetery, was to be taken down with the return of the hostages to the United States. Wyuka business manager Kirk Anderson decided Monday to raise the flags, after the announcement came that the 52 American hostages in Iran might be freed. See related story on Page 2.