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Thanks for what you do...now pass it on!

National Ag Day is just around the corner so get ready to celebrate! Each year, the Agriculture Council of America sets aside one day during National Ag Week to recognize agriculture, the people involved with it and everything ag does for our country. With the average American three and four generations removed from production agriculture, National Ag Day is a great opportunity to educate the public on just how significant agriculture is to our everyday lives. Whether it's patting yourself on the back, thanking a neighbor or talking to your grandson's class about agriculture, do what you can to spread the word. If you're not sure where to start, check out the National Ag Day website at www.agday.org for hints and ideas. In the meantime, here are some fun facts from the website to pass on:

- Today, each farmer/rancher feeds over 144 people; in the 1960's each farmer fed just 25.
- A hive of bees flies over 55,000 miles to bring you one pound of honey. A honey bee can fly 15 miles per hour.
- Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife. Deer, moose, fowl and other species have shown significant population increases in the past several years.
- It takes a combine nine seconds to harvest enough wheat to make 70 loaves of bread.
- Farmers receive approximately five cents (or less) from each loaf of bread sold.
- A pig can run a seven-minute mile.
- It takes just 40 days for most Americans to earn enough money to pay for their food supply for the entire year. In comparison with the 129 days it takes the average American to earn enough money to pay federal, state and local taxes for the year.
- One bale of cotton can produce 1,217 men's t-shirts or 313,600 \$100 bills.
- A family of four could live for ten years off the bread produced by one acre of wheat.
- Grapes are one of the oldest cultivated fruits. They have been around for more than 8,000 years.
- Lettuce is a member of the sunflower family.
- Hamburger meat from a single steer will make about 720 quarter pound hamburger patties. That's enough for a family of 4 to enjoy hamburgers each day for nearly 6 months.

For more information on National Ag Day, turn to page 5 of your WIFELINE.

President's Report



By Ruth Laribee
New York

Overhauled Farm Bill brings changes to ag producers

Signed, sealed and delivered, the nearly \$1 trillion Federal Agriculture and Risk Management Act (FARRM), also known as the Farm Bill, has passed. The long-time-coming bill is touted as reducing regulatory impediments, reducing the deficit over time and reforming or eliminating outdated programs. One thing it should do is give the farmers and ranchers some relief, knowing programs have been put in place to help them make plans while providing a safety net.

The bill cut \$8.6 billion from the food stamp program but added a separate program to help those who benefit from food stamps double their benefits at farmers markets, thereby making fresh fruits and vegetables more available. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is prohibited from promoting food stamps, otherwise known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on the radio, television, through foreign governments and using billboards.

The bill eradicates the \$5 billion crop subsidy program but will add \$7 billion over the next ten years to the federal crop insurance program. According to USDA Administrator Brandon Willis, crop insurance has become the "lynchpin" for the farm safety net.

The dairy portion was overhauled with a new, voluntary Margin Protec-

tion Program (MPP) but the reform does not mandate government supply controls.

How some of the new/revamped programs will help those affected remains to be seen as farmers and ranchers begin using the newly implemented programs in real life farm practices.

A stipulation by Senator Mike Johanns (R-NE) is included in the Farm Bill with the intention of stopping the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from regulating farms with less than ten employees. This was important for family farms, as it was clear that OSHA was overstepping its control in its claims to be able to regulate certain types of grain-handling action on small farms.

A Note from Your President: Just when I think about waving the white flag because winter has been here long enough and I have had enough, I look around and see all the adults and children having so much fun in the snow. We have snowmobiling, down-hill skiing, cross-country skiing and ice-skating; I used to really enjoy those sports too (I still have my skis and skates). There is also hockey for the kids. All this is nearby and easy to get to. Around six years ago, a new adventure was put in place about two miles down the road at Maple Ridge called tubing. There are now 13 lanes; each one is 1,200 feet long with a vertical drop of about 100 feet. A rope pull takes you back up to the top while you sit in your tube.

My four and a half year-old great granddaughter just took her first skiing lesson and really loved it so I guess

I will put my white flag away. A gal at the Ford garage told me no one would see it anyway because of all the snow.

Snow and the extreme cold in some states where farmers' and ranchers' cows are calving at this time is a hardship. Long, hard, cold days are being put in to make sure each calf is born healthy and strong and stays that way.

Winter started way too early for some states and the animal loss was staggering. We will hope that 2014 deals them a much better hand.

