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Inside This Issue:

Hard Spring Wheat
Show Special Edition

Farm & ranch monthly magazine published by The Roundup
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71st Annual Hard Spring Wheat Show Feb. 1, Williston

By Dianne Swanson

The 71st annual Hard Spring Wheat Show takes place Thursday, Feb. 1, at the Grand Williston Hotel & Conference Center. The show is always packed with excellent speakers, good food, and the most up-to-date information for area farmers and ranchers and this year is no exception.

Start the day off at 8 a.m. with a free breakfast sponsored by American State Bank & Trust followed by a welcome from Brian Funk, Williston Research Extension Center director, and Brian Kase, Wheat Show treasurer. Williams County Commodity Elections led by Kelly Leo, Ag & Natural Resources Agent, will also take place at this time.

At 9 a.m., Andrew Thosterson, NDSU Extension Service pesticide program specialist, will give an EPA pesticide update. Get a Weed Control update at 9:30 a.m. from Brian Jenks, NDSU weed scientist, and Utility of Metribuzin in Pulses from Charlie Lim, NDSU Williston Research Extension Center Extension cropping specialist.

During the break sponsored by Thrivent Financial, commodity elections with the North Dakota Soybean Council and North Dakota Oilseed Council – Canola will be held. Tom Wolf, Agrimetrix Research & Training owner, will talk about Nozzle selection for PWM and conventional sprayers beginning at 11 a.m.

The many loyal sponsors of the Wheat Show will be recognized during the noon awards luncheon which costs \$18.

Tim Sullivan, Farm Rescue executive director, will explain his remarkable program at 12:45 p.m. followed by the popular Weather Outlook by Daryl Ritchison, ND Agricultural Weather Network director, at 1:15 p.m.

Frayne Olson, PhD, NDSU Crop Economist/Marketing Specialist and Quentin Burdick Center director for Cooperatives, will present a Market Outlook for 2024 at 2 p.m.

Following a break at 3 p.m., attendees will enjoy the Agronomist Happy Hour with Jason Hanson, Rock and Roll Agronomy owner and Kyle Okke, Agile Agronomy owner.

An important, and fun, part of the Wheat Show is the 41st annual bread fair where over 1500 5th graders will learn to make bread and take a loaf home. Students include those from Williams County, North Dakota, as well as those from six counties in Montana.

Mark your calendars and plan to meet your friends and neighbors at the Wheat Show Feb. 1, Williston.



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Andrew Thostenson to Provide EPA Pesticide Update At Hard Spring Wheat Show

By Katelyn Sponheim

As, Andrew Thostenson, NDSU Extension Pesticide program specialist, oversees the training and certification of private and commercial pesticide applicators throughout North Dakota. A decade of owning and operating a seed and crop management consulting company in the Pacific Northwest, and four years of experience as a county Extension agent in Washington and North Dakota required him have a firm grasp on the litigation and regulations regarding pesticide use.

The Endangered Species Act, enacted in 1973, establishes protections for fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered. It also provides interagency cooperation for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities that may

damage their recovery. Pesticides often find themselves at odds with flora and fauna, but he will both explore the history of the Endangered Species Act, how it affects North Dakota's pesticide use, and how to navigate the Act's pesticide labeling in the modern world.

Thostenson is a former American Association of Pesticide Safety Education president and EPA's Certification and Training Assessment Group fellow and past-chair. He holds a Bachelor and Master of Science in plant sciences from the University of Idaho. He has been in his current position at NDSU for 26 years.

The 71st Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show will be held at the Grand Hotel in Williston, Thursday Feb. 1. Andrew Thostenson will be doing the EPA Pesticide Update at 9 a.m.



Andrew Thostenson
(Photo submitted)



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

Dr. Lim To Discuss Metribuzin In Pulse Crops

By Dianne Swanson

Dr. Charlie Lim, Williston Research Extension Center NDSU Extension weed specialist, will share results and experiences from field trials with Metribuzin in pulse crops at 9:30 a.m. CST on Thursday, Feb. 1 at the Hard Spring Wheat Show at the Grand Hotel, Williston.

Lim's experiments have mostly focused on crop safety of Metribuzin in lentil and chickpea with some in demo plots featuring in different soil types. He will also discuss contributing factors that could increase the potential for injury in pulses due to carry over from herbicides commonly used in wheat. He said he will also leave enough time for time for questions and discussion.

Lim received his PhD in weed science from Montana. He conducts research and extension programs to serve North Dakota agricultural clientele and stakeholders. His research interest and outreach programs focus on weed control and integrated weed management, the mitigation of herbicide-resistant weeds, management of weed seed soil banks, diverse and ecological approaches to weed management, herbicide safety in crops, stewardship of weed control tools, and other topics and issues related to weeds.



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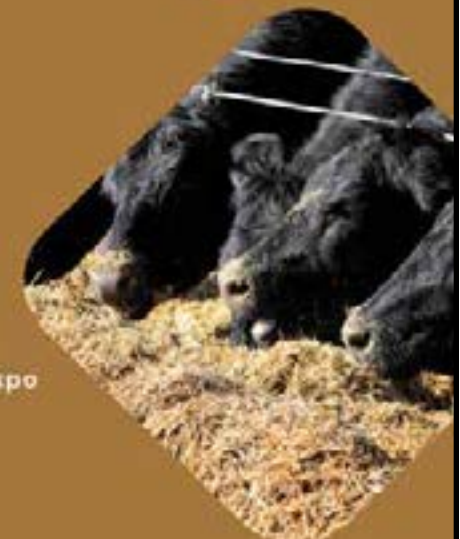
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Dr. Frayne Olson to Provide Market Outlook For 2024

By Dianne Swanson

Dr. Frayne Olson will share his expertise on grain markets, soybeans, and corn at 2 p.m. CST on Thursday, Feb. 1 at the National Hard Spring Wheat Show, Williston.

Olson explained that with all the volatility in the markets, he will first give attendees an update on the current market including what traders and analysts are saying. Although he said that it's a guessing game to a certain extent, he will explain what he and others are focusing on as market predictors.

He will then share what he sees coming in the near future. There may be some shock value to what he shares, which could cause people to look at the market differently. "I can't predict the future," Olson said. "What I can do is provide a time line of events, and advice on whether to store or sell."

Olson said that he will also try to filter through some of what is almost an overload of available information, and encourage attendees to choose what's important rather than what may be simply interesting. "I will try to show them how to focus on what they need to be focused on," he stated.

Olson's presentation will focus on spring wheat markets but he said he will also spill over into soybeans and corn as well as durum. He will welcome questions throughout his presentation.

