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Ramping Up Biosecurity

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Poultry & Bird Owners Encouraged To Ramp Up Biosecurity Plans Now

NDSU Extension specialists have developed tips for reducing transmission of HPAI.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is a disease carried by wild birds and affects domestic birds. Avian influenza is caused by the influenza Type A virus (influenza A). The virus is shed in the feces and respiratory secretions of infected birds and is able to survive for weeks in cool, damp environments.

While the transmission rate from animals to humans is low, it is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be shared between species. There have been several detected cases in wild mammals, including two cases in red fox in North Dakota.

With millions of birds set to begin migrating this spring, now is the time for poultry and bird owners to ramp up biosecurity efforts.

“One of the first clinical signs of HPAI is sudden, unexplained death,” says Dr. Gerald Stokka, North Dakota State University Extension veterinarian and livestock stewardship specialist. “Most HPAI cases are reporting a decline in water and feed consumption prior to the unexplained death.”

Decreased egg production and depression in layers may be another sign that birds are not feeling well. Purple or dry combs, being quieter than normal, frequent laying down and swelling around eyes are other symptoms birds may experience.

“The best way to reduce the potential for transmission of HPAI is to reduce interaction between wildlife and domestic flocks,” says Dr. Stokka. “Wild birds and mammals, such as foxes, coyotes and raccoons, are transmission vectors to your domestic flocks.”

NDSU Extension specialists have developed tips for reducing transmission of HPAI.

To reduce transmission between wildlife and domestic birds:

- If possible, keep poultry housed until the risk for transmission has decreased. Non-lethal methods to deter wildlife are available on the U.S. Department of Agriculture wildlife damage webpage: aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/sa_reports/ct_wildlife+damage+management+technical+series.
- Reduce the attractiveness for wildlife to stop at your place by cleaning up litter and spilled feed around your domestic flock housing.
- If you come in contact with or handle wildlife, change into clean clothes, wash your hands and disinfect your footwear prior to contact with domestic flocks.
- Report sick or deceased wildlife to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department at <https://gf.nd.gov/wildlife/diseases/mortality-report>.
- In the event you need to handle or dispose of carcasses to reduce potential interactions, be sure to follow the appropriate procedures: nds.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza.

To reduce transmission between domestic flocks:

- Keep your distance. Restrict access to your property and your flock. Allow contact from people who care for your birds but minimize visitors.



Poultry farmers should monitor for signs of HPAI and practice good biosecurity. (Pixabay photo)

- Do not haul disease home. If you have been near other poultry or bird owners, such as at feed stores, clean and disinfect car and truck tires. New birds should be kept separate from your flock for at least 30 days.

- Do not borrow disease from your neighbor. Do not share lawn and garden equipment, tools or bird supplies with your neighbor or other flock owners.

“The best defense against HPAI is having a biosecurity plan in place,” says Mary Keena, NDSU Extension livestock environmental management specialist. “It is your job as a flock owner to create a line of separation between your clean flock and the potential unclean issues that wildlife or visitors may bring.”

More information about biosecurity can be found on the USDA Defend the Flock Resource Center webpage: www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program.

“Poultry testing positive for HPAI are prohibited by law from entering the marketplace,” says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. “Poultry and poultry products are safe to eat, and proper handling and cooking is always advised.”

To date, in 2023, there have been no positive HPAI cases in domestic poultry or birds in North Dakota. Report sick birds to your local veterinarian. If you do not have a local veterinarian for your flock, contact the North Dakota State Veterinarian’s office at 701-328-2655.

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North Dakota 4-H Foundation Honors Century Families, Hall of Fame Inductee

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation honored one Hall of Fame inductee and five North Dakota 4-H Century Families recently.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation recognized its 4-H Hall of Fame inductee and five North Dakota 4-H Century Families during its Awards and Donor Recognition Luncheon in Bismarck March 28.

"We're glad to recognize these 2022 honorees after a December blizzard postponed this recognition," said Deb Clarys, North Dakota 4-H Foundation chair from Center, ND. "These honorees represent the best of long-term service to North Dakota 4-H."