2014 WIFE Officers

President

Ruth Laribee
7639 East Road
Lowville, NY 13367
(315) 376-2644 EST
grrlaribee@hotmail.com

Vice President

Linda Newman
24728 DY Trail
Winifred, MT 59489
(406) 462-5583 MST
dlnewman@3riversdbs.net

Secretary

Darcy Dressler
PO Box 116
Taylor, ND 58656
(701) 722-3553 CST
darcy_dressler@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Shana Baisch
323 Road 300
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 365-4133 MST
jsbaisch@midrivers.com



By Tammy Basel
South Dakota

Sheep and Goats Report

South Dakota producers still reeling from livestock losses

In early October 2013, there was a storm the meteorologists named "Atlas." This weather system affected parts of the Northwest, the Rockies and much of the Midwest. There were 22 tornadoes associated with Atlas and two received a rating of four on the Enhance Fujitua Scale. The blizzard connected with the storm went from North Dakota to Nebraska, with a path that may have been 200 miles wide. Atlas took a devastating toll on livestock; actual numbers of death loss may never be known though current estimations say that 40,000 cattle and 4,000 sheep perished.

In the spring of that same year, when cattlemen were checking their cows at night to assist with any calving problems, they could sit and watch the dust blow. It is difficult to be optimistic about summer grass when the dust is blowing in March. By May, livestock producers in western South Dakota were selling cow/calf pairs because of drought conditions. It finally started to rain and then the moisture just kept coming. By fall, the grass and pastures were in the best condition producers had seen in years. Livestock were in summer pastures, enjoying green grass when Atlas hit.

Knowing the volatile land they live in, some producers insure their livestock for things like drowning and suffocation. With significant livestock losses on hand, the insured producers had animals necropsied for cause of death and turned in their claims.

One of the insureds southeast of Rapid City, South Dakota, turned in a claim for a loss of 50 cows and six calves. The veterinarian necropsied

many animals for him and his neighbors. The veterinarian's report stated the cattle had lungs that were, "heavy and moist and the cows drained water out of their nasal cavities when moved around. I found the cows died from drowning."

The insurance adjuster told the insured that he heard South Dakota State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven's report stating the cattle most likely died from congestive heart failure and resulting pulmonary edema, and that he

took that to mean they succumbed to the elements. He chose the State Veterinarian's report over the local vet and denied the insurance claims.

The livestock that drifted into water and were "drowned by submersion" makes for easier claims. The insurance policies have vague definitions of what it takes to recover a claim for a "drowning." Atlas claimed lives of livestock in draws, on hilltops, fences, shelterbelts in dams, dugouts, creeks, rivers, and in barns. Sheep, cattle and horse owners did all they could to protect their animals and their livelihoods. Families who have been in the area since homestead times have never seen such a stock-killing storm and in such a large geographical area. They also did what they could to protect their investment by insuring all they could afford, only to have claims denied.

The Rancher Relief Fund was formed to assist producers financially with their livestock losses. Over \$4.2 million have been donated and distributed to nearly 600 families that had losses. We live in a great country where people are willing to step up to the plate and help each other out. Over \$4 million seems like a lot of money but the payout equals only about \$95 per head, which is great but will not go far to pay down debt.

Another source of giving for the effected area has been "Heifers for South Dakota." In this program, ranch families would actually receive donated cattle. This group has distributed 887 cattle to the 93 recipients with 185 heifers in a feedlot waiting for new homes.

Atlas storm victims are humbled by all the donations but real recovery will begin with the Livestock Indemnity Program, formed under the recently passed Farm Bill.

WIFE Supporting Members

VIP Membership

- Bayer CropScience

Executive Membership

- Renewable Fuels Association

Associate Membership

- American Bankers Association
- American Council of Life Insurers
- Florida, Texas, and Hawaii Sugarcane Growers
- Monsanto
- U.S. Beet Sugar Association
- Western Skies Strategies

Contributor Membership

- AT&T
- American Sugarbeet Grower's Association
- North Bridge Communications

In-Kind Contributors

- Miller/Coors
- Rauner & Associates

Trade Report



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

NAFTA: twenty years later

The National Cotton Council (NCC) contends the cotton provisions in the new 2014 Farm Bill, specifically the Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), will bring the U.S. into compliance with a 2008 Appellate Body decision against the U.S. cotton program. Unfortunately, the Brazilians are not welcoming the changes with open arms. This is one area that should be watched carefully.

A reduced global beef supply is meeting with more demand for protein, as countries like China see incomes improve. Brett Stuart, global market specialist, said the Chinese middle class of 300 million is expected to grow to 640 million over the next six years. Already China, when grouped with Hong Kong, is the world's largest beef importer. Stuart said they are closely watching any movement that might indicate when the country will begin to accept U.S. beef. Currently, Australia and New Zealand are the two largest beef exporters to China (DTN/The Progress Farmer).

Michele Nash-Hoff in a report titled "Has NAFTA Benefited Americans?" offers the following thoughts on 20 years of trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA):

- According to the report "NAFTA at 20," released this month by Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, "more than 845,000 specific U.S. workers have been certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance as having lost their jobs due to imports from Canada and Mexico or the relocation of factories to those countries."

