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Rasmussen Gains Hands-On Experience

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Rasmussen Gains Hands-On Experience Through Internship Program

By Dianne Swanson

MSU-Bozeman student Alex Rasmussen has had a busy summer completing his internship through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), the Montana Rangeland Resources Committee and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). According to the DNRC, the internship is designed to offer beginning agriculturalists, natural resource and range specialists, biologists, soils majors or any student looking into natural resources the real-world and hands-on experience implementing the educational tools already gained to a ranching operation. Interns spend two weeks at each of six host/mentor's ranch operations. Rasmussen started the summer at a ranch in Boulder, then made it to Big Timber in time to help with lambing as well as cattle. Fencing was on the agenda on a ranch at Ekalaka where he helped rip out two miles of barbed wire fencing and put in four miles of electric fence. The next stop was a ranch in Ryegate.

Since July 17, Rasmussen has been a welcome asset at the busy Dick and Connie Iversen ranch south of Culbertson. He has gained experience in rotational grazing as he moved cattle, has stacked bales, done some fencing, put out salt and minerals, and even helped with two major events the Iversens hosted during the week.

Rasmussen is from the Portland, OR, area and has always loved the outdoors. Although he had no ag experience, and without knowing exactly what his career path may be, he chose to attend MSU Bozeman, where he felt the programs offered would provide a good way to not sit in an office. He will graduate next year with a degree in natural resource and rangeland ecology, giving him multiple state and federal employment options, as well as potential jobs in the private sector.

Rasmussen is truly enjoying his internship saying his favorite part has been the constant learning opportunities. "I don't do well in a classroom but I love to learn," he explained. "Every place I've been has provided chances for new experiences and learning the hands-on way." With only limited experience on a tractor, learning to run equipment has been fun. Some of the work has been from horseback, which he was already proficient at, but most has been with 4 wheelers and side by sides. He has gained experience with skid steers and other ranch equipment as he visited each place. "I love most, but not all, things mechanical," he said.

Rasmussen is looking forward to getting back to school and putting what he has learned to use. "This will bring a lot more meaning to what I'm learning in the classroom," he stated.

Iversens have had a very gratifying experience hosting the students, stating "It has been a fun experience to be part of the Working Lands Internship program. We have had the opportunity to mentor agricultural students and give them a hands-on view of a working ranching operation. At first the idea of having a person you have never met move in and be part of the family for several weeks is kind of daunting but the young college students we have had have been nothing but delightful. Most have had very little experience on a ranch and our job is to give them the opportunity to see the inner workings of agriculture they don't get sitting in a classroom. Our hope is this will help them be more informed about agriculture and make their job easier if they work in the ag field. Rasmussen is the 6th student we have hosted over a period of five years, the first year we hosted two students in the same summer. All of the students we have had the pleasure of hosting have become lifelong friends and some have even returned to visit and help with chores when we needed some extra help. We have been asked to be references to jobs



Intern Alex Rasmussen (right) works at the Iversen ranch. (Submitted photo)

they applied to as well as giving supporting information for their projects. It has been a very satisfying experience that we hope to repeat in the future."

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Richland County Fair & Rodeo Has An Extravaganza Of Entertainers For 2023

By Meagan Dotson

Get ready to be entertained at the 2023 Richland County Fair & Rodeo, happening Aug. 2-5.

Country artist Kip Moore will be headlining this year's concert on Saturday night. He recently released two new singles and his album "Damn Love" which dropped April 28.

Neo-traditional country singer and songwriter Chancey Williams will be opening. The Wyoming native was named iHeartRadio's 2022 Rocky Mountain Country Music Awards Entertainer of the Year. Williams also won Songwriter of the Year for "The Saint", and Album of the Year for "3rd Street", produced with country hitmaker, Trent Wilmon. The performance will include songs from his most recent album, "One of These Days".

Of course, there will be rodeos Thursday and Friday nights, with Friday being 'Tough Enough to Wear Pink' in which attendants will wear pink to show their support and raise funds for cancer awareness.

