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Wild West Weekend

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Photo submitted

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Make Plans To Meet In Watford City For Wild West Weekend!

Submitted by Jessie Veeder
Scofield, Long X Arts
Foundation Director

The McKenzie County Cowboy Association is hosting the 2023 North Dakota Rodeo Association Finals on Friday, Sept. 22 and Saturday, Sept. 23 indoors at the new McKenzie County Ag Expo, Watford City, ND. With three rounds of rodeo, a western art and vendor show, a Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Kids Cowboy Bootcamp, mechanical bull riding and two nights of rodeo dancing, there will be fun for the entire family to enjoy!

The Western Art and Vendor show kicks off the weekend on Friday, Sept. 22 from 6-8 p.m. in the Ag Expo Exhibit Hall. Shop over 20 western artists and vendors specializing in western themes and gear from across the region. Explore large and small scale paintings, glass, leather, woodworking, hats, ropes, boots, boutique clothing, jewelry and more.

Right across the hall the first round of the NDRA Rodeo kicks off at 7 p.m. featuring the state's best cowboys and cowgirls competing in bronc and bareback riding, steer wrestling, team roping, breakaway roping, calf roping, barrel racing, bull riding and more. The High School Cowboys Wild Horse Race in memory of Coy Hepper is a must see at all three rodeos. Make sure you bring the kids for the boot race!

After the rodeo, Western Montana's retro classic country band, "Sam Platts and the Plainsmen," will be set up at the dance floor in the exhibit hall both Friday and Saturday night. The band has been regular performers at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, NV, and specialize in familiar western dance music and country standards. Sit and listen, take a swing around the dance floor or try your skills on the mechanical bull. A cash bar and concessions will be available both evenings.

On Saturday grab your breakfast at the Ag Expo at the Flannels and Flapjack Cowboy Breakfast benefitting a local charity. Contestants will be available at the breakfast for meet and greet and autograph signing.

The Western Art and Vendor show continues in the exhibition hall on Saturday from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. with art demonstrations and classes scheduled throughout the day. Bring your kiddos to the Cowboy Bootcamp and Canteen where they can learn how to dress like a cowboy, saddle a horse, ride the bucking bull, rope and shop for cowboy essentials throughout the day. Then gear up for the next round of rodeo action at 1 p.m.



Photo submitted

The Long X Arts Foundation will be offering a free cowboy kid craft throughout the day and hosts the Cowboy Poetry Gathering at 2 p.m. on the stage in the exhibit hall. Featured entertainers include North Dakota Poet Laureate, Denise Lajimodiere and four National Cowboy Poetry Gathering regulars: singer/songwriter, Sam Platts, Montana based troubadour DW Groethe, Medora cowboy poet Jonathan Odermann and local musician, Jessie Veeder. The event, which will wrap up with area powwow dancers, will feature stories, music and poetry that captures the life, humor and tribulations of working cowboys and cowgirls in the region.

The final round of rodeo will kick off at 7 p.m. in the indoor arena where the champion cowboys and cowgirls will be determined with the rodeo dance and mechanical bull riding to follow.

Tickets to the rodeo are \$20 for adults and can be purchased at the door. Kids 11 and under are free. The Western Art and Vendor Show and Cowboy Poetry Gathering are free thanks in part to a grant from the North Dakota Council on the Arts and the Long X Arts Foundation.

Interested rodeo sponsors should contact Eva Hepper at 701-898-9801 or hemperranch@gmail.com. Western Art Show and Cowboy Poetry sponsors contact the Long X Arts Foundation at 701-770-8659 or email longxart@gmail.com.

To find out more about the rodeo, performers, artists and vendors, community specials and schedule visit www.wildwestweekend.com.