- The small pre-NAFTA U.S. trade surplus with Mexico turned into a massive new trade deficit and the pre-NAFTA U.S. trade deficit with Canada expanded great-

ly. According to Census Bureau data in 1993, the non-inflation adjusted U.S. trade surplus with Mexico was \$1.6 billion and in 2013, the U. S. trade deficit had grown to \$50.1 billion. The non-inflation adjusted U.S. deficit with Canada grew from \$4.4 billion in 1994 to \$7.4 billion in 2013. Together, the Mexico and Canada inflation-adjusted trade deficits "have morphed into a combined NAFTA trade deficit of \$181 billion."

- When our country imports more goods than it exports, we go into debt as a country to pay for these goods. We then have to borrow money or increase taxes to have enough money to run our government. This is why we now have a nearly \$17 trillion national debt.

- Trade deficits also diminish the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since GDP equals the sum of consumption, investment, government procurement, and net exports (exports minus imports). Our trade deficit in 2011 alone shaved an astounding 4 percent from overall U.S. GDP.

- NAFTA has contributed to downward pressure on U.S. wages and growing income inequality. What this means is that as Americans lose their higher paying manufacturing jobs, they have to compete with the glut of other Americans for the non-offshorable, lower paying, low-skill jobs in retail, hospitality, and food service. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, two out of every three displaced manufacturing workers who were re-hired in 2012 experienced a wage reduction, most of them taking a pay cut of greater than 20 percent

- Despite a 188 percent rise in food imports from Canada and Mexico under NAFTA, the average nominal price of food in the United States has jumped 65 percent since the deal went into effect.

- Our average annual U.S. agricultural trade deficit with Mexico and Canada under NAFTA stands at \$800 million, more than twice the pre-NAFTA level. American ranchers and cattlemen have been hurt by the 130 percent increase of beef imports from Mexico and Canada

since NAFTA took effect and today, U.S. consumption of NAFTA beef tops \$1.3 billion annually.

- U.S. food processors moved to Mexico to take advantage of low wages, resulting in a loss of jobs for Americans at U.S. food processing plants.

- The increased export of U.S. corn to Mexico resulted in the destruction of the livelihoods of more than one million Mexican campesino farmers and about 1.4 million additional Mexican workers whose livelihoods depended on agriculture. This led to a surge of illegal immigrants living incognito and competing for low-wage jobs in the U.S.

- Real wages in Mexico have fallen significantly below pre-NAFTA levels as price increases for basic consumer goods have exceeded wage increases. A minimum wage earner in Mexico today can buy 38 percent fewer consumer goods as on the day that NAFTA took effect.

- The influx of illegal immigrants from Mexico is another factor in the downward pressure on wages in the United States. Today, only 1.9 million hourly workers make \$20 per hour, which is a marker for jobs that provide a middle-class standard of living, down 60 percent since 1979, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- More than 60,000 manufacturing firms have closed since 1994 and nearly one million American workers have lost their jobs because of NAFTA.

Representative Alan Grayson said this about NAFTA: "The U.S. suffers chronic \$60 billion to \$70 billion annual trade deficits with Mexico and by this summer the accumulated U.S. current account losses with Mexico under NAFTA will pass \$1 trillion."

This information should be useful when discussing negotiations now underway for new trade treaties with Europe and in the Pacific with your legislators. Now is the time to write those letters opposing the two trade treaties. It is time we educate our Congressmen about the dangers of more "free" trade treaties.



By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming

Sugar Report

U.S. consumers spend less on food than other countries

President Obama signed the new five-year Farm Bill on February 7, 2014. The Farm Bill budget is set at \$756 billion with 77.9 percent of it set at a mandatory spending level for nutrition programs. The special nutrition programs, authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Act of 1966, includes the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the school lunch and breakfast program.

Sugar Program Included in New 2014 Farm Bill

Thanks to Senator Stabenow (D-MI) and House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) for working diligently to make sure

we have a strong farm policy that saves taxpayers money and gives America's farmers peace of mind. The sugar policy is designed to operate at no cost for the American taxpayer; sugar farmers don't receive a penny from Washington. As our nation struggles with huge budget deficits, the sugar industry assists to reduce this deficit.

Every year sugar factories borrow huge amounts of money from the Commodity Credit Cooperation (CCC) loan with the interest to operate their annual business. At the end of each year, sugar factories pay back their loans to the CCC and the interest paid back assists to reduce our huge budget deficit. Sugar beets are produced in eleven western states and sugar cane in four southern states. The sugar industry employs over 146,000 jobs in eighteen states and generates nearly \$20 billion of economic activity in the U.S. each year. The country's largest beet sugar producer, American Crystal Sugar

Company, operates in North Dakota and Minnesota.

When comparing the amount of money U.S. consumers spend on food with those of other countries, it is interesting to note that less than 2 percent of the U.S. population is engaged in production agriculture. Because of American farmers' efficiency, U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Japan and 53 percent in India. More than half of the people in India are farmers.