Wednesday, Aug. 2, 406 FMX will be wowing the crowd with their freestyle motocross show in the arena and tickets are just \$15. It will be 90 minutes of adrenaline as the crowd watches motorcycle jumps, snowmobile jumps, and a back-flipping UTV.

"It really should be an awesome show," said Fair Manager Pam Shelmidine of the Montana based 406 FMX entertainers. "It is always

great to get local talent to showcase in our arena."

Free entertainment will be held every day with a rotating schedule that will be posted on the Richland County Fair & Rodeo website and Facebook page in June.

Strolling acts include Pippi the Clown and Buster the Baby T-Rex. Buster and his handler will be roaming around the fairgrounds for an hour at a time, three times a day.

Additionally, there will be The Magic Bean, which is an agricultural education show for kids, explaining to them in fun fashion how a little bean seed becomes food on the table. There will also be a pedal tractor pull for the kids that will happen three times each day of the fair. These acts will be set up in the grassy area behind the fair office and there will be signs set up to make sure everyone knows where to go to take in these fun events.

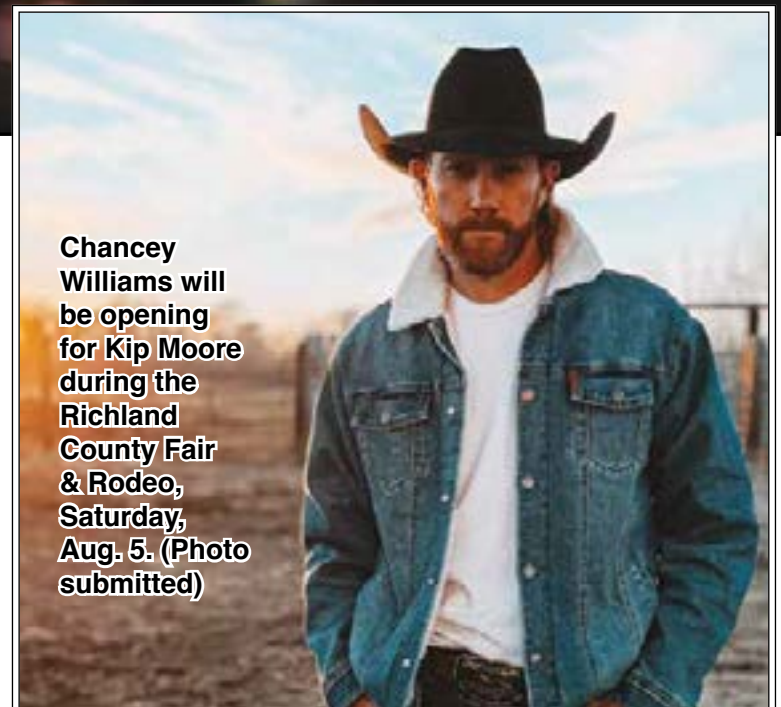
Don't forget to swing into the carnival and check out the more than 100 vendors that will be set up in and outside the event center. Get your grub on for a good cause and sample some delicious fair food while supporting a variety of nonprofits that raise a bulk of funds for their organizations feeding hungry fair-goers. Remember the reason for this particular season is to showcase some of Richland County's finest via awesome fair exhibits.



Kip Moore will be headlining the Saturday night concert at this year's Richland County Fair & Rodeo. (Photo by PJ Brown)

Baking, photography, sewing, seed pictures, school exhibits, 4-H exhibits and so much more will be proudly displayed. The 4-H schedule will be available on the fair website by the end of the week. Fair buttons, concert tickets and rodeo tickets will be available May 30 at the fair office; buttons will also be available at local banks.

Get geared up for Stars, Stipes, & Summer Nights at the Richland County Fair & Rodeo!



Chancey Williams will be opening for Kip Moore during the Richland County Fair & Rodeo, Saturday, Aug. 5. (Photo submitted)

Time To Think About Fire Prevention, Fire Safety This Summer

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

Bozeman, MT - Much of Montana has enjoyed a wet spring, and green grass has stretched well into mid-summer resulting in fat cattle and extensive haying. However, as the days grow warmer and the chance for moisture lessens, the odds of late summer fires increase whether man-made or from natural causes.

