



March 2023

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Inside This Issue:

**MonDak Ag
Days Edition**

Farm & ranch monthly magazine published by The Roundup
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MonDak Ag Days 2023

MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show

March 2-3 in Sidney

By Robyn Heck

The MonDak Ag Days and Trade Show, a Sidney Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture event has been set for Thursday, March 2 and Friday, March 3 at the Richland Event Center, Sidney. The Ag Days Banquet will be held at the Sidney Elks Lodge starting at 5 p.m. March 2.

Breakfast will be held on Friday, March 3. Lunch will be available both days. A Free Education Schedule has been set up at the events center.

Thursday, March 2

10 a.m.: Drainage Tile: The Dos & Don'ts by Jerry Weiland
11 a.m.: Getting More Bang For Your Fertilizer Buck by Dr. Clain Jones
1 p.m.: Prussic Acid & Nitrates In Forages by Marley Manoukian
2 p.m.: Updates To Medically Important Antibiotics by Gary Schieber
3 p.m.: Cattle Market Update by Katelyn McClintock

Friday, March 3

7 a.m.: Breakfast, sponsored by Farm Bureau Financial Services
10 a.m.: Input Costs & 2023 Projections by Ron Haugen
11 a.m.: Value Added Agriculture Opportunities by Hailey Vine
12 p.m.: Pre-emergent Herbicides & Modes Of Action by Charlie Lim (1 pesticide point)

The Trade Show provides the latest in technology and farm equipment for

today's farmers and ranchers. The show will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday.

The Ag Days Banquet will be held at the Sidney Elks Lodge Thursday, March 2 with a pre-social at 5 p.m. followed by a prime rib dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$45 and are available at the Sidney Chamber or at the door the night of the banquet.

Keynote speaker for the banquet will be Jay Bodner.

Bodner has been described as one of the most respected lobbyist at the state legislature. In 2022, he was named the outstanding agriculture leader, on behalf of the Montana State University College of agriculture, and the Montana agriculture experiment station.

For decades, he has worked with key associations in the state. He is known as someone who works with everyone from local, state, and federal officials, to ranchers and industry leaders.

He has a proven record of impacting agricultural policy. He's been described as an individual who serves cattle producers with dedication, passion, and col-



Jay Bodner.
(MSU photo)

laboration. Prior to the department of livestock Bodnar spent 20 years with the Montana Stock Growers Association (MSGA). He was appointed executive vice president of the association in 2018 and had previously served as the director of natural resources in 2002. During his tenure there, he focused on policy and natural resource issues, with an additional focus on organizational effectiveness. He was engaged in issues, most heavily, impacting the agriculture industry, such as the waters of the U.S. portion of the clean water act, the Confederated Salish, and Kootenai, tribes, market, transparency, tax relief, and trade issues.

Bodner has been described as someone whose view of the cattle industry is more than just meeting the needs of Montana producers. He is involved in his community as well as his family's ranch near Rainsford, MT.

Along with his brother, John, he and his family continue to run cattle and operate the fourth generation ranch. He was a 4-H program leader for many years, coached youth sports teams, and helped develop a community park for a local school.

The event is sponsored by Tri-County Implement, EGT, C&B, Stockman Bank and ButlerAg equipment.



Drue Roberts from Tri-County Implement chats with a prospective customer at the 2022 MonDak Ag Days Trade Show.

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MonDak Ag Days 2023

Vine's Ag Days Presentation Will Focus On Adding Revenue Streams To Current Operations

By Meagan Dotson

This year at the MonDak Ag Days and Trade Show, Hailey Vine Director, Food and Agriculture Development Center (FADC), will be presenting 'Value Added Agriculture Opportunities'. Vine has been in her current position at the FADC under the Great Northern Development Corporation for two years this June. She describes her position as "being a walking resource" to assist food and agricultural entrepreneurs through market research, putting together business plans, assisting with grant writing, and more.

"Our goal is to be on-the-ground support from the Department of Agriculture and help producers thrive where they're at," Vine said.

Vine's presentation addresses creating additional revenue utilizing the commodities producers already have; by incorporating value added ag opportunities, producers are able to keep more of every dollar in their pocket. For instance, cattle ranchers can designate a certain number of animals to be slaughtered,



processed, and then sold. The beef they sell then becomes a value-added product in which they are getting a higher price than they would selling the live animal, and becomes an additional revenue stream. Another way to enhance the value of products is to meet market demand for organic or locally grown produce and grass fed beef.

"More often than not, people are willing to pay more for locally grown food, which we see at Farmers Markets for example," she stated. "Consumers are willing to pay more because there is value in knowing where your food comes from."

Agritourism is another example of a value added agricultural opportunity.

"Agritourism combines the top two industries for the purposes of entertaining and educating. Offering tours of agricultural operations captures the tourism audience," Vine explained.

Vine hopes that producers reach out to her as she serves 12 counties and has a lot of resources to offer, including access to new markets. She encourages people to visit the Great Northern Development Corporation online at gndc.org, or reach out to her directly via email at fadc@gndc.org.

"I see how hard farmers work to feed the world, and I love this job because I get to help them in what they do," she added.

The MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show is a Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture event that is held annually to provide agricultural education and introduce the latest in ag-related technology. It will be March 2 and 3 at the Richland County Event Center, Sidney, with a banquet dinner taking place at 6 p.m. on March 2 at the Sidney Elks Lodge. There will be a social prior to the banquet beginning at 5 p.m. For more information, or to purchase banquet tickets, visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/mondakagdays.



Hailey Vine is one of nine directors in Montana with the Food and Agriculture Development Center under Great Northern Development Corporation. (Photo provided by Hailey Vine)

Haugen To Provide Insight For The 2023 Season

Input Cost & 2023 Projections

By Dianne Swanson

Area farmers and ranchers are invited to gain some valuable knowledge from NDSU Farm Management Specialist Ron Haugen at 10 a.m., Friday, March 3 during MonDak Ag Days.

In his 30 plus years at NDSU, Haugen has seen the highs and lows of the ag industry and is pleased to share what he sees happening during the current crop year. He said, "Changes are happening all the time in terms on input costs, market prices and farm programs"

With the cost of almost everything except fertilizer going up, Haugen will cover input costs and farm budgets. He will also touch on cash rents and the existing farm bill which expires the end of 2023. Other topics of interest will include the ERP (Emergency Relief Program) and PARP (Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program) and how they may relate to your operation.



Ron Haugen

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MonDak Ag Days 2023

Explore The Dos & Don'ts Of Drainage Tile With Weiland During Ag Days

By Meagan Dotson

Jerry Weiland, a Fratco sales representative, will be speaking about 'Drainage Tile: Dos and Don'ts' at this year's MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show, March 2 and 3. The annual event is a Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agricultural event which provides educational presentations and showcases the newest in ag-related technologies.

Weiland's presentation will explain why drainage tile is one of the best investments a grower can implement on their farm, how drainage tile will pay for itself, and how it can make farming easier and more profitable. He will also cover the basics of designing a system, which begins with an assessment of the ground with consideration of the soil parent material, how the ground has been treated in the past 50-100 years, and the hydraulic pressure in the soils in question.

"I have customers using our tile for several different reasons. First is for drainage in the agricultural fields. Second, are for sub surface irrigation using the tile system to drain the field of excess water while allowing a method to add water back into the soil for irrigation. A third use is for irrigation water flow in canals and ditches to eliminate the seepage from those systems while adding human safety and reducing cleaning and maintenance," Weiland said.

