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May 2022

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Spring Storms Take A Big Toll

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New Fish Bypass Channel Open At Intake; Yellowstone River



Yellowstone downstream end of bypass channel.
(Photo by USACE Asset)

By USACE, Omaha District

Billings, MT - The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the completion of the Lower Yellowstone fish bypass channel project near Glendive water is flowing and the channel is navigable.

The success of this, three-year, \$44 million construction project was due in part to the joint coordination efforts and contributions of intergovernmental organization resources to help improve the passage structure for the endangered pallid sturgeon and other native species around this Intake diversion dam.

"The bypass channel supports the recovery of the Pallid Sturgeon and will allow passage at the Intake Dam and Irrigation Headworks Project on the Yellowstone River," Carlie L. Hively, P.E. Project Manager, Civil Works Branch, USACE, Omaha District, said. "It is exciting to see this project come to fruition; to arrive at a tangible result of years of hard work and partnering of multiple agencies for the benefit of the Pallid Sturgeon."

Construction on the channel started in April 2019 and was recently completed with the removal of the cofferdams on April 9, 2022. The 2.1 mile long channel was constructed as part of the Lower Yellowstone Intake Diversion Dam Fish Passage Project, a joint federal project between USACE and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, that was designed to address fish passage concerns associated with the intake diversion dam. In addition, the project includes a new diversion structure to facilitate irrigation diversions to the Lower Yellowstone Project which was completed by USACE in Dec. 2021.

"The opening of the fish bypass channel is a great example of interagency partnership success," Ryan Newman, Reclamation's Montana Area Manager, said. "Since the early 2000s, Reclamation and USACE have been working to address passage and entrainment issues associated with the Lower Yellowstone Project. In addition to protecting pallid sturgeon, Reclamation is committed to continuing the viable and effective operation of the Lower Yellowstone Project for local irrigators."

In 1990, Pallid Sturgeons were listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act. USACE, the Wildlife Service, and Reclamation have been working in partnership to determine the effects of the Lower Yellowstone Project on the species. Two primary issues were identified, entrainment into the Lower Yellowstone main canal and lack of passage success over Intake Diversion Dam. A new screened headworks structure was completed in 2012 and addressed the canal entrainment issue. The new weir in conjunction with the bypass channel will provide passage and open approximately 165 river miles of potential spawning and larval drift habitat in the Yellowstone River.

While this portion of the project is complete, construction in the area is ongoing. The contractor, Ames Construction Inc., is still actively working on Joe's Island to reclaim construction haul roads back to natural vegetation. The contractor will rehabilitate sections of Road 551, located off State Highway 16, and Canal Road, both on the north side of the Yellowstone River at Intake. Joe's Island is expected to remain closed for the Fall of 2022 when all construction related activities will be complete.

The Lower Yellowstone Project is a 58,000-acre irrigation project located in eastern Montana and western North Dakota. The project is operated and maintained by the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District Board of Control under contract with Reclamation. The project includes the intake diversion dam, a screened headworks structure, 71 miles of main canal, 225 miles of laterals and 118 miles of drains, three pumping plants on the main canal, four supplemental pumps on the Yellowstone River and one supplemental pump on the Missouri River.

The Bureau of Reclamation is a federal agency under the U.S. Department of the Interior and is the nation's largest wholesale water supplier and second largest producer of hydroelectric power. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation opportunities, and environmental benefits. Visit our website at www.usbr.gov and follow us on Twitter @USBR.

For further information on the USACE, Omaha District's civil works projects visit: www.nwo.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works.

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Help Available For Livestock Death Losses Due To Blizzard

NDSU Extension specialists encourage ranchers to inquire about the Livestock Indemnity Program

NDSU Extension Service News

April blizzards may bring May flowers, but blizzards can also cause newborn calves and other livestock to become smothered, trampled and die due to the conditions created by adverse weather. These death losses can create an emotional and financial burden for livestock producers.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension specialists encourage ranchers to inquire about the Livestock Indemnity Program provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA).

“The Livestock Indemnity Program provides benefits to agricultural producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government,” says Karl Hoppe, NDSU Extension livestock systems specialist at the Carrington Research Extension Center. “Eligible weather events include earthquake, hail, lightning, tornado, hurricane, flood, blizzard, wildfire, extreme heat, extreme cold, straight-line winds, and eligible winter storms.”

The Livestock Indemnity Program applies to the loss of cattle, poultry, swine, sheep, horses, goats, bison and other eligible livestock.

A fact sheet for the livestock indemnity program is available on the FSA website. Search “FSA Livestock Indemnity Program.”

The fact sheet provides what is eligible livestock, eligible loss conditions, payment rates, how to file for the Livestock Indemnity Program and loss documentation.

“Ranchers must file a notice of loss with FSA within 30 days of when the loss is apparent,” says Hoppe. “They also must file an application for payment no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss occurred.”

The Livestock Indemnity Program requires a deduction for normal mortality and these need to be documented, he adds. These normal mortalities do not have to be weather related.