Dr. Olson is the North Dakota State University Extension, Director of the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives Crop Economist/Marketing Specialist and is an NDSU professor in the Agribusiness and Applied Economics Department. Olson conducts educational programs focusing on crop market outlook and price analysis, evaluating alternative crop marketing strategies and the economics of crop contracting. As Center for Cooperatives director, he teaches a senior level course on cooperative business management and coordinates the center's research and outreach activities. He received his PhD from the University of Missouri in agricultural economics, and his M.S. and B.S. in agricultural economics from North Dakota State University.



Dr. Frayne Olson speaking at the 2023 Hard Spring Wheat Show.

Tom Wolf of Agrimentrix to Discuss Nozzle Selection for PWM and Conventional Sprayers

By Katelyn Sponheim

Tom Wolf won't be showing up empty handed to the 71st National Hard Spring Wheat Show at the Grand Hotel, Williston Feb. 1.

He'll have a portable sprayer along to demonstrate pulse width modulation, and proper nozzle selection. Hailing from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, he is a Canadian Weed Science Society spray application specialist, and a past president and fellow. He has been named Distinguished Agrologist with the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrology and writes for the world's number one sprayer website, sprayers101.com.

Nozzle selection, depending on water volume, can affect consistency in the spray pressure, drift, and coverage, varying

with travel speed. Therefore, choosing the correct nozzle for your system and needs is an important factor in your operation, and one he hopes to make simpler. He will have the equipment to demonstrate for both conventional and Pulse Width Modulation systems.

Wolff has over 30 years of research in spray technology, and has his Ph.D. from Ohio State University and Masters in Science from University of Manitoba, where he grew up.

The 71st Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show will be held at the Grand Hotel in Williston, Thursday Feb. 1. Tom Wolf will be doing a talk on Nozzle Selection for PWM and Conventional Sprayers at 11 a.m.



Tom Wolf
(Photo submitted)

71st National Hard Spring Wheat Show



Join Us At The Grand Williston Hotel & Conference Center On February 1st
(3601 2nd Ave W • Williston, ND)

Schedule of Events

<p>8 am.....Ag Appreciation Breakfast Sponsored by American State Bank & Trust</p> <p>8:45 am.....Welcome Dr. Sam Funk, Director, Williston Research Extension Center & Brian Kaae, Treas. Wheat Show Williams County Commodity Elections–Kelly Leo, Ag & Natural Resources Agent</p> <p>9 am.....EPA Pesticide Update Andrew Thostenson, Pesticide Program Specialist, NDSU Extension Service</p>	<p>9:30 am.....2024 Weed Control Update Brian Jenks, NDSU Weed Scientist Utility of Metribuzin in Pulses - Initial data & Observations–Charlie Iim, NDSU Extension Cropping Systems Specialist at Williston Research Extension Center</p> <p>10:30 am.....Break/Commodity Elections ND Soybean Council & ND Oilseed Council-Canola. Sponsored by Thrivent Financial</p> <p>11 am.....Nozzle Selection for PWM & Conventional Sprayers Tom Wolf, Owner of Agrimetrix Research & Training</p> <p>12 pm.....Awards Luncheon–\$18 Sponsors Recognized</p>	<p>12:45 pmFarm Rescue Tim Sullivan, Executive Director</p> <p>1:15 pmWeather Outlook Daryl Ritchison, Director of the ND Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN)</p> <p>2 pm.....2024 Market Outlook Frayne Olson, PHD, NDSU Crop Economist/Marketing Specialist & Director of the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives</p> <p>3 pm.....Break</p> <p>3:30 pmAgronomist Happy Hour Jason Hanson, Owner of Rock & Roll Agronomy and Kyle Okke, Owner of Agile Agronomy</p>
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NDSU Williston Research Extension Center, New Director Funk, To Deliver Wheat Show Welcome Address



Sam Funk is the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center new director. (NDSU photo)

Dr. Sam Funk, NDSU Williston Research Extension Center director, will welcome guests to the 71st Annual Wheat Show along with Brian Kaae, Wheat Show treasurer, at 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 1. Funk, who began his appointment on Dec. 18, 2023, is looking forward to introducing himself to area farmers, ranchers and the business community.

Funk is an expert in farm and ranch management, agricultural policy and evaluation of on-farm technology adoption.

“He brings a wealth of experience and expertise in production economics to the center,” says Greg Lardy, NDSU Agricultural Affairs vice president. “He is a recognized expert in farm and ranch management, agricultural policy and evaluation of on-farm technology adoption.”

Prior to joining NDSU, Funk has served in significant roles with the United Soybean Board, Rabobank and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation.

He looks forward to joining NDSU to continue bringing research-based information to northwest North Dakota and the broader region.

“I am excited about the mission we have to continue to expand opportunities for farmers, ranchers and other stakeholders in northwestern North Dakota and beyond,” says Funk. “The Williston Research Extension Center combines the efforts of outstanding researchers and staff while serving as a hub for Extension programs.”

The center will continue its role in improving crop varieties available to match cropping systems in the region. Foundation seedstock production and germplasm evaluation and improvement will remain key functions of the center.

“Collaborating with farmers, ranchers and stakeholders to address needs with applied research and economics is a professional calling,” adds Funk. “I look forward to working with my colleagues to develop Extension content with effective solutions.” The 71st Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show begins at 8 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 1, at the Grand Hotel in Williston.

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71st National Hard Spring Wheat Show



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**Ag Appreciation Breakfast Begins At 8am
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Hour With
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Kyle

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Sullivan to Explain Farm Rescue At Wheat Show

By Katelyn Sponheim

Williston will be hosting the 71st National Hard Spring Wheat Show, where Tim Sullivan will share the Who, What, When, Where, and How vision for Farm Rescue. He will show a family case video testimonial to display to attendees what he and his organization achieve for the families they assist and the impact on their communities. After he speaks, there will be time for questions and discussion. The 71st Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show begins at 8 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 1, at the Grand Hotel in Williston.

Sullivan, Farm Rescue executive director, of a volunteer operated nonprofit organization based south of Fargo. He coordinates volunteers and equipment sponsors to help provide planting, haying, harvest, commodity/hay hauling, and livestock feeding in times of crisis, free of charge. Whether it is because of injury, illness, or natural

disaster, Farm Rescue, originally founded by Bill Gross, is struggling farm and ranch families. Started in 2005, in its first year it assisted 10 families with the help of John Deere. Since then, they have assisted over 1000 families, with 3000 volunteers having served over 19 years. Currently, their roster of over 600 men and women, ages 18-85, hail from all 50 states and Canada to share their helping hands and servant hearts with farm and ranch families unknown to them.

A North Dakota native, born on a small grain and livestock farm close to Oakes, ND, Sullivan farmed with his family and then attended Moorhead State University. A business and marketing career may have taken him out of state but has now come full circle with him and his family calling southwest North Dakota home.

Tim Sullivan will be talking about Farm Rescue at 12:45 p.m.