Drainage tile has been used since the mid 1970s with its main function to allow airflow into the soil, preventing root systems from being drowned or stunted.

"Water is necessary for crop production, so reducing that for late season crop production seems counter intuitive. We have to understand, if we do not have a healthy plant, we shouldn't expect good yields. Other benefits include more effective utilization of nutrients, less disease and a better microbial system in the soil," he explained.

Weiland hopes that his listeners will have lots of questions for him and that they leave with a better understanding of what drainage tile is and how it works.

"I encourage a discussion with the group to address their questions; that's why they came to see my presentation in the first place. I also want attendees to feel comfortable to contact me with any questions or concerns following Ag Days," Weiland added.

He can be contacted via email at jweiland@fratco.com or at 605-957-5050.

The MonDak Ag Days and Trade Show will be held at the Richland County Event Center, with a banquet happening March 2 at 6 p.m. at the Sidney Elks Lodge. For more information, visit them online at facebook.com/mondakagdays.



Jerry Weiland will discuss the benefits of drainage tile and looks forward to questions and discussion from listeners. (Photo submitted by Jerry Weiland)

Dr. Manbir Rakkar To Present 'Getting More Bang For Your Fertilizer Buck' At Ag Days

By Meagan Dotson

Dr. Manbir Rakkar will be presenting 'Getting more Bang for Your Fertilizer Buck' on Friday, March 3 during the MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show in Sidney at the Richland County Event Center.

Rakkar's research aims to resolve soil issues using inter-disciplinary approaches. Currently, she is focused on preventing, mitigating and adapting to soil acidification in Montana.

The first part of the presentation will address how to put more nutrients in crops and keep the remainder in the root zone to help increase profits. In 2022 fertilizer costs hit record highs, in part because of the war in Ukraine, as Russia produces a substantial amount of fertilizer and supply and demand started to shift.

The second part of the presentation will discuss ways to keep soil from becoming too acidic.

If nutrients can be kept in the root zone, less fertilizer is needed, which reduces the acidity of the soil overall producing healthier, more cost effective crops.

The MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show is held each year to introduce the latest technology in agriculture and provide education on pertinent ag-related issues. It is a Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture event and will be held March 2 and 3. A banquet dinner starts at 6 p.m. at the Sidney Elks Lodge, with a pre-banquet social beginning at 5 p.m. For more information, or to purchase banquet tickets, visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/mondakagdays.

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MonDak Ag Days 2023

McCullock, LMIC, Will Discuss Cattle Market During MonDak Ag Days March 2-3

By Meagan Dotson

Katelyn McCullock, Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) director and senior agricultural economist, will be speaking at the MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show March 2 and 3.

LMIC is a non-profit cooperation between land grant universities, USDA and industry partners that was established in 1955 to collect data for market analysis that is made available to participants, and support Extension efforts. This is beneficial as it reduces the time, energy and resources each state would have to put forth to collect the data themselves. Montana State University re-joined the LMIC this year, for a total of 28 land-grant universities belonging to the organization.

"This idea pre-dates computers and the internet, and so the center has evolved to provide more market analysis, forecasts, presentations and expertise in addition to the data that we house and distribute from our USDA partners," McCullock explained. "We generate market analysis content on commercially produced animal agriculture and feed grains. As the senior economist I provide market analysis for dairy, cattle, hay and corn as well as coordinate the other forecasts in the office on hogs, soybeans, chickens, turkey and sheep."

McCullock, who has been in her current position at LMIC for the last five years, will be giving a cattle market update during the MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show, and discussing the current drivers of supply and demand and how they will affect cattle producers.

"The last few years have been tricky with COVID throwing a lot of curveballs. Four years out and we are still dealing with some of those effects, as well as the Ukraine-Russian War, drought, a weakening economy, and declining cattle supplies. Each of those adds a layer of nuance to the market situation and some have longer term effects than others," she commented. "There are quite a few issues moving the markets this year and I think a key take-away is that volatility will likely continue, because of the sheer number of big picture influences happening at this time."

The MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show is a Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture event and will be happening at the Richland County Event Center, Sidney. There will be a banquet held at 6 p.m. Thursday March 2 at the Sidney Elks Lodge. To purchase banquet tickets or for more information, contact the Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture at 406-433-1916 or visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/mondakagdays.



Katelyn McCullock has been the Director and Senior Agricultural Economist at the Livestock Marketing Information Center for the last five years. (Photo submitted)

MonDak Ag Days – Prussic Acid & Nitrates In Forages

By Marley Manoukian

Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland County Extension Agent will be giving a presentation on Prussic Acid & Nitrates in Forages during MonDak Ag Days' educational program. Prussic acid and nitrates can both be fatal to our livestock. Prussic acid is most prevalent in sorghum and sudangrass crops, while nitrates are found in cereal grains, sorghum, sudangrass, millet, corn, and some weed species. Many environmental factors affect the levels of both prussic acid and nitrates within a plant. Drought and grasshopper damage in recent years have increased nitrate levels in the region. Grasshoppers are again forecasted to be a problem this growing season.

Manoukian's presentation will cover susceptible species, factors that affect levels, effects on livestock, management tactics, and testing for both prussic acid and nitrates. Often times issues with prussic acid or nitrates are only recognized when the results are fatal, and it is too late. Join us for this presentation and be equipped with the knowledge on how to prevent the problem before it arises.



Marley Manoukian. (Photo submitted)


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MonDak Ag Days 2023

Schieber Will Explain FDA Ruling Regarding Antimicrobial Medications & Livestock

By Meagan Dotson

Local veterinarian Gary Schieber will be presenting 'Updates to Medically Important Antibiotics' at this year's MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show March 2 and 3 at the Richland County Event Center, Sidney, MT.

Schieber graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2003 and moved to Sidney in 2004 when he began his practice at High Plains Veterinary Clinic.

"I am a mixed animal practitioner that focuses mostly on large animals with an emphasis on production animal medicine," Schieber explained.

His presentation will focus on food producing animals such as cattle, goats and sheep, and the Food and Drug Administration's ruling that was passed in June 2021. The ruling will require some antimicrobial medications, that were previously considered over-the-counter, to now be prescription medications.

"These medications which have been available for many years will now be only available with a veterinary prescription," Schieber stated. "This ruling is an effort to promote judicious antimicrobial use in food producing animals and combat antimicrobial resistance in both animal and human health."

The FDA ruling will be fully implemented in July 2023, and will affect how and where these medications can be purchased.

"I want listeners to have an understanding of the FDA ruling and why the ruling

is being implemented. The importance of antimicrobial use, the responsibility of antimicrobial use in food animal production, and that these medications will now require a veterinarian prescription to be purchased," he concluded.

The MonDak Ag Days and Trade Show is a Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture event that is held annually to introduce new technologies and provide relevant ag-related education for producers. There will be a banquet at the Sidney Elks Lodge on March 2 at 6 p.m. with a social hour starting at 5 p.m. For more information, or to purchase banquet tickets, visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/mondakagdays.