The framers of the Declaration of Independence were farmers. American farmers represent and preserve the value of our nation: hard work, risk-taking, and a love of the land. They represent love of family and love of our country. Farmers are in partnership with God to take care of his land and feed his people. As Master de Vargas said about St. Isidore, "Angels are farmers' helpers."

National Ag Day set for March 25

The 41st anniversary of National Ag Day will be celebrated on March 25, 2014, to honor American farmers and ranchers. This event is a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind America's citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us.

Honoring and praying for farmers at church's daily Mass, especially the first week of Spring, has been a blessed tradition. It is an appropriate time to look back at history. The life story of St. Isidore is an inspiration to everyone. St. Isidore and his wife Maria de la Cabeza lived in Madrid, Spain around 1110 A.D. He came from a poor and humble family. From childhood he worked as a farm hand on the de Vargas estate. Isidore's most distinguishing trait in life was praying and attending daily Mass. He loved the good earth and was honest in his farming practices. Domestic animals and birds showed their attachment to his kindness. Isidore's coworkers and master de Vargas became disturbed about the amount of time he was taking from his work. Finally de Vargas decided to see if the reports he was receiving were as bad as they sounded. One morning he hid himself in the field where Isidore was supposed to be plowing. On that day Isidore returned even later than usual from his morning worshipping, the other workers had finished their jobs and had left the field, while St. Isidore's job was still untouched. Master de Vargas was just about to approach Isidore but something told him to wait and see what would happen. St. Isidore set to work and seemed to be making great progress. As the employer watched, he saw the reason: two angels were working side by side with St. Isidore, each guiding a plow and racing in holy rivalry to see who could get the most work done. After that, whenever anyone asked Master de Vargas about St. Isidore's work, he would answer simply, "Angels are his helpers." By the Sacred Congressional of Rites on February 22, 1947, St. Isidore was designated as the special protector of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and American farmers. Every year during Agriculture Week (March 20-25) daily mass is celebrated for American farmers.

Our country celebrated its first Agriculture Day on March 21, 1973. The history of agriculture goes back to the birth of America. George Washington, the father of our nation, suggested to Congress the establishment of a National Board of Agriculture in 1766. Agriculture was the stepping stone which our young nation needed to start. In 1800, the average annual value of agriculture exports was \$23 million dollars, which accounted for 75 percent of total exports. According to the United States Department of Agriculture or USDA, the annual trade of today's farm commodities account for more than a trillion dollars annually, which should be helpful to reduce the U.S. budget deficit. Agriculture is a renewable resource to feed U.S. citizens and assure security.

Natural Resources Report



By Alice Parker
Washington

ESA Working Group releases final report

Species Act and Seeking Improvement for People and Species.” The forum had seventeen speakers from across the nation representing private landowners, agriculture, sportsmen, electric utilities, timber, labor unions, state and local government, chambers of commerce, research, policy organizations, energy producers and environmental and conservation groups.

The ESA was passed in 1973 and since then over 1,500 species have been listed. Most of these listings remain on the list and over the next two years, hundreds more could potentially be added. Only a two percent recovery rate has occurred. The Working Group says that number is not acceptable.

The Working Group’s overall recommendations for changes to the ESA are listed in four categories:

- Ensuring Greater Transparency and Prioritization of ESA with a focus on Species Recovery and De-Listing.
- Reducing ESA Litigation and Encouraging Settlement Reform.
- Empowering States, Tribes, Local

Governments and Private Landowners on ESA Decisions Affecting Them and Their Property.

- Requiring More Transparency and Accountability of ESA Data and Science

The Working Group went on to answer various questions related to the ESA’s workings and relevance. Here are some examples of those questions and the group’s quoted answers provided:

How is the ESA success defined and how is ESA progress measured?

With less than 2 percent of species removed from the ESA list in 40 years, ESA’s primary goal to recover and protect species has been unsuccessful. Progress needs to be measured not by the number of species listed, especially as a result of litigation, but by recovering and de-listing those that are currently listed and working cooperatively on-the-ground to prevent new ones from being listed.

Is the ESA working to achieve its goals?

Current implementation of ESA is focused too much on responding to listing petitions and unattainable statutory deadlines, litigation threats and ESA regulatory mandates, rather than on defensible policies, science or data to recover and de-list species. This slows or halts a multitude of public and private activities, even those that would protect species.

Is the species recovery effectively prioritized and efficient?

Current implementation of ESA does not clearly identify what is needed to recover and de-list species, resulting in a lack of incentives, for state and private conservation, costly mandates, and wasted resources even in light of increased federal funding.

For the complete report go to <http://esaworkinggroup.hastings.house.gov>. If unable to get the report, contact me at mrsp@swmireless.net.