For those ranchers and farmers haying, it's important to check bales for moisture content.

"This year, we may see folks putting up wet hay for the first time in a while, especially if they are running behind and want to catch up," says Montana Ag Safety Program Director Dana Jansen.

"Wet hay will self-ignite. Probe bales regularly and install moisture sensors on balers if possible. Mark all wet bales and leave them unstacked, then monitor the bale temperature frequently. Don't stack those bales until you are certain they are dry and are not as likely to combust."

Jansen cautions farmers and ranchers to keep hay, straw, and bedding materials stored away from buildings, and if possible, on areas of bare ground. Consider multiple hay yard sites to minimize overall risk and impact. Often insurance policies dictate the tonnage of bales and the distance between haystacks.

"Maintain all equipment at manufacturer-recommended intervals. Replace worn or broken parts and regularly grease the bearings," Jansen cautioned. "Properly maintained equipment is less likely to start a fire."

Whether you own a large ranch, a small farm or a cabin in the mountains, it's essential to mow all the grass short around buildings, bins, and areas with high vehicle traffic. Dry grass poses a significant risk for fire. Short grass in these areas can prevent significant damage and danger later in the summer as it dries out.

Other precautions include using extreme caution with sources of ignition, such as fence chargers, matches, sparks, batteries and equipment. Make sure there are working fire extinguishers on equipment and in buildings.

Jansen, who is a volunteer firefighter in Lavina, MT, tells landowners to ensure there is access to all areas of the ranch and build and maintain roads.

"Folks don't consider that gates should be wide enough for equipment and vehicles to easily pass through and be opened easily. No fence stretchers! If they can't open the gate in a fire emergency, that gate will be cut," explained Jansen. She added that having names for your pastures and the GPS coordinates for that location can help the dispatcher and fire fighters find your property quickly.

"Whether you're new to our state or a generational rancher, it's important to remember that wildfires are part of living here. Have defensible space around your dwelling, keep your lawn mowed short, don't store firewood next to your home and don't park in tall grass. Be sure to have an adequate water supply available," Jansen said.

"It's imperative to have an evacuation plan for your family and your animals," she noted. "Stay up to date on the fire conditions and heed all warning and orders. Remember, human life is a fire fighter's number-one priority."

For more information on fire safety, along with a wide range of safety resources, visit the Montana Ag Safety Program at www.mtagrisafety.com or email Dana Jansen at danaj@mtagrisafety.com.



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Grasshopper Damage Results In Crop Loss



Grasshopper damage that resulted in total crop loss in Richland County. (Submitted photos)

By Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland County Extension

Grasshoppers have continued to wreak havoc in Richland County and the surrounding areas. They have damaged both cropland and rangelands, with varying severity depending on the area.

Cropland grasshopper damage has varied from defoliation to loss of field edges to total crop loss. Crop yields can be more directly affected as grasshoppers begin clipping off wheat heads. Producers have had to apply multiple insecticide applications to attempt to slow the progression of damage. Unfortunately, the majority of insecticide options for grasshoppers do not have a very long residual, meaning they do not remain effective on the application site for very long. This creates opportunities for grasshoppers to reinfest the crop even after an insecticide application has been made. Not only is yield being negatively affected by grasshopper destruction, but producers input costs per acre are dramatically increased when the insecticide must be applied multiple times.

Grasshoppers are also causing severe damage in rangelands. Grasshoppers negatively impact both the quality and quantity of rangeland plants. Often times they will begin by stripping the leaves of the plants. The majority of a plant's nutrients are in the leaves, therefore leaving a lower quality diet for our livestock to select from. As grasshopper pressure increases, they can remove entire sections of forage. Rangeland insecticide applications are not as common as cropland applications, as larger area treatments are more costly.

Now is the time that grasshoppers will start laying their eggs. This egg laying will extend into September. Grasshoppers lay their eggs in the soil, and they overwinter there and hatch in the spring. Where there are high densities of grasshoppers during this egg laying time frame, it is likely that populations will be high in those areas next spring.