Gary Schieber. (File photo)



Charlie Lim.
(Photo submitted)

Get Some Help With Those Persistent Weeds At Ag Days

By Dianne Swanson

Charlie Lim, NDSU Williston Research Extension Center (WREC) Extension weed specialist, Williston, is scheduled to speak at 10 a.m. March 3 at MonDak Ag Days in Sidney. Lim will offer farmers, ranchers and gardeners up to date information relating to effective control of weeds using pre-emergent herbicides. He will explain the differences in herbicide modes of action and requirements for effective weed control. He will also have updates on herbicide resistance. Lim will cover control of weeds including marehail, kochia, green foxtail, wild oat and narrowleaf hawksbeard. He also plans to bring some weeds for identification purposes. Lim graduated with a PhD in Plant Science from Montana State University in 2020 and was named weed specialist at WREC, Williston in July 2022. His professional interests include integrated and ecological approaches to pro-active weed control and weed seedbank management. As a grad student and post-doctoral research associate, Lim screened and characterized kochia populations for multiple resistance to glyphosate, dicamba and ALS-inhibitor herbicides. He also conducted field trials on weed control and crop safety of new and existing pre- and post-emergent herbicide formulations, as well as integrated strategies to manage weed seedbank in the soil.

McKenzie Co. Soil Conservation

Soil Health Summit Held Feb. 14

By Robyn Heck

The McKenzie County Soil Conservation District presented the soil health summit on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at the Rough Rider Event Center, Watford City, ND. Burke Teichert spoke about grazing to close out the summit. He not only spoke about agriculture but he talked about life. Teichert said, "Follow your principles everywhere you go. Obey the principles but also be flexible about the context."

Teichert spoke on Tuesday about an article he wrote in 2013. This article was about more efficient grazing procedures. In it he discussed why ranchers don't learn how to graze properly. "It requires a change in mindset. When I started out, I was young and hardheaded. I felt if you don't raise Red Hereford, you're not raising cattle. Well, right now I am 80 years old and there can always be a better way, or a more efficient way, to do things," said Teichert. He continued by explaining that another reason farmers don't graze as efficiently as possible is because of social pressure. "What will the neighbors think? Also, there's more interest in cattle and soil and grazing and not all farmers understand the relative economic potential of grazing versus livestock production," explained Teichert.

He went on to discuss four ways to manage your graze land and explained that they are interconnected. "When you touch one you touch them all: production, finance, marketing, and people. Ranchers need to understand time and timing. Overstocking results in over grazing," said Teichert. Overgrazing is repeated defoliation of individual plants before they have had adequate recovery time. If given the right amount of time, they will recover.

Teichert then discussed overgrazing. He gave the advice to always allow adequate recovery time before returning to a previously grazed pasture. "The management of time and timing to reduce or eliminate overgrazing requires a large number of paddocks, especially in low rainfall areas. We expect adaptive grazing to accomplish more food and better livestock performance," said Teichert.

Teichert then spoke about his six principles of soil health, three revelations of adaptive stewardship, and four ecosystem processes. The six principles (or truths that can carry over to other areas of life) are: 1. Manage time and timing; 2. Short graze time and long recovery time; 3. Stock water, locations, and spacing; 4. Fencing for a high number of paddocks; 5. Begin with the end in mind; 6. Ask yourself, what are your practices doing to, or for, the ecosystem?

Teichert was raised on a family ranch in Western Wyoming. His father and grandfather were ahead of their time in understanding the importance of low input-low cost agriculture.

He went to BYU and got a degree in ag economics and ag business. For 2 1/2 years he spent time in Brazil on a mission trip for his church. He then went to the University of Wyoming for a masters in ag economics with emphasis on farm and ranch management. At the University of Wyoming, he learned methods for analyzing alternative methods of operating ranches, or bringing new practices to them. He served on the University of Wyoming agriculture, economics faculty for one year. He was in the artificial insemination industry and studied with some of the best animal scientists in America.

Since then, Teichert spent over three years as the general manager of the livestock division of UI Inc. in the Tri-Cities area of Washington, he spent over two years as a part-time assistant professor of ag economics at BYU, and part-time engaged in consulting work.

From 1980 to 1990 Teichert worked with welfare services department of

the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He managed seven cattle ranches in Utah from 1990 to 2010. He was the general manager and later, vice president of the ag reserves, Deseret ranches. "No two ranches can be managed the same, thus the need for adaptive grazing and adaptive management to fit practices to the individual ranch."

Since retirement, he has worked as a contract manager, consultant, and speaker. He has traveled to speak extensively in the United States, and in parts of Canada, Central America, South America, England, Australia, and New Zealand.



Burke Teichert

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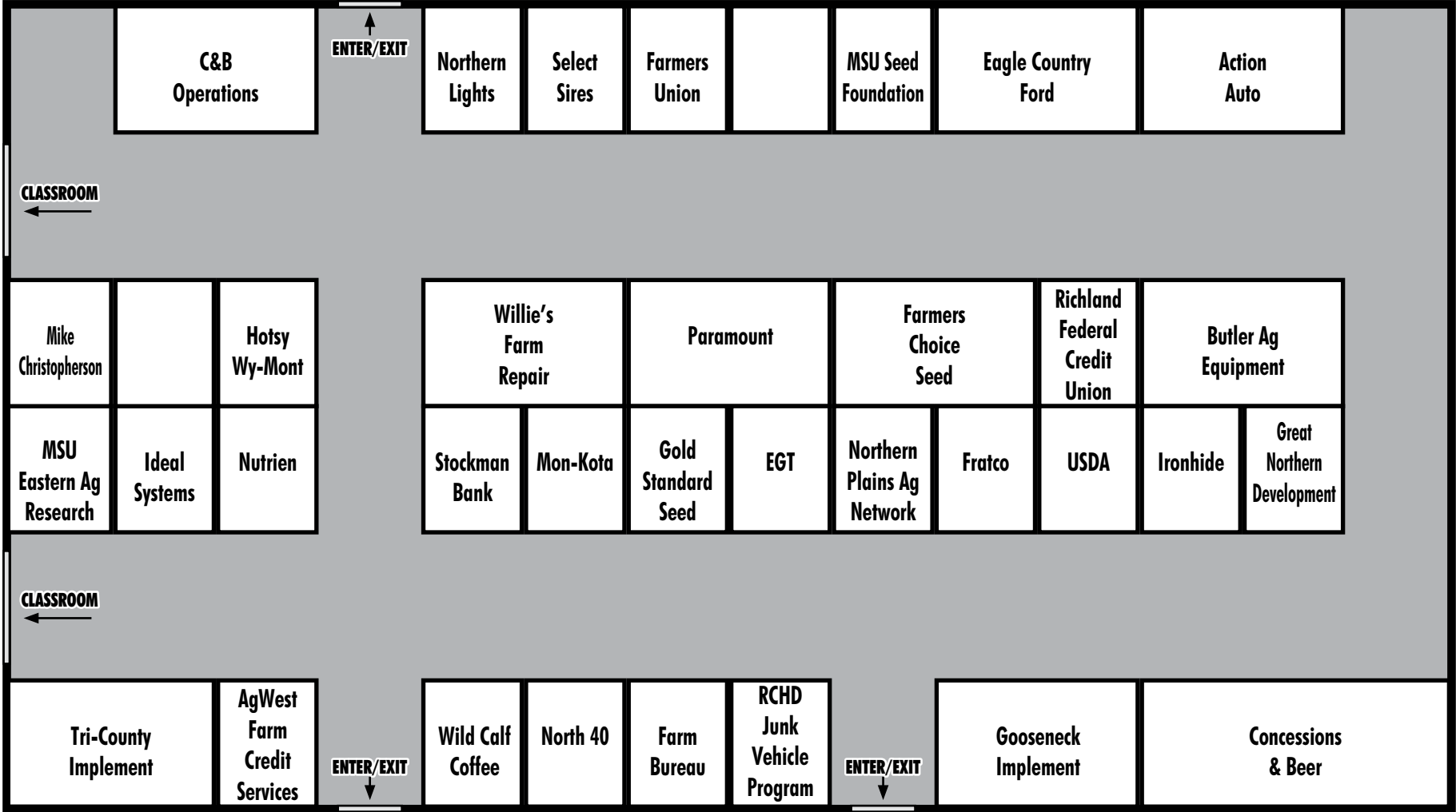
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"2023 Getting it Right Canola Production"

Webinar Set For March 9

Topics include canola cultivar selection, weed and disease management, fertilizer recommendations and more.