The normal mortality rates for cattle in North Dakota are:

- Calves weighing less than 400 pounds - 4.6%
- Calves weighing 400 to 799 pounds - 1.5%
- Calves weighing 800 pounds or more - 1%
- Adult cows - 1.6%
- Adult bulls - 2%

Hoppe advises ranchers to contact their local FSA office for Livestock Indemnity Program details and requirements as soon as possible so the proper records are collected. These may include pictures with time and date of dead livestock.

How to dispose of dead livestock

“If you experienced livestock deaths due to the recent blizzard, disposing of those carcasses will be one of your top priorities in the coming days,” says Mary Keena, NDSU Extension livestock environmental management specialist at the Carrington Research Extension Center.

In North Dakota, animals that die for any reason must be disposed of in an



The Livestock Indemnity Program provides benefits to agricultural producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather. (NDSU Photo)

approved method within 36 hours of death, says Keena. Rendering, incineration, burial, composting and landfilling are all approved methods of carcass disposal. Burning is also an approved method in certain situations but should be used as a method of last resort.

Due to the current weather conditions, landfilling and composting may be the easiest options for carcass disposal.

“If you are going to bury, be sure carcasses are placed 4 feet above the water table with 4 feet of cover,” says Keena. “If possible, bury livestock in clay soils.”

Dispose of carcasses at an approved municipal solid waste landfill. Search “DEQ ND municipal solid waste landfills” to find an approved landfill. Contact the landfill to determine disposal protocols.

Composting is an above ground burial process that uses resources already on your operation.

The materials you will need include:

- Base material: straw, old hay, coarse crop residues (corn stalks), sunflower hulls
- Bulking material: manure or spoiled fermented feedstuffs
- Cover material: straw, old hay, sawdust

To compost:

- Step 1: Place 2 feet of base material in pile or long row, depending on number of dead livestock to be composted.
- Step 2: Lay dead livestock on top of base. Have at least 1 foot of base material between perimeter of dead livestock and edge of base.
- Step 3: Cover dead livestock with 8 to 10 inches of bulking material.
- Step 4: Cover the entire pile or long row with 2 feet of cover material.

Things to remember:

- Small-sized dead livestock (livestock you can lift by hand) can be layered next to or stacked on top of one another, given there is bulking material between them so they are not touching.
- If composting ruminants, puncture the rumen to prevent it from exploding.
- Make sure pile always has sufficient cover material to keep bulking material and dead livestock covered.
- Aerate the compost every six months from early spring to late fall. To accelerate composting, aerate it every two months from early spring to late fall.
- Existing compost can be used to cover new piles or long rows.

Contact your county NDSU Extension agent with questions about disposing of dead livestock.

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ENTERTAINMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Draft Horse Competition & FREE BBQ Thurs, June 16

Demo Derby & Farm Olympics Fri, June 17

NDRA Rodeo Sat, June 18

North Star Amusements Carnival June 16-18

Adam The Great, Playing With Gravity

Wednesday, June 15

- 8-11am: 4-H Livestock Entry
- 12-3pm: Static 4-H Judging & Animal Interview
- 1-3pm: Open Class Entry
- 4pm: McKenzie Co. Farm Bureau Supper & Annual Meeting
- 6-8pm: Open Class Entry

Friday, June 17

- 9am: FFA Livestock Show
- 1pm: 4-H Livestock Sale
- 2pm: Demo Derby Registration
- 4:30pm: Farm Olympics
- 6pm: Demo Derby
- Music by Josh Kehr
- Playing With Gravity

Thursday, June 16

- 8-11:30am: Open Class Exhibit Entry
- 9am: 4-H Livestock Evaluation
- 5pm: 4-H Small Animal Judging
- 1-4pm: Open Class Exhibit Judging
- 4pm: Parade
- 5pm: Draft Horse Entry & Free BBQ
- 6pm: Draft Horse Competition

Saturday, June 18

- 9am: 4-H Livestock Showmanship Judging
- 11am: Rodeo Slack
- 1pm: 4-H Awards
- 5pm: Release of Static 4-H & Open Class Exhibits
- 6pm: NDRA Rodeo
- Music by Josh Kehr
- Playing With Gravity



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SatWilliston Woodworkers
Sun8am: 4-H Animal Exhibits Released
11am: Church Services - All Welcome

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Hay Hotline Helps Ag Producers List And Look For Available Forage Or Pasture

Online portal provides a place for farmers and ranchers to buy, sell, or donate forage or pasture

Submitted by Chelsi Bay, Montana Department of Agriculture

Helena, MT – As dry conditions persist throughout the state, the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) would like to remind farmers and ranchers that they can use the Hay Hotline, an online forum, to list their forage for sale or donation, and/or search listings for a variety of forage or pasture posted by other producers.

“Dry conditions seem to be persisting, so the need for hay and pasture will be on everyone’s minds,” said MDA Director Christy Clark. “Our Hay Hotline is a free online listing page to find hay or pasture or list a need for such. There is also an option to list donated hay if folks are in a position to help others out.”