Tim Sullivan, Farm Rescue executive director, will explain his remarkable program at 12:45 p.m. (Photo farmrescue.org)

Kochia Management Topic Of Jenks Presentation

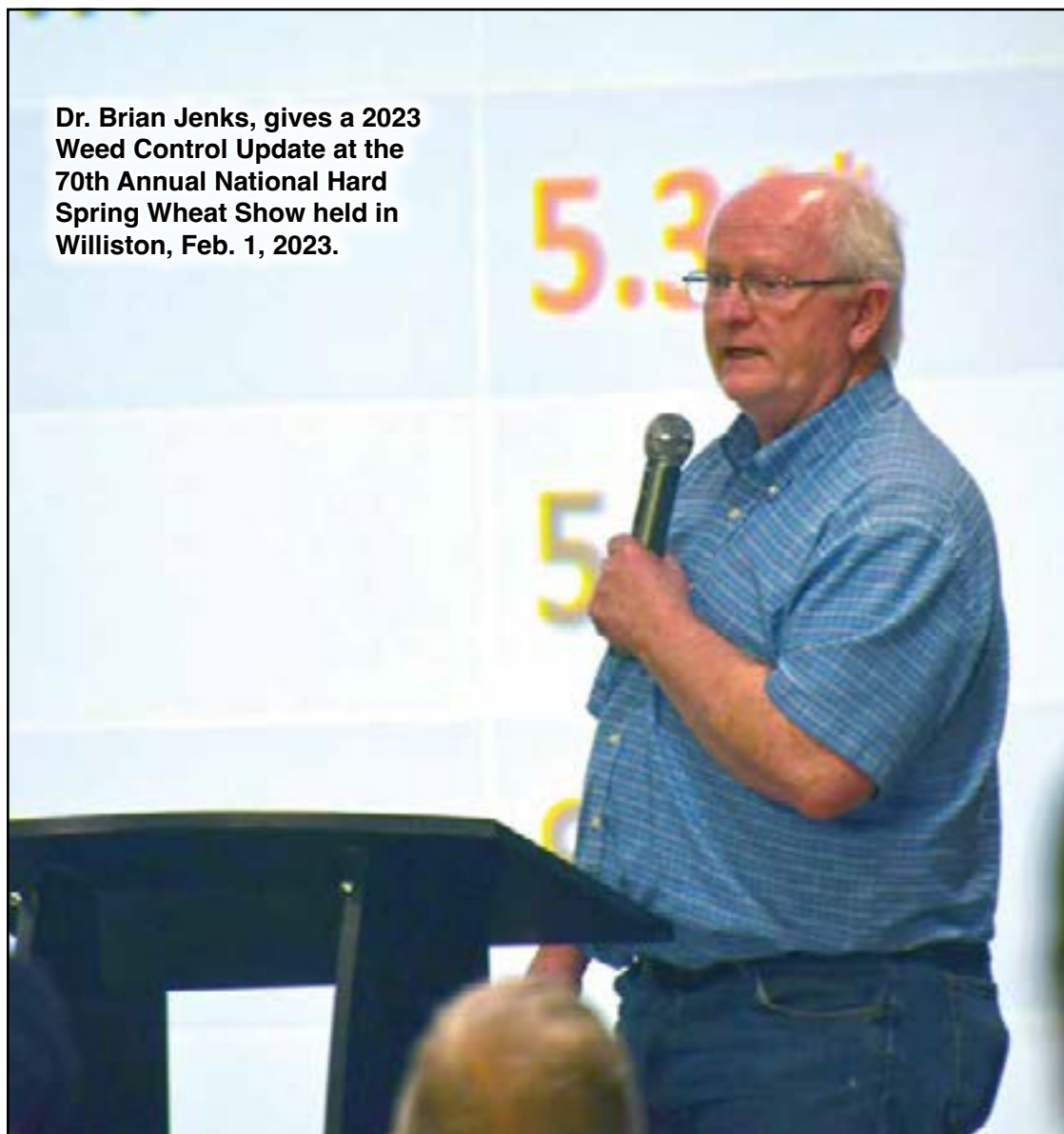
By Dianne Swanson

Dr. Brian Jenks will discuss the use of Metribuzin as well as many other herbicide options for Kochia control during his Wheat Show presentation at 9:30 a.m., on Thursday, Feb. 1, in Williston.

He writes that 'Kochia has been a very competitive weed in the Northern Plains for decades. However, farmers' ability to control kochia has become even more difficult since kochia has developed resistance to some of our commonly used herbicides. In recent years, we have observed that some kochia populations are no longer completely controlled by Roundup, Starane, and Dicamba. In December 2022, some kochia populations were documented to be resistant to Group 14 PPO herbicides such as Sharpen and Aim. PPO resistance will leave no-till farmers with few pre-plant burn down options. There is also evidence that these kochia populations may be resistant to other extremely important soil-applied PPO herbicides like Spartan and Valor. Kochia will need to be managed through cultural practices in addition to using other herbicide modes of action.'

Jenks is the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center-Minot weed scientist. He has been with the NCREC since 1997 and is widely respected throughout the MonDak. He earned his PhD from the University of Nebraska. The 71st Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show will be held at the Grand Hotel in Williston.

Dr. Brian Jenks, gives a 2023 Weed Control Update at the 70th Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show held in Williston, Feb. 1, 2023.





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Dr. Audrey Kalil Hired as Agronomist/Research Specialist at Horizon Resources

Submitted

Dr. Audrey Kalil obtained her Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 2007 and worked in the commercial inoculant industry in research and development for three years prior to entering her graduate program. Audrey obtained her Ph.D. in Plant Pathol-

Continued on
page 14.



Dr. Audrey Kalil.
(Photo submitted)

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Eastern MT & Western ND 5th Graders To Experience Fun Educational Opportunity At 2024 Hard Spring Show Bread Fair



(Submitted Photo)

Right: Kelly Leo, Williams County Extension Office's presentation of bread-making techniques was highly attended at Missouri Ridge Middle School in 2023. (Submitted Photo)



Right: 5th graders across Montana and North Dakota were able to learn to make bread at the Annual Bread Fair in 2023 and will do so again in 2024. (Submitted Photo)



By Jaymi Mozeak

Through the months of February and March, thanks to the generosity of Northern Lights Honey, North Dakota Mills, and LaSaffre Corporation, and the producer of Red Star Platinum Yeast, the 41st Annual Wheat Show Bread Fair committee will be going into middle schools across the MonDak region to enter 5th graders who want to learn to make bread from scratch.

Until 2020, the Annual Bread Fair was part of the National Hard Spring Wheat Show. Since then the National Hard Spring Wheat Show Board continues to be integral in the decision making process of the bread fair, but the activity has evolved into a new format. In 2021, Extension agents decided to take the show on the road and travelled to the different schools that wished to participate. In the following years, school staff expressed a desire to continue the fair in this new format. This

year, over 1,500 5th graders from over 14 counties in North Dakota and Montana will be able to make a loaf of bread at their schools from a portion of the 2,000 lbs. of white flour, 2,000 packets of yeast, 150 lbs. of McKenzie County produced honey, and canola oil donated by the sponsoring companies.