University and agriculture professionals will provide information to assist canola producers with production



decisions for the 2023 growing season during the Getting-it-Right in Canola Production webinar. (NDSU photo)

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

North Dakota State University Extension will offer the "2023 Getting It Right Canola Production" webinar on Thursday, March 9. The Zoom webinar begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at noon CST. Certified Crop Advisor Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available.

The conference will consist of two parts. The first half features live presentations about canola cultivar considerations, plant establishment and plant development, weed management, fertilizer recommendations, and intercropping in canola. After a short break, the webinar will continue with live presentations about insect management, clubroot, blackleg and sclerotinia in canola, market updates, and biofuels canola.

Speakers include Bryan Hanson, NDSU research agronomist; Brian Jenks, NDSU Extension weed scientist; Dave Franzen, NDSU Extension soil science specialist; Justin Jacobs, NDSU irrigation research specialist; Venkat Chapara, NDSU assistant agriculture experiment station specialist; Randy Martinson, Martinson Ag Risk Management market analyst; Anitha Chirumamilla, NDSU Extension cropping systems specialist; Travis Prochaska, NDSU Extension crop protection specialist; and Dave Ripplinger, NDSU Extension bioproducts/bioenergy economist.

Speakers will entertain questions at the end of each talk and the audience are encouraged to participate.

The conference is free. To register, visit www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/events/getting-it-right-canola-production-conference.

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Rugged & Regal

Thiessen's Regency Acres Angus breeds top line, tough genetics

By Tamara Choat, Tri-State Livestock News

The hardy, performing Angus cattle raised on Regency Acres Angus look good wearing their work clothes – and get their jobs done. “Our environment here is quite brutal,” says owner Russ Thiessen. “We believe that our cattle are unique in that if they can survive our extremes in weather and on our short grass, they can survive anywhere.”

The Thiessen family: Russ and Jill and their children, daughter Téa, who teaches math in Stanford, MT and Tyler, who is now the fifth generation on the ranch, raise their registered herd in rugged central eastern Montana near Lambert, just 30 miles from the North Dakota border, on land near where Thiessen's great-grandfather homesteaded in the early 1900s.

“As (the second generation) grew up they branched off and bought their own places, which is where we are based out of now, on land my grandfather bought,” says Thiessen, although they still operate on some of the original homestead land.

Today, the Thiessens run a diversified farming and purebred Angus ranch, holding an annual production sale either the first or second Friday in April where they sell approximately 80 yearling bulls and 30-40 purebred yearling heifers. Crops include dry land wheat, corn, peas, lentils, barley, oats, safflower and canola. “We got our start in registered Angus in 1957,” says Thiessen. When his dad, Jim, took over the operation in the late '60s the commercial cows were sold and the ranch began running 100% registered cattle. “We've always incorporated the best tools to identify and progress the best animals.” In the '70s they enrolled in the Montana Beef Performance Association, a state Extension records-keeping center that pioneered herd selection methods and contributed to the formation of the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program. “We also incorporated artificial insemination, carcass ultrasound, genomic testing, and herd testing for diseases like BVD and Johnes to make sure they are free and healthy for our customers,” says Thiessen. Today, the Thiessen herd is one of only a few that is state-certified Johnes-free.

“In the mid-'90s I returned home after college, married my bride of now 25 years and we had our two kids.”

Today, their annual work cycle is similar to many purebred operations in the region. Calving starts the first of February with the Aled heifers. Thiessen says they try to stick to a 60-day calving cycle. Heifers calve from Feb. 1 to April 1; cows from the end of February to the end of April. Breeding begins in early May with synchronized heifers, and all the cows except the late calvers are also Aled on a natural cycle then hauled or trailed out to summer pastures with the herd bulls. Summer is spent haying, spraying, and fencing with harvest occurring mostly in August. Fall is spent hauling hay, fencing, moving cattle, preg-checking and fixing corrals. Calves are weaned around October 1 and put into the feedlot. Bulls are fed a ration designed for growth without getting them fat. Heifers are kept in the feedlot for around a month then turned out to pasture for the winter. Winter is usually time to haul crops to the elevator, maintain equipment and travel around to look at cattle.



From left, Tyler, Russ, Tea, and Jill Thiessen. (Submitted photos)

“We are very diligent in the genetics we incorporate into our herd,” says Thiessen. “The cattle must have length, depth of body, be angular and have good feet. The females must be good-uddered with mild dispositions. Our customers say our cattle are pleasant to be around, last longer, and leave them with great females and steers that are highly marketable.”

The mission statement of Regency Acres Angus is: “To propagate the genetics that return the most dollars per acre for our customers.”

“That is still and always will be our primary goal,” says Thiessen. “Personally

Continued on next page.



Thiessen's Regency Acres Angus Annual Production Sale is April 14

Continued from previous page.

I am striving to leave a profitable business and livelihood for my son and future grandkids, and to teach them that success isn't just measured in dollars, but in fulfillment in what you are doing."

Thiessen says he likes the genetic side of the purebred business, and the process of searching out the right bulls to mate the cows to. "I enjoy studying the pedigrees and mating the cattle to try to improve both the dam and the sire in the offspring," he says. "Tyler has that unique ability to sit and have a conversation for hours with someone he just met so he likes the public relations part of the business."

Don Switzer, Switzer Land Company, near Richey, MT, runs a herd of commercial cattle and has been a customer of the Thiessens for many years. "They just have really top of the line bulls, whether you're looking for a heifer bull or a cow bull," he says. "He's really particular about what sires he uses; he has good bloodlines."

Gary Tescher owns Three Bars Angus Ranch southeast of Sidney, MT, across the North Dakota state line. He's been buying Thiessen bulls for around 20 years.

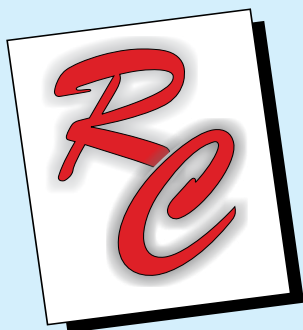
"First of all, they're good people so you can trust the cattle and the information

they put out on them, which is danged sure important," says Tescher. "They've got good bulls and good cattle, but the other thing I notice and I admire about them is they don't necessarily use the same sires as everybody else is using. They're not just following the crowd. I can appreciate that too – it makes me think they think for themselves."