USDA-APHIS is the provider of the Rangeland Grasshopper Suppression Program. This is a cost-share program on private, state, and federal lands. While it is too late for suppression efforts on rangelands this year, producers should be thinking about those areas with high densities now and start considering if there would be interest in the program for next year. There will be more information on this program to come this fall.



Mark Your Calendars For The Badlands Cattle Conference, Oct. 4

By Meagan Dotson

AgPro Solutions & Purina Animal Nutrition in partnership with Thiessen's Regency Acres Angus Ranch will be hosting the inaugural Badlands Cattle Conference this fall. The event will be hosted Wednesday, Oct. 4 at Russell and Jill Thiessen's ranch located 8½ miles south of Lambert and 16 miles west of Crane.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. with speakers lined up to start their presentations at 9:30 a.m. Mark Voll, Zoetis Animal Health, will be speaking about biosecurity threats and calf health at weaning. Dr. Chad Zehnder, Purina Animal Nutrition, will be discussing fetal development and emerging technologies for weaning calves. Dr. Chris Zellmer, Diamond V will present weaning management tips and rumen health and Jon Scofield, Zinpro, will talk about lameness in cattle and the role of trace minerals.

Tri-tip sandwiches will be served at 12:30 p.m., and there will be time that afternoon for questions and observations of cattle on display. Dinner will wrap up the event at 6:30 p.m., with brisket on the menu. Beef and sides are courtesy of Russell and Jill Thiessen.

"I trim sale bulls in the winter and that was how I connected with Russell. We started talking about feed and one thing turned into another discussing a possible field day," said Purina Livestock Production Specialist Austin Buzanowski, Glendive. "We thought it would be a great way to showcase their operation, the feed program, and the partnership between us."

The Badlands Cattle Conference will provide valuable information to those in the industry. They are hopeful that attendees will take home new ideas to apply to their operation. It will additionally serve as an opportunity to network with other cattlemen from the area.

"Our main goal is to provide a lot of worthwhile knowledge. The cattle market is great and feed should be plentiful this fall, so it is a good time to invest in areas that have not been focused on before," Buzanowski explained.

Area ranchers from eastern Montana and western North Dakota will be attending. Those interested can register by contacting Buzanowski at 406-839-1255 or AgPro Solutions at 406-377-4572. There is no cost to attend the Badlands Cattle Conference.



Ag Appreciation Golf Tournament

The Sidney Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture held their annual Ag Appreciation Golf Tournament Monday, July 10 at the Sidney Country Club. Pictured (L-R) is the Top Team for the Tournament, Robbie Bruer, Tim Cayko, Todd Cayko and Kyle Cayko. (Submitted photo)



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SBARE Seeks Input

Input from the public will help shape SBARE's recommendations for the 2025 legislative session.



By NDSU Agriculture Communication

The North Dakota State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) is seeking public input on needs in the state.

SBARE provides the North Dakota legislature and governor with recommendations on how the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station and North Dakota State University Extension can address critical state needs and ensure that the state's investments on behalf of North Dakota citizens will yield great long-term dividends.

The input will help shape SBARE's recommendations for the 2025 legislative session.

"You have a vital stake in North Dakota's future and are invited to provide your thoughts on critical needs and concepts for solutions," says Sarah Lovas, SBARE chair. "Specifically, we ask you to provide your input in a format that works best for you." SBARE is holding three input sessions:

- Sept. 14: North Central Research Extension Center, 5400 Hwy. 83 S, Minot
- Nov. 9: Dickinson Research Extension Center, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson
- Dec. 12-13: NDSU Harry D. McGovern Alumni Center, 1241 N. University Dr, Fargo

To set up a time to present 10-15 minutes of testimony at an input session, contact Erin McCall at 701-231-7656 or erin.mccall@ndsu.edu. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input at an earlier session to ensure availability.

Other options are:

- Provide written testimony: Send a letter to SBARE, NDSU Dept. 7520, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050
- Provide testimony by email - Send an email message to sbare@ndsu.edu
- Provide an online submission - Submit testimony online at ndsu.edu/vpag/sbare/stakeholder_input/

In your remarks, describe your agricultural research and/or Extension needs and potential solutions.

