

A photograph of a man and a woman standing in a clothing store. The man is on the left, wearing a blue patterned shirt and brown pants, holding a rack of light blue shirts. The woman is on the right, wearing a pink top and dark pants, holding a red and white checkered shirt. They are surrounded by racks of various shirts. In the background, there are shelves with hats and a sign that says "MONTANA".

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March 2014 Edition

Saddle Up! In Watford City

See page 4

Montana Farmers & Ranchers Reminded of Important March 17th Deadline for 2014 NAP Coverage

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Bruce Nelson reminds Montana farmers and ranchers that the sales closing deadline of March 17th for most non-insurable 2014 spring planted and forage crops, including grass for hay and grazing, is fast approaching.

Application deadline for the 2014 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all non-insurable crops except for honey and value loss crops is March 17, 2014. The 2014 sales closing dates have already ended for honey (Dec. 2, 2013) and value-loss crops (Sept. 2, 2013).

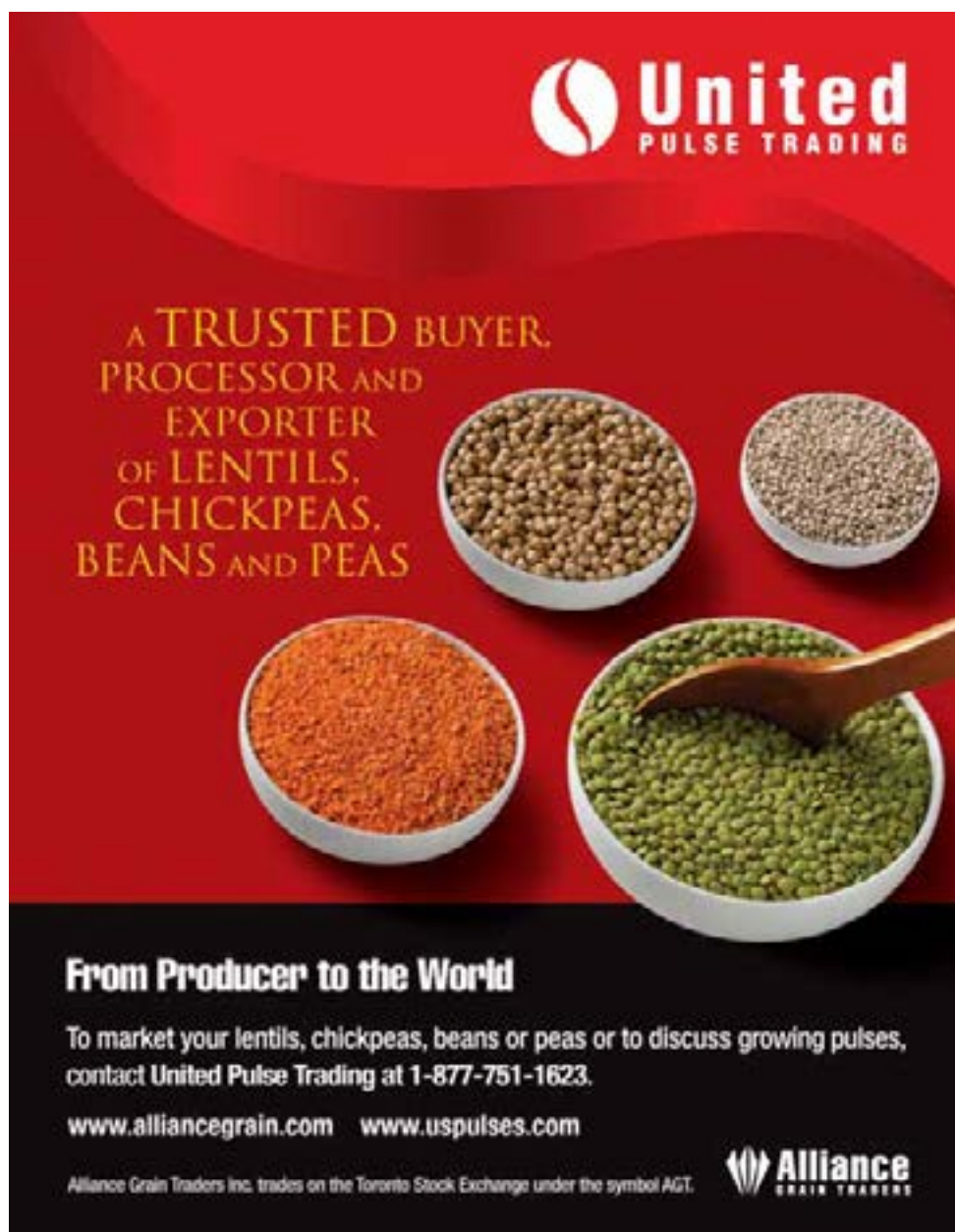
Eligible producers can apply for coverage at their local FSA office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage. Producers must file the application and pay the applicable service fee on or before the application closing date for the applicable crop. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. For continuous coverage applications, producers are reminded that they must pay the applicable service fee and sign form CCC-471 before the sales closing date.

NAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers when natural disasters cause catastrophic loss of production (low yield) or prevented planting of an eligible noninsurable crop by providing coverage equivalent to the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance. In the event of a natural disaster, NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50 percent of the expected production based on the producer's approved yield and reported acreage.

"Montana farmers and ranchers who have not purchased NAP coverage are reminded of the March 17th sales closing date for most 2014 NAP crops," Nelson said. "In Montana, the most common NAP crops are grazing and various forage crops but all producers are encouraged to contact their local county office to determine crop eligibility."

NAP is available on commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. If the Risk Management Agency (RMA) offers coverage for a specific crop and intended use in the county, then NAP coverage is not available for that crop.

For more information on NAP and other FSA programs, contact your local FSA office and visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov/m



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USED MFWD & 2WD TRACTORS

- 2007 JD 8430, Powershift, MFWD, 3pt hitch w/ quick hitch, 5 hyd's, PTO, 380/96R50 duals, front duals\$185,000
 1978 JD 4240 (110 PTO HP) quad rang tranny, ept hitch, dual PTO, 19.9R46 singles.....\$21,500

LOADER TRACTORS

- 2012 JD 7130 (110 HP), 16 speed powerquad tranny, MFWD, 3pt hitch, 3 hyd's, dual PTO, 18.4x38 singles, factory warranty, low hours. NEW JD H360 loader, 8' bucket, grapple, mech joystick\$118,900
 2003 JD 7320 (105 PTO HP), 3pt hitch, 3 hyd's, dual PTO, 18.4 x 38 singles, 741 loader, 8' bucket, grapple and joystick.....\$69,500
 2008 JD 7330 (125 PTO HP) IVT tranny, MFWD, 3 pt hitch, 3 hydraulics, dual PTO, 18.4X38 singles, JD 741 SL loader, 8' bucket, grapple, joystick.....\$109,500

USED COMBINES

- 1) 2012 JD S660 combines, 520/85r38 duals, Contour master, low low hoursCALL
 2012 JD S660 combine, 520/85r38 duals, contour master, 630R platform pickup reelCALL
 2006 JD 9660 STS, 520/85r38 dualsCALL
 2000 JD 9750 STS, 30.5x32 duals, chopperCALL
 2002 JD 9650 STS, 800/65X32 Singles, Chopper, Grain Tank ExtCALL
 1990 JD 9600, 30.5x32 singles, chopper, chaff spreader...CALL
 1989 JD 9600 with chopper, 30.5x32 duals, 960 McDon draper headerCALL
 2013 JD 635FD, draper platform with HHS in rigidCALL
 2013 640 FD, draper platform, no HHS in rigid.....CALL
 2012 635 FD draper platform, no HHSCALL
 2010 JD 630R platform, pickup reel.....CALL
 (2) 2004 JD 635F Flex platform, 35'CALL
 1998 JD 930 platform with pickup reel.....CALL
 2009 Case IH 2010 Rigid Platform, Bat Reel, Less than 100 Hours.....\$20,000
 1997 Macdon 960D platformCALL

USED 4WD DRIVE TRACTORS

- 1995 JD 8970 (400 eng HP), powershift tranny, 4 hyd's, 520/ 85R42 duals\$69,500

SEEDING EQUIPMENT

- JD 610/787 air hoe drill, 40', 230 bu.....\$45,000
 2001 JD 1900/1820 air hoe drill, 53' and 270 bu.....\$62,500
 Flexicoil 5000/2320 Air Hoe Drill, 57', 7.2" Spacing (lot F625)\$42,500
 JD 787/730 Air Disk Drill, 36', 6" spacing, 170 bushel tank\$16,500
 (2) JD 9350 disk drills, 8' units, fertilizer, hitch\$4,750
 (3) JD 9350 disc drills, 10' units, 6" spacing, fertilizer, JD transport hitch\$11,500

USED MISCELLANEOUS

- JD480B forklift, gas, 28' mast, side shift, fresh overhaul\$8,950
 2012 JD XUV 825i gator, camo, only 54 miles\$16,000
 2009 Brandt 10x60 Swing away auger\$11,500
 Brandt 5000EX grain vac\$12,500
 Nile 3pt ditcher.....\$3,950
 Diamond 72" & 62" mowers.....\$2,500

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Saddle Up Moves to New Retail Development



Mark and Dori Sparby's new store in Watford City has a huge selection of everything western.

By Tie Shank

You don't have to be a cowboy to shop here! Saddle Up, Inc., located in Watford City, ND, brings a fresh take on the classic style.

Mark and Dori Sparby opened Saddle Up in Blackduck, MN in 2007. When their full time positions brought them to Watford City, they brought Saddle Up with them. In 2011 the Sparby's opened their clothing store on Main St., and in January of this year they moved in to a 2600 sq. ft. building located at 109 6th Ave. SE in Watford City.

The larger building has allowed Saddle Up to maintain an even larger inventory which caters to almost every need or want. With an 8ft high, 52ft long wall of shirts, you're sure to find something that catches your eye.

Owner Mark Sparby states, "We carry your western needs from A-Z."

Saddle Up offers hundreds of clothing styles from casual western to riding clothes and rugged western apparel. In addition to western wear, Saddle Up carries FR clothing, steel toe boots, children's toys, perfume, jewelry and home décor.

"We have multiple brands to choose from including: Ariat, Tony Lama, Nocona, Wrangler, b tuff & Cowgirl tuff, tin haul, Cinch, Justin, plus so many more. We still carry the old Wrangler ranch jeans for only \$23.95. We try to offer the best prices and best service within a 150 mile range," states Sparby.