Thiessen says that while they put in long hours working, they still must make time to play. A few years ago he and a couple of his friends got into barbeque. They built their own smoker (nicknamed "The Mistress" by their wives) and cook for weddings, parties and even funerals. Thiessen and his son also enjoy hunting, and Tyler has his own "herd" of hound dogs he uses to eliminate raccoons for the neighbors.

"The work load is immense and there isn't enough profit in agriculture to afford to hire on more employees – even if you can find one. So the hours are long and stressful but we get to work alongside our kids, our wives, our fathers and grandfathers and we get to work in God's garden every day.

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Wed, March 15th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Wed, March 22nd..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Wed, March 29th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Wed, April 5th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Wed, April 5th..... Missouri Red Angus Bull Sale 1:00
27 Yearling Red Angus Bulls
30 Commercial Red Angus Heifers

Wed, April 12th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Fri, April 14th..... Regency Acres Bull Sale 1:00
80 Black Angus Bulls
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Wed, April 19th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

Wed, April 26th..... All Class Cattle Sale 9:00

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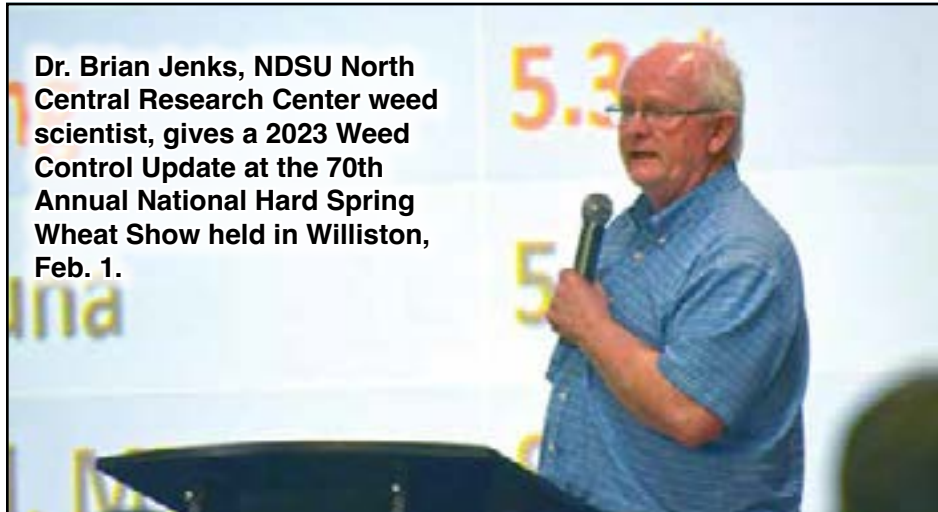
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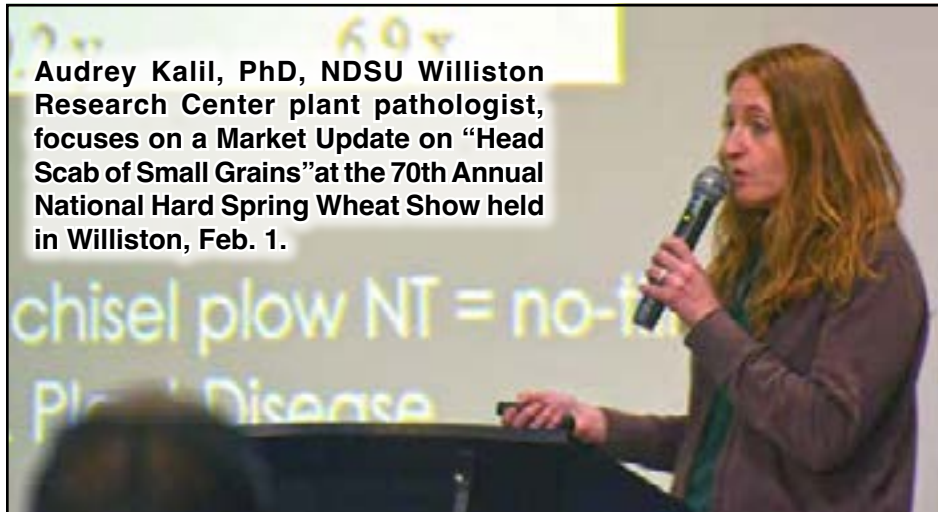
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70th Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show Highlights



Dr. Brian Jenks, NDSU North Central Research Center weed scientist, gives a 2023 Weed Control Update at the 70th Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show held in Williston, Feb. 1.



Audrey Kalil, PhD, NDSU Williston Research Center plant pathologist, focuses on a Market Update on "Head Scab of Small Grains" at the 70th Annual National Hard Spring Wheat Show held in Williston, Feb. 1.



Ben Larson, Birdsall Grain & Seed, and Charlie Cahill, Cahill Seeds, show seed variety updates at the 70th Annual Hard Spring Wheat Show held in Williston on Feb. 1.

Montana Farm Bureau Offers Scholarships For Higher Education

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and the Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee are offering several scholarships for students pursuing higher education. "Our Montana Farm Bureau Foundation and Women's Leadership Committee are pleased to once again provide students with some financial assistance as they work toward furthering their education," said Montana Farm Bureau's Director of Events and Foundation Development Alena Standley.

Scholarships Available:

The Montana Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Scholarships: Two \$1,500 scholarships are available through the sponsorship of the MFB Women's Leadership Committee. The scholarships are available to young men and women. The applicant must be an incoming college freshman and must be from a paid Montana Farm Bureau member family. Applications will be scored on scholastic achievement, future goals, community involvement and school activities. Many county Farm Bureaus offer scholarships and the online form for this application will allow students to apply for any county Farm Bureau scholarship for which they are eligible as well as the state scholarship. Due Date: April 1.

The 2023 MFB Foundation CYF&R Scholarship: The Montana Farm Bureau Foundation will award one \$1,000 scholarship to a current member of the Collegiate Chapter of Young Farmers and Ranchers at MSU Bozeman, UM Western, Miles Community College or Dawson Community College. The purpose of this scholarship is to assist Collegiate Young Farmer and Rancher members in pursuing a degree from an accredited institute of higher education and enrolled at that institution for the Fall 2023 semester. Due Date: April 1.

The 2023 Bernard Greufe Honor Scholarship: This \$1,500 scholarship assists Montana high school students in paying for higher education. The applicant must be pursuing a degree from an accredited institute of higher education, although the award is not limited to students seeking a degree or career in agriculture. Due Date: April 1.

The 2023 Future of Agriculture Honor Scholarship: This \$1,500 scholarship is administered by the Montana Farm Bureau Foundation through generous donations from Seed Source, Inc., of Toston, MT. The purpose of this scholarship is to assist students towards the completion of a degree in a field pertaining to agriculture. A special emphasis will be given to applicants who have shown ingenuity in agricultural production and advancement of small-scale agriculture. Due Date: April 1.

All students wishing to apply for these scholarships will need to sign in to the Montana Farm Bureau scholarship portal, which is available by visiting mfbf.org/Foundation/Foundation-Scholarships and mfbf.org/Programs/Womens-Leadership-Committee. For more information call 406-799-9955 or email alenas@mfbf.org.

Low Forecast For Wheat Midge Continues Into 2023

The dramatic decrease in wheat midge populations since 2019 is probably due to drought in 2020 through 2022.