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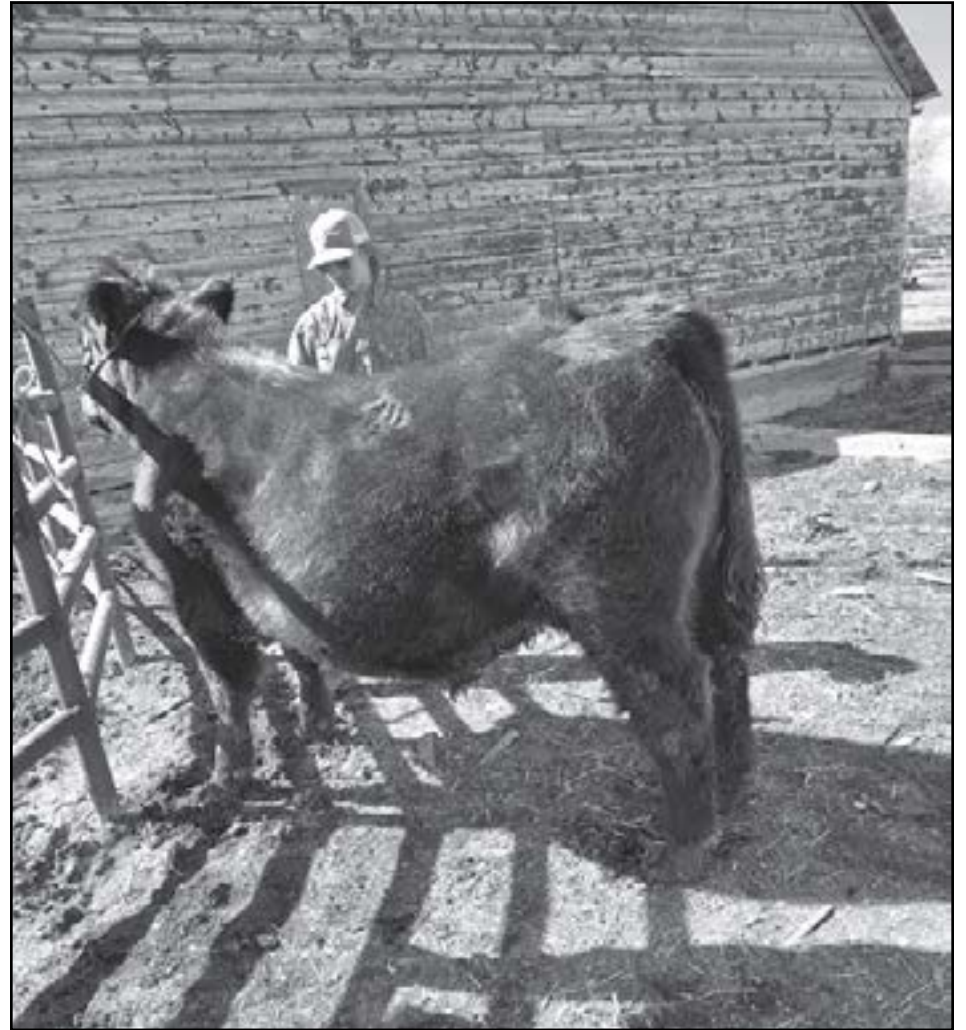
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William Head 2023 Richland County Fair Grand Champion Steer



Photos submitted.

By Katelyn Sponheim

William Head is more than the 4-H member behind this year's Grand Champion Market Steer for Richland County. A sophomore at Richey, he's a dedicated member of the Richey FFA chapter, a proficient welder, a future rancher, and an upstanding role model. Only his second year showing a steer, he pulled all his knowledge and work ethic together to bring a champion to the fair. A Black Angus and Simmental cross, Dumpy, was an easy gainer who converted feed well on William's program. William's mother, Laramie Head, said he spent time daily with the steer and puts that level of effort into all his projects. He loves to see the changes and improvements as his animals grow and learn and works on himself just as rigorously.

On Aug. 26, William was invited to Miles City, MT, for the Champion of Champions show. While he did not add it as a win, he no doubt took a learning experience away. Wyn Reimann, a neighbor and friend who helps William and others with her wealth of livestock knowledge, said he is extremely competitive and always aims to be the best he can be. Last year William's market lamb won

Grand Champion at the Richland County Fair, and then placed in the top 5 at Western Junior Nationals, Rapid City, SD. She said great genetics, when a great feed program and a hard-working kid are added, is a recipe for success. William also works for Wyn's father, Bobby Walker, as a farm hand and makes himself indispensable. Both Bobby and William's mother shared William's love for learning all that comes with ranching and the range. Tinkering with equipment, fencing, identifying plants, haying and finding out what it takes to raise the best animals possible all are passions of his.