In May of 2013, members of the House of Representatives announced the formation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Congressional Working Group, which is led by House Natural Resource Committee Chairman, Doc Hastings (WA) and Western Caucus Co-Chair Cynthia Lummis (WY). Others in the Working Group include Representatives Mark Amodei (NV), Rob Bishop (UT), Doug Collins (GA), Andy Harris (MD), Bill Huizenga (MI), James Lankford (OK), Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO), Randy Neugebauer (TX), Steve Southerland (FL), Glenn Thompson (PA) and David Valadao (CA). This group was created to analyze the ESA, its effectiveness and how to improve its functionality.

On October 10, 2013, the Working Group organized a forum titled “Reviewing 40 Years of the Endangered

WIFE 2014 Commodity & Topic Chairs

Beef

Whitney Klasna

Cereal Grains

Jean Wach

Dairy

Kay Zeosky

Sheep & Goats

Tammy Basel

Transportation

Pat Torgerson

Sugar

Klodette Stroh

Natural Resources/Private Property/Water/Endangered Species

Alice Parker

Rural Life/Farm Finance Communication/Tax/Health

Donna Bolz

Trade

Pam Pothoff

Homeland Security

Marlene Kouba

Energy

Barbara Broberg

Beef Report



By Whitney Klasna
Montana

WIFE Submits Comments on Importation of Fresh Meat from Brazil

National WIFE Area I Director, Mary Ellen Cammack of South Dakota recently submitted comments regarding the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) plans to allow the importation of fresh beef from 14 Brazilian states. The proposed regulation changes would allow the importation of chilled or frozen beef, while continuing to protect the U.S. from an introduction of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), USDA says. Due to long-standing concerns over FMD, only thermally processed beef (cooked) from Brazil has been allowed into the U.S.

Close to 500 comments were submitted to the Federal Register concerning the importation of fresh meat from Brazil. To read the proposed rule and submitted comments, please visit <https://federalregister.gov/a/2013-30464>. The comment period closed on February 21.

Mary Ellen Cammack, National WIFE Area I Director, submitted the following comment on behalf of National WIFE:

National Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE), request the Department of Agriculture Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to extend the comment period for an additional 60 days, Docket #: APHIS-2009-0017, "Importation of Beef From A Region in Brazil".

This proposed action has the po-

National WIFE submits comment on importation of Brazilian meat

tential to impact trade, food safety, and the health of the United States livestock herds. Extending the comment period 60 days will give stakeholders additional time to discuss and comment on this issue, of importing fresh or chilled beef from a region not declared free of Foot and Mouth Disease, which affects all cloven-hoofed animals.

Editor's Note: Before press time, USDA did extend the comment period regarding this issue 60 days; comments will be accepted until April 22, 2014.

Farm Bill Passed; USDA to Expedite Livestock Disaster Assistance

USDA announced it will expedite the implementation of its livestock disaster assistance program and will begin accepting applications on or near April 15.

The 2014 Farm Bill makes the Livestock Indemnity Payments (LIP) a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible livestock losses back to October 1, 2011. (The \$100 million program was reauthorized in 2008 but the program and its funding expired in October, 2011, leaving producers without payment for losses for over two years.)

The program allows livestock producers to receive indemnities for losses sustained in 2012 and 2013, including winter storm Atlas.

Sign-ups for the program will be at local Farm Service Agency service centers.

Livestock owners should record all pertinent information of livestock death losses due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

Documentation should include the number and kind of livestock that

have died, supplemented, if possible, by such items as:

- Photographs or video records to document the loss, dated if possible
- Purchase records, veterinarian records, production records, bank or other loan documents
- Written contracts, records assembled for tax purposes, private insurance documents, and other similar reliable documents.

Additional information can be found at fsa.usda.gov.

Editor's Note: More information about winter storm Atlas and livestock loss can be found in the "Sheep and Goats Report" by Tammy Basel.

Japan to propose cutting tariffs on beef in TPP talks

Japan is expected to propose reducing tariffs on a certain quantity of beef imports from the United States as a compromise plan to Washington in the on-going Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free-trade talks, sources close to the matter said Tuesday.

Japan had been reluctant to cut tariffs on key farm products including beef and pork, but decided to offer a concession amid strong pressure from the United States to open up its agricultural sector.

Tokyo will likely propose the plan to Washington during bilateral working-level talks being held in Tokyo, the sources added.

Imported beef is currently subject to a 38.5 percent tariff. Japan now plans to propose lowering the figure to less than 30 percent, while it is also considering proposing a reduction in tariffs levied on low-priced pork from the United States, which is currently subject to a high level of duties, they said (globalpost.com).

Rural Life Report



By Donna Bolz
Nebraska

Nebraska program encourages mentorship between female producers

ward trend in female agriculturalists.

According to the Department of Agriculture, women-owned farms increased from 5 percent to 14 percent between 1979 and 2007. About 300,000 women own their own farms and about one million qualify as “farm operators” as they farm with their spouse. For more information on Green Heron tools go to www.greenherontools.com.

On a personal note, I have been gathering information about Medicare and various drug plans. I have been receiving lots of letters offering to help me find the best plan for me. What bothered me was that each letter was sent by someone who was selling his or her product.