2022 Wheat Midge Larval Survey



2022 Wheat Midge Larval Survey (NDSU photo)

2022 Wheat Midge Larval Survey



Wheat Midge Larval Survey - Percent Parasitism

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Soil samples from North Dakota counties indicate low levels of overwintering wheat midge larvae (cocoons) for the 2023 season, says Janet Knodel, North Dakota State University Extension entomologist.

A total of 2,040 soil cores were collected from 22 counties in the fall of 2022 to estimate the statewide risk for wheat midge for the 2023 spring wheat growing season. The risk for wheat midge is based on unparasitized cocoons found in the soil samples.

"The majority of the soil samples had zero wheat midge cocoons in the soil for the past three years," Knodel says. "The percentage was 97.5% with no midge cocoons in 2023, 95% in 2022 and 86% in 2021. This is the record low since the wheat midge larval survey for overwintering cocoons started in 1995."

Only about 2.5% of soil samples were positive for wheat midge cocoons, with density ranging from 36 to 143 cocoons per square meter. This is a low risk for wheat midge infestation, which is classified as one to 200 midge cocoons per square meter.

"Low risk areas were scattered in eight counties throughout the state, including the northwest area (Burke County), north-central area (Benson, McHenry and Rolette Counties), and the west-central area (McLean County)," Knodel says.

"No soil samples had moderate or high cocoon densities of wheat midge (201 to over 800 midge larvae per square meter)," Knodel says.

Knodel adds, "This dramatic decrease in wheat midge populations since 2019 is probably due to drought in 2020 through 2022. Drought can cause wheat midge to overwinter for two years instead of the typical emergence during the following season. Larvae also are susceptible to dryness and require rain to emerge from the soil in late June through mid-July, and to drop out of the mature wheat heads and dig into the soil to overwinter as cocoons. In some locations, wheat midge larvae remained in the wheat heads during harvest due to the dry environment and ended up in the harvest trucks instead of the soil. Comparing precipitation from May through August with wheat midge cocoon densities for each surveyed county over the past 12 years shows a strong positive correlation between precipitation and wheat midge populations."

Another reason wheat midge infestation risk is so low could be due to the late

spring wheat planting in 2022 due to the cool, wet conditions in early May. Late planting dates reduce the risk of infestation due to the wheat heading after peak emergence of wheat midge.

With the very low populations of wheat midge for the third year in a row, night scouting for adult midges in spring wheat fields is not pressing, unless the field is continuous wheat and/or favorable moist weather in late June to early July occurs during emergence. These two factors can cause rapid increases in the numbers of emerging adult wheat midges, especially in areas that did receive adequate precipitation last year.

Knodel recommends that producers still use the wheat midge degree-day model to predict the emergence of wheat midge and to determine when to scout, and if their wheat crop is at risk.

Producers can access the wheat midge degree-day model on the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) website at <https://ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu/wheat-growing-degree-days.html>.

Select your nearest NDAWN station and enter your spring wheat planting date. The output indicates the expected growth stage of the wheat and whether the crop is susceptible to midge infestation, as well as the timing and percent of wheat midge emerged.

If wheat midge is detected, the economic thresholds for wheat midge are one or more midge observed for every four or five heads on hard red spring wheat, or one or more midge observed for every seven or eight heads on durum wheat.

Knodel says, "This forecast is favorable for growers since the risk for yield loss and reduced grain quality from wheat midge is low. Unfortunately, the bad news is that the beneficial parasitic wasp that attacks and kills wheat midge can't survive without its host. No parasitized cocoons were found in 2022 and 2021. This is the second time that no parasitic wasps were observed."

"Parasitic wasps play an important role in natural control of wheat midge and parasitize the eggs or larvae," she adds. "In contrast, the parasitism rate was 15% in 2020, 36% in 2019 and 9% in 2018."

NDSU Extension agents collected the soil samples and Extension entomology specialists extracted the larvae from the soil samples. The North Dakota Wheat Commission supports the wheat midge survey.



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A Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture Event

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Trade Show (Free to the Public):

March 2nd: 8am – 5pm

March 3rd: 7am – 2pm

Lunch Available Both Days Courtesy of FFA
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Banquet: 6pm (Social 5pm) March 2nd at
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Education Schedule:



Jay Bodner
Keynote Speaker

Thursday March 2:

10am Drainage Tile: Do's and Do Not's | Jerry Weiland
11am ... Getting More Bang for Your Fertilizer Buck | Dr. Clain Jones
1pm Prussic Acid & Nitrates in Forages | Marley Manoukian
2pm Updates to Medically Important Antibiotics | Gary Schieber
3pm Cattle Market Update | Katelyn McCulloch

Friday, March 3:

10am Input Costs & 2023 Projections | Ron Haugen
11am Value Added Agriculture Opportunities | Hailey Vine
12pm Preemergent Herbicides & Modes of Action | Charlie Lim

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Reinke Recognizes Mon-Kota With Dealer Award

Deshler, NE - Reinke Manufacturing, a global leader in irrigation systems and precision irrigation technology, has recognized Mon-Kota in Fairview with a Reinke Diamond Pride award for their performance in the last year.

"Reinke is honored to work with Mon-Kota to help them serve the growers in their areas," said Chris Roth, Reinke president. "We're proud to award their efforts and we appreciate their dedication as we continue to develop and implement precision irrigation equipment and technology to help growers increase yields and profitability."

Reinke dealerships from across the United States and Canada come together annually for the company's sales convention to recognize select Reinke dealers for their hard work and commitment to serve growers. The Reinke Pride awards are determined as part of an incentive program that distinguishes superior achievement levels according to an evaluation based on a dealership's exterior and interior housekeeping and maintenance, indoor and outdoor displays, safety, retail environment, merchandising, professionalism, promotions, event participation and market share.

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Pictured (L-R) Chris Roth, Reinke president; Lyle Roberts, Mon-Kota; and Vern Hinnenkamp, Reinke Territory Manager.

Montana State Announces Finalists For Agritourism & Sustainable Agriculture Program

From the MSU News Service

Bozeman - The Montana State University College of Agriculture has announced finalists for a new leadership program focused on sustainable agriculture and agritourism.

The Montana Agritourism Fellows Program will center on the goal of developing leaders to advance sustainable agritourism. The fellowship is designed to engage agricultural producers and train them in methods of communicating and promoting sustainable agriculture for farmers, ranchers, professionals and communities. It was funded by a grant from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, or Western SARE, program. The inaugural cohort consists of 14 fellows, listed below with their city, occupation and the focus of their outreach efforts.

- Todd and Molly Barkley, Baker, owners of Barkley's Home Grown LLC, exploring year-round greenhouse agriculture.
- Tana and Tienna Canen, Glendive, multi-generational ranchers exploring the Ranching for Profit sustainability program.
- Andy Fjeseth, Helena, Montana Department of Agriculture bureau chief, exploring agritourism development.
- Laura Garber, Hamilton, director of Cultivating Connections and owner of a diversified vegetable farming operation, exploring community agriculture education.
- Susan Joy, Helena, manager of the Made in Montana program, exploring agritourism development.
- Carissa McNamara, Plains, owner of Wild Horse Lavender Farm and ambassador for Northwest Farmers Union, exploring agritourism development.
- Tamara Robertson, Forsyth, diversified rancher and farm tour host, exploring sustainable ranch management practices.
- Haylie Shipp, Glasgow, rancher, exploring communications outreach and agritourism.
- Jon and Erin Turner, Missoula, owners of Turner Farms and hosts of outreach events, exploring community engagement and community-supported agriculture.
- Liz and Toby Werk, Hays, ranchers, exploring cultural agritourism.