North Dakota is the #1 producer of three of the main ingredients of the bread: canola, hard red spring wheat, and honey. In North Dakota, Williams, Divide, Dunn, Lewis & Clark, McKenzie, Mountrail counties, Powers Lake, and White Shield schools will be participating. In Montana, Grant, Daniels, Dawson, McCone, Richland, Roosevelt, and Sheridan county schools will be participating.

At the end of January the extension agents from each of the counties of the participating school systems will be gathering at the NDSU Extension in Williston to assemble the bread kits for this educational and fun activity.



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Dr. Audrey Kalil Hired at Horizon Resources...

Continued from page 12.

ogy with a minor in Plant Breeding and Genetics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she studied beneficial plant symbiosis with rhizobia and arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi.

After completing her PhD in 2015, Audrey moved to Williston and joined North Dakota State University as the first Plant Pathologist at the Williston Research Extension Center. In this role, she led an applied research program focused on management of plant disease in durum, peas, lentils, chickpeas and sugar beet,

Continued on page 28.

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McKenzie Co. Ag Expo Farm Show

Feb. 7-8

By Katelyn Sponheim

The McKenzie County Ag Expo will host a Farm and Ranch show, Feb. 7-8 in Watford City, from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

Wednesday will include "Bull Days", with beef breeders bringing a sampling of their bulls and/or heifers to showcase their herds' genetics and what will be available at this spring's sales. Twelve pens have been sold so far, with more available.

Gooseneck Implement, Williston; Heggen Equipment, Watford City; 4 Fires Enterprises, Keene; Horizon Resources, Watford City; and Northern Pump & Compression Inc., Watford City; will have some of their available equipment on display, ranging from air compressors to Bobcats. Lund Oil will have a booth for their ethanol, DEF, fuel and propane business, and OK Tire will have a range of tractor tires that they offer. DJ Sales another equipment dealer, will have a 30 ft. bin to show.

Cornerstone Bank and 1st International Bank and Trust will have representatives to answer questions on ag loans. Heritage Insurance will be discussing farm and crop insurance options. Paramount Real Estate will be present with information on buying or selling farm and ranch land, EGT LLC, a grain elevator, Sidney, MT, United Agronomy, Parshall, and Custom Grain & Seed of ND will have a sampling of their goods and services, from feed and fertilizer to custom spray applications and seed treatments. United Quality will also be joining with similar products, bulk fuel information, Arrowquip chutes, and is providing a free feed on Wednesday.

Also attending are McKenzie County Tourism, McKenzie County Crop Improvement Association, and McKenzie County Weed Board. The North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board will be educating visitors on cloud seeding operations in McKenzie County.

If you're involved in local agriculture, or want to be, the Farm & Ranch Show at the McKenzie County Ag Expo will have the resources to help you improve your operation or get started on one.

Also attending are McKenzie County Tourism, McKenzie County Crop Improvement Association, and McKenzie County Weed Board. The North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board will be educating visitors on cloud seeding operations in McKenzie County.

If you're involved in local agriculture, or want to be, the Farm & Ranch Show at the McKenzie County Ag Expo will have the resources to help you improve your operation or get started on one.



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2023 NDSU Corn Hybrid Variety Trial Results Now Available

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

The 2023 North Dakota State University Variety Trial Results and Selection Guide for Corn (A793) is now available online and in print. The guide can be accessed online at ndsu.ag/cornvt23.

"The corn hybrid guide is a good source of information for farmers and agronomists looking for variety performance data from around the state," says Clair Keene, NDSU Extension small grains and corn agronomist. "We appreciate our industry partners who participate in these trials and make this work possible."

Printed copies are available through your NDSU Extension county office or nearest NDSU Research Extension Center (REC).

"Like North Dakota farmers, we had high variability in the yields of our 2023

corn trials," says Keene. "We had a trial average of 244 bushels per acre at our Lisbon site in Ransom County, but only 171 bushels at the Abercrombie site in Richland County, both in our southern testing zone. We had some locations that struggled with dry conditions but others that did quite well."

Keene adds, "Another factor to keep in mind when comparing corn hybrids is moisture at harvest. Because drying down wet corn can considerably add to your cost of production, it's important to look for varieties that mature reliably in your area in addition to having high yield. When comparing two or more varieties of interest, be sure to take a look at the moisture at harvest as a hybrid that dries down more quickly may offer a savings in terms of drying cost."



The corn hybrid guide is a good source of information for farmers and agronomists looking for variety performance data from around the state. (NDSU photo)



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MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show March 7-8

Submitted by Marley Manoukian Voll,
MSU Richland County Extension Agent

MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show is scheduled for March 7-8 at the Richland County Event Center Sidney.

The trade show will open Thursday at 8 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. and again on Friday from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. There will be vendors onsite with their information, products, and services. Breakfast will be served both days with the Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce hosting on Thursday and Richland County Farm Bureau hosting on Friday. Lunch will be available at the Event Center both days, as well. In lieu of the traditional banquet, the MonDak Ag Days Committee invites the vendors and the ag community to join us in a pitchfork fondue! The Pitchfork Fondue will be onsite at the Richland County Event Center. In addition to a great meal, the Pitchfork Fondue will have a cash bar hosted by the Ranger Lounge and Casino and live music.

The educational sessions will start Thursday at 10 a.m. and you can expect topics including an update from Greenwood Renewable Ventures, Grain Storage & Drying, a Seed Crushing Plant Update, the Basics of Estate Planning, Carbon Credits, Livestock Risk Protection, and an Agriculture and Government panel featuring elected officials.

The educational program on Friday will also begin at noon and topics include Feral Hogs, Warm Season Grass Ecology and Management (1 pesticide credit available), What's Next? 2024 Crop Market Outlook, and Mapping and Reporting Yields.

Please join Richland County Extension at the Richland County Event Center March 7-8 to take in MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show.



Funding Available For Conservation Practices

Submitted by Julie Goss

Applications are being accepted for the Richland County Conservation District cost share program. To get an application stop by the conservation office, 2745 W. Holly, Sidney, request one by email richlandcd@gmail.com or visit the website www.richlandcd.org.

Cost share funds available for stock water wells and pipelines, grass seeding, irrigation projects, fencing and any other conservation practice that enhances the natural resources in Richland County.

The Richland County Conservation District is in its 14th year of assisting Richland County landowners with conservation practices. This year, the conservation district has increased the cost share to \$5,000 per project to qualifying applicants. Land where the project is installed must be in Richland County. Landowner or lessee may apply for funding. Deadline to complete the project is Dec 31, 2024. The deadline to apply is March 1, 2024.