William doesn't limit his efforts to himself. This fall, he could be found at several local fairs, helping friends and fellow 4-H youth with their animals. He exemplifies the values at the heart of 4-H and FFA and enjoys pouring his quickly growing knowledge into the younger generation. Border Steel purchased his 2023 Grand Champion Steer, and William already has others started for next year's projects. He plans on continuing with the 4-H steer program, and his family and friends look forward to seeing his future successes and growth.

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Now Is The Time To Think Ahead For Fall Bale Grazing

Bale grazing is a great way to reduce bale movement, save time and labor, and add nutrients to a needed area.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Despite the heat of summer, many ranchers are thinking ahead to fall and preparing to winter their cowherds. The first cutting of hay has been completed in many areas and ranchers are moving bales from the field to the lot for storage until they are fed.

This period of bale transport is a great time to set up areas for bale grazing, say North Dakota State University Extension specialists.

“Moving bales from the field straight to the area where they will be fed saves an extra step in bale movement and machinery costs,” says Zac Carlson, NDSU Extension beef cattle specialist.

“The concept of bale grazing is simple,” says James Rogers, Extension forage crops production specialist, North Central Research Extension Center. “Place bales in a grid pattern in the area that they will be fed in. Then, install electric fence in a manner to allow access for two to three days of feeding. Continue to allow two to three days of bale feeding by leapfrogging the electric fence across the bale grazing area.”

“Bale grazing is a good way to reduce manure handling, and add nutrients and organic material to a needed area,” shares Mary Keena, Extension livestock environmental management specialist, Carrington Research Extension Center. “It also allows cattle to self-feed, reducing the labor of daily feeding.”

Carlson, Keena and Rogers offer several considerations to make bale grazing successful.

- First, consider how many bales will be needed. This is determined by nutritional demand, the number of head and the desired length of time for bale grazing. For example, the 90-day period after weaning can be an optimal time for bale grazing because it is a time of low nutritional demand for the cow, which can be met by a fair to good-quality hay. Do not forget to include bale waste. Rogers says a good estimate for bale waste is 20%, but it will vary depending on the area used for bale grazing, bale density and quality, bale access space and animal behavior.

- Forage test each hay lot, defined as similar species harvested from the same hay field within 48 hours, and allocate hay based on nutrient content and nutritional demand. You can stage bales based on quality and leave higher quality hay for cows in late gestation or early lactation.

- Selection of the area to be bale grazed is important. Bale grazing can be conducted on introduced perennial pasture, hayland or crop ground but the effects on each will differ. Bale grazing creates a concentration of nutrients and hoof action around each bale. These effects require consideration when choosing the area to bale graze. Select an area that will benefit the most from the addition of these nutrients. Perennial pasture areas with sod-forming grasses will hold up better than bunch-type grasses. Avoid areas where excess nutrients can flow into streams and ponds. Areas that can provide natural wind protection are advantageous.

- If possible, use multiple locations for bale grazing over time in order to reduce nutrient concentration in one area. Use soil testing to monitor changes in soil fertility over time.



Bale grazing is a great way to reduce bale movement, save time and labor, and add nutrients to a needed area. (NDSU photo)