Agritourism links agricultural operations with tourism by welcoming visitors to farms and ranches for entertainment, recreation or education. Examples include organized tours, community supported agriculture programs, public education events and more. Organizers hope the program will promote a holistic approach to farming focused on profitability, land and natural resource stewardship, and improved quality of life for the producers as well as their communities.

"We are excited to engage with this outstanding cohort of agricultural professionals and producers over the next two years," said Shannon Arnold, the program's faculty lead and a professor in MSU's Department of Agricultural and Technology Education. "The fellows program focuses on developing these leaders to promote, educate and build community awareness about the sustainable agritourism industry in Montana."

The inaugural group of fellows will attend four two-day seminars at various sustainable agritourism operations across Montana over the next two years, with the first to be held in Helena Feb. 16-17. The second and third seminars will be hosted in central and eastern Montana at locations to be determined, and the fourth will be in Bozeman, where fellows will apply what they've learned to plan and host a statewide agritourism conference in 2024.

The seminars will consist of workshops, tours and networking opportunities exploring the facets of agritourism, including management, business, media

relations, planning and communication. Fellows will also learn how to advocate for sustainable agritourism and conduct outreach events for industry promotion.

The Western SARE organization is hosted by MSU through 2023. The faculty team on the project includes Arnold; Dustin Perry, head of the Department of Agricultural and Technology Education; Kim Woodring, Toole County Extension agent; and Beth Shirley, assistant professor in technical communication.



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8 am	Tradeshow opens
10 am	Drainage Tile: Do's & Do Not's <i>Jerry Weiland</i>
11 am	Getting More Bang For Your Fertilizer Buck <i>Dr. Clain Jones</i>
1 pm	Prussic Acid & Nitrates In Forages <i>Marley Manoukian</i>
2 pm	Updates To Medically Importnat Antibiotics <i>Gary Schieber</i>
		3 Pesticide Points Available 11am - 2pm
3 pm	Cattle Market Update <i>Katelyn McCulloch</i>

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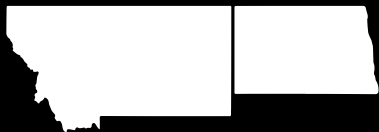
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MONDAK**AG DAYS**

A Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture Event

Thursday - Friday

March 2-3, 2023

5 pm Tradeshow Closes
Banquet Pre-Social

6pm Banquet Dinner
Sidney Elks Lodge. Keynote Speaker: Jay Bodner

Friday, March 3rd:

7 am Tradeshow opens

10 am Input Costs & 2023 Projections
Ron Haugen

11 am Value Added Agriculture Opportunities
Hailey Vine

12 pm Pre-Emergent Herbicides & Modes of Action
Charlie Lim

3 pm Tradeshow Closes

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Farm Bureau Members Call On Capitol In Helena



Montana Farm Bureau Federation members with Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras at the Capitol.

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

Helena, MT - Meetings with legislators and agency directors plus learning to give testimony were part of the Montana Farm Bureau Calling on the Capitol Feb. 6-7, in Helena. Calling on the Capitol provides MFBF members with a chance to learn about the political process in the state's capital during the legislative session.

The event kicked off with legislative updates and training by the MFBF Legislative Team, followed by a history of Montana politics presentation and a reception in the Capitol Rotunda where legislators and legislative staff could learn about Farm Bureau and visit with their constituents. Tuesday morning featured visits with Attorney General Austin Knudsen, Director of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Hank Worsech, Director of the Department of Agriculture Christy Clark and Department of Livestock Executive Officer Mike Honeycutt.

The group found their meeting with Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras inspiring, thanking her for her work on the Red Tape Initiative to streamline government regulations, along with discussing water bills, the progress on de-listing grizzly bears, and rural community issues.

"I really appreciate the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's passion and direction," said Ronan rancher Josh Senecal. "It was an excellent visit and we had a very good discussion on issues of concern for people in agriculture."

Members sat in on the Senate and House Floor Sessions, both of which recognized the 40 members in the galleries at the Legislature. They also had the opportunity to sit in on committee hearings, with a few members testifying.

Although MFBF has always brought groups to the Capitol during the legislative

session, this is the first year they combined the different Calling on the Capitols to have a large group. "This was a great event for those who have attended many times, and for first-timers," said MFBF President Cyndi Johnson. "It gives you a sense of pride to see Farm Bureau participating in the political process in our state. I loved seeing our young people putting pen to paper to develop their testimonies and their leadership skills. At this event, we get to know each other better and learn about the potential of our organization. It always makes me excited to come to these events and realize the impact Montana Farm Bureau has in this state on agricultural issues."

This was the first time Joe Lackman, a Montana State University sophomore, had been to Helena. "As president of the Collegiate Farm Bureau, I considered Calling on the Capitol a great opportunity to see the legislative process and hear legislative updates for our members," said the young farmer from Hysham. "It was interesting to watch the Floor Sessions and see how bills are voted on. I really enjoyed Jon Bennion providing us with a history of politics in Montana, the trends, and how politics has changed since the 1940s. This was a great way for me to learn more being here in person."

District 8 Director Ed Bandel has attended several COTCs, and said there is always something to learn. "It's always interesting to see how our state government works and what issues they're addressing," said the Floweree wheat farmer. "It's impressive that we can come here to visit with the different agencies and our legislators, and have the chance to express our opinions."

Lentil Fertilizer Study Results Available On MSU Online

From the MSU News Service

Bozeman - Montana State University scientists and their colleagues are sharing the results of a three-year study examining the importance of inoculant and sulfur fertilizer on lentil production.

Scientists from MSU and North Dakota State University recently completed the study, which examined seven sites across the Great Plains. Researchers aimed to determine the effects of rhizobial inoculants and certain fertilizer nutrients (potassium, sulfur and micronutrients) on lentil yield at each site and nitrogen fixation at two sites. The study was led by professor Perry Miller in the MSU Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences.

According to Clain Jones, MSU Extension soil fertility specialist and professor in the LRES department, the number of acres in Montana used to produce lentils has increased dramatically in the past two decades. Lentils, which are legumes, form symbiotic relationships with rhizobia bacteria in nodules on their roots that can convert nitrogen gas to a form useful to plants, a process known as nitrogen fixation. Inoculating legumes with rhizobia can increase the likelihood and extent of nodulation and nitrogen fixation. This process makes lentils an attractive option for farmers who want to use less nitrogen fertilizer on their soil, Jones said.

The study showed that inoculated lentils produced greater yields in 30% of site-years — by an average of 344 pounds per acre — and fixed more nitrogen in 40% of site-years by an average of 14 pounds per acre. That's compared to non-inoculated lentils.

(A site-year is a test performed for one year at one site. That means a test conducted at one site for 10 years equals 10 site-years; conversely, a test conducted for one year at 10 sites also equals 10 site-years.)

"Lentil response to inoculation was not impacted by a history of legumes on study fields, but other research suggests it can impact nodulation success," Miller said. "Inoculation is likely worth the cost since nodulation failure risks an insufficient nitrogen supply."

The study compared two types of inoculants: granular and a peat-powder, seed-coat formulation. According to Jones, neither type showed a consistent advantage in lentil yields or amounts of nitrogen fixed.