Tree Order Time

Submitted by Julie Goss

Now is the time to get your tree orders in at the Conservation District Office. A list of trees usually available from the conservation district is on our website www.richlandcd.org. If you need assistance in planning a shelter belt or windbreak, stop by the office and we will help you out. Varieties sell out quickly so order soon. Order forms are available at the Conservation District office, 2745 W. Holly St. or by email at richlandcd@gmail.com.

Preparing your ground for tree planting is important. Ground should be worked up and free of weeds and grass. A water source to water the newly planted trees throughout the hot summer is important to keep the trees viable.

If you order trees from the Conservation District, be prepared to pick up your trees and plant them when they are delivered from the nursery. If you have any questions, please contact the Conservation District at 406-943-3001.



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Managing Cow Body Condition Is Critical For Profitability

Body condition of cows during calving impacts open rates in the upcoming breeding season.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

In the cow-calf production system, reproductive efficiency is the No. 1 driver of profitability.

“That’s how this business works,” says James Rogers, North Dakota State University Extension forage crops production specialist. “We market the offspring from our herds. No offspring, no profit.”

Rogers references a measure of reproductive performance used in the swine industry called “non-productive days”, or days that a gilt or sow is neither gestating nor lactating. Each non-productive day comes at a cost and serves as a benchmark measure of reproductive and economic performance in a swineherd.

“A sow has a huge reproductive advantage over a beef cow, as a sow will have two or slightly over two litters per year with multiple piglets,” Rogers says. “A beef cow should have zero non-productive days. Each day of the year, she should be lactating, gestating or preparing to rebreed. A beef cow gets one day a year to calve and only 80 days from calving to rebreed in order to stay within a 365-day calving interval. Cows with longer calving intervals cost more to maintain and produce less weaned calves than earlier calving cows.”

Rogers adds that a 100% pregnancy and calving rate is not realistic, but ranchers should expect an open rate of around 8% in mature cows and 12% in heifers. Numbers higher than benchmark averages indicate that there may be an underlying cause. Reports across North Dakota indicate a wide range in open rates from the benchmark averages to as high as 30%.

According to Rogers, the single most important factor in keeping a cow at zero non-productive days is body condition, the amount of fat cover a cow is carrying through the various stages of the production cycle. Body condition has a direct impact on calving interval, conception rate, and percentage of open cows. To assess body condition, ranchers and researchers use a scoring scale of 1 (emaciated) to 9 (very obese).



NDSU Extension specialist James Rogers encourages ranchers to assess body condition now while there is still time to add condition prior to calving. (Photo by NDSU)

Research has shown that cows that calve at a body condition score of 5-6 will return to estrus in 50-60 days. A cow calving at a body condition score of 4 will take 70 days. With only 80 days available from calving to rebreeding to stay on a 365-day calving cycle, this does not allow much time. For spring calving herds, Rogers recommends ranchers take body condition scores now while there is still time to economically add condition prior to calving if needed.

“Realize that it takes around 100 pounds of weight gain to change 1 unit on the body condition scale,” says Karl Hoppe, NDSU Extension livestock systems specialist. “If a cow requires such a gain, consider whether you have quality feed supplies on hand to accomplish it. A forage test can help you know what you are working with. Forage tests cost about \$20 per sample. An open cow could cost you about \$1,200 in lost calf revenue plus cow maintenance costs for a year. The return on investment for a forage test is hard to beat.”

It’s slow progress to change the body condition score of a cow. When balancing a ration for a one pound per day gain, it will take three months to increase one body condition score, Hoppe says. Extreme cold weather can decrease one body condition score quickly if the ration is not changed to include more energy. Prolonged winters like 2022-2023 can reduce body condition score without the owner recognizing the change.

Describing how a body condition score of 5-6 should look can be difficult because one person’s 5 is another’s 6. Online images of cows in the various body condition scores can be a guide, and NDSU Extension livestock specialists and county agents are available to help determine body condition score in cowherds. Consistency in scoring is important when evaluating the herd.

Rogers uses an analogy to help others to visualize the body condition scale based on the condition of a cat.

- If the cat is round, with no defined shape or waistline, and you can’t feel the ribs, then this cat probably has a body condition score of 7-9 (on the fat side).
- If you can see the cat’s waist and feel its ribs, but it has a covering of fat down the back with some cover over the ribcage, it is a 5-6 (considered ideal).
- If ribs and hipbones are clearly visible on your cat, and there is a lack of cover down the back and ribs, this cat is a 1-4 and needs to gain weight. The same is true for cows.

“When open cow numbers are higher than average, many ranchers assume something happened during the breeding season, and it probably did,” Rogers says. “Cows may not have been cycling or cycled late. The cause may have occurred before the breeding season with less than adequate cow body condition in late gestation and calving. Assess cowherd body condition now to minimize open cows in the fall.”

In addition to body condition score, NDSU Extension specialists recommend ranchers consider other parts of the production system this winter. Some questions to consider are:

- Is the stocking rate for the cowherd adequate for the amount of range and pasture biomass produced?
- Do the genetics of the cowherd match ranch resources?
- Are production records in place to track calving interval?
- What is the marketing plan for open cows?

Giving these matters attention now keeps the cowherd in optimal condition year-round, Rogers says.

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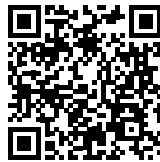
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ND 4-H Foundation Elects Officers



By NDSU Agriculture Communication

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation recently elected new officers. They are:

- Becky Peterson, chair, Mandan
- Jennifer Hauge, vice chair of ends development and evaluation, Leith
- Alana Sears, vice chair of policy monitoring, Wheatland
- Vicki Monsen, vice chair of board fundraising and community outreach, Watford City
- Julie Hassebroek, vice chair of financial management and treasurer, Cogswell
- Deb Clarys, past chair, Center
- Aidan Sears, 4-H Ambassadors representative, Wheatland

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation raises funds to support 4-H youth programs across the state. An additional 15 4-H supporters and North Dakota State University Extension staff serve on the foundation's board.

Left: Becky Peterson, Mandan, is the new chair of the North Dakota 4-H Foundation. (Photo courtesy of Peterson)

“One of my favorite ads is the National 4-H ad, ‘You’re going to need us,’ which expresses that 4-H is growing the next generation of leaders,” said Peterson, Farm Credit Services of Mandan marketing and services director.

“Nothing prepares our youth for careers and leadership like 4-H does, but they can’t do it alone. They need the North Dakota 4-H Foundation to help fund the programs that develop those leadership and communication skills. My passion for this organization is driven by the proven leadership results and our team of board members who help reach our foundation goals.”

To support North Dakota 4-H programs, donate at <https://bit.ly/DonateND4-H> or contact Chloe Drummond, the foundation's board coordinator and relationship specialist, at 701-231-8569 or ndsu.nd4hfoundation@ndsu.edu.