Hay Hotline users enter their own listings and descriptions at agr.mt.gov/

Hay-Hotline. The online forum is maintained by the Montana Department of Agriculture as a service to the agricultural industry with the expectation that all buyers and sellers will treat each other in an equitable and lawful manner. The department does not facilitate sales, nor does it make representations as to the amount, kind, or quality to hay listed by participants.

As hay shortages continue to stress farm and ranch operations, the department is also reminding buyers and sellers of hay to be cognizant of the risk for fraud by considering bonds, insurance, or banking services to assist with large purchases or sales.

As Cort Jensen, Chief Legal Counsel for MDA, said, “Unfortunately, as hay prices rise, so does the risk of fraud. Producers may need to take additional steps to protect themselves from fraudsters.”

Visit agr.mt.gov to learn more about the Hay Hotline and other department services.

LOOK UP. LOOK OUT.

POWER LINE SAFETY ON THE FARM



WHAT TO DO

IF YOU CONTACT A POWER LINE:
If a power line falls across or near your machinery while you are in it, stay inside and **CALL 911**. Tell bystanders to stay away. If you must exit, jump as far as possible so no part of your body is touching the machinery when you land. **KEEP BOTH FEET TOGETHER** and shuffle or hop at least 40 feet away.

SAFETY TIPS THAT ARE ALWAYS IN SEASON

1. Know what's below. **CALL 811** before starting any digging project.
2. Always **USE A SPOTTER** to warn you of any dangers when moving equipment
3. If you strike a guy wire, **NEVER REPAIR IT YOURSELF**. Call you local utility right away.
4. **WATER CONDUCTS ELECTRICITY**, so be careful when irrigating near power lines.
5. Keep yourself and machinery **AT LEAST 10 FEET AWAY** from overhead power lines.
6. Be extra careful when operating sprayers, planters, and cultivators. **KNOW THE HEIGHT AND WIDTH OF YOUR FARM EQUIPMENT** to prevent accidental contact.

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Richland County Farmer's Market Organizational Meeting May 19

By Carrie Krug & Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland Co. Extension Agents

MSU Richland County Extension will be hosting an organization meeting for this year's Richland County Farmer's Market at 6 p.m., Thursday, May 19 at the MSU Richland County Extension Office, 1499 N Central Ave.

If you are a past vendor or are interested in becoming a vendor, you are encouraged to attend this open meeting. Market vendors can sell a varied of products; ranging from handmade items to produce, baked goods, and more.

The organization details and safety regulations of food sales at the Richland County Farmer's Market will be discussed at this meeting. Please call MSU Richland County Extension Agents Carrie Krug or Marley Manoukian at 406-433-1206 if you have any questions.

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Grasshopper Workshop Recap

Recording Now Available



**Submitted by Marley Manoukian,
MSU Richland County Extension Agent**

The grasshopper outlook for 2022 again looks troubling for much of Montana, and especially Richland County. The USDA-ARS Great Plains Laboratory and MSU Extension Richland County hosted a Grasshopper Workshop. The recording of that workshop is now available at: <https://richland.msuextension.org/AG.html>

Dr. Dave Branson, USDA-ARS in Sidney explained the importance of grasshopper biology and proper identification. The majority of grasshopper species lay their eggs in the soil in late summer and fall, and they hatch in spring and early summer. There are approximately five species of grasshoppers that hatch in late summer and over winter as nymphs. You may be seeing these grasshoppers now, but these species are not of economic concern. The life cycle of a grasshopper is also very important, as control efforts are focused on nymphal stages. Grasshopper species differ in what they eat, making proper identification key.

Gary Adams, USDA-APHIS explained different rangeland treatments and management options for grasshoppers, as well as insecticide control options that include malathion, carbaryl, and diflubenzuron. He emphasized the importance of monitoring grasshoppers on rangelands, with Memorial Day being the time when monitoring should begin. He also discussed cost share programs available with USDA-APHIS.

To conclude the program, Dr. Kevin Wanner, Montana State University Extension explained grasshopper management in croplands. He discussed control options including carbaryl, pyrethroids, and diflubenzuron. He also emphasized you should be scouting for nymphs on field edges in May and June. Dr. Wanner discussed treatment thresholds and treatment options for small grain crops, as well.

If you have any questions, please contact the MSU Richland County Extension Office at 406-433-1206 or marley.manoukian@montana.edu.



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Proposed SEC Rule Could Reach Nearly Every Farmer and Rancher

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

Washington - April 27 – The American Farm Bureau Federation joined 119 other agriculture organizations in sending a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) asking for an extension of time to comment on its proposed rule, “The Enhancement and Standardization of Climate Related Disclosures for Investors.”

The SEC - whose primary purpose is to protect investors, maintain efficient markets and facilitate capital formation - now wants to require public companies to report data about their entire supply chain. Nearly every farmer’s and rancher’s products eventually touch a publicly traded company, meaning that farmers and ranchers could be forced to report personal information and business-related data. This unprecedented overreach could create onerous reporting requirements for even small farms and ranches with few or no employees.

“This appears to be an example of overreach by the Securities and Exchange Commission,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “Farmers and ranchers are already heavily regulated by multiple agencies at the local, state and the federal level. New SEC reporting requirements will no doubt make an already complicated patchwork of regulations even more cumbersome.