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Whitney Van Hook Appreciates Her Time As Richland County 4-H Member

By Dianne Swanson

Whitney Van Hook, Brorson Farmhands 4-H Club, has a long history with the program, starting as a Clover Bud when she was just 6 years old. She has been a full-fledged 4-Her since 2013 with various projects over the years including poultry, rabbits, steers, horses and sewing projects. But she has always had a

quilt project and a hog. This year, she will show a steer and a hog, and have a beautiful quilt to enter in the Richland County Fair.

The quilt project has been a constant throughout Van Hook's 4-H years, with a more difficult pattern each time. She also took a fiber tech class in school last year where she learned new things. She has participated in

the County Quilt Revue each year except this one, where judges are different than the ones at the fair. Winners are then qualified to attend Congress, which she has chosen not to do, but she values the feedback from the judges.

Van Hook said that her favorite part of 4-H is showing her projects at the fair. She has done

very well with those projects over the years, winning Reserve Champion with her poultry, Grand Champion several times with her family pen of three hogs, Best of Fair and Judges Choice multiple times in quilting. She has also taken her steer to Jackpot Shows in Glendive and Billings where she learned valuable showmanship information.

Big brothers William III and Wes have provided valuable assistance over the years with William III helping to break the steer and both helping with

shots for the hogs. It's preferable to have someone else do the shots so the hog doesn't associate that process with the 4-Her, making it easier to handle in the ring.

The livestock sale at the fair is the culmination of all the hard work put in by the kids raising livestock. Van Hook would like to thank all the buyers for their support of Richland County 4-H and for the purchase of her animals over the years. The money she has raised will go towards her education and she truly appreciates it.

In her club, Van Hook has held leadership positions including historian, club treasurer and vice-president. She has also logged tons of community service hours with projects such as Operation Shoe Box, making benches for the fair, delivering Meals on Wheels, conducting food drives, and participating in multiple events at Crestwood Inn.

Whitney is the daughter of William Jr. and Vonnie Van Hook. She plans to attend NDSU this fall with the goal of becoming a Vet Tech.



4-H member Whitney Van Hook works to finish her quilt for this year's fair. (Photo by Dianne Swanson)

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Papka Credits 4-H With Helping Him Grow

By Dianne Swanson

Lane Papka, Savage, has really enjoyed his time in 4-H and how much it has helped him grow as a person. Over the past five years with the Yellowstone Valley Trailblazers, Papka has raised pigs and steers along with completing photography and woodworking projects. His favorite is the steers which he purchases from and keeps at Morgan Ernster's farm. His pigs have been housed at the Peter's farm.



He has earned a Perfect Quality award for his pig and blue ribbons for the majority of his entries. He also served as vice president of his club for two years.


Papka said his favorite parts about 4-H are learning new things and having good experiences. Demonstration day was a challenge for this young man who never used to talk in front of people, but the experience was rewarding as it really got his confidence up and he appreciates that.

The son of Melissa and Levi Papka, Lane will attend NDSCS, Wahpeton, ND, this fall to become a welder. The sale of his 4-H animals has helped to fund his education, something he is very thankful for.



Lane Papka with his steer Charlie. (Submitted photo)



