

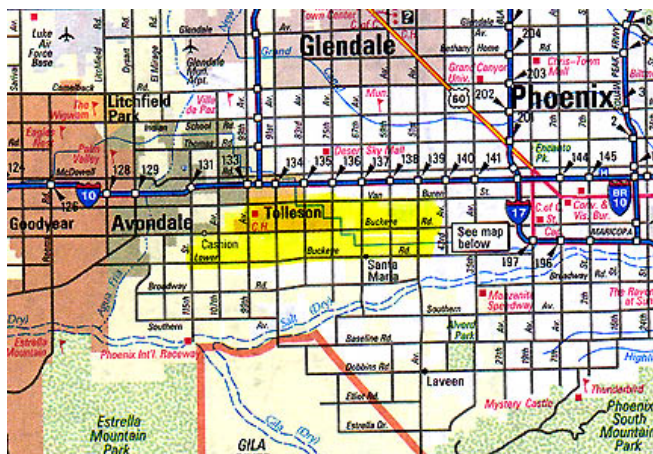


Phoenix Barley Mystery: Apparently Irrigation and Wind

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One of three barley fields operated by Brooks Farms near intersection of 75th Avenue and Buckeye Road, Phoenix, Arizona, in the Tolleson suburb, which have straight parallel lines of standing crop between which are randomly downed and standing crop. May 25, 2005, aerial photograph © 2005 by KTVK, Channel 3 News.



Tolleson, a Phoenix suburb, is region where Brooks Farms cereal crops are grown in big fields on Buckeye Road and Lower Buckeye Road.

May 26, 2005 Phoenix, Arizona - Thirty-five years ago, Trent Johnson was born in Phoenix into a farm family that raised cereal crops. At age six, he was already learning how to drive a tractor. Twenty years ago he began working for Brooks Farms which leases several thousand acres of land. One of Brooks Farms' fields is leased from Swift Transportation, a large trucking company. That field is near 75th Avenue and Buckeye Road. Two other fields next to each other run from 67th to 72nd Avenues north of Lower Buckeye Road and are owned by a Utah company called "Property Reserve Arizona LLC." Mr. Johnson has been foreman and farm manager of Brooks Farms since 1997.

A week ago, Jeffrey Wilson, Director of the Independent Crop Circle Researchers' Association (ICCRA) in Ohio, reported that ICCRA member, Ruben Uriarte, learned of crop anomalies in the Buckeye Road field after trucker, Salvador Estrada, saw the unusually straight downed crop, and called Victor Camacho, host of a Spanish-language radio station. Camacho reported the crop anomaly on air. Jeff Wilson asked Rod Bearcloud Berry to investigate and e-mailed on May 19, 2005, "Bearcloud reports that there are three linear flattened pathways approximately 525 to 600 feet in length that are parallel to the power lines and the road. Interspersed between the three pathways are a series of irregular flattened shapes, none of which cross any tramlines."

Jeff further searched Google Maps and for one intersection, 71st and Buckeye Road, a

satellite photograph showed three linear, nearly parallel, strips with no vegetation. [See **Earthfiles 052005** for images.] But there was no date for the image. Now Jeff Wilson has learned the satellite photo has to have been made no earlier than September 2004.

Yesterday, Channel 3 KTVK news producer, Scott Davis, interviewed Trent Johnson about the straight-line downed crop which had caught residents' attention. Scott called me to say Mr. Johnson has been seeing crop go down in straight sections over the years and links the downed plants to the Brooks Farms' irrigation routine and wind. This morning I talked with Trent Johnson for this Earthfiles report.



Close-up Brooks Farms' barley May 25, 2005, aerial photograph © 2005 by KTVK, Channel 3 News.

Interview:

Trent Johnson, Foreman and Farm Manger, Brooks Farms, Goodyear, Arizona: "We grow barley, wheat, corn, summer silage, cotton those are our main crops. The crop before the barley in these fields was cotton. And it was probably a month ago, we had heavy winds come through. I think we were in between irrigations at that time. We run on about a 10-day schedule, about every 10 days we were irrigating. So, the ground was somewhat wet when the wind came through there. But it doesn't necessarily need to be a wind storm. Even a dust devil can come through and in just certain areas lay it down. It depends on how wet the ground is, how wet the plants are, and how heavy the seed head is.

IN 2005, WAS THE WIND STORM AT THE END OF APRIL TO FIRST OF MAY UNUSUAL?

No, we go through this every year. It's just a timing thing. We have to fight the weather and wind every year because we *don't want* the crop to go down. Sometimes we have to hold off on the irrigation for an extra two to three days in order to make the plants not go down because you don't want to be running water when there is 30 to 40 mph wind. That will lay the *whole field* down if that's the case.