“Farmers and ranchers are focused on growing the food, fuel and fiber this country needs, and have never been subjected to SEC regulations. Unlike the large corporations currently regulated by the SEC, family farms and ranches don’t have teams of compliance officers. We urge the SEC to extend the comment period to allow those in agriculture time to understand the full impact of this proposal and offer meaningful input.”

The proposed rule is 510 pages long with 1,068 technical footnotes and almost 750 direct questions, but the SEC has only allowed 39 days for review.

The proposed rule “may create multiple, new sources of substantial costs and liabilities,” the letter states. “These include almost certain reporting obligations, technical challenges, significant financial and operational disruption and the risk of financially crippling legal liabilities.”

Pure Live Seed Information from MSU Extension

By Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland County Extension Agent

As producers are preparing to start seeding, there are many factors to consider, and pure live seed (PLS) is one of them. Recommended seeding rates for crops are given in pounds of PLS per acre. Using these seeding rates would assume that every seed is viable and able to establish a plant, when in reality not every seed that is planted will result in a plant. Therefore, you must adjust the seeding rate based on the given germination and purity percentages. On a seed tag, there should be a germination percentage, which is an estimate of how many seeds are actually viable in that bag. The tag will also list other percentages that should be minimal such as weed seed, other seed, and inert matter. You can determine purity by subtracting these other percentages from 100, however, purity may already be listed on the tag as pure seed. Follow the steps below to determine the adjusted seeding rate based on your seed tag to achieve the desired stand establishment. Be sure to use whole number percentages in this calculation.

Step 1: (% germination × % purity) = PLS Index 10,000

Step 2: Seeding Rate = lbs bagged seed per acre PLS Index

Contact the MSU Richland County Extension Office with questions; 406-433-1206.

Regenerative Agriculture Key To Productive Soil, Healthy Animals

Submitted by Rebecca Colnar, Ag NewsWire

Bozeman, MT -- Regenerative farming and ranching pioneer Gabe Brown addressed a packed building April 19 at the fairgrounds in Big Timber regarding the importance of soil health and regenerative agriculture practices.

"How do we heal our soils? By practicing regenerative agriculture," the North Dakota farmer told the crowd during the Sweet Grass County Farm Bureau sponsored event, adding, "Even though some people claim regenerative agriculture would never work with their soil, anyone can build resiliency in their soils anywhere because the soil is basically sand, silt and clay."

Brown said regenerative agriculture and adaptive grazing work in synchrony with nature’s principles, including armoring the soil, maximizing diversity, integrating animals and insects, using no-till or minimal tillage, and keeping roots in the soil.

"We want to see the biology in the soil, including nematodes, protozoa, and roots. There are exudates in plant roots that build aggregation, which is important to water filtration," Brown said. "Dysfunctional, packed soil makes it impenetrable for water. Remember, it's crucial to keep the soil covered. You don't want to see bare soil—that is costing you money."

He said reseeding cropland or pasture with a variety of plants, including millet, buckwheat, daikon radishes, sunflowers, and others, mimics nature by adding diversity which in turn creates a landscape that is supportive of livestock, beneficial insects and soil health, and less affected by drought.

Brown, who raises cattle, shared that livestock plays an essential role in adaptive grazing. "Adaptive grazing allows us to be fully adaptable and flexible to ever-changing conditions. It produces the greatest results within the shortest time. There is power in stocking density, and the higher the density, the better the utilization of the soil because of their manure, urine, and their ability to spread seeds. However, you must move the cattle off to ensure plants receive adequate recovery time. The minimal time to not graze plants is 150 days, with 12-18 months of rest preferred. Regrowth starts in three days, but you will kill the plant if the cattle graze the regrowth."

He said that although not every aspect of adaptive grazing is identical or possible for every ranch, implementing even some of the practices could create better soil and additional grazing matter. An additional benefit is adaptive grazing puts more carbon back in the ground, which creates healthy soil and less carbon in the air.

"Take advantage of the natural processes because nature is self-organizing and self-healing," Brown advised. He noted that by using regenerative farming and adaptive grazing methods, farms and ranches could become more profitable due to reducing and often eventually eliminating inputs such as herbicides in crops, insecticides for livestock, and the need for cattle salt and mineral.

According to Brown, using adaptive grazing helps the soil and plants and adds to the nutrient density of the meat. He sees a time in the not-so-distant future when ranchers will receive a premium for meat that is high in phytonutrients.

"Remember, you need to implement adaptive grazing and regenerative agriculture within your context; what will work for you and your ranch," Brown said.

Spring Storms Take A Big Toll On Livestock & Ranchers

By Anna Dragseth

The combination of snow and high winds from the historic April snowstorms, have made things caused by drifts that made things difficult for livestock and ranchers, burying livestock, causing newborn animals to freeze to death, and making it difficult to get to the barn to feed animals.

Thanks to advanced warnings, many ranchers were able to get their livestock into enclosed areas, protecting them from snow drifts, but several ranchers did not have big enough facilities to house the livestock.