Dean Aakre, recently retired North Dakota 4-H activities coordinator, was inducted into the North Dakota 4-H Hall of Fame. The five 4-H Century Families honored were:

- Dwight and Christina Dockter family, Stutsman County, 115 years of 4-H participation
- Dennis and Linda Goltz family, Sargent and Traill counties, 145 years of 4-H participation
- Ervin and Ruthann Helmuth family, Pierce County, 169 years of 4-H participation
- Jason and Peggy Leiseth family, McKenzie County, 131 years of 4-H participation
- Jason and Carrie Odenbach family, Stutsman County, 136 years of 4-H participation

Any family whose years as 4-H members, leaders and/or volunteers add up to 100 or more is eligible to be named a North Dakota 4-H Century Family.

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation's 4-H Hall of Fame award recognizes an individual for their outstanding leadership and commitment to 4-H on a local, county, regional and state level.

Aakre retired as the 4-H youth development specialist last year. He joined NDSU Extension in Stutsman County as an assistant agent in 1983 and joined the state staff in 1987. Prior to that, he was a vocational agriculture teacher at Lisbon High School and Jamestown High school.

Nominator Karla Meikle succeeded Aakre as state 4-H activities coordinator and was once a 4-H'er working with him in Stutsman County. She said Aakre is especially known and appreciated for his work at fairs.



The Jason and Peggy Leiseth family is recognized as a North Dakota 4-H Century Family. Pictured are (from left): Vicki Monsen, North Dakota 4-H Foundation board member; Jason and Peggy Leiseth; and Deb Clarys, North Dakota 4-H Foundation chair. (NDSU photo)

"Even then (in Stutsman County), it was difficult to pin him down and ask a question, as he was everywhere on the fairgrounds, meeting new families, working with youth and ensuring a smooth-running 4-H Achievement Days," Meikle said. "I know this, as I was one of those 4-H members he assisted."

"Dean has taught many youth about agriculture and worked with many crops, range and livestock contests," Meikle said. "The North Dakota State Fair 4-H program would not have happened for the last 30-plus years without Dean's hand in ensuring all youth were taken care of and able to highlight their 4-H exhibits. He had a great rapport with everyone he came in contact with at the fair."

Meikle said Aakre also shared his knowledge of parliamentary procedure and other topics, and he was always organized, patient and even-tempered.

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Brorson School students (L-R) 3rd grader Rosalie Stevenson, 4th grader Titus Edinger, 3rd grader Ryker MacGrady and 1st grader Xander MacGrady enjoy some ice cream in a bag.



Ag in the Classroom

Lambert FFA member Cortney Hofman educates students about foods containing wheat.

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The Sidney Chamber Ag Committee, Sidney and Lambert FFA and MSU Extension held Ag in the Classroom day for Richland County students at the Richland County Event Center April 20.

Right: Lambert 3rd graders (L-R) Cohen Thornton and Braelyn Sattler enjoy making ice cream in a bag.



Sidney FFA member Corey Christensen educates students about beef products.

McKenzie County 4-H Archers Receive Honors At State Indoor Match



ND State 4-H Indoor Championship Beginner Barebow Team (L-R) Payton Schultz, Noah Ellis and KayDee Ceynar. Not pictured is Paul Smith. (Submitted photo)

Submitted by Marcia Hellandsaas,
McKenzie County NDSU Extension Agent

McKenzie County 4-H Archers took home first place honors in the Barebow Beginner Division at the 4-H Archery Indoor Championships held at the North Dakota State Fairgrounds in Minot on April 25. Team members were: KayDee Ceynar, Payton Schultz, Paul Smith and Noah Ellis. KayDee captured third place individually and Payton received fifth place honors.

In addition, the Senior Freestyle team placed second. Members were, Ryan Pingel, Dawson Beadle, Dylon Cargo and Hailey Wendlandt.

Lastly, the Senior Bare Bow team received third place honors. Those team members were, Jake and Clay Ceynar, Ryan Pingel and Ethan Morris.

Finishing off, master shooters Clay and Jake Ceynar placed third and fourth respectively.