There's a comparison I can use: take a spaghetti noodle and when it's dry, it's very hard and brittle, right? When you put it in water and it soaks up water, it becomes very flimsy. That barley plant is basically the same thing. When it is dry, it is very brittle and you can break it. But when it's got water in it, it becomes very flimsy. The head where the seed is becomes heavy and if it's heavier than what the plant can sustain, that's the reason it falls down.

YOU'RE CERTAIN IT WAS THE WIND AT THE END OF APRIL, FIRST OF MAY, THAT KNOCKED IT DOWN?

Yes.

WOULD YOU SAY THESE THREE FIELDS IN 2005 HAVE AN UNUSUAL PATTERN OF RANDOMLY DOWNED CROP COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS?

No, not really. Sometimes you'll get those patterns out there. We have one field in which the entire 40 acres went down. You never can predict how it's going to go down. It's like Nature just does it. I don't know how else to explain it.

Straight Dirt Berms to Control Irrigation Water



Road side view looking down some of the straight berms and randomly down and standing barley. May 24, 2005, photograph © 2005 by Scott Davis.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS BEEN CONFUSING TO US WHO HAVE SEEN A LOT OF CROP FORMATIONS IS HOW ABSOLUTELY STRAIGHT THOSE LINES ARE BETWEEN THE RANDOMLY DOWNED CROP.

There are borders and that's why sometimes it will go down between the borders. The borders are perfectly straight. We put those in.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THE BORDERS ARE AND HOW YOU MAKE THEM?

We have what is called a 'border dig.' It's a small implement that is pulled behind a tractor that makes a big berm and we use it for irrigation to control our water when we irrigate.

SO THOSE STRAIGHT LINES WHERE THE CROP REMAINS STANDING IS WHERE DIRT HAS BEEN PILED UP?

Yes, each line is about a 2-foot-high berm of dirt that's about 3 to 4 feet wide. The berms are spaced roughly every 32-feet. Then the irrigation water is run through those two borders and that way, we can control the water. If we did not have those raised berms, we would not be able to control the water.

SO WHEN YOU IRRIGATE, THE WATER IS ONLY IN THE AREA THAT WE SEE AS RANDOMLY DOWNED IN BETWEEN ALL OF THOSE STRAIGHT LINES OF STANDING CROP WHERE THE BERMS ARE?

Right, exactly.

IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY SUCH AS THE MIDWEST OR CANADA OR ENGLAND, THEY DON'T IRRIGATE FIELDS LIKE YOU DO. COULD THIS BE ONE OF THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUR PHOENIX RANDOMLY DOWNED CROP IN STRAIGHT LINES VERSUS OTHER PLACES?

Yeah, it can be because of our irrigation and the way we plant things here and the way we live in the desert. It's kind of a valley we live in. That all could contribute to it, I guess.

SOME RESIDENTS SAID THEY HAD NEVER SEEN THE FIELDS LOOK LIKE THIS BEFORE. WHAT IS YOUR COMMENT TO SOMEONE WHO SAYS THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN THE FIELDS LOOK LIKE THAT BEFORE?

It does happen every year to one extent or another. Being there has been such an influx of new people here to the valley, especially in the west valley there's been so much growth. I think it just caught peoples' attention. It's not an uncommon deal. I've seen this for 30 years. It does not always happen as pronounced as it is in these fields now. You might just have few spots one year and you might not have any wind come through. But it's not anything out of the ordinary to us. It's just normal crops for us.



Brooks Farms now surrounded by houses. May 24, 2005,
photograph © 2005 by Scott Davis.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THIS CROP DOWN?

You pray that the combine can pick up as much of it that's gone down as they can!

IT WILL JUST LAY THERE UNTIL HARVEST (mid-June).

Yeah, there's nothing we can do about it.

Influence of Previous Cotton Crop

WHAT ABOUT THE PREVIOUS COTTON CROP?

After the cotton is harvested, we go in right behind it and plant barley. And there are still some volunteer plants from the cotton that comes up in the barley a bit in rows like it was originally planted, like markers. And there might be a little more seed in one spot over another and the rows where the cotton was can somewhat influence the barley as to how thick it is. The thicker it is, the less likely the crop will go down. But if it's really thin, the wind can really lay it down.

SO WHERE THERE IS STANDING CROP LIKE IN CIRCLES, WHAT MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED THOSE PATCHES WOULD BE COTTON FROM THE PREVIOUS PLANTING?

It could be that, or it could be the ground moisture itself. The moisture is never always the same across a field. It can be drier in some spots and wetter in some spots. It might have gotten more fertilizer in one particular spot. There are a lot of variables.



Single standing clump in long, straight section of downed barley.
May 24, 2005, photograph © 2005 by Scott Davis.

I THOUGHT ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING PHOTOGRAPHS THAT SCOTT DAVIS FROM CHANNEL 3 HAD TAKEN ON THE GROUND WAS AN AERIAL WHERE THE BARLEY HAD GONE DOWN VERY STRAIGHT IN A VERY LONG SECTION, BUT THERE WAS ONE PATCH, MAYBE A COUPLE FEET IN DIAMETER, THAT LOOKED LIKE A PERFECT CIRCLE OF STANDING BARLEY.