McKenzie County's Agricultural and Natural Resource Agent Devan Leo, said one of the biggest challenges for ranchers was just getting to their livestock. Whether it was inside or outside, the distance and high snow drifts between the animals and the rancher is what makes it hard to access the animals.

"You could be prepared all you want, but once your animals are locked inside of a building or corrals and snow gets as deep as it did, the hardest part is getting between your living space and the space you had the animals in." She said, "There is a point where your life becomes more valuable than the animal's life, so you have to make that deciding factor. At what point do you stop trying to get to the cows?"

Some ranchers in the county even slept in their tractors because they were unable to get back to their house and some producers whose cows were brushed up in tree lines spent four to five days digging to the cows to get them fed.

"It doesn't matter if they lost 1 or 100 of their cows, it has been impactful in many different ways."

Leo explained that the most detrimental factor is the after-effects of the storm; extreme temperature fluctuations can cause respiratory issues in cattle.

The other challenge is the risk of disease; the stress from the storm is causing pneumonia and scours in the calves.

"That is where their main losses are coming from, not necessarily during the storm because everyone was pretty diligent during the storm. The stress after the fact is one of the hardest parts on our livestock," said Leo.



KD Angus, Watford City, during the second snowstorm (photo submitted).



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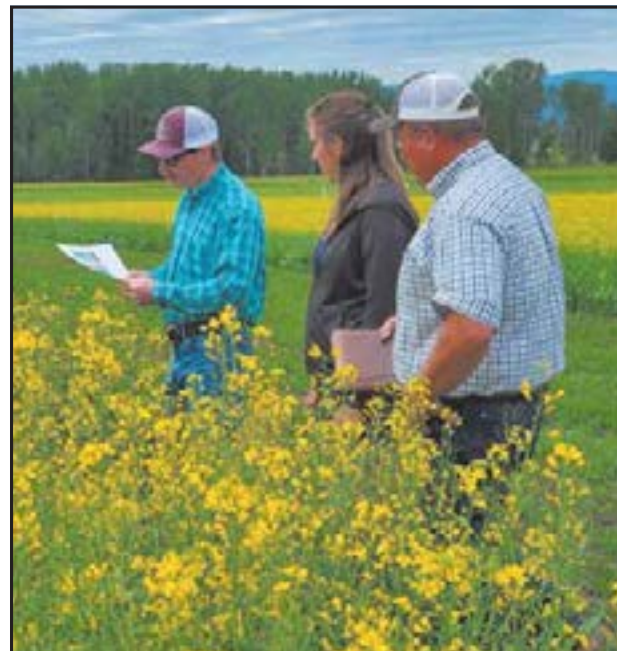
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(continued on page 12)

MSU Researcher Investigates Effects Of Planting Winter Canola In Montana

While spring canola is one of the more popular crops in Montana – 185,000 acres were planted in 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture – the winter variety has very few acres planted. However, winter canola has a higher yield than spring canola and can lead to a more lucrative harvest for growers.



Clint Beiermann, left, is currently researching winter canola to see how it can be adapted for successful planting in the Flathead region and beyond. The crop has a higher yield than spring canola and can lead to a more lucrative harvest for growers. (Photos courtesy of Clint Beiermann)

By Meaghan MacDonald-Pool, MSU News Service

Bozeman — A Montana State University researcher is looking into the benefits of planting an uncommon variety of a common crop, winter canola.

While spring canola is one of the more popular crops in Montana – 185,000 acres were planted in 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture – the winter variety has very few acres planted. However, winter canola has a higher yield than spring canola and can lead to a more lucrative harvest for growers.

Clint Beiermann, Northwestern Agricultural Research Center assistant professor of agronomy in Kalispell, is currently researching the crop to see how it can be adapted for successful planting in the Flathead region and beyond. The research center is part of the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station in MSU's College of Agriculture.

"We are really excited about winter canola because it yields higher generally in most environments and gives producers who are already growing spring canola another option for a crop they already know well," Beiermann said.

Winter canola is not typically grown in northern states due to the long, cold winters. States like Kansas and Oklahoma focus on winter canola because they have shorter, milder winters and their summers are warm. Spring-planted canola flowers mostly in July and is harvested around late September. Winter canola is planted in the late summer or early fall, has some vegetative growth development, goes dormant in the winter and flowers earlier in the spring.

One issue with winter canola is making sure it can survive the winter. To adapt the crop for Montana, Beiermann is looking at two potential factors: planting date and fertilizer.

"We've seen so far that planting dates make a big difference in the winter survivability because that's going to affect how much time it has in the fall to germinate and grow," Beiermann said. "In those earlier planted times, those canola plants are going to reach a larger stage before they go dormant in the fall. So far in our one-year study, we've seen better survivability from those earlier planted times."

Beiermann's research is also being funded by the Montana Fertilizer Adviso-

ry Committee, which allows Beiermann to expand his winter canola research to four sites across Montana, in the Flathead valley, central Montana, southcentral Montana and western Montana. Through the other sites, Beiermann can test the survivability of the plant in a state that has vastly different climates. Beiermann will try different fertilizer rates, coupled with planting dates, to also test how those two variables can factor in the vitality of the plant.