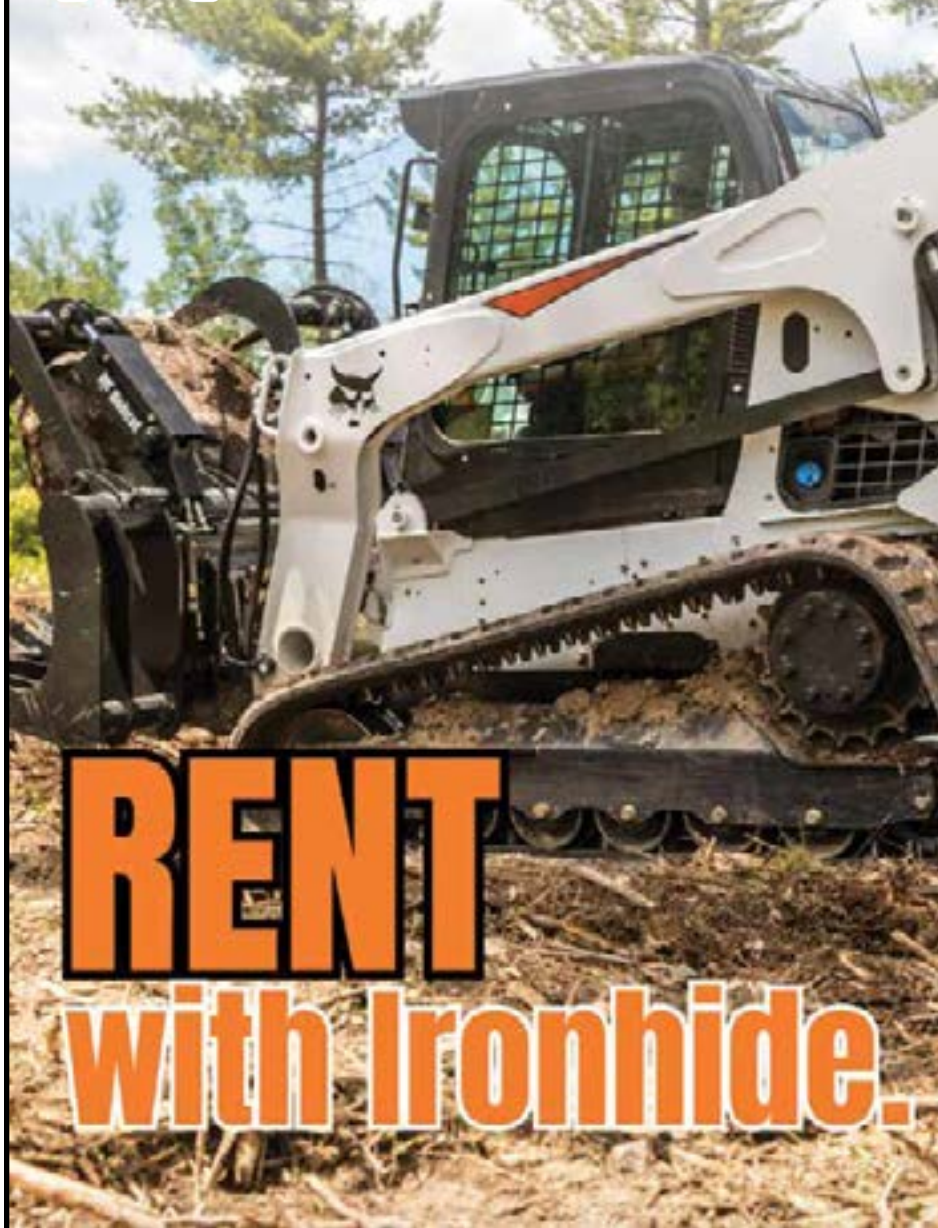
- Hay bales move nutrients and seed from one location to another. If hay is contaminated with weed seed, such as foxtail barley, be mindful of areas where you do not want the weed to establish.

- Place bales where all cattle can have equal bale access. Setting up bales on a 40' x 40' grid will work well and can lead to more uniform manure distribution.

- Fencing and water access are important. Electric fencing provides the flexibility to make bale grazing work. Two strands of hot wire may be required to prevent cattle from pushing into yet-to-be grazed bales. If cattle have no experience with electric fence, train them to it prior to turning onto the bale grazing area. If the ground is frozen, use the bales as an area to drive posts into for the fence. Make sure that cattle have easy and adequate access to water.