He adds "We're community through and through."

Saddle Up is involved in youth and high school rodeos, the McKenzie County fair, donates to high school sporting events, is a Watford City Chamber member and continuously promote Watford City.

"If you're looking for a wallet, a western tie, socks, silk neckerchief, belt buckle, boots, work clothing, or western clothing, we have a large inventory. We also have a large selection of exotic boots including: Ostrich, Elephant, Caiman, Alligator and some Kangaroo," adds Sparby.

Owners Mark and Dori Sparby would like to recognize their staff. "We are proud of our awesome, dedicated staff. Renee, our manager, Michelle, Karissa, Katlynn, Donna, Taylor, Jordan and Mackenzie, all work together and provide outstanding customer service."

Saddle Up is currently making some renovations to their Main Street store and will be re-opening it within a couple of months to carry a hunting apparel line, a work clothing line and other outdoor apparel.

Stop in to meet their staff and to see their new store on 6th Ave. SE.

They're open

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USED TRACTORS

1979 JD 4840, 3 pt, PTO	\$22,500
2008 CaseIH 435 Steiger, 710 duals, full auto guidance, HID lights, luxury cab, 1987hrs.....	\$210,000
1982 JD 4440, 3pt, 3 remote, quad range, new paint, duals, 11631hrs.....	\$25,000
2005 CaseIH MX255, MFD, 3pt, 3638hrs, 480/80R42 Duals w/ CaseIH LX780 loader & grapple	\$108,000
Bobcat T190 track loader, cab, auxiliary hydraulics, 2002hrs ...	\$22,000
IH Hydro 70, gas engine, new tires, dual loader, grapple.....	\$10,000
2004 Case IH MX255, 4200 Hrs, 0 Hrs on new engine, 3pt. ...	\$110,000
2009 Case IH Maximum 110, loader, grapple, MFD....Just Traded!	

USED MISCELLANEOUS

2009 Rem 3700 Grain Vac, good condition, 120 hrs.	\$23,000
Farmhand 25' mulcher	\$11,500
(2) John Deere 2700 disc grippers, 7 shank.....	\$22,000 each

USED SEEDING & SPRAYING

Concord 4710 Drill, 3000 tow behind cart, hydraulic drive....	\$30,000
2005 Brandt 2SB4000, suspended boom, 90', 1500 gal. tank	\$25,000
2005 CaseIH SPX 4410 self propelled sprayer, 1200 gal., 90' booms, Raven Auto Trac, 5700 Hrs, consigned	\$95,000
Summers 2pt sprayer, 88' booms, 500 gal tank, Dickey John monitor	\$6,500
Monosem 6 row, 24" planter.....	CALL

USED HARVEST EQUIPMENT

2005 CaseIH 2388, 1267R/1506E hrs., chopper, yield & moisture monitor, very good cond.	CALL
w/ 2005 2042 35' draper head	CALL

USED HAYING EQUIPMENT

JD 4895 Windrower, 1641 Hrs, 18' dual knife loader ...Just Traded	
2006 RBX563 Round Baler, wide pickup, mesh wrap, endless belts, 8,000 bales, good cond.	\$26,000
1999 CaseIH RS561	\$12,500
1995 CaseIH 8465	\$8,995
1994 CaseIH 8480 Softcore	\$6,995
1990 Hesston 560 Round Baler.....	\$5,500
CIH RBX 563 baler, mesh, wide pickup.....	\$25,000
2008 CaseIH RB564 round baler, 8700 bales, mesh wrap, wide pickup, endless belts, hydraulic pickup lift, central lube	\$29,900
2003 CaseIH RBX562, MeshWrap, Like New	\$24,500
2008 Vermeer Processor, BP8000	\$10,500
2011 Haybuster 2650, hydraulic chute lift, big tires, very good condition	\$16,000

USED MOWERS

Artsway Belly Mower, 6', mounts for a Farmall C	Consigned
Grasshopper 618, 52" Deck, Bagger	\$4,500
Dixie Chopper LT 2500, 50" Deck	\$5,500

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Richland County 4-H Jr. Leaders Complete Care Packages for Soldiers



Jr. Leaders Left to Right Front Row: Taylor Schepens, Jorhen Carpenter, Kolton Nevins, Rachael Oliver and Tim Wright. Back Row: Kyle Topp, Sierra Osborne, Jake Kunda, Chris Gartner and John Helmuth.

Submitted by Josie Evenson

The Richland County 4-H Jr. Leaders are once again busy "Making the Best Better." The Jr. Leaders are senior 4-H members from across Richland County who have dedicated themselves to going above and beyond the club level to develop leadership skills, plan and implement 4-H events, promote the 4-H program and serve as role models for younger 4-H members. The most recent event that the Richland County Jr. Leaders planned and implemented was a community service event, which provided

care packages for Soldiers. The Jr. Leaders spent a month collecting items that could be put into care packages for troops who are currently deployed. Such items included personal care items, food and drink items, puzzles, cards, stationery and other small items. At the end of the month, the Jr. Leaders came together and sorted the items they had gathered for well over a dozen individual care packages. The Jr. Leaders felt that it was important to give back to the men and women who serve our Country.

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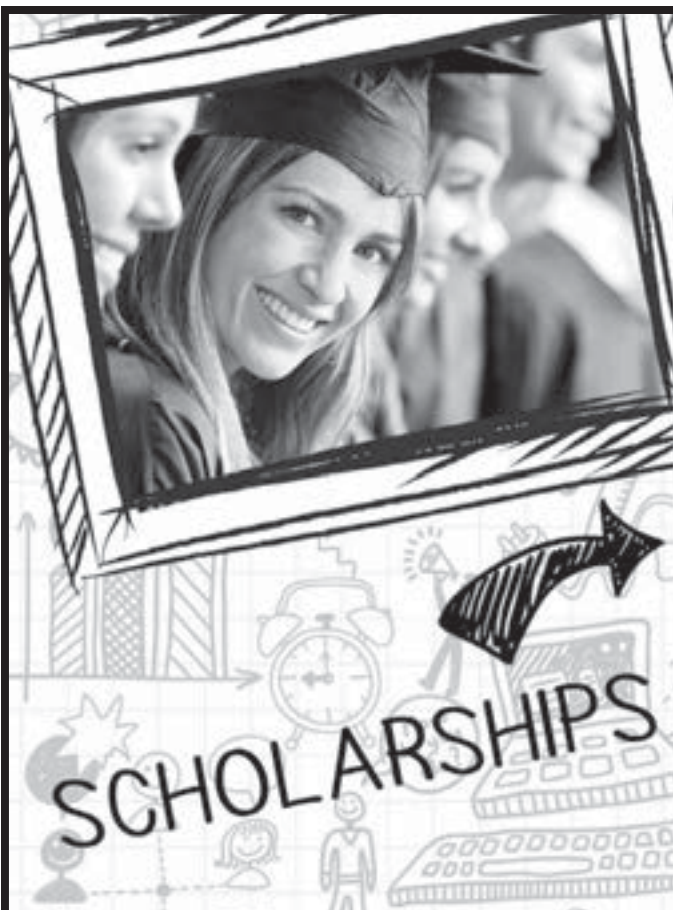
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A Steak in Ag

Thanks to everyone who made calls, neither COOL nor the enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act were weakened in the 2014 Farm Bill! These are both important victories for U.S. independent producers.

The COOL lawsuit in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals is ongoing. R-CALF USA will continue to defend COOL. We encourage everyone to buy Made in the U.S.A. products. As consumers, we're voting with every dollar we spend.

Checkoff

In response to R-CALF USA's request for an investigation, the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued an updated report that reverses its 2013 conclusions that the NCBA had properly expended all Beef Checkoff Program funds and that the relationship between the Beef Checkoff Program's Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) and the NCBA complied with U.S. law. This is the first time OIG has pulled a report and reissued a correction.

Additionally, R-CALF USA has requested an investigation to determine the legality of using cattle-producer contributions mandated by the U.S. beef checkoff program to help Wendy's advertise "North American beef."

The request states that the Montana Beef Council maintains an advertisement on its website for Wendy's and "100% pure North American beef." Also, the request cites a newspaper article that states that \$5,000 obtained from the "\$1-per-head beef check-off fee" will be used to pay for the "North American beef" promotional campaign.

Since R-CALF USA's letter was sent, the advertisement has been changed to read "100% pure beef."

R-CALF USA believes that if U.S. producers are prohibited from using checkoff funds to promote their beef (exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the U.S.) then it is patently unlawful for checkoff funds to be used to promote their competitors' beef – beef from cattle that were not born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S.

Brazil

USDA has issued a proposed rule to allow the importation of fresh and chilled beef from 14 states in Brazil, a country that had been plagued with the most contagious disease known to cattle - foot-and-mouth-disease (FMD). USDA admits that Brazilian imports would increase the risk of introducing FMD into the United States. Additionally, USDA admits that imports of cheap Brazilian beef will harm U.S. cattle producers. To prevent this rule, we need your help. Please send comments to USDA before April 22, 2014. Tell USDA that its proposal to import fresh and chilled beef from 14 states in Brazil is anti-American, irresponsible and dangerous. Tell them it will increase our risk of introducing FMD, destroy our cattle markets, and drive even more U.S. cattle producers out of business.

R-CALF USA is solely funding by donations and member dues. For more info or to join go to www.r-cal-fusa.com, 406-252-2516.

MSU Extension Offers a New Pesticide Performance MontGuide

Submitted by Sara Adlington

Montana State University Extension's Pesticide Education Program is offering a new MontGuide about pesticide performance and water quality. Poor water quality can significantly reduce the efficacy of many pesticide products.

The MontGuide, "Pesticides and Water Quality," explains why pesticide applicators should always test their water for turbidity, pH and hardness prior to using a pesticide mixture. Because pesticide mixtures are often composed of greater than 95 percent spray solution, a slight variation in water quality can have a significant impact on pesticide performance. Water quality may vary due to acidity and alkalinity, minerals dissolved in water, or suspended soil particles (dirty water). The guide discusses areas of the state that encounter common water

quality issues and solutions to overcome water quality limiting factors.

The four-page guide is written by Cecil Tharp, Extension pesticide education specialist in the MSU Department of Animal and Range Sciences, and Adam Sigler, Extension water quality associate specialist in the MSU Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences.

The MontGuide is free and is available from local MSU Extension offices. It may also be downloaded from the MSU pesticide education website at pesticides.montana.edu by selecting "References." Printed copies are available for the cost of shipping from MSU Extension publications. To order a printed copy, call (406) 994-3273, write to P.O. Box 172040, Bozeman, MT, 59717, or email orderpubs@montana.edu.