"I think the fertilizer is going to be a key to (its success rate). That along with seeing how different planting dates across four different sites in Montana will affect our outcomes," he said. "I think we are going to see some really interesting results on this trial."

"The work being done by Clint and his team and the rest of our researchers across the state is pivotal to aiding Montana growers and producers looking for new and smart ways to run their businesses," said Darrin Boss, head of the Department of Research Centers and assistant research professor of animal science.

Beiermann visualizes a strong future for winter canola adoption in the state, but there are some potential setbacks.

For one, there is a limit to how early a grower can plant a crop without interfering with another crop grown before winter. In some regions of the state, where winters are colder, harsher and longer, potential planting dates could be as early as August, which makes winter canola's adoption difficult to add into an existing cropping system.

While this may cause some issues for some growers, Beiermann said there are some regions he believes the adoption of winter canola can be successful.

"Fitting winter canola into your system if you have a fallow field in a given year is an option," Beiermann said. "The encouraging part is a lot of Montana is in small grains production that has a fallow period in their cropping system. The Flathead is not a region where there is a fallow cropping season because we have so much rainfall, but drier regions that have fallow periods to accumulate moisture would be best. I am excited for the potential there and that they could achieve a planting date by planting during a fallow season."

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Potential For Grass Tetany

Marley Manoukian, MSU Richland County Extension Agent

As grass begins to grow following the much-needed moisture, there is a potential for grass tetany to occur. Grass tetany is a serious metabolic disorder in cattle that is a result of two issues occurring simultaneously: 1) lactating animals have high magnesium requirements, and 2) lush, green grass is low in magnesium and unable to meet such requirements.

Grass tetany is caused by low levels of magnesium in the blood and affects lactating cows grazing lush, green grass. Magnesium requirements are high in lactating animals and increase as their milk production increases. Peak lactation in beef cattle occurs 60-80 days postpartum. Additionally, animals have a limited amount of magnesium reserves in their bodies and require a consistent intake from their diet to maintain proper blood magnesium levels, especially during these

times of increased requirements.

Rapidly growing grass is low in magnesium. This problem is further complicated as the high potassium and crude protein content of the growing grass interferes with the absorption of magnesium in an animal's rumen. Older forage is higher in magnesium content compared to new growth. Grass tetany is more prevalent when grazing areas with minimal old forage leftover from the previous year.

Onset of grass tetany can be rapid and often times the first sign may be finding animals dead with evidence of struggle. Symptoms of live animals include convulsions, weakness, disorientation, or aggression. Consult a veterinarian if you observe symptoms. Prevention of grass tetany is key. Provide a consistent supply of magnesium, which could include a salt and mineral mix or lick tubs which all are available in "high-mag" formulations.

Please contact the MSU Richland County Extension Office if you have any questions; 406-433-1206 or marley.manoukian@montana.edu.

Spring Storms Take A Big Toll...

(Continued from page 9)

Some producers picked up the calves and brought them into shelter right after they were born, which means they didn't get a chance to suck colostrum from the cow. "So, they missed that first initial shot of immunity right there.

Although the storm had devastating effects on livestock, ranchers across the area are thankful for the precipitation.

People throughout the region are hoping the moisture created by the blizzard could be a turning point to move to a wetter cycle, but McKenzie County is still in a D3 drought status.

Unfortunately, all the snow does not equate to rain. "During the first storm over Easter weekend, we may have had 18-24 inches of snow across the county of snow, but that only equates to 1.5-2 inches of actual moisture," explained Leo. "The second storm event, was a lot more wet, but still we only received about 2-3 inches of moisture"

Altogether, the county only received 4-5 inches of actual moisture, considering the three feet of snow they received over the past two snow events.

On top of this, the county has had zero growing degree-days since the week before Easter. "We need consecutive growing degree days to stimulate the grass again and we still have a lot of areas covered with snow." She said, "Producers will need to draw back to turn out their livestock; just because we see green does not mean we should turn out. People may be low on feed, but we need to really hold off if we want the grass to get us through the summer."

Although the exact loss of cattle will not be known until the snow melts, many ranchers have yet to get to all their cattle. "There are still some deep residual drifting areas, where producers know there are dead livestock under the drifts."

"Bottom line, it is too early to tell the impact the storms had on the drought; we will not know the true impact of the storm until all the snow melts."

NDSU extension is evaluating the storm's impact on the state's livestock industry. The information they collect will determine the need for assistance programs and areas with the greatest needs. For more information, producers are encouraged to contact their local extension agent.



KD Angus, Watford City, during the second snowstorm (photo submitted).

Free Counseling Services Now Available To Montana's Agricultural Community

Frontier Psychiatry partners with the Montana Department of Agriculture to provide access to counseling services for Montana producers

Submitted by Kerri Huso, Senior Communications Manager, Frontier Psychiatry

Helena, MT - In an effort to provide support for Montana's agricultural community, Frontier Psychiatry has partnered with the Montana Department of Agriculture to provide free access to counseling. Funded through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), this partnership will offer a variety of services, including individual counseling and medication management, at no cost to the participant. Telehealth services ensure broad access to care and maximum privacy to the individuals in the program.