"Montana soils are typically sufficient in potassium, and this was true for this study, as well," Jones said. Researchers found that potassium fertilizer did not consistently increase lentil yield or the amount of nitrogen fixed. "Still, farmers should have their soils tested for exchangeable potassium to make sure levels are sufficient," he said.

The researchers found that lentil sometimes responded to sulfur fertilizer. Yield and the amount of nitrogen fixed both increased in 20% of site-years by an



Stock photo

average of 255 and 30 pounds per acre, respectively. Low soil sulfur levels did not always result in a lentil response to sulfur fertilizer.

"However, because of several large positive yield and nitrogen fixation responses observed and the low cost of applying five pounds of sulfur per acre, sulfur fertilization is likely a good decision for many lentil producers," Jones said.

At one site-year, nitrogen fixation consistently increased as whole plant tissue sulfur concentration at early pod stage increased, while yield plateaued at tissue sulfur concentrations around 0.09%.

"This means that a sulfur fertilizer application may be justified, even when a seed yield response does not occur, since more fixed nitrogen is contained in lentil residue and hence producers may be able to decrease nitrogen fertilizer the following year," Jones said. "Organic producers who rely more upon legume cover crops for their nitrogen fertility could especially benefit from increased nitrogen contained in crop residue because of increased sulfur supply. There are affordable, organic gypsum sources that producers can use to supply sulfur."

The study's summary, "Fertilizer Fact 81: Lentil Yield and Nitrogen Fixation Response to Inoculant and Fertilizer," is now available online at landresources.montana.edu/fertilizerfacts/html/FF81.html.

Questions about this or other soil fertility topics can be directed to Jones at clainj@montana.edu or 406-994-6076. More information on soil fertility is available at the MSU Extension soil fertility website at landresources.montana.edu/soilfertility/.

NDSU Projects Crop Profits For 2023

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

The North Dakota State University Extension projected crop budgets for 2023 are available for the state's farmers, says Ron Haugen, NDSU Extension farm management specialist.

The 2023 projected profits vary by region and crop.

"The budgets are guides for large multi-county regions," says Haugen. "Returns and costs can vary considerably between producers within a region. Also, the budgets estimate returns to labor and management with no consideration of price and yield variability or risk. A perfect comparison of crops is not achieved because different levels of labor, management and risk exist."

"Generally, most crops in all regions project a profit for the year," says Haugen. "With the increase in all commodity prices, the bottom line looks good. With higher gross income there is a negative note, expenses are higher overall. Fertilizer prices and pesticide prices are far above average."

"Generally, for most crops, the projected total costs per acre have increased," adds Haugen. "Fertilizer costs per acre have decreased somewhat but are still near the high levels of 2022. Pesticide costs are flat to higher for most crops in most regions. Seed costs are somewhat flat. With our high inflation rate, fuel, repairs and ownership expenses have had increases. Cropland rents for most regions are up."

"Specialty crops may show a positive return, but usually have limited contracts and acreages, and also may have higher risk," says Haugen.

The NDSU Extension-developed budgets are available online at ndsuhq.ndsu.edu/cropcompare or by searching online for NDSU Crop Budgets.

NDSU Extension also offers an updated Crop Compare Program for 2023, which is a spreadsheet designed to compare cropping alternatives.

The program uses the direct costs and yields from the 2023 projected crop budgets for nine regions of North Dakota, but farmers are encouraged to enter the expected yields and input costs for their farm.

The user designates a reference crop and enters its expected market price. Depending on the region, a broad selection of nine to 18 crops are compared. The program provides the prices for competing crops that would be necessary to provide the same return over variable costs as the reference crop.

"Producers can compare these 'break-even' prices to expected market prices to see which crop is most likely to compete with the reference crop," says Haugen. "The program provides a tool for farmers to check changing scenarios until final planting decisions are made."

The program includes an underlying assumption that fixed costs, such as machinery ownership, land, and the owner's labor and management, do not vary among crop choices, and therefore do not need to be included in the analysis.

"In practice, there may be differences in fixed costs that should be considered," says Haugen.

"For example, there may be additional labor, management and risk associated with a competing crop," Haugen adds. "If all the labor and management is provided by the owner-operator, it would be considered a fixed cost and could be excluded. However, the farmer should add some cost if he or she would only want to produce the crop when an adequate reward would be received for the extra time and management required relative to the reference crop."

A similar rationale could be used if a competing crop is considered higher risk.

The Crop Compare program is available online at ndsuhq.ndsu.edu/cropcompare.

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Prevent The Spread Of Bacteria From Newly Hatched Poultry

Good biosecurity & hygiene practices can reduce the risk of contamination & illness from hatchlings.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

As spring approaches, backyard poultry owners and educators may be preparing for hatching season, which also means taking precautions against the spread of disease.

“Even in a small and controlled environment, biosecurity threats are present,” says Samantha Lahman, North Dakota State University Extension 4-H youth development specialist in animal science. “It is important that those working with poultry are prepared to keep these newly hatched birds and the people in contact with them healthy.”

All people and animals carry populations of germs and other organisms on and in their bodies. Zoonotic organisms are those that pose a health risk to animals and people. Some zoonotic organisms are harmless to animal carriers but can cause disease in humans.

According to NDSU Extension veterinarian Dr. Gerald Stokka, bacteria are often responsible for disease in backyard poultry.

“Even birds that look healthy and clean can transmit bacterial organisms like *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Campylobacter*,” cautions Dr. Stokka. “These bacteria are found in the droppings of poultry and can be found on the bodies of birds even when birds show no signs of illness.”

The bacteria spreads to bedding, cages, water dishes, feeders, desks and countertops, and to the hands of those handling the birds. While people often associate these bacterial infections with eating raw or undercooked poultry, infections can happen from being in close contact with contaminated equipment, handling poultry and eggs. Infections can cause symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach pain.

Good biosecurity and hygiene procedures can greatly reduce the risk of contamination and illness. Good practices for hatching small batches of poultry include:

- Locate incubators, brooding facilities and young bird pens away from where humans consume food or water.
- Once the chicks have hatched, designate one area where birds will be kept and handled. This location should have nonporous surfaces for easy cleaning and adequate ventilation.
- Thoroughly clean poultry enclosures on a regular basis. Cleaning should include both dry and wet cleaning. Dry cleaning is the removal of things like dried manure, feathers, bedding and other caked-on material that disinfectants would not sanitize. Wet cleaning should follow dry cleaning using water, detergents and



Baby chicks may carry disease-causing bacteria, but biosecurity and hygiene practices can prevent the spread of infection. (NDSU photo)

disinfectants.

- To keep both baby chicks and handlers safe, limit the holding and handling of young birds.
- Wash hands prior to and immediately after handling birds or being in contact with poultry equipment such as cages, feeders and waterers.
- Ensure young people keep their hands away from their faces and mouths when in close proximity to poultry.
- Treat any scratches or bites from poultry promptly.
- After lessons or chores are completed, check flooring, shoes and surrounding surfaces for debris.

“Taking poultry from egg to chick is a very rewarding experience when done properly,” says Lahman. “As you plan for this exciting experience, make sure you have proper biosecurity procedures in place and everyone involved is educated in proper hygiene practices. With adjustments for safe poultry hatching in place, baby chicks in the spring can continue to be an annual family and classroom tradition.”

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