- Handling bale twine and wrap can be the most challenging issue with bale grazing. If sisal twine is used, place the bale on its side, and the twine will deteriorate and not be an issue. Polypropylene and net-wraps will not deteriorate and will pose a problem if left on the bale. One strategy is to set bales on end and remove wrapping as needed, which works, but anticipate more moisture seeping into the top and bottom of the bale, which can increase spoilage.

For additional information on winter feeding strategies, view the NDSU Extension publication “Alternative Winter Feeding Strategies for Beef Cattle Management” at [ndsu.ag/winterfeeding](https://www.ndsu.edu/winterfeeding) or contact your county NDSU Extension agent.



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North Dakota Stockmen Association's Convention & Trade Show Coming To Watford City

By Jaymi Mozeak

In September, NDSA members are invited to "come home" to the organization's birthplace for business, meetings and celebration. The 94th Annual Convention & Trade Show will be held Sept. 28-30 in Watford City. The event will feature an educational series, informational speakers, policy-development sessions, business, networking and fun.

This year, the NDSA will host the largest trade show in their history, featuring 64 booths.

During policy meetings members will discuss and debate policy issues and learn from industry experts who will offer information on H2A and immigration workforce reform, the Bureau of Land Management rule, vaccine efficacy, the electronic brand inspection program, Environmental Protection Agency pesticide registration changes, the Dakota Legacy Initiative, prompt payment provisions, Livestock Risk Protection, cell-cultured protein and more.

The speaker showcase will feature topics of global meat overview, modern agriculture, Prop. 12 and succession planning.

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association (NDSA) is a cattle producers' trade association that dates back to 1929. Cattlemen on the Fort Berthold Reservation and surrounding areas were tired of the chronic cattle rustling plaguing their herds. Andrew Johnston, a Watford city, ND, - area cattleman, decided to call a meeting to determine what could be done about it.

That gathering took place June 6, 1929 - now considered christening day for the NDSA - in Watford City. Founders at that meeting elected John Leakey as their president and each pitched in \$5 a person to establish a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone stealing cattle, horses or mules in North Dakota.

As the association grew older, members found value in banding together on other issues, so the mission expanded to what it is today: to unite, protect, promote, educate and serve the state's beef cattle industry.

A new addition to Saturday morning will be the "Hoofin' It Home" 5K Beef Walk/Run. Check-in for the race begins at 9:15 a.m., with the race starting at 10 a.m. at the Rough Rider Center. Prizes will be awarded for first place in the children's, men's and women's divisions.

The annual banquet will include the recognition of long-time employees, as

Arnegard Spud Fest Sept. 9

By Jaymi Mozeak

Arnegard and the surrounding community will be celebrating the long potato-growing heritage of the area. The Arnegard Spud Fest will be held at Arnegard's Nelson Park on Saturday, Sept. 9. from 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

With an early McKenzie County Fair causing it to be difficult for locals to grow produce and show off what they have grown and with the scarcity of area harvest festivals, the Arnegard North Dakota Park District will hold its first annual Arnegard Spud Fest to celebrate the harvest and the area's rich agricultural heritage.

Along with the usual harvest festival festivities, the 2023's Arnegard Spud Fest will have food, live music, vendors, face painting, a style show, free games, crafts, hayrides, pumpkins, raffles, potato sack races, and open horseshoe and cornhole tournaments.

There will also be judging of produce, canned goods, and baked goods. All produce and canned goods presented for judging are to be entered at the park on the evening of Sept. 8 and baked goods are to be entered on the morning of Sept. 9.

Updates and times and events can be seen on the Arnegard Park District's Facebook page.

well as outstanding members selected for the Honorary Local Brand Inspector, Honorary Membership, Rancher of the Year, Environmental Stewardship and Top Hand Awards.

The deadline to pre-register is Sept. 14.

Room blocks are available at Teddy's Residential Suites, 701-842-6480, the Little Missouri Inn, 701-842-6262, and Mainstay Suites, 701-566-7664.