This event is the culmination of indoor matches held across North Dakota. Around 300 archers participated in this competition.

Thirty-seven archers from McKenzie County participated in the state contest. These individuals, not named above were, Cory Crites, Nick Ellis, Boston, Foss, Jordyn and Peyton Grace; Kesley Haak, Jax Hovde, Anna and Casey Hovland; Jacob Jaggi, Hayden and Rhys Kincaid; Lloen, LaPaz,, Colt and McCoy Lawlar; Alani and Dillon Morris; Luke Pederson, Aria, Brianna and Jacob Rink; Parker Schmidt, John Signalness, Hailey and Luke Transtrom; and Malakai Wendlandt.

McKenzie County 4-H archery has 90 members ages 8-18.

Volunteer coaches for McKenzie County are, Dustin Ceynar, Brent Schwan, Blaine Hovland, Alex Schmidt, Andrew Grace, Bonnie Reeves and Brandon Beadle.

For more information on the McKenzie County 4-H Archery Program, contact NDSU Extension/McKenzie County at 701-444-3451.

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Considerations For Annual Forage Production This Season

NDSU Extension specialists offer tips for planning annual forage crops.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

This year's long winter and late spring have eaten into livestock hay supplies.

"North Dakota ranchers will need another good year of hay production to restore what was fed during this winter and build a cushion for future hay demands created by environmental conditions," says James Rogers, North Dakota State University Extension forage specialist.

NDSU Extension specialists recommend several annual forage crops that will produce a quality hay product that can meet nutritional needs of many classes of livestock.

Early spring planting (April-May)

In early spring, recommended cool-season cereal forages include oats, triticale and barley.

"These crops can produce good yields with excellent nutrient value when harvested from late boot to soft dough stages of development," says Rogers. "Oat and triticale yields can be slightly higher than barley or wheat. These crops can also be planted into late June and can achieve good yields if rainfall is adequate."

Seed costs and availability may dictate selection more than agronomic characteristics of the cool-season cereals. Cool-season cereals will take 60 to 80 days after establishment to reach a harvest point. These crops can be planted as a monoculture or blended with a legume crop such as forage pea.

"If planted as a monoculture, take a soil test prior to establishment to measure residual soil nitrate availability and adjust applications rates," advises Rogers. "These cool-season cereal crops are all potential nitrate accumulators, and nitrogen application should be kept to 25 pounds nitrogen per acre for each ton of anticipated dry matter production."

In a research study at the NDSU North Central Research Extension Center (NCREC) in Minot, nitrogen response for forage oats peaked at 50 pounds nitrogen per acre.

Planting a cool-season cereal and legume blend can eliminate the need for nitrogen fertilizer. Many commercial seed companies offer a 60% forage pea, 40% forage cereal blend that is ready to plant. These blends should be harvested based on maturity of the cool-season cereal.

Another option is to blend with a warm-season annual grass, such as foxtail millet or sorghum-sudan, which can produce two harvests from a single planting. At the NCREC, a blend of 25% forage oats and 75% sorghum-sudan had higher total yield from two harvests compared to a single harvest of forage oats and was similar in yield to two harvests of a sorghum-sudan monoculture.

Early summer planting

As the season moves into late spring and early summer, production potential shifts to the warm-season grasses. Annual millets (foxtail, proso, pearl and Japanese) are the most popular of the millets used for hay crops in the northern Plains.



A good annual forage production strategy helps meet nutritional needs of livestock. (NDSU photo)

The foxtail millets offer good production, nutrient content and drought tolerance and will mature at 55 to 70 days, depending on variety. They can be planted as a monoculture or in combination with a legume or other warm season annual grasses. Regrowth potential of foxtail millet is little to none when harvested closely for hay.

Pearl millet has higher yield potential than the foxtail millets and has good regrowth potential following harvest. Pearl millet works well on lighter soils types and can be used for haying or grazing. Pearl millet does not respond well to alkaline soils. Brown mid-rib (BMR) and dwarf types are available in some pearl millet varieties. The millets can also be nitrate accumulators but tend to accumulate at lower levels than cool-season cereals. Unlike sorghums, millets do not accumulate prussic acid.