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**Re-Inventing
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BeefTalk: It Pays to Read the Tag

By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist
NDSU Extension Service

Data is essential for finding the desired genetics when selecting bulls.

Early discussions of animal breeding and selection always grouped producers into three types, which were the breeder, multiplier and commercial producer.

Generally portrayed as a pyramid, the base represented the large group of commercial producers who are in the business of producing products for the consumer. These producers would obtain breeding stock from the second level within the pyramid.

The second level represented those producers who specialized in expanding the population of breeding males and females. Their principle source of income was selling sires and replacement females to the commercial producer. As a general rule of thumb, commercial producers would neuter all male offspring and, in some cases, even sell all the female offspring.

As one would climb the pyramid, the top represented the elite breeders, those breeders who offered breeding stock to seedstock producers for propagation. Our agricultural friends use the same process because crop producers may be involved in or have access to breeder, foundation, registered or certified seed.

At the top of the pyramid is crop breeder seed, which is the product of an intense selection regime that commonly is referred to as the first generation. The seed is kept under close supervision to allow for appropriate regeneration to assure a source of the seed. As the seed is further prepared for distribution, foundation seed is produced or maintained to assure adequate preservation of the genetic traits and associated purity of the seed.

As a genetic line of seed expands to commercial production, just like cattle, there needs to be a level of production that focusses on the distribution of the traits unique to the seed and provides assurances that those traits are maintained and available in the purchased seed.

Thus, the production of registered seed, which is seed that is the progeny of foundation seed and bears a high probability that the goals of the original breeder are met. Still not at the volume needed for commercial production, certain producers become certified seed producers to produce certified seed. These producers go to great efforts to assure certifying agents and their customers that they have met a satisfactory expectation and their seed contains the genetic traits the original breeder desired to offer to the industry. There is the assurance that the seed is pure and not significantly modified from the original stock.

This process has been going on for more than a century in livestock and plants with the expectation of producing co-



pious amounts of food to feed people.

As beef producers, the process is not as structured as the system of genetic improvement and implementation that our agricultural friends have honed. Nevertheless, the process still is with us. What is it? Breed associations and

expected progeny differences (EPDs).

A breed association is a group of breeders who take seriously the responsibility of exploring, finding and propagating genes. Those genes, organized strands of DNA and reported as EPDs, guide breeders and seedstock producers to produce cattle that fit the current needs of the commercial producer. Thus, the genes are available for commercial production to work within the extended industry and ultimately provide food for people.

As cattle producers shop for those genes, it is easy to see what cattle or sires have the needed DNA. In contrast to the agricultural industry's structured process for certified seed, bull buyers depend on breed associations.

Both processes work well. Breed associations derive from their data sets the EPD values that bull buyers need to have the assurance that the genes they want are present. Meanwhile, if one reads the tag on a seed bag, the tag tells the producer what is in the bag.

At the Dickinson Research Extension Center, we read tags. We know what is in the bag or, in this case, under the hide. The current Simmental tag says birth weight 2.2 pounds, weaning weight 78 pounds, yearling weight 109.9 pounds, marbling score 0.07 and rib-eye area 0.99 square inch. The Red Angus tag reads birth weight minus 0.5 pound, weaning weight 61 pounds, yearling weight 104 pounds, marbling score 0.43 and rib-eye area 0.38 square inch.

As a commercial user of bulls, the center needs to have access to data to find the genetics desired to meet the center's goals. Breed associations provide and meet that need. Just like our farming friends, with proven bulls or certified seed, it pays to read the tag.

May you find all your ear tags.

For more information, contact Ringwall at 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/beeftalk/>.

(Ringwall is a North Dakota State University Extension Service livestock specialist and the Dickinson Research Extension Center director.)



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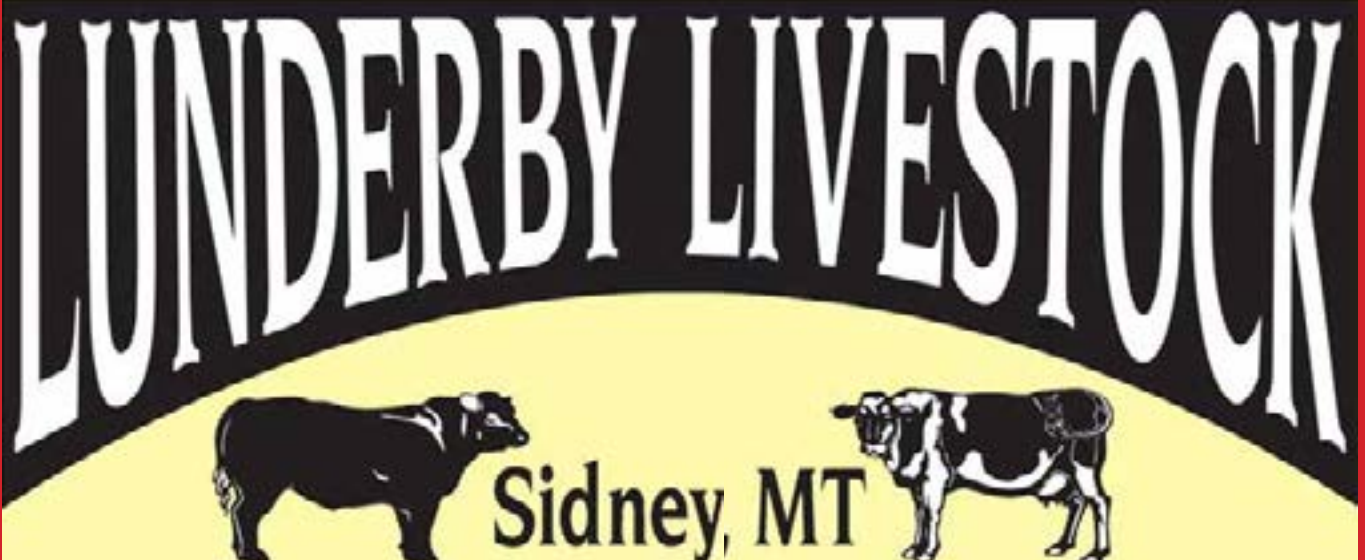
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Montana Hail Program Pays Out Record Amount 186% of Premiums Paid in 2013

Submitted by Jayson O'Neill

Montana's hail insurance program paid out record amounts in 2013. Due to the costs associated with the extensive crop damage, the hail board voted to not offer refunds to farmers this year. After issuing 2,082 policies last year, the Montana Department of Agriculture and

the hail board covered 1,046 losses totaling more than \$14 million from hail events. In the program's 98 year history, Montana hail program experienced the worst loss on record.

"The bottom-line is Montana had a bad hail year. With sound fiscal management and a strong reserve

fund, the department was able to cover 186% of premiums in 2013. After reviewing the actuarial report at our annual meeting, the hail board voted to not offer refunds to farmers this year to keep the program whole for next year," said Montana Department of Agriculture Director Ron de Yong.

The Montana state hail insurance program was created to provide basic hail insurance coverage on any crop grown in the state. The five-member board consists of Commissioner of Insurance Monica Lindeen, Agriculture Department Director Ron de Yong, Chair Gary Gollehon, and producers Trudy Lass Skari and Jim Schillinger. A reserve fund is maintained to provide security for the program's financial responsibilities.

"This might have been a once in a lifetime hail year, but we need to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best. Currently, we are looking into reinsurance so Montana farmers are protected next year," explained Gary Gollehon, chairman of the hail board.

The program, with existing reserves, can cover 122% of claims next year. In examining reinsurance, the board must consider catastrophic weather events that could be harmful to farmers.

For more information about state hail insurance, contact the Montana Department of Agriculture's hail program at (406) 444-2402 or the hail insurance website.

The Montana Department of Agriculture's mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the Montana Department of Agriculture, visit www.agr.mt.gov.



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Richland County Conservation District, Cost Share Applications and Tree Sales

Submitted by Julie Goss

Applications for the Richland County Conservation District Cost Share program will be accepted through March 7, 2014. The cost share program provides financial assistance for natural resource improvements within Richland County. The program is available to any private sector landowner on property in Richland County. Projects must be on the ground and follow the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) designs standards and specifications where applicable. Cost share assistance is 50% of the cost recommended on the NRCS cost list and is limited to \$5000.00 per year and a cap of \$10,000 within a 5 year period. Applications will be ranked and successful applicants will be notified by March 31, 2014. All projects must be completed by December 31, 2014. If you have received cost share from another public entity in the last 5 years you are not eligible for this program. Practices implemented in the past include stockwater wells and pipelines, fences, grass seeding, buried irrigation lines and shelterbelts. Over \$400,000 in conservation practices have been implemented in Richland County since the start of

this program in 2011. Deadline for this cost share program is March 7, 2014.

Tree orders will be taken for conservation tree plantings until April 1, 2014. Trees will be delivered in late April or early May. Trees available through the Conservation District are suitable for wind breaks and shelterbelts. Trees can be ordered in bundles of 10 or 25 depending on size and availability. If you need advice on tree selection, pruning techniques, general tree care and maintenance plan to attend our Tree Care and Shelterbelt workshop on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 from 2-5 pm and Thursday, March 6th for a tour of shelter belts in the area. Featured speaker for the workshop is Peter Kolb, MSU Extension Forestry Specialist. The Conservation District is cooperating with MSU Extension-Richland County and the local Natural Resource Conservation Service office to present this workshop.

Information on the cost share program or tree order forms are available at the conservation district office at 2745 West Holly Street or by calling 406-433-2103x101 or emailing julie.goss@mt.nacdnet.net.

Junior Ag Loan Program Assistance Available for Farm and Ranch Youth Accepting Applications for New Projects

Submitted by Walt Anseth

More than 50 Montana farm and ranch youth now participate in the Montana Department of Agriculture's Junior Agriculture Loan Program. Young people active in rural youth organizations like 4-H or FFA may be eligible for loans up to \$8,500. The program has provided over 1,300 loans to young farmers and ranchers since its inception.

The program is designed to help rural youth develop or expand livestock or agri-business projects like custom farming, marketing, and processing. The Department of Agriculture may finance up to 90 percent of a project, at a low five-percent interest rate.

"At times it can be difficult for young farmers and ranchers to get the financing they need to develop a project. The Junior Agriculture Loan Program can help get a project get off the ground and give young producers valuable business experience," said Walt Anseth, Agriculture Finance Officer with the Montana Department of Agriculture.