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

By Meagan Dotson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Watford City Heritage Day Sept. 16



By **Katelyn Sponheim**

Photos submitted

Watford City will be hosting their 23rd Annual Heritage Day Sept. 16. Events will be held at the McKenzie County Heritage Park and North Dakota Oil Museum, 904 2nd Ave. SW, Watford City. The day will start at 11 a.m. with opening ceremonies and food service starting immediately after. They will be serving BBQ burgers, pulled pork sandwiches, and hot dogs. There will be several other food and goods vendors, and have openings for additional vendors should any be interested.

At 12:30 p.m., the educational entertainment will begin with an old-time school marm teaching a class. A belt-driven sawmill and shingle mill demonstration will follow at 1 p.m. The threshing machine demonstration, then a stationary hay baler, will have a coin toss into the resulting straw for the attending children. The blacksmith demonstration, costume contest, vendors and games will last throughout the day.

A cake walk, followed by a pie eating contest will start at 3:30 p.m. At 4:30 p.m., they will announce the silent auction winners, and end the day out at 5 p.m. with a closing ceremony.

The McKenzie County Heritage Park and North Dakota Oil Museum is open Memorial Day-Labor Day, and available to the public for family picnics and reunions. They also have a media center and kitchen available to rent for parties and meetings! Their hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m.



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Time To Manage Livestock Winter Feeding Areas Is Now

Manure management is important for managing winter feeding areas.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Whether farms have cattle, horses, sheep or goats, summer management of the winter-feeding area is important.

“Most of the management in your winter-feeding area begins with manure,” says Mary Keena, NDSU Extension livestock environmental management specialist. “That is true whether your winter-feeding area is corrals or a specific area of a field that you now feed on.”

While summer tasks and activities often take precedence this time of year, Keena urges ranchers to look back on what went wrong last winter and take note of what needs maintenance this summer.

“An easy place to start is pushing up manure in the winter-feeding areas,” says Keena. “Making stockpiles of manure allows the pen or field surface to dry. It also allows the manure to start heating, reducing total volume and, in turn, reducing total loads hauled when removed.”

Composting livestock manure will increase the volume reduction compared to stockpiling, as well as reduce internal and external parasites, pathogens and weed seeds. To compost manure, turn the piles every 10-14 days while maintaining 50% moisture. Learn more about composting in the NDSU Extension publication, “Composting Animal Manures,” available at ndsu.ag/manures.

When animals are still present in winter feedings areas, fly control via manure management is also important. Flies lay their eggs in the top few inches of manure, and the eggs can hatch every seven days. By pushing the manure into a pile and turning the piles, you can compost manure and stay ahead of the fly cycle.

Often the nutrients from manure can help fertilize undesirable weeds in your feeding areas. If the weeds have already gotten away from you, several management strategies can help reduce weed population and spread.

“Repeated mowing reduces weeds’ competitive ability, depletes carbohydrate reserves in their roots, and reduces seed production,” says Penny Nester, Bowman County NDSU Extension agent. “Mowing can kill or suppress annual and biennial weeds. It also can suppress perennials and help restrict their spread.”

A single mowing will not satisfactorily control most weeds. However, mowing three or four times per year over several years can greatly reduce and occasionally eliminate certain weeds. Mowing along fences and borders can help prevent the introduction of new weed seeds. Regular mowing helps prevent weeds from establishing, spreading and competing with desirable grasses and legumes.

Another option for weed control is to apply herbicides, says Nester. It is best to apply herbicides to weeds that are still young because they will absorb the chemicals more effectively than their mature counterparts. Herbicide can also be effective to treat actively growing weeds in the weeks following mowing.

Ideal temperatures for applying most herbicides are between 65-85 °F. Avoid applying volatile herbicides such as 2,4-D ester, MCPA ester and dicamba during



Manure that has been stockpiled in a winter-feeding area should be turned at least once for volume reduction and every 10-14 days for weed seed, pathogen and parasite reduction. (NDSU photo)

hot weather, especially near susceptible broadleaf crops, shelterbelts or farmsteads.

Cleaning pen and field surfaces is a great time for reflection of the past season. What worked? What didn't? What should be fixed, changed or maintained now to make the next winter-feeding season successful?