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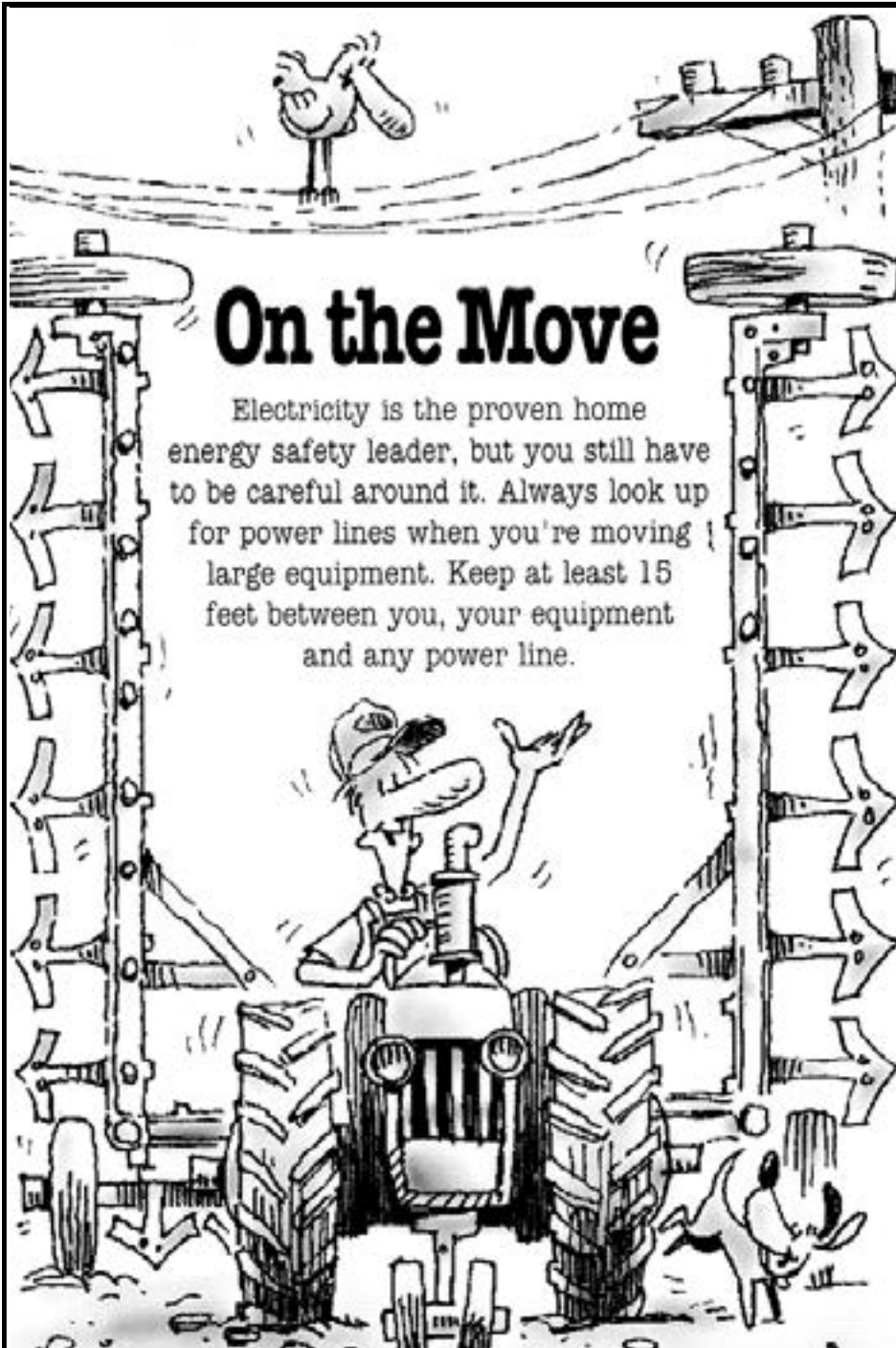
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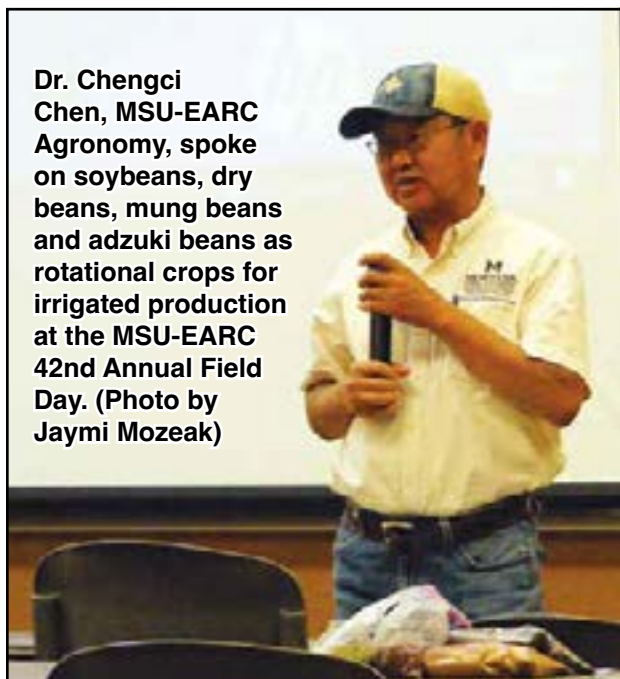