The experience and educational benefits from the program often far exceed the actual loan for active participants. Many young men and women unable to secure conventional finance due to age, inadequate collateral or credit history, have used the program to establish financing experience and to advance their project's monetary value.

Youth applicants age 9 to 11 are eligible for up to a \$3,500 loan, while 12 to 21 year olds are eligible for up to an \$8,500 loan. For more information and application materials, contact Walt Anseth, Agriculture Finance Officer at the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-2402 or by email at agr@mt.gov.

The Montana Department of Agriculture's mission is to protect producers and consumers, and to enhance and develop agriculture and allied industries. For more information on the Montana Department of Agriculture, visit www.agr.mt.gov.

Montana FSA Announces a Change in NAP Policy Affecting 2014 Crop Eligibility in Some Montana Counties for Dryland Corn; 2014 NAP Sales Closing Date is March 17th

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Bruce Nelson announced a major policy change affecting crop eligibility for the 2014 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) in some Montana counties.

Today, the national FSA office approved Montana FSA's request for an exemption in specific counties to allow the use of NAP coverage for nonirrigated corn intended for grain and silage (NAP practice of forage) beginning the 2014 crop year. Prior to January 2014, if catastrophic (CAT) risk protection level of crop insurance was available to any crop, type and intended use in the county then NAP could not be offered for those crops within that county for any practice. National procedure was recently amended to allow states to request exemptions to that provision.

Effective today, nonirrigated corn intended for grain and nonirrigated corn intended for silage (forage) is available for NAP coverage beginning in 2014 for producers in the following counties that were previously not approved for NAP due to crop insurance being available on the irrigated practice: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Fergus, Hill, Judith Basin, McCone, Musselshell, Phillips, Powder River, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, Valley and Yellowstone.

In addition, nonirrigated corn intended for grain is available for 2014 NAP coverage for the following counties that were previously not approved for NAP due to crop insurance being available on the irrigated practice: Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt and Wibaux. However, because crop insurance is available for nonirrigated corn silage (NAP practice of forage), in these counties, NAP cannot be offered for the intended use of silage (forage).

The application deadline for the 2014 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all non-insurable spring planted and forage crops, including grass for hay and grazing is March 17, 2014. The 2014 sales closing dates have already ended for honey (Dec. 2, 2013) and value-loss crops (Sept. 2, 2013).

Eligible producers can apply for coverage at their local FSA office using form CCC-471, Application for Coverage. Producers must file the application and pay the applicable service fee on or before the application closing date for the applicable crop. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

NAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers when natural disasters cause catastrophic loss of

production (low yield) or prevented planting of an eligible noninsurable crop by providing coverage equivalent to the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance. In the event of a natural disaster, NAP covers the amount of loss greater than 50 percent of the expected production based on the producer's approved yield and reported acreage.

NAP is available on commercially-produced agricultural commodity crops for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available. If the Risk Management Agency (RMA) offers coverage for a specific crop and intended use in the county, then NAP coverage is not available for that crop.

For more information on NAP and other FSA programs, contact your local FSA office and visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

Stockgrowers Announces Beef Industry Internship

Submitted by Ryan J. Goodman

Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) is seeking a student intern for the summer of 2014. The internship will focus on involvement in the beef cattle community of Montana and will include work with MSGA Policy, Communications, and Marketing and Membership staff members. Students should be at least college Juniors, majoring in a field related to agriculture, and preferably have a background in (or working knowledge of) the cattle or beef industry. A more detailed description of the internship, application forms and required materials are available online at bit.ly/MSGAIntern2014 or by calling the MSGA office in Helena at (406) 442-3420. Application packets must be completed by April 1, 2014.

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Biosecurity Vital in Combating Swine Virus in N.D.

North Dakota confirms its first case of the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus.

Implementing strict biosecurity procedures is as important as ever, now that North Dakota has its first case of the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv), North Dakota State University Extension Service swine specialist David Newman says.

The PEDv has killed more than 4 million U.S. pigs since it was discovered in the country in April 2013. The first North Dakota case was confirmed in a swine herd in the eastern part of the state this week.

"For producers impacted by the virus, it can mean serious economic losses, as well as the psychological damage of dealing with the production losses associated with PEDv," Newman says. "Farms impacted by PEDv can see high mortality rates in piglets for three to five weeks, typically."

The virus causes severe diarrhea, hydration and vomiting in pigs. Mortality in older groups of swine is very low, although these groups will display symptoms of the virus. However, young piglets lose the ability to absorb nutrients, so the mortality rate in piglets from herds not previously exposed to the PEDv is nearly 100 percent.

The PEDv spreads very easily through swine fecal matter and has been found in transport vehicles, processing plants and pig collection points.

Biosecurity involves making sure the swine barn is clean and virus-free, and establishing a line of separation between the clean area (the barn) and the dirty area (anywhere outside the barn). It also includes washing boots and clothing before and after being around swine, and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles used to transport pigs.

"The best method for swine barn employees to prevent bringing the virus into a farm is to shower into and out of the facility each time they enter," Newman says. "This is a routine procedure in modern swine production and creates a good barrier."

A simpler way to maintain that separation is to have everyone sit on a bench between the clean and dirty areas and remove his or her boots or shoes before entering the barn, then put on clean boots once in the barn, according to Jennifer Young, NDSU swine research technician. Workers and visitors must make sure their feet do not come in contact with the ground in the dirty area before putting on clean boots.

An alternative to changing into clean boots is to have people put on plastic boots over their street footwear, Young says.

NDSU has a website (<http://tinyurl.com/PEDVinfo>) with information about the virus and how anyone working around swine - commercial pork producers, youth exhibitors

and pig transporters - can prevent it from spreading. That includes a video describing biosecurity measures.

The site also has links to information about the virus from national pork organizations, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

Neil Dyer, director of the NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, is urging swine producers who suspect the PEDv is in their herd to contact the lab at (701) 231-8307.

The lab can diagnose the PEDv in dead piglets, intestinal samples or feces using a variety of tests. However, the best and quickest test is known as PCR, or polymerase chain reaction, a molecular assay specifically for the virus, Dyer says.

"The best sample for the lab is one that comes from a recently dead, untreated piglet," he adds. "Work with your veterinarian to assist you in this process."

Newman stresses that the PEDv is not a human food safety issue; it is an animal health issue that only affects pigs.

For more information about the virus, contact Newman at (701) 231-7366 or david.newman@ndsu.edu, or state veterinarian Susan Keller at (701) 328-2655 or doa-bah@nd.gov.

The Art of Farming, WIFE Calendar Art Contest

Submitted by Gladys Walling

In recognition of National Agriculture Week (National Agriculture Day, March 25, 2014), WIFE (Montana Women Involved in Farm Economics) invites Montana's school children to express their ideas on farm life by participating in WIFE's twenty-eighth statewide calendar art contest. Winning entries grades K through 8th will be awarded a cash prize at the 1st place (\$30), 2nd place (\$20), and 3rd place (\$10), levels in each grades division. Two Honorable Mention places in each grade will be awarded certificates. Only 25 pictures are used on the calendar. Those winners whose pictures are used will also receive a calendar.

All entries are to be done horizontally on 8 1/2 by 11 inch white paper with dark, black lead pencil or black pen (no markers please). Any aspect of agriculture that is of interest to the students may be drawn. Any depiction of alcohol or tobacco will not be accepted. Student's name, grade, school, address, town, zip, should be clearly printed in a corner on the back of their picture.

No entries can be returned, but WIFE may display or use student's artwork for various WIFE projects throughout the State. Entries must be postmarked on or before April 15, 2014.

Artwork will be judged on the basis of originality. Please send all art entries to: Gladys Walling, PO Box 55, Winifred, MT 59489. Phone 406-462-5330 for more information.

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Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project Annual Meeting

Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project held its annual meeting Friday, February 14 at the Sidney Elks Lodge with a delicious lunch catered by Kountry Catering and skillful emceeing by LYIP Board of Control president Richard Cayko. Rod Stephens and Lonnie Schipman were thanked for their many years of dedicated service and congratulated on their retirement while operator Terry Jensen was recognized for 30 years of service to LYIP. Bud Groskinsky was presented a book of historical LYIP photos, some of which featured his father, upon his retirement as Board of Control Member at Large.

Jamie Selting from the NRCS explained that only one year remains of the 5 year AWEF program and irrigators are encouraged to take advantage of this last sign up opportunity.

James Brower, manager of LYIP, gave a slide show presentation with some historic photos before showing and explaining the work done by the organization in the past year. He also gave a clear update on the status of the project at Intake involving the pallid sturgeon. Public meetings on that project will be taking place this spring with one meeting scheduled for Sidney. Dates and locations of those meetings will be provided as soon as possible.

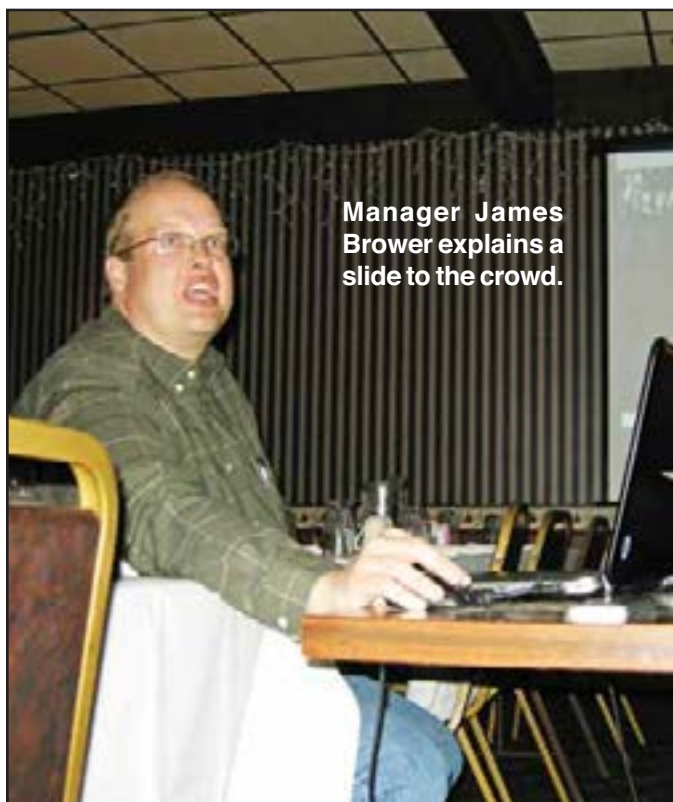
A huge number of door prizes were then awarded before the meeting adjourned.