I've seen that and I can see why people would go, 'What is that?' But I guess when you've

done this as long as I have, you don't think twice about it. I cannot explain to you exactly why that one little spot stayed standing. It's honestly related to Mother Nature. That's my best explanation for it."

Two weeks from now, all the barley crop - standing and flattened - will be harvested and a new summer silage will be planted which grows like corn. Mr. Johnson told me, "If something unusual happens in that corn, I'll call you."

More Information:

See other Earthfiles reports about Crop Formations in the **Earthfiles Archives**:

- 05/20/2005 -- **May 2005 Crop Formation Update in Six Countries**
- 05/09/2005 -- **Mysterious Lights and 2003 Serpent Mound Soybean Formation**
- 04/20/2005 -- **Outer Space Impact At Serpent Mound, Ohio, 256 Million Years Ago**
- 04/12/2005 -- **First 2005 Dutch Crop Circles Reported in Hoeven, Holland Grass**
- 10/17/2004 -- **American Crop Formations: 1880-2004**
- 09/22/2004 -- **Miamisburg and Serpent Mound, Ohio Crop Formations: Geometries Compared**
- 09/17/2004 -- **Updated: Part 1 - High Strangeness in Canadian Cattle Corn**
- 09/12/2004 -- **Part 2 - High Strangeness in Canadian Cattle Corn**
- 09/10/2004 -- **Update on Miamisburg, Ohio, Corn Pictogram - Balls of Light?**
- 09/05/2004 -- **Part 2 - Hillsboro, Ohio Corn Plant Anomalies**
- 09/04/2004 -- **Hillsboro, Ohio Corn Formation - High Strangeness in Soil and Plants**
- 09/02/2004 -- **Updated Photos: Big, Impressive New Corn Formation in Miamisburg, Ohio**
- 08/29/2004 -- **Another Pictogram in Poland**
- 08/28/2004 -- **Cow Mutilation and Loud, Unidentified Sound in Farnam, Nebraska**
- 08/12/2004 -- **Circles in Belgium and Holland**
- 08/10/2004 -- **Updated Aerial Photos of West Overton, Wiltshire "Serpent"**
- 08/09/2004 -- **Pictograms in Poland**
- 08/03/2004 -- **Crop Formations: Fifteen in Southern England Since July 20, 2004.**
- 07/26/2004 -- **Crop Circles in Tilden, Wisconsin Oats and 90-Degree Angles in Litchfield, Minnesota Barley**
- 07/25/2004 -- **2004 Canadian Crop Formations: Scorched Soybeans and "Dirt" Pattern in Barley**
- 07/24/2004 -- **Part 3 - Crop Formations and Mysterious Lights in Wiltshire, England, July 2004**
- 07/24/2004 -- **Part 2: Crop Formations and Mysterious Lights in Wiltshire, England, July 2004**
- 07/15/2004 -- **Updated: Part 1-Beyond Hillsboro, Ohio, More Corn Down in New Milford, Connecticut**
- 07/13/2004 -- **Updates on Spanish Fork, Utah Barley Formation**
- 07/07/2004 -- **Fourth 2004 Crop Formation in Poland Has Multiple Parts**
- 07/06/2004 -- **Additions to Spanish Fork, Utah Formation and Mysterious Lights Seen**
- 07/06/2004 -- **Mysteriously Downed Oat Plants in Eagle Grove, Iowa, and Downed Corn in Hillsboro, Ohio**
- 07/04/2004 -- **Crop Formation in Spanish Fork, Utah**
- 06/17/2004 -- **More 2004 Holland and Poland Crop Formations**
- 06/16/2004 -- **England: 2004 Crop Formations and 2003 Research**
- 06/03/2004 -- **Updated - Second 2004 Pictogram Crop Formation in Poland**
- 06/02/2004 -- **2004 Peach Orchard, Arkansas Crop Formation**
- 05/24/2004 -- **Biophysicist W. C. Levengood's Crop Circle Reports Available for First Time On Internet**
- 05/22/2004 -- **2004 Overview of Crop Formations in Six Countries**
- 05/17/2004 -- **Updated - Crop Formation Reported in Zabno, Poland**
- 05/11/2004 -- **An Extraordinary Photograph in A Dutch Home**
- 05/09/2004 -- **2003 English Crop Formations on Documentary DVDs**
- 04/14/2004 -- **Light Anomalies in Photos of Conondale, Australia Grass Circles**
- 01/10/2004 -- **Strange Unidentified Aerial Objects in Indiana and Pennsylvania**
- 12/05/2003 -- **Diatonic Ratios and Seed Changes in 2003 California Wheat Circles Rule Out Hoax?**

Websites:

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