Keena and Nester offer some considerations for maintenance:

- Notice and manage stress. The “winter” season started in October 2022 for some animal owners and lasted through May 2023. While commiserating with family and friends will sometimes help, consider exploring NDSU Extension’s “Coping with Stress” resources available at ag/copingwithstress. Sometimes we need the help, and sometimes we are the help. Either way, a refresher is good practice.

- How do the fences look? Are there any places that need fixing?

- Did the watering system work during the winter-feeding period? What changes or fixes can help prevent leaking or freeze-ups?

- How level are pen surfaces? Are there holes to be filled? Are any areas holding water? Gravel and clay are commonly used to backfill these areas and regain proper slope and drainage in the pen.

If you are experiencing challenges in your livestock winter feeding areas or need a list of for-hire custom manure applicators in your county, contact your county NDSU Extension agent for resources and help. Visit www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-home/directory to find their contact information.

Consider Supplementation Strategies To Stretch Limited Pasture Resources

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Drought conditions in portions of North Dakota are forcing some farmers and ranchers to consider their options, according to North Dakota State University Extension specialists. Currently 30% of the state is experiencing some level of drought with several counties in northern North Dakota experiencing severe drought (D2). Producers in these areas are experiencing below normal forage production and poor pasture conditions.

“Drought-affected pastures and native ranges generally do not produce adequate forage to maintain normal stocking rates,” says Miranda Meehan, NDSU Extension livestock environmental stewardship specialist. “Stocking rate can be adjusted by reducing the number of animals and/or the length the grazing period. Farmers and ranchers must make the decision to sell cattle, relocate cattle to a drylot, or provide supplemental feed to offset nutrient deficiencies in the forage or replace a portion of pasture or range intake.”

Reductions in stocking rate will benefit range plants by reducing stress and providing more forage for the remaining cattle, Meehan adds. When stocking rates are reduced, only small effects on weaning weight may be noted. If stocking rates are not reduced, supplemental feeding is necessary to maintain herd productivity and alleviate grazing pressure. Additionally, producers will likely see a decrease in forage production on pastures that are overstocked the subsequent grazing season.

Supplementing on pasture or range can help stretch available forage and allow farmers and ranchers to maintain “normal” stocking rates this fall. However, caution must be taken when considering supplementation strategies when the goal is to replace pasture or range intake.

“The main objective of supplementation programs is to meet nutrient requirements as efficiently and economically as possible,” says Zac Carlson, NDSU Extension beef cattle specialist. “The thought of replacing pasture or range with feed for cattle grazing would be to substitute daily pasture intake with an economical feed that doesn’t negatively impact forage digestion. To do that, factors that should be considered when making decisions about supplements include forage supply, protein content, body condition, and cost and availability of supplements.”

“If forage production is limited, farmers and ranchers may wish to replace a portion of pasture intake with supplemental feed,” says Karl Hoppe, NDSU Extension livestock systems specialist based at NDSU’s Carrington Research Extension Center. “Feeding harvested forages such as alfalfa or annual forages on pasture is one option; however, forage supplies are already short in many situations.”

It is also challenging to get cattle to consume harvested forage while on pasture,” Hoppe notes. Farmers and ranchers should provide at least 0.5% of bodyweight of alfalfa hay daily to replace pasture intake with alfalfa hay. It is recommended to supplement harvested forages on tame pasture over native pasture to reduce the introduction of undesirable plant species on native range.

Grain-based supplements can reduce forage intake by providing a substitution effect. However, cereal grains contain starch and sugars, which will lower ruminal pH and reduce forage digestibility, especially at higher feeding levels. This results in less energy from available pasture or range to the animal. Therefore, cereal grain supplements should be limited to 0.25% of bodyweight to minimize the negative effects on forage utilization.

For some grains, processing may be necessary for optimum use by cattle. Corn and oats can be fed whole but may be better utilized if coarsely rolled before feeding. Barley and wheat should be coarsely rolled.

Unlike protein supplements, energy supplements should be delivered daily for optimal performance to avoid excess energy intake and maintain optimum conditions in the rumen.