Manager James Brower, right, congratulates operator Terry Jensen on 30 years of service to the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project.



Bud Groskinsky, left, and LYIP manager James Brower show the book of photographs Groskinsky received on his retirement as Board of Control Member at Large.



Manager James Brower explains a slide to the crowd.



As emcee, Board of Control chairman Richard Cayko keeps the LYIP Annual Meeting running smoothly.

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Agri Industries Honored With Valley Irrigation Performance Plus Dealer Status



Submitted by Doug Dale

Valley Irrigation has announced Agri Industries of Sidney, MT as a Valley Performance Plus Dealer at the company's 2014 National Meeting. Agri Industries has earned this honor for excelling in the areas of Service, Aftermarket Support and Sales.

The Valley Performance Program accredits dealerships that meet the highest standards across a variety of criteria. Evaluations are based on customer service ratings, goal achievements and core requirements in relation to dealership growth plans. Additional measure is considered to develop an overall evaluation of the dealership in respect to the entire customer experience and support after the sale.

"The status of being known as a Performance Plus Dealer exemplifies the dedication of the dealership to Valley

products and the commitment to providing superior service to Valley customers," stated Rich Panowicz, Vice President of North American Sales, Valley Irrigation.

Valley, the leader in mechanized irrigation, encourages their dealers to set the bar in their industry, delivering the highest standard of service and product support to their irrigation customers.

Panowicz continued, "We are proud to honor and recognize our dealers for their excellence in these areas. We sincerely believe as our dealers challenge themselves from year to year that we will be recognizing them for greater levels of achievement. The Valley Performance Program allows us the opportunity to reinforce the valuations that lead to industry success."

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(Bluegrass New Design 205 x Sitz Traveler 5924)

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Smith values honesty and it is not the intent of T&A Seeds to merely sell the farmer what the business has available. Rather, T&A Seeds strives to provide farmers with the products that will work best in the environment. Smith points out that T&A Seeds has a stake in all farming success.

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Porcine Epidemic Virus (PED) Found in Montana

Submitted by Steve Merritt

According to the USDA, infected piglets less than 7 days old may have a mortality rate of about 50 percent. The mortality rate in suckling pigs may reach 50 to 80 percent, but then typically declines to 1 to 3 percent in larger pigs. Most older swine recover without treatment unless secondary infections occur.

Test results have confirmed Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PED) at a swine production facility in Montana.

"Add Montana to the list of states hit by the virus," said state veterinarian Dr. Marty Zaluski after receiving laboratory confirmation over the weekend.

PED – which poses no threat to human health, food safety or other livestock – causes diarrhea, vomiting and severe dehydration, and can have mortality rates of up to 100 percent in suckling pigs. It was first found in the U.S. less than a year ago (April 2013) but has already spread to 24 states, with more than 2,100 separate positive cases reported.

Zaluski said that suckling pig losses at the affected operations have been "significant."

The department is working with the producer, attending veterinarians and the Montana Pork Producers Council to contain the outbreak to the premises.

PED is highly contagious, Zaluski said, stressing the "absolute need" for stringent biosecurity measures.

"It's fecal-oral transmission," Zaluski said, "and sound biosecurity practices can dramatically reduce the potential for outbreaks."

Those biosecurity measures include:

- Limiting traffic (people and equipment) onto the farm;
- Thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting anything coming onto the farm;
- Establishing designated routes and parking areas for service vehicles;
- Isolating newly arriving

animals and knowing the health status of the source;

- Having dedicated clothing and footwear for animal contact areas.

Transportation vehicles are considered the most likely means of spreading the virus.

So far, the disease has killed about a million piglets in the U.S., the world's leading exporter of pork; one agricultural economist last week said it could ultimately kill as many as 5 million pigs, or about 4.5 percent of the pigs sent to slaughter last year.

The disease was first discovered in England in 1971, and is common throughout Europe and Asia.

Producers who suspect PED should contact the Montana Department of Livestock and their local veterinarian for a diagnosis and collection of samples if necessary.

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MSU Extension Offering New Publications On Soil Nutrient Management For Forage Crops

Submitted by Sepp Jannotta

Forage crops provide substantial income to many Montana farmers. They are also an integral part of livestock production systems. Improvements in forage production through good soil fertility practices have the potential to increase income for farmers and ranchers.

Montana State University Extension has recently published two bulletins, "Soil Nutrient Management for Forages: Nitrogen" and "Soil Nutrient Management for Forages: Phosphorus, Potassium, Sulfur, and Micronutrients." These publications present soil nutrient management options for Montana forage production systems based on regional research results.

The key to nutrient management for optimal forage yield and quality is to select the right fertilizer source, rate, placement and timing for your operation, known as the 4R concept. "These are usually interrelated. For example, the right rate, placement and timing are very dependent on the source," said Clain Jones, co-author and Extension soil fertility specialist in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences (LRES) at Montana State University.

In addition, selecting the right crop and the best management practices to maximize legume nitrogen fixation are also critical.

"Getting it 'right' not only increases your bottom line, it also protects soil, water, and air resources," said Jones.

Nitrogen is the most common nutrient that needs to be added for production of forages containing a low percentage of legumes, while phosphorus and potassium are more important for those dominated by legumes.

The correct balance of nutrients can influence stand species composition and is important for efficient fertilizer use and forage yield and quality. Fertilizer rates should be based on soil tests or plant tissue concentrations to ensure adequate amounts, yet minimize the risk of forage nutrient concentrations that are toxic to livestock.

Timing of fertilizer application depends largely on the source in order to optimize the amount of nutrient that gets taken up by the crop, rather than lost to the environment. "Nutrient sources that slowly release their nutrients over time, such as manure, phosphate rock or elemental sulfur, can extend benefits over years, while many commercial inorganic fertilizers are more immediately available," said Jones.

Legumes may be the most economical source of nitrogen.

"Because fertilizer can become tied up temporarily in the soil and plant material, the economic benefit of fertilization should be evaluated over several years," said Jones.

Adequate nutrients are key to sustaining stand health and most likely are less expensive than reseeding or interseeding. If stands are largely desirable species, rejuvenating old forage stands with fertilizer is more effective than mechanical rejuvenation methods such as aeration or harrowing. "Well thought out nutrient management on forages can easily pay for itself," said Jones.

The bulletins are available as printed copies from MSU Extension, www.msuextension.org/store, or (406) 994-3273, as well as online at Jones' webpage at <http://landresources.montana.edu/soilfertility/publications.html>.

STAMPEDE

By Jerry Palen

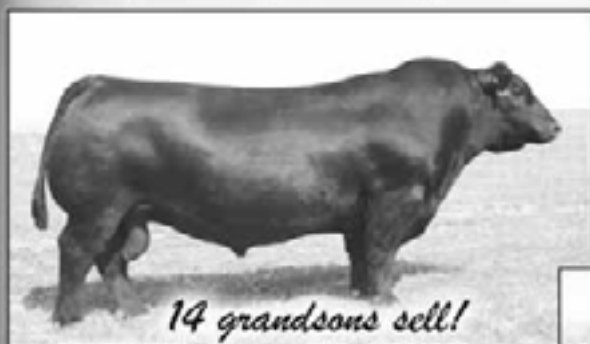


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Renewable Accounts: Big Pipe Could Mean Big Opportunities

**By David Ripplinger, Bioproducts and Bioenergy
Economist and Assistant Professor
NDSU Department
of Agribusiness and Applied Economics**

While North Dakota has tremendous natural gas resources in the form of associated gas, the infrastructure to collect natural gas and move it is not fully developed, as evidenced by the continued flaring of gas. However, this is expected to change soon and in a big way.

One of the activities I'm regularly involved with is siting new facilities. It's fun to pull down a map, push pins, draw lines and evaluate communities against prioritized criteria.

Among the most critical criterion for siting new biorefineries and other bio-based processing facilities is natural gas availability. This is a surprise to many, but the reason is simple: Natural gas is a relatively inexpensive and green fuel.

For thermal energy that biorefineries need to convert energy from its original form, for example corn, to one that is more readily useable, such as ethanol, natural gas almost always is the best choice. Given the development of domestic oil and gas in tight formations, this isn't likely to change anytime soon.

WBI Energy, a unit of Montana Dakota Utilities, announced an open season on gas at the end of January for the new Dakota pipeline that will span the northern tier of North Dakota. The pipeline, which will be 24 inches for most of its length, will move 400 million cubic feet of gas per day. That's enough to heat 1.3 million homes. There's no other way to put it: That's a big pipe.

While most of the gas in the Dakota pipeline will make its way to major markets after it reaches the terminus at Emerson, Manitoba, there's no reason some of it can't find its home at a facility in the north country.

In terms of facility siting, when built, the Dakota pipeline will provide a large boost to the viability of sites between North Dakota Highway 2 and the Canadian border. Some of these areas already are served with natural gas pipelines, but these pipes are smaller and have little to no extra capacity. The Dakota Pipeline will change natural gas availability from a factor that excluded sites in the region to a distinct advantage.

McHenry, Pierce, Towner, Cavalier and Pembina counties, opportunity just knocked on your door. A natural gas super highway is being built near your community. That big pipe could mean big opportunity.

Crop Insurance Deadline Approaching for Producers

Submitted by Jim Rickman

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming that the spring sales closing date is March 15. The spring sales closing and cancellation date applies to spring planted crops, and is also the deadline for producers to notify their agent if they have planted winter wheat in a county with only spring wheat coverage.

There are also important changes for organic producers this year. The five percent surcharge for all acreage insured under organic farming practices has been removed and a new contract price option will be available to organic producers who grow eligible crops under guaranteed contracts. An organic price election is now available for

oats, bringing the total number of crops with organic price elections to sixteen. Changes to organic transitional yields (t-yields) will be phased in so they will be more reflective of actual organic farming experience. More information on risk management tools available for organic farmers can be found on the RMA Organic Crops website at: www.rma.usda.gov/news/currentissues/organics/.

Doug Hagel, Billings Regional Office Director, reminds producers to contact their crop insurance agent for changes and insurance availability specific to their operation. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or on the RMA website at: www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/.