NDSU Soybean & Dry Bean Variety Data Publications Available For 2024 Crop Production Decisions

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

NDSU's soybean and dry bean variety guides help farmers make crop variety selection decisions.

Farmers and crop advisers needing crop variety information to make decisions for the 2024 crop season now have available the North Dakota State University Extension 2023 soybean and dry bean variety guides. These publications can be accessed online at ndsu.ag/varietytrials23. Printed copies are available at NDSU Extension County offices and Research Extension Centers.

“Crop variety selection is one of the most important crop management decisions to be made to optimize seed yield and quality,” according to Greg Endres, NDSU Extension agronomist and lead author of the two variety guides.

Endres encourages farmers to spend adequate time doing their homework to select the very best variety choices for their fields. NDSU crop breeders, research agronomists and numerous support staff have devoted substantial resources to generate this data to aid in making decisions regarding variety use.

The soybean 2023 variety trial results and selection guide contain 33 tables of agronomic, and seed yield and quality data from 28 NDSU research sites across the state. The trial tables are identified based on the general categories of herbicide-resistant or conventional. The guide also provides an overview on soybean variety selection (besides seed yield), including plant maturity, tolerance to iron-deficiency chlorosis, resistance to disease, including phytophthora root and stem rot and soybean cyst nematode, and herbicide-resistance traits. In addition, a table in the guide lists the 26 seed companies that submitted varieties for NDSU testing and their websites to allow you to obtain details on their respective varieties.

The new dry bean variety trial results and selection guide provides the opportunity to view 20 variety trial tables from eight North Dakota and Minnesota research sites. The bulk of data is associated with performance of pinto bean varieties, but variety data is also available from black, navy, great northern, pink, small red and cranberry market classes.

Besides an expansion of the number of data tables in this year's guide, a table has been added that indicates pinto bean direct-harvest ratings. In addition,

the number of varieties listed and their sources (origin or owner) has increased compared to previous issues of the guide.



Crop variety selection is one of the most important crop management decisions to be made to optimize seed yield and quality. (NDSU photo)

Cowhide Theme For 11th Annual Cattlemen's Ball Feb. 10

By Dianne Swanson

The premiere event of the winter, the Cattlemen's Ball, takes place on Feb. 10, at the Richland County Event Center, Sidney. This fun event is for everyone, with a mouth-watering beef dinner and a wide variety of live auction items that anyone would love to own. Music by "Fast Forward" out of Melstone will keep you out on the dance floor all evening.

The Cowhide theme will be carried throughout the décor and auction items which include a leather headstall made by Ryan Smith, an iron and wood cross, cowhide mirror and more. The popular Planko board is back, providing lots of fun and lots of swag to win. The men's and women's raffle items are also amazing again this year.

As always, the awesome sponsors are rolling in, without which the event couldn't happen. Grayson Mill Energy LLC is the top sponsor with their sponsorship of the band. Tri-County Implement, Seitz Insurance, Stockman Bank, Sidney Livestock Center, and RJ Contractors are the cowhide sponsors. Many more sponsors will be highlighted on the event's social media pages. The community support is greatly appreciated.

The goal of the event has always been to showcase beef and the importance Ag has in Richland County. Proceeds this year will go to Getting Local Beef in the Schools, beginning with Sidney Schools, and gradually adding all the schools in Richland County.

Doors open at 5 p.m., dinner is at 6 p.m. and the live auction starts at 7 p.m. Dance the night away from 8 p.m.-midnight. Tickets are available at Prewitt & Company for just \$50 each.

Everyone is encouraged to purchase their tickets now so organizers can plan for food and swag.

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WESTERN TIRE

NDSU Sets Western North Dakota Best Of The Best In Wheat Meeting Jan. 31

The program will feature the latest information on variety selection, pest and weed management, and fertilization strategies for wheat.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

North Dakota State University has set the 2024 Best of the Best in Wheat Research and Marketing meeting in western North Dakota for Jan. 31 at the Grand Hotel, Minot.

The program begins at 8:30 a.m. CST and includes sessions on wheat variety selection, in-season nitrogen application for increased quality in durum, a scab fungicide update, current insect pest issues in wheat, wheat fertility recommendations, herbicide resistant weed update, and a market outlook. The program will end at 3:30 p.m.

"We're excited to bring producers this program which includes the latest information on variety selection, pest and weed management, and fertilization strategies in their wheat crop," says Clair Keene, NDSU Extension small grain and corn agronomist. "We also have break out sessions on weed identification, herbicide injury symptoms, and insect pest defoliators, which will allow attendees to interact with presenters in a smaller group."

Brian Jenks, North Central Research Extension Center weed scientist, Minot, will discuss herbicide resistance issues in common grass weeds and kochia.

"We're seeing an increase in the occurrence of green foxtail and wild oat populations that are resistant to Group 1 and 2 herbicides," says Jenks. "Unfortunately, we're also finding some populations with resistance to both modes of action. We'll also talk about kochia and what we are now seeing in regards to Group 14 (PPO inhibitor) resistance. We've been dealing with resistance to Groups 2, 4, and 9 in kochia for some time, but the developing resistance to Group 14 is going to change how we handle this weed."

The final speaker on the agenda is Frayne Olson, Extension crops marketing specialist who will provide insight into current global and domestic factors influencing grain prices.

"We have a lot of big-picture things happening right now," says Olson. "It's always important for growers to understand what is driving the markets and things to consider as they put together their marketing plan for the up-coming year."

Certified Crop Advisor Continuing Education Units (CEU's) will be offered in the following categories: 0.5 nutrient management, 2.0 pest management, 1.0 crop management, and 1.0 professional development.

The Best of the Best meeting is free to attend but registration is highly encouraged to help with lunch planning. Registration is available at: <https://www.ndwheat.com/events/2024BestoftheBestMeetings/>.

This event is sponsored by the North Dakota Wheat Commission and North Dakota Grain Growers Association.



Breakout sessions on weed identification, herbicide injury symptoms and insect pest defoliators, will allow attendees to interact with presenters in a smaller group. (NDSU photo)

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XT MARKETING

McKenzie Co. 4-H Hosts Badlands Roundup Archery Match



Photos submitted



Submitted by Marcia Hellandsaas

McKenzie County Archers captured 1st place team in every division and were awarded several top individual placings at the Badlands Roundup 4-H Archery Match held on Saturday, Jan. 13 at the McKenzie County Sportsman's Club, southeast of Watford City.

All 1st place individual achievers were awarded a plaque and 2nd to 5th place individuals receive metals.

Top barebow beginner winners from McKenzie County were: 1st Hailey Transtrom; 3rd Will McCoy; 5th Aria Rink

Other McKenzie County archers were: Lincoln Echevarria, Peyton Grace, Kesley Haak, Anna Hovland, Heston Jenks, Brindle Kubal, Kyron LaPaz, Grant Linseth, Charlie McCoy, Brailyn Monson, Bridget Monson, Ava Schultz, Adalyn Transtrom, Bodey Transtrom, Natalie Transtrom, Will Wisness, and Bella Wolff.