The MSU-EARC Field Day was held July 11 in Sidney. Pictured is Dr. Darrin Boss, MSU research centers department head, gave an update of the MSU research centers department at the MSU-EARC 42nd Annual Field Day, Sidney, MT. (Photo by Jaymi Mozeak)

NDSU-WREC Field Day



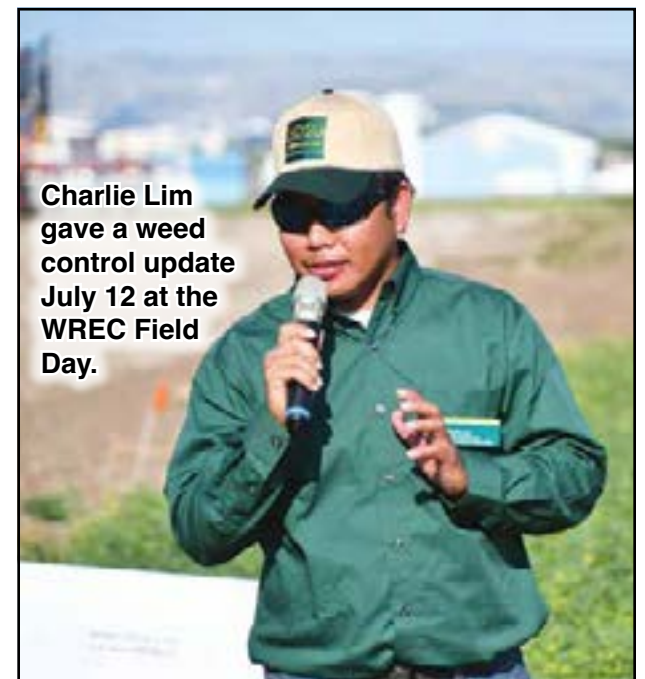
The NDSU-WREC Dryland Field Day was held in conjunction with the Horticulture Field Day on July 12 in Williston. Pictured is Dr. Clair Keene in a soil test pit talking about Kernza as a new perennial, dual-use forage and grain crop for western North Dakota.



Dr. Chengci Chen, MSU-EARC Agronomy, spoke on soybeans, dry beans, mung beans and adzuki beans as rotational crops for irrigated production at the MSU-EARC 42nd Annual Field Day. (Photo by Jaymi Mozeak)



Andrew Friskop gave a report on Fusarium Head Blight (scab) management at the WREC Field Day July 12.



Charlie Lim gave a weed control update July 12 at the WREC Field Day.

Consider Annual Forages & Cover Crops When Hay Production Is Down

The Best Forage Species Will Vary Based On The Primary Planned Use



Annual forages and cover crops may be viable options for hay production or grazing. (NDSU photo)

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Another challenging year for spring moisture has created a deficit in hay production across much of the Dakotas and Minnesota, leaving ranchers to consider options to increase their forage supply. Lack of rainfall from mid-May to mid-June impacted forage production of perennial grass hay fields such as brome grass, crested wheatgrass, timothy and orchardgrass. State-wide reports have indicated as much as a 40% decline in hay production compared to the previous year.

“Recent precipitation may make annual forages and cover crops viable forage options for hay production or grazing,” says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist.

Despite recent rains, available soil moisture and recommended planting dates will limit options. Forage species selected will vary based on primary planned use: hay, fall grazing, or next spring haying or grazing.

Recommended forage species for hay production

“The best options this late in the growing season will be warm-season forages,” says Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist. “Foxtail millets have the shortest growing period (seed germination to heading). With droughty conditions, Siberian millet may be the best option; however, under better moisture conditions, German millet could be a better option to maximize production potential. Other options include sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids.”