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WEDNESDAY – MARCH 12

8:45 a.m. Doors Open

1:05 p.m. Program Announcements/ Recognition

1:15 p.m. ***'I Have an Idea: Let's Develop a New Biotech Trait'***

Tom Peters

Extension Sugarbeet Agronomist/Weed Specialist

University of Minnesota/North Dakota State University

2:00 p.m. View Exhibits

5:00 p.m. Doors Close

Free Breakfast!
8:45-9:45
March 13

THURSDAY – MARCH 13

8:45 a.m. Doors Open

10:15 a.m. Program Announcements/ Recognition

10:25 a.m. ***'Going the Extra Mile – In Athletics & Agriculture'***

Gene Taylor

Director of Athletics

North Dakota State University

11:10 a.m. View Exhibits

Mid-Afternoon Doors Close



Tom Peters

Tom Peters is extension sugarbeet agronomist, with emphasis on weed control, for the University of Minnesota and North Dakota State University. The central Minnesota native recently retired from Monsanto after nearly 24 years with the company, working in biotechnology mainly with the development of new traits products. Peters earned his Ph.D. in agronomy at NDSU, specializing in weed control in sugarbeet.

Gene Taylor has served as NDSU's director of athletics since 2001. He guided the university's athletic program in its reclassification to NCAA Division I from Division II, including the securing of conference affiliations for all 16 sports. A business management graduate of Arizona State University, Taylor also holds a master's in sports administration from St. Thomas University, Florida. He came to NDSU after 15 years with the U.S. Naval Academy.



Gene Taylor

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MSU Extension to Celebrate Centennial Anniversary in 2014

Submitted by Sara Adlington

Montana State University Extension will celebrate its centennial anniversary in 2014 with special events around the state and continuing local education programs.

MSU Extension is a network of educators in all counties of the state and specialists on the MSU campus providing unbiased, research-based education programs and information to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of Montana citizens.

MSU Extension has been educating in Montana's local communities for 100 years. It may show up as after-school or 4-H youth programs, a master gardener course, or in-person education and service through webinars on personal finance; testing for animal forages or crop health; or food preservation classes.

Extension was created through the Smith-Lever act in 1914, which provided for cooperative agricultural extension

work at the land-grant colleges that were established with the Morrill Act of 1862. The educational partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the nation's land-grant universities extends research-based knowledge through a state-by-state network of Extension educators.

The original Smith-Lever charter statement remains true after 100 years, that the purpose of Extension is "better farming, better living, more happiness, more education, and better citizenship for the "entire country."

To celebrate the centennial, MSU Extension will have special events in May and October. County Extension offices may host open houses or events throughout the year to celebrate with communities by highlighting Extension's 100 years of extending knowledge and changing lives.

For more information on events and local Extension learning opportunities in 2014, visit <http://msuextension.org> or call your county Extension office.

2012-2013 Year End Award For Youth Rodeo Assoc.

Banquet held January 26, 2014 PeeWee Girls

2012-13 All Around Champion - Cassandra Schiffer
2012 - 13 All Around Runner up - Chalee Harms

Poles

1. Chalee Harms, Miles City
2. Cassandra Schiffer, Rosebud
3. Harley Meged, Miles City
4. Rowan Ellingson, Sidney

Goats

1. Cassandra Schiffer, Rosebud
2. Harley Meged, Miles City
3. Chalee Harms, Miles City
4. Draya Wacker, Melstone

Flags

1. Harley Meged, Miles City
2. Chalee Harms, Miles City
3. Cassandra Schiffer, Rosebud
4. Rowan Ellingson, Sidney

Barrels

1. Chalee Harms, Miles City
2. Draya Wacker, Melstone
3. Cassandra Schiffer, Rosebud

4. Harley Meged, Miles City PeeWee Boys

2012-13 All Around Champion - Clay Helm
2012 - 13 All Around Runner up - Garrett Cunningham

Poles

1. Clay Helm, Miles City
2. Garrett Cunningham, Broadus
3. Grady Larson, Sidney
4. Bryce Grebe, Melstone

Goats

1. Garrett Cunningham, Broadus
2. Cole Helm, Miles City
3. Clay Helm, Miles City
4. Grady Larson, Sidney

Flags

1. Garrett Cunningham, Broadus
2. Grady Larson, Sidney
3. Clay Helm, Miles City
4. Cole Helm, Miles City

Barrels

1. Garrett Cunningham, Broadus
2. Clay Helm, Miles City
3. Grady Larson, Sidney
4. Bryce Grebe, Melstone



Girls (L to R) Harley Meged, Miles City; Cassie Schiffer, Rosebud; Chalee Harms, Miles City; Draya Wacker, Melstone and Rowan Ellingson, Sidney.



Boys (L to R) Garrett Cunningham, Broadus; Cole Helm, Miles City; Clay Helm, Miles City; Bryce Grebe, Melstone and Grady Larson, Sidney.

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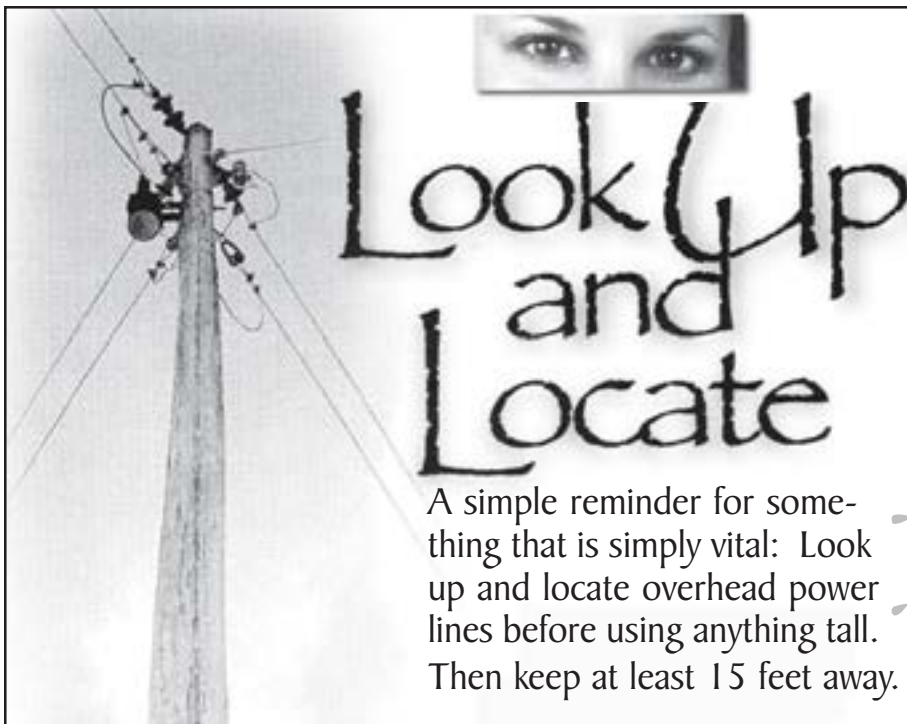
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Impacted Rancher Opposes Keystone XL

Submitted by Olivia Splinter

"The Northern Plains Resource Council believes that careful analysis of the just-released final Environmental Impact Statement will show that it is far short of demonstrating that the Keystone XL pipeline would be in the national interest," said Darrell Garoutte, a Northern Plains member and rancher whose land would be crossed by the pipeline in McCone County, Montana. "The release of the final EIS means that it is now time for citizens, especially in the affected states with so much to lose, to speak up and let Secretary Kerry and President Obama know that we do not believe this project to be in the national interest.

While proponents point to the lengthy multi-year review process undergone, the time that has passed has hardly done anything to get this pipeline closer to a project that is safe and beneficial for America. The time has been unproductive, not only frustrating pipeline proponents but also failing to satisfy the concerns of citizens and landowners in the path of the pipeline."

Garoutte also pointed out:

"The Keystone XL pipeline tar sand is bound for export, doing nothing for 'national energy security;

The project still does not have an Emergency Response Plan, despite the historical warnings of the Kalamazoo and Yellowstone rivers disasters and others;

It would carry highly corrosive tar sands bitumen, while the strength of the pipe has been questioned, posing higher risk of spills and leaks;

It crosses the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers and Ogallala Aquifer, which provide drinking and irrigation water to a large percentage of our nation's population;

The likelihood of adequate reclamation of land and waterways at certain places along the approved Keystone XL route in Montana, such as the gumbo hills of McCone County, is low;

Property rights have been violated. There are landowners along the route facing condemnation by the Keystone XL pipeline who don't want the pipeline on their land;

It isn't needed here in Montana. It could only carry a small fraction of the daily production from the Bakken, if any, and that oil is already moving to markets without the Keystone XL pipeline;

Agricultural production highly important to Montana's economy is threatened by risk of spills or poor reclamation."

Farm Bureau Applauds Right to Grow GMO Program

The Montana Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau support the recent announcement that farmers who are looking to plant new technologies have a reliable way to market their product with the "Right to Grow GMO" program. The program, developed by Syngenta and Gaviola Grain, LLC, will serve as a model to provide confidence for the American farmer that they will continue to have access to new technologies while meeting the needs of international customers.

Montana Farm Bureau Wheat Committee Chair Ken Johnson expressed his enthusiasm for the program. "Last week I attended the American Farm Bureau Commodity Advisory Committee meetings in Washington, D.C. where I served on the Wheat Committee. Although there is no GMO wheat to date, our committee agreed we needed to work with other countries so we're all on the same page growing GMO crops. We believe there is a need for coordinating with all of the major exporters and importers of wheat to see if countries are ready for it."

Johnson, a Conrad farmer, noted many people equate GMOs only with "Roundup Ready" crops, but that's not

necessarily the case. "GMOs can provide drought resistance, reduce the need for fertilizer and provide nitrogen efficiencies. Roundup Ready is another tool, but that's not our main interest. GMOs can help increase yields during drought, provide resistance to disease, and help prevent mold in humid areas. GMOs can provide health benefits, and may eventually be able to help people who are gluten intolerant. The perception is GMOs are created by greedy chemical companies, but that's all they think. They don't take time to learn about the actual technology and think about the benefits to both farmers and consumers."

American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman says, "Now more than ever, it is imperative that American farmers have access to new technologies to continue to provide a safe, healthy and affordable food supply both domestically and internationally. While the U.S. regulatory system is built on predictability and ensuring that new technology is safe, we also recognize that our international customers are subject to their own regulatory systems. As such, it is important that U.S. exporters meet the needs of our export customers."

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MSU Extension “Dying Without a Will” Materials Available

By MSU News Service

Given that seven out of 10 Montanans die without writing a will, Montana State University Extension has developed materials to educate people about what happens to their property if they die without a will.

The information can be accessed at: www.montana.edu/dyingwithoutawill, or by obtaining a free CD from MSU Extension.

By clicking through a series of yes-or-no questions on the website, Montanans can see on a simple family tree how Montana law distributes their if property if they pass away without writing a will, said Marsha Goetting, MSU Extension family economics specialist. The CD is just as straightforward, Goetting added.