"Pearl millet is a high water use grass that also requires heat to fully be productive," says Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist. "If conditions are dry and the forecast is for droughty conditions, pearl millet would not be recommended."

According to Rogers, the crop with the highest production potential is the sorghums: forage sorghum, sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids. This group establishes best when soil temperatures are at 60 degrees Fahrenheit and

rising. Within this group, many combinations of production traits are offered, such as BMR with lower fiber and higher digestibility, dwarf types, male sterile, dry stalk, maturity, and others. They can be planted as a monoculture or combinations of legumes, millets or other crops.

As with the other crops listed here, sorghums can be nitrate accumulators. They also can develop prussic acid. Piper sudangrass has the lowest potential for prussic acid development of the sorghums. New sorghum types are being developed that contain no dhurrin, which is a precursor to prussic acid development and will be a welcome addition to the market. Harvesting forage sorghum and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids contain a large stem and can be difficult to achieve sufficient dryness to harvest for good quality, dry hay. Varieties with the dry stem trait can aid in dry down time.

These forages are not restricted to use as a hay crop. All have the potential to be grazed or made into a silage. For annual forages with good regrowth potential, such as the sorghums and pearl millet, take advantage of the flexibility the crop offers and consider haying the first cutting and grazing the second.

"Think in terms of increasing the diversity of mixtures, which can often extend seasonal distribution of forage, lower production risk and increase forage nutrient content," says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. "Be aware of any chemical applications that might have been made to the planting area prior to establishment. Some residual soil chemical activity may interfere with seed germination. Also consider seed costs and availability. Pick the forage that works best for you in your growing season of opportunity."

For more information on annual forage options for the Northern Plains, refer to the NDSU Extension publication, Annual Cover Crop Options for Grazing and Haying in the Northern Plains ([ndsu.ag/covercrops](https://www.ndsu.edu/covercrops)). Reach out to your NDSU Extension county agent for assistance in selecting the right annual forage crop for your system.

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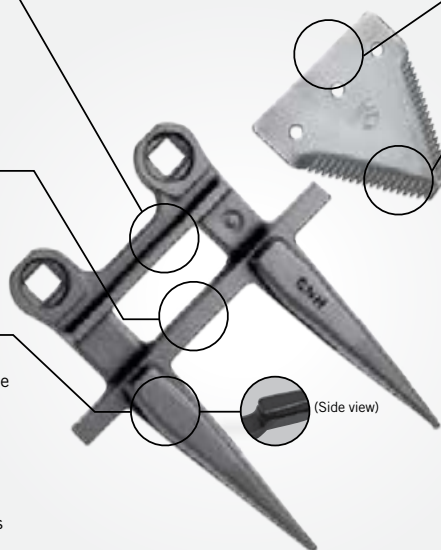
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Hellandsaas Retires After 50 Years Of Helping Kids & The Elderly

"Working with kids and the elderly is always fun," states Marcia Hellandsaas, retiring McKenzie County Extension Agent after nearly 34 years.

Hellandsaas graduated from Regent High School, has a BS degree in home economics from NDSU and began her career in Williston working for the North Dakota Health Department as an environmental health inspector, inspecting restaurants, bars, motels, campgrounds, in northwest North Dakota.

She noticed an opening ad for an extension agent in Watford City, which was an opportunity to work with 4-H kids and their families. She moved to Watford City, not to only serve 4-H kids in McKenzie County but working with the Dunn County 4-H program for 20 years. "I had to be on my toes all the time because there was a time change between Watford City and Killdeer," she says.

Every year she has been very instrumental in getting kids ready for fairs, events and shows.

Now there is a network between counties so a lot of the counties can work together on different projects. Currently, she is working with Mandan and Fargo on Suicide Prevention.

She has around 300 4-H kids involved in various projects and programs. Her teams in various events sometimes bring home top honors.

"Watford City is great at volunteering for a variety of services which makes my job easier," she finishes.