These warm-season crops should be planted by no later than late July or early August. Harvest before a hard frost or directly following the hard frost to retain forage quality and palatability. Sudangrass and the sorghum-sudangrass hybrids have higher yield potential, but because of the shorter day-length and cooler temperatures in late summer and early fall, sufficient dry down to put up hay can be difficult when using a sorghum-sudangrass hybrid. A dry stalk trait is

available in some sorghum-sudangrass hybrids that speeds drying time due to stalks containing a lower moisture content.

Recommendation for fall/winter grazing

Many forage options can be planted now and grazed late summer through early winter. Foxtail millet, sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass can also be used as pasture. However, once they freeze, livestock tend to be more selective and increase waste through trampling. Following a killing freeze, allow sorghum species to completely dry down before grazing to minimize prussic acid potential.

Cool-season cover crop mixtures make excellent pasture well into the early winter period. However, cool-season plants are less efficient at using water and will be more prone to fail if dry conditions persist. Make sure ample topsoil moisture is available for plant establishment.

A good option for a fall and winter grazing mix is a seed mixture with a combination of cool and warm-season crops. The cool-season crops will retain nutritional quality after a freeze while the warm-season crop provides fiber for energy and proper rumen function. Cool-season cover crop options may include a mixture of oats, barley, turnips or radish.

Recommendation for spring grazing or haying in 2024

Winter annuals can be a great option for spring grazing or late spring hay, helping to reduce pressure on already stressed rangeland and pastures while providing cover on the soils. September is the optimal planting date for winter annuals; however, they can be seeded in August if moisture conditions are good. Options include winter wheat, winter rye and winter triticale. Winter annuals can be utilized for early season grazing or harvested for hay in June.

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Winter rye and triticale will be the best option for grazing in May through early June. Both winter rye and triticale can be harvested for hay by early June. Winter wheat produces less foliage in May and will provide a better option for high quality hay in late June.

When to Purchase Hay

"If you plan to purchase hay to offset a shortage, we recommend sourcing hay early this year," says James Rogers, NDSU Extension forage crops production specialist.

Severe to extreme drought persists throughout much of the Central Plains states and Corn Belt. Demand for hay is expected to be high in these regions, with producers sourcing hay from the Dakotas and Minnesota. With a depleted

hay inventory projected throughout much of the Great Plains, hay prices are likely to increase from their current levels.

Precautions

Many annual forages have toxic risks when growing under stress. Cereal grains, turnips, sorghum species and millet can be high in nitrates when grown in droughty conditions. Do not add any additional nitrogen fertilizers when planting these forage crops this summer. Test for nitrate levels, especially if plant growth occurs under drought stress. Sorghum, sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids are susceptible to prussic acid toxicity when immature, under stress or directly after a frost.

"We realize that producers are taking a risk in establishing an annual crop, given the dry conditions, and cost may be a factor," Meehan says. "NDSU Extension has developed a cover crop cost calculator that provides the ability to estimate and compare the cost of different mixes."

The tool is available at: tinyurl.com/NDSUCoverCropCalculator

"Farmers may be reluctant to plant annual forages because of fear of soil moisture depletion and desire to recharge the soil," say Sedivec. "If the cover crop develops enough structure, it will protect the soil from erosion while providing aid in trapping snow and reducing evaporation for moisture conservation, potentially improving soil moisture for spring planting, while providing forage for livestock."


Stable Flies On Cattle

By Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland County Extension

If your cattle have been bunched up in corners of your pastures, they may be affected by stable flies. These stable flies are an annoyance, but they can also reduce average daily gains. Animals that are fighting stable flies may flick their tails, stamp their legs, twitch, stand in water, or bunch up. The economic injury level is as few as four flies per leg.

A study from the University of Nebraska saw a reduction of 0.44 lb. of average daily gain from cattle affected by stable flies that did not receive an insecticide treatment vs. cattle that did receive a treatment. These stable flies required two blood meals a day, and they typically feed on the legs and belly of the animal. After their meal, they rest in shaded areas to digest.

There are limited control options for stable flies, unfortunately. Weekly spray of control product such as Coumaphos, Permethrin, and Phosmet are the most common. As range conditions dry up, stable fly number should be reduced.




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