“The web or CD information shows that your hard-earned assets could go to someone you wouldn't expect,” Goetting said. “That can be a real motivation to write a will. It gives you some control.”

The 39 examples in the CD describe typical family situations, but if a family scenario is not illustrated, Montanans can contact Goetting for more information.

For those who have already familiarized themselves with Extension's “Dying Without a Will” materials, Goetting said they are still up to date, as the legislature has not changed any of the pertinent statutes since the CD was developed.

Montanans can order the CD for free by contacting Goetting via email at goetting@montana.edu, calling (406) 994-3511, or writing to MSU, P.O. Box 172800, Bozeman, 59717, or ordering online at: www.montana.edu/dyingwithoutawill/ordercd.html. Additional copies for family members may also be ordered.

Contact: Marsha Goetting, (406) 994-5695, goetting@montana.edu.

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By Jerry Palen



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BeefTalk: Understanding EPD Percentile Tables is Important

**By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist
NDSU Extension Service**

A simple way to deal with the table is to decide on what level of performance one wants to shop for.

The discussion of how to utilize breed association expected progeny differences (EPDs) by setting individual goals requires that producers understand how bulls are positioned within the breed association's data set.

For example, if a producer is looking at a Simmental bull, then go to the American Simmental Association's website at <http://simmental.org/site/> and click on the "Industrial Science/Tech Advancement" tab. From there, hover on the "Genetic Prediction (EPD)" box and scroll down to the "% Tables/Breed Avg." tab. Click on the box and select the desired cattle type.

The Dickinson Research Extension Center is using purebred Simmentals, so we would click on "Purebred Simmentals" to see the 2014 purebred Simmental percentile table, then print the table. The table for other breeds will be about the same but may have different labeling on their respective websites and tables.

Step two is to get a colored highlighter pen and prepare to decide what level of performance one wants to select when buying a bull. For example, one can decide to ask to see the EPD value rankings for a particular trait much like one would ask to see the miles per gallon rankings for a specific car model to compare with other models.

A simple way to deal with the table is to decide on what level of performance one wants to shop for. For example, the center desires that the Simmental bulls simply rank in the upper 50 percent of the breed for the desired traits. Therefore, locate 50 percent on the left-hand side of the percentile table and read across the table to determine the EPD value for each trait printed in the sire summary that would rank a bull at the 50th percentile within the breed. It sounds complicated but it really isn't.

Now take the colored highlighter pen and draw a line across the table at the 50 percent line. Now you have highlighted the EPD value needed to rank a bull at the desired 50th percentile within the breed. By looking at the numbers above the line, one knows the EPD values of the bulls ranked within the upper 50th percentile. So the performance of the bulls is unveiled, which is what we are searching for. As the center buys bulls, in this case Simmental bulls, the center uses the same process.

The center focuses on five traits within the Simmental breed - birth weight, weaning weight, yearling weight, marbling score and rib-eye area - and sets a goal that the average value for herd sire EPDs should meet or exceed

average EPD values.

Using the process described above, the purebred Simmental breed average (50th percentile) birth weight is 2.2 pounds, weaning weight is 64.2 pounds, yearling weight is 93.2 pounds, marbling score is 0.13 and rib-eye area is 0.76 square inch.

The center's registered herd bulls that were born in 2011 and 2012 and utilized during the 2013 breeding season did not meet all of the goals for individual traits. The center's sire averages were birth weight 1.5 pounds (goal met), weaning weight 59.6 pounds (goal not met), yearling weight 80.1 pounds (goal not met), marbling score 0.15 (goal met) and rib-eye area 0.88 square inch (goal met).

As the 2014 breeding season approaches, the center has retained one of the 2012 bulls and replaced the rest of the bulls with four bulls that were born in 2013. Current herd bull averages for birth weight are 2.2 pounds (goal met), weaning weight 78 pounds (goal met), yearling weight 109.9 pounds (goal met), marbling score 0.07 (goal not met) and rib-eye area 0.99 square inch (goal met).

These current sires are reflective of a desire to meet the center's goals but also the reality of buying bulls. A review of the EPD values reveals that the center has increased birth weight slightly while increasing weaning and yearling weight significantly.

Unfortunately, along with the increased growth in the current sires, marbling decreased but rib-eye area increased. Three traits moved in the right direction but one did not. Birth weight changed but, arguably, not in the right direction (it went up). However, it remained at the breed average and is acceptable.

Marbling will need to be improved in the future. The current Simmental bull pen should provide the genetics to fit the cows that are in the center's traditional medium- to large-framed cow herd.

The center expects cows to fend for themselves at calving, so there is the desire for low birth weight. They also are expected to bring home growth-orientated calves that fit industry expectations in the fall, so, therefore, the desire for increased growth EPDs and good carcass merit.

Mission almost accomplished.

May you find all your ear tags.

For more information, contact Ringwall at 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/beeftalk/>.

(Ringwall is a North Dakota State University Extension Service livestock specialist and the Dickinson Research Extension Center director.)

Ag Producers Income Tax Filing Deadline Draws Near

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Ron Haugen, NDSU Extension Service farm economist, has some items to note for your 2013 income tax preparation.

Agricultural producers have until March 3, 2014, to file their 2013 income tax returns without penalty if they have not made estimates.

"Producers have until April 15 to file without penalty if they have paid their estimated tax by Jan. 15," says Ron Haugen, North Dakota State University Extension Service farm economist.

Items to note for 2013 income tax preparation:

New for 2013 is an additional Medicare tax of 0.9 percent on wages and self-employment income in excess of a modified adjusted gross income of \$250,000 if married or \$200,000 if single.

New for 2013 is a surtax of 3.8 percent on net investment income (includes interest, dividends, capital gains, annuities, royalties, rents and pass-through income from a passive business). The tax is on the lower of net investment income for the year or the amount where the modified adjusted gross income exceeds \$250,000 if married or \$200,000 if single.

The 179 expense election for 2013 is \$500,000. Generally, the 179 expense election allows producers to deduct up to \$500,000 of machinery or equipment purchases for the year of the purchase. There is a dollar-for-dollar phase-out for purchases of more than \$2 million. It is set to revert to \$25,000 plus an inflation adjustment for 2014.

The additional 50 percent first-year bonus depreciation provision is in effect for 2013. It is equal to 50 percent of the adjusted basis after 179 expensing. It only applies to new property that has a recovery period of 20 years or less. It is set to expire after 2013.

The standard deduction is \$12,200 for those who are married and filing jointly. The deduction is \$6,100 for singles.

The personal exemption amount is \$3,900.

Long-term capital gains and qualified dividend income is taxed at a 0 percent rate for individuals in the 10 or 15 percent tax brackets and at 15 percent for those in the middle brackets and 20 percent for those in the top income bracket.

The annual individual retirement account contribution is \$5,500 for 2013 or \$6,500 for individuals 50 or older.

The annual gift tax exclusion for 2013 is \$14,000.

The 2013 Social Security wage base is \$113,700.

The business mileage rate for 2013 is 56 1/2 cents per mile.

Crop insurance proceeds, if received in 2013, may be deferred to 2014 if you qualify. You must use cash account-

ing and show that, under normal business practices, the sale of damaged crops would occur in a future tax year.

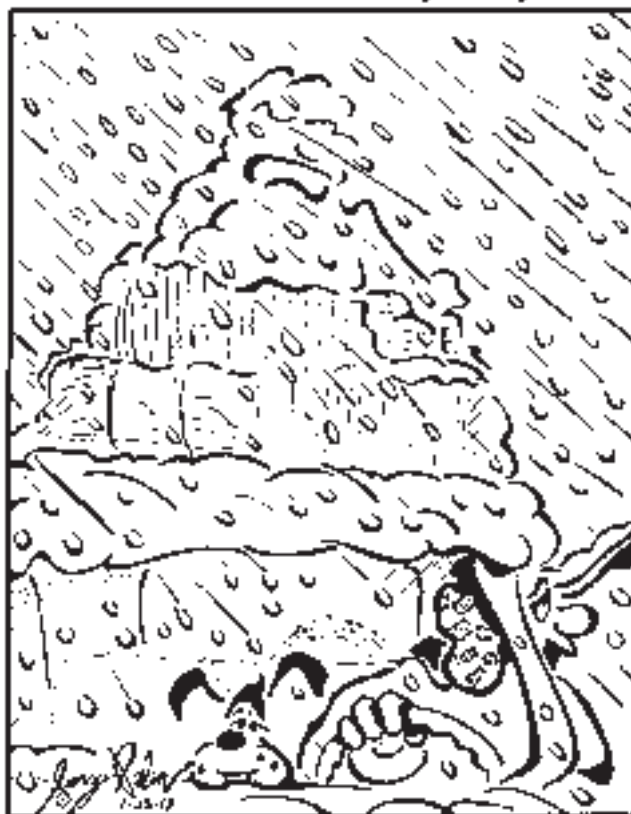
A livestock deferral can be made by those who had a forced sale of livestock because of a weather-related disaster.

Remember that qualifying farmers can elect to compute their current tax liability by averaging, during a three-year period, all or part of the current year's elected farm income. This is done on Schedule J. North Dakota farmers who elect to use income averaging for federal purposes also may use Form ND-1FA, which is income averaging for North Dakota income tax calculations.

Information on agricultural tax topics can be found in the "Farmers Tax Guide," publication 225. It is available at any IRS office or can be ordered by calling (800) 829-3676. Any questions about these topics or further updates should be addressed to your tax professional or the IRS at (800) 829-1040 or <http://www.irs.gov>. Call the North Dakota Tax Department at (877) 328-7088 or go to <http://www.nd.gov/tax/> for answers to North Dakota income tax questions.

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By Jerry Palen



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Montana Young Farmers and Ranchers Learn, Network at National Conference



Members of the Montana and MSU/UM Collegiate Farm Bureaus at the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference in Virginia Beach.

Networking, new ideas and leadership were all part of the American Farm Bureau National Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference February 8-10 in Virginia Beach, VA. Twenty-nine Montana Farm Bureau and Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers found the trip invaluable.

MFBF YF&R Jenny Stovall found the networking incredibly worthwhile. "There were young farmers and ranchers from all commodities. We had differences but also similarities and struggles," said Stovall, who ranches with her husband south of Billings. "I sat with a tobacco and cucumber farmer from Georgia. He told me how labor intensive it is to grow cucumbers. They apparently have a huge employment problem as they have 8 to 15 acres of cucumbers that need to be picked by hand. They pick half of them every other day for 40 days. It's hard to find help, yet when they hire immigrants, people complain."