Fibrous by-product feeds, such as soyhulls, wheat middlings, corn gluten feed, distillers grains, beet pulp and brewers grains, contain low levels of starch and sugars, but high total digestible nutrient values have less negative impacts on forage intake and digestibility. However, fibrous by-product feeds should be supplemented at levels greater than 0.6% of bodyweight daily to replace pasture or range intake.

Farmers and ranchers may consider feeding cattle in a drylot if pasture conditions are extremely poor. This may be more cost-effective than supplementation if large amounts of supplement must be transported and fed to cattle daily. In addition, it may allow pastures a much-needed rest period to begin recovering from the drought.

For additional information on supplementation strategies, view the NDSU Extension publications “Drylot Beef Cow-Calf Production” at ndsugrow.com/drylot and “Alternative Feeds for Ruminants” at ndsugrow.com/alternativefeeds, or contact your county NDSU Extension agent.



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Clean Grain Bins To Reduce Insect Problems

By Marley Manoukian,
MSU Richland County Extension

Information from this article was taken from the NDSU Crop & Pest Report, Aug. 25, 2022.

Cleaning grain bins is the key to preventing insect problems in stored grain. Any old grain or even dust residue left in the bins is enough for some insects to survive and infest new grain. Remove any leftover grain from the bin and sweep and vacuum the walls. After cleaning, check the bins for any cracks or holes and seal them, as this is how most grain insects get into the bin. Clean the area outside of the bins, removing vegetation in a 10-foot border around the bins. After cleaning and repairing the bin, it is important to spray a residual bin insecticide both inside and outside the bin. Examples include malathion, Tempo, Diacon IGR Plus, or Centynal EC. These should be applied two weeks before new grain is placed in the bin. Apply the spray to walls, floors, joints, seams, cracks, ledges, and corners. Insect pests can reduce the quality and salability of your grain, making it important to take steps to prevent their infestations.

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Be On Lookout For Anthrax

Anthrax cases continue to be identified in southwestern North Dakota.

By NDSU Agriculture Communication

Anthrax continues to be a concern for cattle producers in North Dakota. Several more cases of anthrax in cattle have been confirmed in southwestern North Dakota.

"This is a reminder to our cattle producers that the threat of anthrax is present," says Gerald Stokka, North Dakota State University Extension veterinarian. "It appears that during times of high rainfall or very dry conditions, the spores are uncovered and cattle are at risk of infection."

Anthrax is a disease in cattle caused by bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis*. It has a special survival mechanism called spore formation. This characteristic allows the bacteria to produce very hardy spores with a high survival rate. The spores can survive for years under the right conditions. When these spores come into contact with susceptible cattle, they can "hatch" and infect cattle, resulting in disease and death.

Often the only initial sign of anthrax infection is finding dead cattle. Cattle can die without signs of illness for a number of reasons, including lightning strikes, clostridial infections and toxicities, but anthrax always should be considered, according to Stokka. If anthrax is suspected, do not perform a necropsy. Take a blood sample and submit to the NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for confirmation.

"If the diagnosis of anthrax is suspected and confirmed by your veterinarian and the NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, then vaccination needs to be implemented as quickly as possible," he says.

The commercial vaccine available is a live attenuated (nondisease-causing) spore vaccine. The dose is 1 cc administered subcutaneously in the neck region.

All adult cattle and calves should receive the vaccine, and treatment with antibiotics should be withheld because it may interfere with the immune response. However, when faced with an outbreak situation, administering an antibiotic and a vaccine concurrently has been effective. Consult your local veterinarian for a recommendation.

"Consider removing all cattle from the pasture where anthrax deaths are suspected because spores present can infect the remaining animals," Stokka advises.

Also, anthrax carries a risk to humans, so take care to not disturb the carcass. The recommended method of disposal is to burn the carcass and soil on which the carcass was found after placing them in a trench dug in the immediate area of the death.

For more information, visit the NDSU Extension publication "Anthrax" at www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/anthrax.



Contact your veterinarian if anthrax is suspected. (NDSU photo)

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