Hellandsaas along with her hectic lifestyle manages to serve on the First Lutheran Church Board, Heritage Park Board and McKenzie County Fair Board.

She has a son, Eric, who is married and lives on the farm.



Marcia Hellandsaas
(Photo submitted)



MFU's Eastern MT Women's Conference Provides Support, Inspiration To 35 Attendees

More than 35 women enjoyed a weekend of learning and networking during the first ever Eastern Montana Women's Conference hosted by Montana Farmers Union in Sidney.

"It brought people together in the community and celebrating women and agriculture," said Rachel Prevost, MFU's member services director.

The inaugural event held earlier this month featured panel discussions on cooperatives, succession planning, managing stress in agriculture, leadership development; hands-on workshops; and plenty of time to get to know the other attendees.

"People were really excited that there was an event coming to their area," said Peyton Cole, who planned the conference.

Attendee Darlis Nordhagen attended to reconnect with MFU after watching her mom be involved with Montana Farmers Union and National Farmers Union when Darlis was a girl, as well as network with women in her area.

"Support networks are important for all people, but, in our exceedingly remote area with harsh weather that can be even further isolating, opportunities to network with other rural women are extremely important to well-being," Nordhagen said.

During the conference, Nordhagen was struck by how many resources are available.

"It can feel pretty lonely and overwhelming as a woman farmer and rancher in eastern Montana. The conference was a reminder that there are many women involved in a vast array of agriculture businesses in eastern Montana, and there are many resources available for help and inspiration," Nordhagen said.

Since the conference, Nordhagen already has started utilizing some of those resources, including joining MFU and becoming a member of the Montana Premium Processing Cooperative, as well as tapping into MFU resources for a co-op startup project.

Also during the women's event, Montana Farmers Union launched the statewide Montana Farmers Union Book Club, adding another option for folks to gather, network, and talk about the importance of family farms.

The first book selection is "The Farmer's Lawyer" by Sarah Vogel and registration is open at <https://montanafarmersunion.com/MFU-bookclub/>. For the club's first meeting, Vogel will join participants via Zoom for a Q&A and book discussion at 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 17.

Because the Eastern MT Women's Conference was so well-received by the attendees, plans are already in the works for another, Cole said.

"We're excited to do this next year," she added.

To learn more about other opportunities and upcoming events through Montana Farmers Union, go to www.montanafarmersunion.com.



Photo submitted



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McKenzie County 4-H Events Held April 25



2023 Communications Arts and Project Expo participants and judges. Pictured (L-R) back row, Kathy Skarda, Ethan Roffler, Ethan Morris, Dillon Morris, Nicholas Ellis, Hadley Transtrom, KC Korslien, Noah Ellis, Marcia Hellandsaas, extension agent; and Carol Kieson; middle (L-R) Gavyn Darrington, Gracyn Darrington, Ellie Pennington, Kenley Korslien, Charlie Wisness, Kash Korslien, Graham Darrington and Piper Taylor; front (L-R) Hazel Wisness, Levi Pennington and Annibel Pennington. (Submitted photo)

Submitted by Marcia Hellandsaas, McKenzie County NDSU Extension Agent

The 2023 McKenzie County 4-H Project Expo and 4-H Communication Arts Events were held on April 25 at the NDSU Extension/McKenzie County Office.

The 4-H Project Expo event provides youth with the opportunity to plan, prepare and display an article, educational or food related project. 4-H members also verbally express themselves to a judge. At the close of the contest, ribbon awards were presented to each participant.

Senior (13-1) Ethan Roffler was awarded a Grand Champion ribbon on his display, "Pawsitively Painting."

Junior (8-12) Charlie Wisness was also awarded a Grand Champion ribbon on his "Horse Nutrition."

Ethan and Charlie were invited to attend the State 4-H Project Expo event on July 24 at the North Dakota State Fair, Minot.

The 4-H Communication Arts event is designed to help youth develop speaking abilities. Participants learn about the importance of organizing information and/or equipment to tell and/or show others what they are learning in 4-H. How they present themselves is the number one judging criteria.

Senior General Demonstration Category entry Ethan Morris was awarded a Grand Champion ribbon for his "Defeat of the Egg."