Stovall said the Commodity Market Situation and Outlook for 2014 workshop was very interesting. "Bob Young, chief economist for the American Farm Bureau, said the cattle market looks good for the next three or four years. He said the middle cuts are carrying value, not just the high-

end cuts. Of course, beef inventory is low which will keep prices up. One downside was he said they are expecting interest rates might increase and land prices will decrease."

Stovall said a workshop for state YF&R chairs was excellent as they learned good leadership values and discussed how leaders need to recognize the strength of their members. She found the networking dinners, where selected YF&R members from states were paired together for a meal, informative and enjoyable.

Ben Johnson, a student at MSU whose family raises cattle and grain in Sidney, found the workshops relevant. "One workshop was how to build capital, another covered world trade and exporting agricultural products, along with Country of Origin Labeling (COOL). We had two Canadians give us their perspective on COOL in that discussion," noted Johnson. "The other good workshop I attended covered creative problem solving."

Leah Nelson, president of the MSU Collegiate Farm Bureau, agreed the workshop on creativity was extremely helpful. "The workshop on creative problem solving with Kyle Perry of AFBF, was informative because it looked at different approaches to problem solving. One of those ways

is to find a mentor to assist you in making big decisions. We had the opportunity to interact with other young farmers and ranchers in that workshop."

On the tour Nelson attended, she visited a cotton gin facility, a peanut farm and a farm that grew a specialty soybean for the Japanese food market. The also visited a paper mill that made products out of recycled paper.

"We had a long visit with a young farmer at the cotton gin," noted Nelson. "It was very interesting to hear about the cotton process because it's so different than agriculture in Montana."

Nelson, whose family ranches in Opheim, believes the best part of the conference is the ability to be around people who are in the same position. "They have the same challenges in farming and ranching, even if they are from different states or grow different commodities. We can relate to each other. This conference gave us a good way to tie what we learned back to Farm Bureau as well as advocating for farming and ranching and being involved in the legislative process."

This was the third year Lane Nordlund, a senior at MSU, attended the national YF&R Conference.

"Every year I come back passionate and pumped about advocating for farming and ranching and proud to be a part of production agriculture," said Nordlund. "This conference takes us back to our roots as to why we grow crops and raise cattle. We get to meet people from across the board and learn what their passions are in agriculture. Everyone is

different, whether they are organic or conventional, raising cattle or raising soybeans."

Nordlund thought the workshop on rural development was especially valuable. "I learned more about what the USDA offers, and I'd like to see small towns in Montana doing more. You look at many of our towns in rural Montana and there isn't much business going on except agriculture," said Nordlund, whose family ranches near Malta. "It's difficult for small businesses to survive in these towns and sometimes impossible for young people who graduate from college to come back home if there aren't jobs. A lot of people in Montana don't understand the importance of rural development."

"We toured Smithfield Foods and learned that even with the company being purchased by a Chinese company, nothing is changing in exporting pork because most of the parts of pork sent out to the Chinese market are not part of the American diet," Nordlund explained. "In addition, we got to learn more about history. We toured Jamestown and saw what crops the first white settlers planted."

Nordlund echoes his colleagues that networking is a valuable part of the conference. "It was great to talk to other producers about how they handle state and federal leases. Some farmers from the south couldn't understand how we handled all the cold weather and snow," he laughed. "It was wonderful to have 29 young farmers and ranchers from Montana as part of this excellent experience."



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Prairie Fare: Snooze Your Way to Better Health

**By Julie Garden-Robinson
Food and Nutrition Specialist
NDSU Extension Service**

Sleep is critical for functioning in daily life.

"Daylight savings time is almost here. We can't forget to move the clocks forward," my husband commented the other day.

"Oh, no. I have a hard time with losing an hour of sleep when we 'spring ahead'," I replied.

Although I appreciate the extended daylight hours, I feel jet lag for a few days.

That one hour of lost snoozing time has some major repercussions, according to a survey of 1,000 adults conducted by the Better Sleep Council in 2013 and 2014.

About 61 percent of survey respondents said they feel the effects of the time change the following Monday. About 29 percent of the respondents said it takes a full week to recover from the time change, with women having a harder time adjusting than men. Younger adults have a harder time adjusting than older adults.

About 39 percent report that daylight savings time affects their mood. In fact, 5 percent of the survey respondents indicated that "the Incredible Hulk has nothing on them."

Most people experience occasional insomnia. When I do, I usually get out of bed and go downstairs to avoid waking my family with lights or the sounds of a TV. Unfortunately, my nighttime stroll disturbs our three dogs on the main floor. Our dogs look at me groggily and quickly wake up. They think morning has arrived, and they begin looking for their breakfast.

Then I have a real issue. Our three playful dogs are hopping around, and I am fully awake. I know I will be exhausted the next day or beyond.

After I coax the dogs to return to their soft bed, I turn on the TV and try to bore myself to sleep with late-night TV. Sometimes, I visit my Facebook page to see if any of my night owl friends are still awake and posting amusing pictures or stories online.

However, neither watching TV nor working on a computer are good ideas for insomniacs, according to researchers. Both activate the brain and can "wake you up." I should find a dull book to read.

As we all know, sleep is critical for functioning in daily life. In 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic. On average, adults need seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

In another survey by the Better Sleep Council, 48 percent of Americans stated that they do not get enough sleep, but less than half of them take any one specific action to help them get better sleep. Women are more likely than men to feel sleep-deprived, and women are more likely to recognize the health issues associated with sleep deprivation.

So, what's the big deal about not getting enough sleep? Most of us recognize issues related to fatigue and inability to concentrate when lacking sufficient shut-eye. Longer-term issues include a link to heart disease, strokes, diabetes and mental health issues. A lack of sleep upsets hormones linked to appetite control, which can lead to weight gain.

We spend about one-third of our lives asleep, and sleep

is necessary for our survival. Try these tips based on information from the National Institutes of Health and the Better Sleep Council:

Establish a bedtime routine and stay on a schedule with your sleep patterns. Go to bed the same time on weeknights and weekends.

Don't nap after 3 p.m. Occasional short naps are OK, but persistent napping may indicate you are not getting the restful sleep you need.

Be aware of your caffeine intake. Caffeine can disrupt sleep, so try refraining from caffeine after noon.

Avoid nightcaps (alcoholic drinks). Drinking alcohol may make you sleepy; however, you may wake up when the effects wear off.

Avoid large meals or large amounts of beverages before bed.

Unwind before bedtime. Listen to music, read and/or take a warm bath.

Make sure your room is quiet and cool. Be sure your mattress is comfortable and supports your body.

If you can't sleep after 20 minutes, get up and do some relaxing activity such as reading.

If you have persistent issues with sleeping, see a health-care professional.

Visit <http://www.ndsu.edu/boomers> for more information about eating healthfully. Visit <http://www.bettersleep.org> for more information about its surveys and ways to rest better. If you want a light snack before bed, try some granola and milk.

Lentil Granola

- 1 1/2 c. dry red lentils
- 5 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 c. rolled oats
- 5 ounces sliced almonds
- 1 c. shaved coconut
- 1 c. dried cranberries or desired dried fruit
- 2 Tbsp. olive or canola oil

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add lentils and simmer for five minutes or until just tender. Drain lentils and spread out on a tray. Allow to steam dry and cool. Preheat your oven to 300 F.

Combine honey, vanilla and 2 tablespoons of oil in a bowl. Toss the cooled lentils in the honey mixture. Spread the coated lentils on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes.

Stir in oats and almonds and continue baking for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes or so. Next add coconut and dried fruit and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes or until everything is browned. Cool completely and store in an airtight container.

Try sprinkling granola on yogurt or oatmeal.

Makes 24 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 6 grams (g) of fat, 5 g of protein, 19 g of carbohydrate, 3 g of fiber, 10 milligrams (mg) of sodium, 0.5 microgram of folate and 1 mg of iron.

(Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., is a North Dakota State University Extension Service food and nutrition specialist and professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences.)

About The Ag Roundup



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Spotlight on Economics: Who is Driving Food Standards?

**By David Saxowsky, Associate Professor
NDSU Agribusiness and Applied
Economics Department**

If a consumer does not care for a particular food, there are almost always plenty of alternatives, and many consumers have the income to pursue those alternatives.

Americans enjoy relatively low-cost food when measured as a percent of our income. For several decades, food expenditures in the U.S. have been between 10 and 11 percent of our disposable income. Canada, Europe and several Pacific Rim nations are other countries or regions of the world that enjoy relatively low-cost food. Nations with some of the highest food costs as a percent of income are Kenya, Cameroon and Pakistan.

An implication of relatively low-cost food is that consumers can be selective in the foods they purchase and consume. Consumers can choose among low-cost foods, organic food, ready-to-eat food, raw commodities, gluten-free food, allergen-free food and numerous other options. If a consumer does not care for a particular food, there are almost always plenty of alternatives, and many consumers have the income to pursue those alternatives. U.S. food consumers have the luxury of being picky.

One expectation that consumers likely agree on is that food needs to be safe so that it does not cause the consumer to become ill. Fortunately, most food in the U.S. is safe. Even though there are instances of unsafe food, the overall safety of our food is quite impressive.

However, producing, processing and handling food safely requires a commitment and effort by all the peo-



David Saxowsky, Associate Professor, NDSU Agribusiness and Applied Economics Department

ple and businesses involved in the food industry.

Most people understand that government regulations require safe food practices for processors, retailers and food service businesses. Many of these people also recognize that regulations are increasingly addressing food safety at the production or farm level.

However, regulations are not

the only force driving food safety considerations throughout the industry. Consumer expectations and perceptions are powerful forces. If consumers perceive that a food may be unsafe, it is easy to select an alternative or competing product. Thus, food businesses throughout the industry are imposing quality and safety considerations on their suppliers, such as farmers who produce agricultural commodities.

Producers and others have expressed their concerns about government directives, but the industry is probably driving itself more than the government is regulating the industry. Good agricultural practices and good handling practices audits and documented food safety plans are only some of the industry's emerging expectations. As government regulations emerge, they occasionally reference or cite existing industry standards as evidence that industry expectations often are ahead of government rules.

Society's regulations through the government sometimes lead food industry standards, while regulations follow industry standards at other times. America's wealth also impacts consumers' expectations. The present and future food industry, from input suppliers through farmers and processors to retail outlets and food service businesses, is forced to respond to consumers and one another. Businesses in our food industry focus on one another as much as they focus on government.

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