I recently heard a talk by a lady from the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). This is

a program that is funded by a grant from the Center for Medicare and Medicare Services. They do not endorse any specific agent, company or plan of insurance. You give them your information and they will tell you which plan they believe to be the best.

This was a refreshing idea and this type of information is available in all states. To find an office near you, go to medicare.gov and find your state in the drop down menu under the heading “find someone to talk to.”

The lady I spoke to was knowledgeable and explained things in an easy-to-understand way. They recommend that you check with them every year about your drug coverage as plans change yearly and there might be a plan out there that is better for you instead of keeping the same plan year after year.

It seems that new and aspiring farmers learn best from experienced farmers. The Center from Rural Affairs in Nebraska has started a program to do just that. They are enlisting the help of seasoned women who are willing to mentor aspiring and beginning women farmers and ranchers in Nebraska and Iowa. This doesn't cover all of the WIFE states but it is certainly a great idea worth passing on.

Are you aware of any other states that have similar programs?

With all the knowledgeable and powerful women in WIFE, we could be a force in training new women farmers.

While working in their gardens and fields, Ann Adams and Liz Brensinger found that some tools just didn't work well for them. The tools were designed for men. They decided women needed tools that would work best for their bodies so they started Green Heron Tools, a Pennsylvania-based company that specializes in developing and selling farm and gardening implements for women. These women were surprised that no one had previously tapped into this market.

This isn't just a comfort issue but also a safety issue. Adams and Brensinger believed there was a connection between tools and health and safety. Men have a lot of upper body strength while women have up to 45 percent less; a woman's strength comes from her lower body. This is important to note as recent numbers show an up-

*An update from 2013 FAED Scholarship
winner Breanna Bregel*

Since receiving the WIFE Scholarship I have been busy with college. The first semester went well and I was lucky enough to be named to the Dean's List. I am enjoying college very much and have been keeping busy. Currently I am traveling across the state of North Dakota as the State FFA Treasurer. This has been an exciting challenge and one I am enjoying a lot. I am meeting a lot of students and advisors across the state and really building my leadership skills. Classes keep me busy also, but since I am enjoying them so much it makes it a lot more pleasurable.

Thank you again so much for choosing me as recipient of the WIFE Scholarship. With college costs so high, it helped in paying for my tuition and fees. Also thanks for the updates in your organization's newsletter that you are sending. It has been interesting reading all of the facts and articles that are enclosed.

Sincerely,
Breanna Bregel



By Jean Wach
Nebraska

Cereal Grains Report

Barley vital to beer production

times that much.

The U.S. brewing and beer importing businesses put more than 2 million Americans to work, including barley farmers, shopkeepers, and truck drivers. Beer contributes more than \$246 billion to the U.S. economy. There are more than 1,000 craft breweries in the U.S. and they sold more than 13.2 million barrels of beer last year.

According to the Beer Institute, North Dakota has the highest consumption of beer per capita per year at 45.8 gallons. That comes to about one pint of beer a day for every individual in North Dakota. New Hampshire comes in second with 43.9 gallons per capita per year, followed by Montana, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Nebraska comes in at number ten.

The lowest consumption by beer drinkers is in Utah with an average of 20.2, followed by Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Maryland and then Kentucky.

Here are some interesting facts

about beer, another agricultural product.

- Germany has its own beer pipeline.
- The White House brews its own beer.
- The birthplace of beer was in ancient Babylonia. The Babylonians took their brewing so seriously that brewers were drowned in their own beer if it wasn't good.
- In the Middle Ages, clean water was hard to find. Beer was actually consumed more than water because the alcohol made it safe from infection.
- Vikings believed that a giant goat that spewed beer from its udders awaited in Heaven.
- Barley beer was invented in Iran but now it is illegal to consume it there.
- The oldest recipe in the world is for beer.

Even if a person doesn't like beer, it is a part of agriculture, making barley a vital cereal grain along with wheat and oats.

Since one of our National WIFE Convention tours was to the Coors Brewery, it seems like a good time to share some information on one of the lesser-known cereal grains, barley.

For barley you need low protein, which is the opposite of most other crops. Malt is sprouted barley. The barley is watered down until it sprouts, producing enzymes that are important to break the starch down into fermentable sugar. The sprouted grain is dried to about four percent moisture.

Malt gives most of the color and flavor to the beer. A 12-ounce bottle of lite beer contains about 820 to 950 kernels of barley. The same size bottle of specialty beer would use about three to four

Dairy Report

New insurance program is unclear

The dairy portion of the new Farm Bill has become an insurance program that dairy farmers will calculate themselves. They will be assigned a base, depending on their highest milk marketings for 2011, 2012, or 2013, which will be adjusted annually. New farms will be given a base extrapolated from their first month's production or the size of their herd.