In the Junior Division (8-12), General Demonstrations Category, ribbons were assigned as follows:

- Ellie Pennington, Grand Champion, for "How to Transplant a Plant"
- Noah Ellis, participation ribbon for "Egg Fall Flat"
- Nicholas Ellis and Dillon Morris, participation ribbon for "The Egg Smasher"
- Piper Taylor, participation ribbon for "How to Make Slime"

- Hadley Transtrom, participation ribbon for "Leather Earrings"

In the Illustrated Talk Category, Junior Division, KC Korslien received a Grand Champion ribbon for her "Beef! What's for Dinner" presentation.

A Grand Champion ribbon was awarded to Kash and Kenley Korslien for their Junior Division Mass Media presentation entitled, "K & K News."

Lastly, in the Dramatic Presentation category, Juniors Gavyn and Gracyn Darrington received a Grand Champion ribbon for "Mabel & Marge."

Cloverbud members (ages 5-7, non-competitive) were awarded participation ribbons as follows:

- Graham Darrington for "How to Make a Pine Cone Bird Feeder"
- Annibel Pennington for "How to Make a Bottle for a Calf"
- Levi Pennington for "Rope Handling"
- Hazel Wisness for "Fruit Smoothie"

Communication Arts participants were invited to participate in the 4-H District Communication Arts event to be held on May 31 in Williston.

Kathy Skarda and Carol Kieson served as judges for the events.

NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development's mission is to create supportive learning environments for youth and adults to reach their fullest potential as capable, competent and caring adults. To carry out this mission, 4-H provides hands-on experiences through projects, activities and events. Youth are involved through clubs, school enrichment programs, independent study, after-school programs and special interest groups. 4-H is the largest and only research-based youth organization in our state.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is available to all youth and information is offered in every county in North Dakota. For more information, contact the NDSU Extension/McKenzie County office at 701-444-3451.

A Sweet Donation



On April 12, Sidney Sugars made a donation of a 2,000 lb. super sack of sugar to the Richland County Food Bank. Pictured from left Cassandra Markwald, Balin Rogers and David Smith. (Submitted photo)

Submitted by
Cassandra Markwald,
retired Lab Assistant
Chemist, Richland
County Food Bank
volunteer

The Richland County Food Bank has relied on Sidney Sugars for help meeting our client's needs. Company operations are winding down. The food bank has been supported by Sidney Sug-

ars for 20+ years. At the food bank we have begun to put our relationship with the company and our community in focus.

The food bank board would like to thank Dave Garland, and the employees of Sidney Sugars for their support through the years.

Wednesday, April 12, Sidney Sugars employ-

ees delivered 2,000 lbs. of sugar to the Food Bank building. This donation will allow us to support our clients over an extended time.

Thank you to the beet farmers, management and the workers that have supported so many non-profits like the Richland County Food Bank through the years.

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

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

By Meagan Dotson

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

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

The Richland County Fair & Rodeo is still waiting to announce the opening act, but, according to Pam Shelmidine, fair manager, they have scheduled a 'young, up and coming opener'.

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

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

"It really should be an awesome show," said Shelmidine of the Montana based 406 FMX entertainers. "It is always great to get local talent to showcase in our arena."

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

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

Additionally, there will be The Magic Bean, which is an agricultural education show for kids, explaining to them in fun fashion how a little bean seed becomes



food on the table. There will also be a pedal tractor pull for the kids that will happen three times each day of the fair. These acts will be set up in the grassy area behind the fair office and there will be signs set up to make sure everyone knows where to go to take in these fun events.

Don't forget to swing into the carnival and check out the more than 100 vendors that will be set up in and outside the Event Center. Get your grub on for a good cause and sample some delicious fair food while supporting a variety of nonprofits that raise a bulk of funds for their organizations feeding hungry fair-goers. Remember the reason for this particular season is to showcase some of Richland County's finest via awesome fair exhibits. Baking, photography, sewing, seed pictures, school exhibits, 4 H exhibits and so much more will be proudly displayed. The 4 H schedule will be available on the fair website by the end of the week. Fair buttons, concert tickets and rodeo tickets will be available May 30 at the fair office; buttons will also be available at local banks.

