



Sustaining Member

1990 - 1991

Bac
Kilduff's
wife

Worm says mild winter with nip

BEATTYVILLE (AP) — Rosemary Kilduff's weather predictors are a bit fuzzy about this year's winter forecast, but she still has 100 percent confidence in their accuracy.

After all, they are "woolly worms."

"This is all very professional," Kilduff said of her 12th annual Woolly Worm Survey, published in Wednesday's edition of *The Beattyville Enterprise*.

Appalachian folklore holds that the winter's severity can be gleaned from the color of the Isabella moth caterpillar's "wool."

The largest group of the 393 worms spotted in Lee County this year — 192 — were

black on the ends and brown in the middle. So it looks like the region is in for a mild winter, with a cold snap at either end, Kilduff said.

There were 111 solid black worms, indicating one frosty start and finish. But Kilduff said a bunch of lighter caterpillars portend a mild middle.

"With 36 light-colored ones, particularly the lime- and celery-colored ones, we will certainly see grass in February as we did last year," she said. "Mild and everything will be nice."

Don't believe in predicting the weather as the worm turns? Kilduff has more data to back up the forecast.

"The light corn husks and the walnuts with thin skins bear out this mildness," she said. "The two hornet's nests low on the ground indicate that the snow will not lay on. The one hornet's nest 8 or 9 feet high shows that it will snow during the cold ends of the winter, and that it will lay on during those periods."

And Deputy Sheriff Jim Kilburn counted 3 August, meaning 3. The snow is also yellow and common seeds with sp. ing there will be Kilduff, a co- o the 111-year-old wee ducts

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the four-week survey each year before the Lee County Woolly Worm Festival. She sends the results to the National Weather Service office in nearby Jackson, where officials always take it in the tongue-in-cheek spirit in which it is compiled.

Kilduff acknowledges that the worms sometimes "mess up a little" in their prognostications. But she said those inaccuracies can be attributed to natural phenomena — such as a 1991 volcanic eruption in the Philippines and the "el Nino" current that has played with global climates in recent years.

"That confused the meteorologists," she said. "So what's a woolly worm to do?"