Farmers and ranchers in Montana have demanding jobs that are often complicated by economic uncertainty, vulnerability to weather events, and isolation. Rural agricultural communities also have limited access to mental health services and face the stigma associated with asking for help. The Counseling Access for Montana Ag (CAMA) program was created to address these challenges and ensure that farm and ranch families are receiving the support they need when experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns.

"Working in agriculture is stressful—plain and simple," said Christy Clark,

Montana Department of Agriculture director." Montana's farmers and ranchers are carrying heavy workloads, braving the elements no matter the weather, not to mention taking care of equipment, animals, family members, and everything else that comes along with their work of feeding the world. Our department is excited to roll out resources to ensure our producers are taken care of first and foremost, because they are truly the most important part of their operation."

Frontier Psychiatry CEO Eric Arzubi, MD, explains, "Any farmer or rancher can tell you, farm life is stressful. In the last two years alone, our state's producers have faced a pandemic, a worsening drought, financial pressures due to fluctuating commodity prices, labor shortages, and trade disruptions. We are excited to be supporting our Montana farmers and ranchers by increasing access to mental health resources no matter where they live."

The program is open to any Montanan who is involved in the agriculture community including farmers, ranchers, family members, and employees. Those interested can visit frontier.care/beyondtheweather to learn more and schedule their initial appointment.

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Extreme Weather Expected To Delay Pasture Turnout

NDSU Extension specialists warn ranchers to ensure grazing readiness before turnout.

NDSU Extension Service News

Following a cooler-than-normal spring 2022 and the 2021 drought, ranchers should expect a delay in grass development and growth this spring.

“Air temperature is the main environmental factor that determines the rate of grass development,” says Miranda Meehan, North Dakota State University Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. “Each leaf produced on a stem requires a specific amount of accumulated heat, or heat units. The temperature when plants initiate development, or the base temperature, is 32 F for cool-season and 40 F for warm-season grasses. The temperature or heat units that a plant needs to accumulate to produce a leaf can be expressed as growing degree days.”

According to Kevin Sedivec, rangeland management specialist and interim director of the NDSU Central Grasslands Research Extension Center at Carrington, perennial grasses start to accumulate growing degree days the first day after March 15 that the average daily air temperature exceeds 32 F for five consecutive days. The number of growing degree days needed to reach grazing readiness varies between species from 443 days for crested wheatgrass to over 1,000 for most native species. Search online for “NDSU Extension Determining Grazing Readiness” for more information.

“Grazing readiness is the developmental stage where the plant is able to recover from the stress of grazing,” says James Rogers, Extension forage crops production specialist at the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center near Minot. “Grazing readiness for most domesticated pasture is at the 3-leaf stage, whereas grazing readiness for most native range grasses is the 3 1/2-leaf stage.

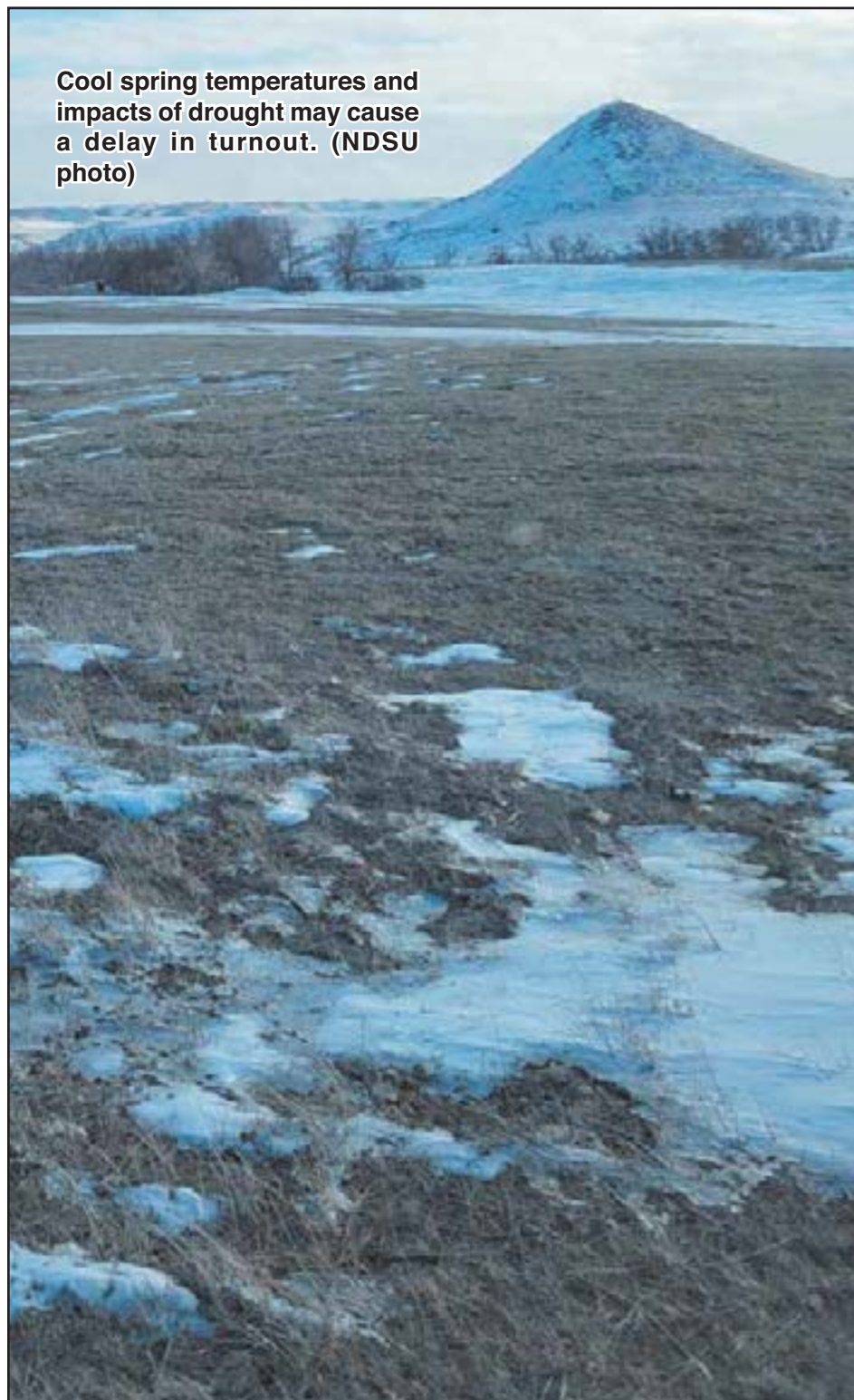
All cool-season grasses, which are the dominant grasses in North Dakota, initiate growth from a tiller that was established the previous growing season. However, drought and/or grazing stress during the fall of 2021 may have caused tillers to die, setting back plant development this spring.