In the Freestyle beginner division, Parker Schmidt placed 4th individually and Colt Lawlar took 5th place. Ian Delaney, Noah Ellis, Wesley Ragan, Bridget Schmidt, and Hailey Transtrom, also shot in this division.

Junior barebow top achiever was Luke Transtrom and Kaydee Ceynar captured 3rd place honors. Boston Foss, Jordyn Grace, Casey Hovland, Myah Jenks, Michael Riely, Brianna Rink, Jacob Rink, Payton Schultz, and Paul Smith were

the remaining shooters from McKenzie County.

Third place winner in the junior freestyle division was Dillon Morris and Leon LaPaz took 5th place. Also shooting junior freestyle from McKenzie County were: Kaydee Ceynar, Cory Crites, Chet Delaney, Boston Foss, Archer Howes, McCoy Lawlar, Jacob Rink, John Signalness, Paul Smith, Luke Transtrom, Audrey Wolff and Mason Wolff.

Senior barebow 5th place finisher was Ryan Pingel. Luke Smith and Brylee Jenks were the other two local shooters in this division.

Senior freestyle top five individuals were all from McKenzie County: 1st DJ Beadle; 2nd Parker Schuster; 3rd Hailey Wendlandt; 4th Maxwell Hanson; 5th Luke Pedersen.

Other McKenzie County archers were: Dylon Cargo, Nicholas Ellis, Jax Hovde, Ethan Morris, Ryan Pingel, Gwen Signalness, Luke Smith, Jayden Transtrom, and Isaac Wolff.

Masters freestyle shooter top finisher was Jake Ceynar.

About 120 archers from 14 counties participated in the match.

For more information, please contact NDSU Extension in McKenzie County at 701-444-3451.

Montana Dept. Of Revenue: Changes To Business Equipment Reporting Requirement

Helena - The 2023 Legislature passed House Bill 212, changing how business equipment is taxed in Montana. The new law increases the business equipment tax exemption from \$300,000 to \$1 million for tax year 2024.

Businesses whose statewide market value of equipment is \$1 million or less are exempt from the business equipment tax. These businesses do not have a reporting requirement in 2024 unless: (1) they have acquired new personal property that would increase their equipment's aggregate market value above the exemption amount; or (2) the department requests a personal property reporting form be completed.

Individuals and businesses owning business equipment (as of Jan. 1, 2024) with an aggregate market value of more than \$1 million statewide must report the equipment owned by March 1, 2024, to avoid a 20% penalty.

The department recently mailed letters to business owners with a known reporting requirement in 2024, letting them know it is time to report their business equipment online using the department's TransAction Portal (TAP) at <https://tap.dor.mt.gov>. Online reporting forms are pre-populated with the business equipment reported in 2023. Owners will review the previously reported assets and make any needed additions and deletions. An immediate confirmation receipt will be sent after the report is submitted.

For more information, visit MTRRevenue.gov or contact us at (406) 444-6900 or DORCustomerAssistance@mt.gov.

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Dr. Audrey Kalil Hired at Horizon Resources...

Continued from page 14.

as well as nodulation and nitrogen fixation in pulse crops. In the eight years she oversaw this program she generated \$1.2 million dollars in grant dollars, authored 16 peer reviewed publications and two book chapters, and gave 54 seminars and outreach talks.

Audrey joined the Horizon Resources Cooperative Agronomy Division in 2024, where she will work directly with growers to improve crop health and oversee educational programming. Audrey continues to support the pulse industry as an Associate Director in the Northern Pulse Growers Association, Co-PI of the North Central Integrated Pest Management Center Pulse Crops Working Group and co-producer of the Growing Pulse Crops Podcast Series. Audrey lives in Williston with her husband Tom Kalil, and two children Avery (9) and Lucas (6), where she is also involved in the Williston Area Chamber of Commerce as a member of the Agriculture Committee.

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Feeding Fertility: Understanding The Relationship Between Nutrition & Reproduction, Jan. 30

By Marley Voll,

MSU Richland County Extension Agent

Many experienced the widespread issues with breed back this fall. Hannah Speer, Northern Ag Research Center Animal Science assistant professor, Havre, MT, will be in Sidney on Tuesday, Jan. 30 at 5:30 p.m. upstairs at the Meadowlark Public House to discuss Feeding Fertility: Understanding the Relationship Between Nutrition and Reproduction.

Speer will be discussing body conditioning scoring (BCS) and how it relates to postpartum interval, pregnancy rates, and important times to think about evaluating BCS throughout the year and when/how to add condition to cows/heifers. She will also discuss nutritional factors that can affect reproduction and feeding strategies to help producers set their herd up for reproductive success.

Dr. Speer is a native of western Kansas and recently graduated from the

Farm Bureau Hosts Young Farmer & Rancher Leadership Conference

Submitted by AgNewsWire

Bozeman — Young farmers, ranchers, and people involved in all aspects of agriculture will want to attend the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference Feb. 9-11 at the Northern Hotel in downtown Billings. Organized by the MFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee, the conference is a one-of-a-kind event allowing Montana's young farmers and ranchers to assemble and participate in a top-notch agenda including relevant keynote speakers, breakout sessions, agricultural industry tours and more. Attendees are also offered numerous opportunities to network with peers and leaders of Montana's agricultural organizations and businesses.

The event kicks off Friday, Feb. 9, with dinner and bingo and a packed schedule Saturday morning with keynote speaker Lance Pekus' talk, "Roping Resilience: The Cowboy Ninja's Journey to Overcoming Obstacles & Nurturing Wellness". Workshops cover the gamut including precision agriculture, cow nutrition, investing and financial planning, mental health, and carbon markets. Popular lunch speaker, Bruce Vincent, will share his thoughts on building a vision for the future that inspires hope.

Afternoon tour choices include low-stress cattle handling that pays or a visit to Swanky Roots and Yellowstone Valley Food Hub. The evening wraps up with dinner followed by dancing to Stolen Roan at the Pub Station.

Sunday morning's breakfast speaker is energetic and creative, Sarah Calhoun, creator of the Red Ants Pants clothing line and Red Ants Pants music festival, talking about "Present Day Pioneering".

There are two early bird registrations offered on or before Jan. 26: Collegiate registration is \$50; YF&R registration is \$75. All registrations after Jan. 26 are \$100. Visit mfbf.org to register.

To make hotel reservations call the Northern Hotel at 406-867-6767 by Jan. 19 and request the "YF&R" room block for the special conference rate of \$124 (single)/\$144 (double) + tax.