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

Montana State's New Ranching Systems Degree Prepares Students For Post-Graduation Success

By Reagan Colyer, MSU News Service

Bozeman - Growing up on a guest ranch near Emigrant meant that Cayden Rose had no doubts about his career aspirations when he arrived at Montana State University in 2019. Now a graduating senior from the College of Agriculture's Dan Scott Ranch Management Program, he's confident he made the right choice.

"It was a perfect fit," said Rose of the new degree program, which was introduced during the 2019-20 academic year and graduated its first student in December 2021. "I was excited about it when it came along."

Rose was majoring in rangeland ecology at the time the new program debuted and was immediately intrigued by the Dan Scott program's ranching systems degree, which is housed in the Department of Animal and Range Sciences. Students apply for the program during their sophomore year and study everything from business communications and economics to natural resource conservation and animal production. They also complete a two-summer internship at a working ranch in Montana, applying their classroom studies in a hands-on fashion.

The goal of the new program is to create well-rounded and well-prepared ranch managers, said director Rachel Frost.

"Today's ranch managers have to be versed in much more than livestock husbandry," said Frost. "They have to track finances, expand market potential, deal with personnel issues and work with a variety of conservation partners and government agencies. Preparing a person for that diverse of a job requires a unique approach to education, which is what the Dan Scott Ranch Management Program provides."

Rose is a member of the Dan Scott program's second graduating class and said the experience has been beneficial on several levels. He particularly notes his internship as a highlight. During the summers of 2021 and 2022, he worked on a cattle ranch outside of Twin Bridges, doing everything from driving cattle to implementing his own research for the ranch's benefit.

"The project I worked on was looking into switching their calving season from spring to fall and looking at, economically, which one was more viable and a better fit their resources," said Rose. "I can't say enough about it. I learned more than I would have doing anything else. You learn the tools in college, but it was nice to be able to apply it somewhere and make that bridge."

Rose said that during his internship, he found new avenues for answering questions. He was able to see the tangible results of management changes in a way that took theoretical knowledge and made it visible. He later had the chance to present his research on calving for other producers and industry experts at the Montana Nutrition Conference and Livestock Forum.

During his second summer on the ranch, he implemented an intensive grazing program and was gratified to see results such as increased daily gain in cattle and faster regrowth of forage in their pastures.

While Rose came to college with a background in ranching, elements of the ranching systems curriculum were new to him in a way that sparked his curiosity. As the agricultural industry changes and modernizes, he said the program has helped him prepare to be a multifaceted ranch manager, which he hopes will benefit the people, animals and natural resources that intersect in ranching.

"I think the thing that intrigued me about the Dan Scott program was the diver-



Montana State University ranch management senior Cayden Rose at the BART Farm in Bozeman, MT. (MSU Photo by Marcus "Doc" Cravens)

sity of the courses that were offered," said Rose. "All the different tools that you need to be able to successfully manage a ranch. You're not just a steward of the land. You're a businessman, you're an accountant, you're an animal scientist and everything else. It really does take everything and combine it all into one program, and that really drew me."

Frost says that Rose has been a stellar example of why the program was created in the first place: to train a generation of ranchers and producers who are prepared to integrate science, business, conservation and production into continued success for one of Montana's largest industries and the communities it supports.

"Cayden is one of those students who asks the right questions," said Frost. "He is always looking for ways to add to his knowledge and apply what he has learned. With that mindset, I have no doubt that he will grow into an exceptional ranch manager."

Rose will graduate in May with a degree in ranching systems and a minor in his original area of study, rangeland ecology. While he says he may take a week or so off to relax after graduation, he is ready and driven to join the workforce as a new ranch manager.

"I feel well prepared. Obviously, I still have a lot to learn, and I hope I never quit learning," he said. "The connections I've made through college have been the highlight, whether it be through academics or just personally, it's been the best years of my life. I've so enjoyed it. Without it, I wouldn't have made any of those connections."

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