“Pastures that have had tiller loss must be given adequate time to recover,” says Sedivec. “Grazing too early in the spring can result in decreased total forage production for the entire grazing season. You may sacrifice 45% to 60% of forage production for the year by grazing too early.”

Grazing too early will reduce plant vigor, thin existing stands, lower total forage

(continued on next page)

Cool spring temperatures and impacts of drought may cause a delay in turnout. (NDSU photo)



State Hail Insurance Program Enters 106th Year

Applications Available Online

Submitted by Chelsi Bay

Helena, MT – For over 100 years, the Montana State Hail Insurance program has provided vital hail coverage to producers in every corner of the state. With planting season right around the corner, the Montana Department of Agriculture is reminding folks to contact the program and get covered.

“The Montana State Hail Insurance Program was established over 100 years ago at the request of producers to fill coverage gaps in hail insurance. Due to the support of Montana producers, the program remains strong and to this day and is an effective tool to provide crop insurance for hail,” said Director Christy Clark.

Producers can insure crops against hail damage at the maximum coverage rate of \$75 per acre for dryland and \$114 per acre for irrigated land. Rates charged are a percentage of the insured amount and vary by county. A detailed list of rates by county and crop can be found by visiting the Department’s website. Policies are available for purchase until Aug. 15, 2022. Policies are effective at 12:01 a.m. the day following the date of application.

Application forms are available online or by calling the State Hail office. Completed forms can be emailed, mailed, faxed, or used as a reference when contacting the State office. Staff is available to process policies, file claims, and help answer any questions producers may have regarding coverage options.

Extreme Weather...

(continued from previous page)

production, and increase disease, insect and weed infestations, says Rogers. Pastures and range damaged by grazing too early and that are severely overgrazed may take several years of deferment or even rest before the stand regains productivity.

A loss of forage production due to grazing prior to grazing readiness will reduce the recommended stocking rate and/or animal performance.

“Due to the combination of cool temperatures and drought stress, producers should expect delays in grazing readiness this spring and manage accordingly,” says Meehan. “This would include avoiding grazing native range until grazing readiness has been achieved.”

Strategies to avoid grazing native range prior to grazing readiness include:


- Grazing domesticated grass pastures, such as crested wheatgrass and smooth brome, in May.
- Providing supplemental forage to livestock on domesticated pasture or hay land.
- Using winter annuals that were established last fall for early spring grazing or hay.
- Continuing dry lot feeding in May.

“While it may be tempting to start grazing early due to a lack of forage resources, it can have long-term impacts on forage production,” warns Sedivec. “Remember, it takes grass to grow grass. Early spring grazing, especially following a drought, can be costly in terms of total forage production during the entire grazing season.”

The Montana State Hail Insurance program was created at the request of producers in 1917 to provide basic hail insurance coverage on any crop grown in Montana. The program is directed by a five-member board consisting of the Department director, state insurance commissioner, and three producers.

The Montana Department of Agriculture’s mission is to serve Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information about the Department, please visit agr.mt.gov.


Contact Information: Montana State Hail Insurance Program; P.O. Box 200201, Helena, MT 59620; Email: agrmail@mt.gov; Toll Free: 1-844-515-1571; Fax: 406-444-9442.




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