There will be a \$100 charge applied for administrative costs. Producers will choose to insure their production between \$4 and \$8 per hundredweight in 50-cent increments. The amount of coverage they select and the amount of

milk to be covered will be determined by what each producer is willing to pay. There are points on the charts where an extra 50 cents of payment will not bring an extra 50 cents of income, so be careful with what choices are made. Finding an economist whose projections each dairyman really trusts will be imperative.

If margins fall below the \$4 level for two months, the Secretary of Agriculture must purchase dairy products for public and private nonprofit organizations, which assist low-income households. That program will end after three months or if margins move above the \$4 limit. The program is also dependent on

world prices.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations have not yet been clarified, so there will be many changes. It seems to be a huge guessing game, somewhat similar to playing charades with our national government. Thank heavens the game is voluntary and may our dairymen be the winners.



By Kay Zeosky
New York



By Barbara Broberg
Montana

Energy Report

Clean energy conference highlights innovative projects

The Harvesting Clean Energy Conference entitled "Powering rural economic development in the Pacific Northwest" was held in Helena, Montana on February 4 and 5 of this year. The information provided was not exclusive to northwestern America.

One of the conference exhibitors included a power company who spoke about "Smart Grid," a relatively new technology for utility electricity systems. The word "smart" comes from computerizing the electric system, which allows power interruption to be recognized sooner. Electricity travels across wires and is optimized through electronic mapping. The grid is then updated as the low efficiencies are identified. Lower rates may be offered to off-peak users.

The Smart Grid can catch all electric data so that electricity can be placed where it is needed most. Electricity sources are now integrated, instead of power coming from only one source such as coal, hydroelectric power, or natural gas. Once wind, solar, and geothermal sources in the neighborhood (or at a distance) are added, a real balancing act is used to keep everyone powered.

As "site-based" energy is implemented by more communities, homes and businesses, the Smart Grid's data will allow power lines to acknowledge, accept and disseminate the electricity in a way that is most efficient to all electric users and to these "distributed generation" (DG) producers. Site-based energy, or DG, is the electric generation that is made where it is used--for instance small solar panels, efficiency windmills, or a drop in hydroelectric units. When there is an excess of electric production, the choice can be made to allow the extra power to go onto the grid. Having a Smart Grid is the efficient way to make use of the existing power grid of wires and switches. For a video about Smart Grid visit cleanenergy.org.

excellence.org.

Another exhibitor at the conference in Helena was Juhl Renewable Energy System, Inc., which has a solar backup power system. It is all contained in a large steel cabinet where it can store electricity against a power outage or use stored power while local rates are high.

Other presentations included successful ethanol projects such as producing drinking alcohol to help profitability. To do this, be sure to have livestock nearby to use the very high-quality feed by-product. And be sure to have your "feed stock" (the corn, lumber, and the switch grass) readily available as you start producing fuel. The evolving biodiesel manufacturer has found niche markets for products and by-products.

Geothermal projects such as smaller windmills, hydroelectric retrofits, plug and "play" solar panels and more are now businesses and projects that are up and running with years of technical experience. The people working with this alternative energy have been doing it long enough to know what to do...or what not to do. In Montana, Moodie Implement, a John Deere dealer, has Moodie Wind Energy, LLC. Its website is <http://www.moodieimplement.com/Store-Locations/MIC-Wind-Division.aspx>.

The Irrigation segment of the conference discussed Variable Rate Irrigation (VRI) and Variable Speed Irrigation (VSI). Irrigation has been having communication problems where the soil and the spray system have not been talking to each other. As sensors, electric motors, spray tips, and 'boomback' drop tubes have evolved, a computer system is needed to handle all the chatter. This technology is arriving and having a Smart phone in hand will help manage it. For more information and to see a fact sheet on Agriculture Irrigation Energy Efficiency visit <http://neea.org/initiatives/industrial/agricultural-irrigation>.

One particularly successful project was described: An irrigation district refitted their irrigation canal for hydroelectric

power. The generator runs 90-100 days out of the year with the electricity producing offset irrigation costs for the district users. The work began as the previous season ended. The work was planned so irrigators were only minimally affected. The man in charge said the paperwork involved is just a part of the project to move through to get to the working project. "The fun part is when you add water and it runs," he said. They were required to have a "fail-safe" bypass in case the water had to free-flow instead of move through the power plant. The presentation showed a video of the project—a cement structure with large square holes was shown with no movement...then water poured in, crashing through; proof that the by-pass could work.

Another interesting project involved Turnbull Hydro, LLC of Idaho Falls, Idaho and Montana Microbial Products, www.mtmicrobial.com, which make fish food from barley. For \$1 million more, they could add ethanol-making capabilities.

A lot of lessons were learned throughout the conference including the realization of how much research universities do and how colleges and technology schools are feeding technicians into these evolving energy functions. These schools are fitted with wetlands, windmills, geothermal heating systems, cows and methane, biodiesel generators and more!