For additional information about the conference or the YF&R program, contact Sue Ann Streufert, 406-587-3153, sueanns@mfbf.org.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln with her PhD in ruminant nutrition. Her research focus there was on cow/calf nutrition and management within systems limited in perennial forage grazing. She evaluated alternative management strategies for systems where perennial forage grazing was limited or not feasible, and also focused heavily on the vitamin A needs of gestating beef cows fed stored forages for extended periods of time. She began her new role as Animal Science assistant professor at the Northern Ag Research Center, Havre, at the beginning of January, and looks forward to conducting research that is important to the producers of Montana.

Please plan to join us on Jan. 30 upstairs at the Meadowlark.

USDA Seeks Applications To Help Farmers & Ranchers Venture Into New & Better Markets

Submitted by Marlee Johnston, USDA Rural Development

Bozeman – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to help agricultural producers maximize the value of their products and venture into new and better markets.

USDA is making the grants available under the Value-Added Producer Grants [Inks.gd] program. The grants help farmers and ranchers generate new products, create marketing opportunities, and increase their incomes through value-added activities.

Eligible applicants include independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

USDA may award up to \$75,000 for planning activities or up to \$250,000 for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product.

Planning activities may include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans. Working capital expenses may include costs associated with processing, marketing, advertising, inventory, and salaries.

USDA is particularly interested in applications that will advance Biden-Harris Administration priorities to:

- Reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.
- Ensure all rural residents have equitable access to Rural Development (RD) programs and benefits from RD-funded projects; and
- Help rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure.

Applications for 2024 grants are now being accepted.

Paper applications must be postmarked and delivered by mail, email or in person to one of Montana's six offices [Inks.gd] by 4:30 p.m., MST, April 16, 2024. Electronic applications are due by 9:59 p.m. MST, April 11, 2024.

Additional information is available on page 2919 of the Jan. 17 Federal Register. [Inks.gd]

For more information or to apply here in Montana, contact USDA Rural Development Agriculture Producer State Specialist Marlee Johnston, at marlee.johnston@usda.gov.



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MSU Extension & Montana Stockgrowers Association Announce 2023 Steer Of Merit Certifications

Submitted by MSU News

Bozeman — Montana State University Extension and the Montana Stockgrowers Association awarded 2023 Steer of Merit certifications at the association's Dec. 7 convention in Billings. MSU Extension beef cattle specialist Megan Van Emon presented the top five winners of the carcass and ultrasound Steer of Merit contests at a Best of Beef Luncheon.

MSU Extension and Montana Stockgrowers Association distinguished 136 "Steers of Merit" out of 1,290 entries in 2023. Out of 555 steers entered in the carcass division, 83 were deemed Steers of Merit. In the ultrasound division, 53 out of 735 entries received the distinction. The number of certifications was similar to the prior year, noted Van Emon.

"More counties participated in the ultrasound contest this year due to a lack of packing plant facilities and space," she said.

The winning steer entries are listed below. Breeders are included in parentheses.

Carcass division:

Alyssa Hendrick Lanser – Missoula County (Jon Bouma)

Kally Konesky – Cascade County (Rich Love)

Cy Eaton – Prairie County (Frank Eaton and Sons)

Kyona Yeager – Cascade County (Kyona Yeager)

Shaun Billingsley – Missoula County (Kyona Yeager)

Ultrasound division:

Liam Steinbeisser – Richland County (Steinbeisser and Sons)

Alex Wahl – Marias Fair, Glacier County (Diamond Box Livestock)

Charli Dale – Wibaux County (Kahl Ranch)

Sam Duey – Yellowstone County (SidBar Cattle)

Ridge Stonehocker – Fergus County (B & K Livestock)

The Steer of Merit program began in 1967 as a joint effort between the Montana Stockgrowers Association and MSU Extension to measure, record and improve carcass characteristics in beef cattle.

"Over time, significant increases have been made in quality grade and in yield grade, or cutability, indicating that cattle can be selected for leaner carcasses with higher cutability and still maintain high quality grade as reflected by marbling, which is the fat in the final product," said Van Emon.

To be designated a Steer of Merit, carcasses are evaluated by a qualified individual using information that relates to yield of lean meat and eating quality. Beef carcasses must meet criteria set by the Steer of Merit Committee in the areas of hot carcass weight, dressing percent, fat thickness over 12th rib (back fat), rib eye area, yield grade, percent cutability, and quality grade. Software helps compile data and rank carcasses for state and county awards. Data is also analyzed periodically to track genetic and feed management progress. The minimum standards for Steer of Merit are reviewed each year, and the program is updated to meet changing industry standards.

Those interested in more information about the Steer of Merit program may contact Megan Van Emon, MSU Extension beef cattle specialist, at 406-874-8286.

Montana Department Of Agriculture Requesting 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications

Submitted by Logan Kruse, Montana Department of Agriculture

Helena – The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for over \$3 million in federal funding available through the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program.

The purpose of the SCBG program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Montana. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, peas, lentils, dried fruits, as well as horticulture, nursery crops, and floriculture. State and/or local organizations, government entities, producer associations, academia, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other specialty crop stakeholders are eligible to apply either as single entities or in combined efforts.

Eligible projects include improving efficiency and sustainability of specialty crop industries, research, education, developing new and improved varieties, improving the capacity of the distribution chain, enhancing food safety, pest, and disease control. For a complete list of guidelines and eligibility requirements, please visit agr.mt.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants.

Grant proposals are due to the Montana Department of Agriculture by 5 p.m. March 8, 2024. Technical assistance calls will be held on Jan. 31, 2024, 1 p.m. and Feb. 28, 2024, 10 a.m. For more information, please visit agr.mt.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants or email scbg@mt.gov.

The Montana Department of Agriculture is serving Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information on department programs and services, visit agr.mt.gov.

REAL Montana Program Accepting Applications Until March 31

Submitted by MSU News Service

Bozeman — REAL Montana, a program from Montana State University Extension, is accepting applications for its next class until March 31. REAL Montana is a comprehensive two-year program offering in-depth education and training in the agriculture and natural resource industries. REAL stands for Resource Education and Agriculture Leadership.

Classes consist of up to 20 participants competitively selected to represent a variety of agriculture and natural resource industries across the state. REAL Montana prioritizes diversity in class structure, including geography, gender and industry sectors. This will be the sixth class offered.

The program seeks to build a network of informed and engaged leaders to agriculture and natural resource industries. Program highlights include eight in-state seminars, a national study tour in Washington, DC, and a 10-day international experience.

"We are excited to welcome a new class in 2024," said Tara Becken, REAL Montana program director. "Our program offers a unique and impactful experience for Montanans interested in increasing their leadership abilities."

Successful applicants will be announced in July, with the first class seminar in Bozeman on Sept. 19.

To learn more about the application process or to apply, visit: montana.edu/realmontana. Questions may be directed to Becken at tara.becken@montana.edu or 406-930-4205.

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