Success is not so much brains as perseverance; being involved in a failed business teaches you more than a four-year degree at any college. Every project is different and there are plenty of interesting things going on if you do need a hobby.

There were several speakers on climate change throughout the conference. It was satisfying to know that these people are centered on keeping the world together for the future of the family. This conference had a great variety of between 100 and 200 people in attendance with over 30 scheduled presentations. For more information on the conference go to harvest-cleanenergy.org or www.ncat.org.



By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota

Homeland Security Report

More federal agencies purchasing bulk ammunition

The United States Postal Service (USPS) joins the long list of non-military federal agencies purchasing large amounts of ammunition. They later claimed that the ammunition is a “standard purchase” for the Postal Police. On January 31, the USPS Supplies and Services Purchasing Office posted a notice on the Federal Business Opportunities website asking contractors to register with USPS as potential ammunition suppliers for a variety of cartridges.

Since 2001, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has been building a massive arsenal through purchases orchestrated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The ED has spent over \$80,000 to date on Glock pistols and over \$17,000 on Remington shotguns.

Back in July, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also purchased 72,000 rounds of .40 Smith & Wesson (S&W) bullets, following a 2012 purchase for 46,000 rounds of .40 S&W jacketed hollow points by the National Weather Service. NOAA responded to concerns over the weather service purchase by stating that it was meant for the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement for its bi-annual “target qualifications and training.”

That seems excessive considering jacketed hollow-point ammunition is typically several times more expensive than practice rounds, which can usually be found in equivalent power loadings and offer similar recoil characteristics as duty rounds.

Including mass purchases by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a combination of non-military federal agencies have purchased an estimated amount of over two billion rounds of ammunition in the past two years.

Additionally, the U.S. Army bought almost 600,000 Soviet AK-47 magazines last fall, enough to hold nearly 18,000,000 rounds of 7.62x39mm ammunition, which is not standard-issue for either the U.S. military or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It would take two trips for one of the largest cargo aircrafts in the world to haul that many magazines.

A month prior, the army purchased nearly 3,000,000 rounds of 7.62x39mm ammunition, a huge amount but still only one-sixth of what the magazines purchased can hold in total.

In January, Homeland Security spent over \$58 million on hiring security detail for just two Social Security offices in Maryland. DHS also spent \$80 million on armed guards to protect government buildings in New York and sought even more guards for federal facilities in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

While the government gears up for civil unrest and stockpiles ammunition without limits, private gun owners are finding ammunition shelves empty at gun stores across America, including shortages of once-common cartridges such as the .22 Long Rifle.

As the federal government grows larger, more and more federal agencies such as the ED and NOAA are forming and arming their own “law enforcement divisions” with hundreds of thousands spent on full-blown arsenals. Even the Environmental Protection Agency has its own SWAT teams conducting raids

on peaceful Americans. Expect to see more large-scale firearm and ammunition purchases by these bureaucracies as they become even more militarized.

An online petition seeking to compel the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to review its law enforcement practices at the Imperial Sand Dunes has attracted more than 1,000 signatures since it was created late last year. Accompanying many of the 1,340 signatures are descriptive accounts of incidents that supporters suggest is evidence of over-aggressive policing. The petition simply states: “Change the behavior of BLM officers in the Imperial Valley.” The BLM’s policing has generated fear and animosity among visitors.

With the sluggish economy and recent fee increases keeping visitor numbers below previous years’ totals, a wide perception of over-aggressive policing could only serve to drive more potential visitors away. Harassment, unconstitutional searches and seizures seem to be a common theme among comments left by the petition’s online supporters. The occasional reference to Nazi Germany’s Gestapo is not uncommon either. It is law-abiding families that seem to bear the brunt of BLM’s policing now. As a result, the word has gotten out among visitors to get “all their ducks in a row” in order to be in compliance with laws and regulations.



WIFE Updates

WIFE GOES TO WASHINGTON

WIFE leadership and members will be heading to Washington, D.C. mid-March to meet with USDA representatives, get staff briefings from both the Senate and House, make Capitol Hill visits and more. This legislative seminar is a yearly event that allows WIFE members to share their stories and knowledge of agriculture with America's leaders while learning about new issues and upcoming legislation that could affect U.S. agriculture and those associated with it. Contact a state or national WIFE board member for more information and be sure to look in next month's WIFeline for a summary of trip activities.

Mark your calendar now for the 2014 National WIFE Convention

This year's national conference is set for November 12-15, 2014 and will be taking place at the Best Western Airport Hotel in Phoenix, AZ. This year's planning committee includes Pat Torgerson, Fran Kreutz, Kerry Lewis, Pam Pothoff, Bobbie Massey, Linda Newman and Ruth Larabee. Plan to attend!



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Mariah Shammel, Editor
2091 Salt Creek Road
Hilger, MT 59451
(406) 462-5639
paisleyprairies@gmail.com

Change Service Requested

Shana Baitsch
323 Road 300
Glendive, MT 59330



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