

# Wyoming Agriculture

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## WyFB tracks key policy priorities during 2026 budget session

BY CALLIE HANSON

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation followed a wide range of legislation during the 2026 budget session, guided by member-developed policy and the organization's mission of strengthening Wyoming agriculture and enhancing Wyoming communities.

With the budget session requiring a two-thirds vote for bill introduction, many proposals did not advance. However, several measures impacting agriculture, natural resources and rural communities were signed into law, while others remain part of ongoing policy discussions.

### Private Property Rights

Private property rights remain a cornerstone issue for Wyoming Farm Bureau. During the session, HB 19 – Corner Crossing Clarification failed to pass the Senate Committee of the Whole on March 2.

While the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals previously determined corner crossing may be legal under certain conditions, the proposed legislation would have ex-

panded that interpretation to include state and local government lands. The bill also raised concerns regarding weakened recourse for incidental trespass and potential damage to private property.

WyFB policy opposes corner crossing. At the same time, the organization recognizes corner-locked public lands remain a challenge and supports improving land exchange processes as a long-term solution to provide a solution to public lands access and property rights concerns.

### Water

Water is one of Wyoming's most valuable resources and a top priority for the organization. While HB 116 – Destruction of Water is Not a Beneficial Use did not advance, several water-related bills supported by WyFB were signed into law, including:

- Voluntary Conservation Pilot Program
- Forest Health Grant Program
- State Engineer Surface and Ground Water Study



Following the close of the budget session, WyFB now looks ahead to the announcement of interim topics as policy work continues. *KERIN CLARK PHOTO*

- Water Districts Funds for Maintenance Projects
- Wastewater and Stormwater Infrastructure Study.

Discussions surrounding the Colorado

River Compact remain critical for water users in the Green River and Little Snake River basins. As negotiations continue between upper and lower basin states, Wyoming's ability to manage its water resources remains essential. The Voluntary Water Conservation Pilot Program establishes a framework allowing water rights holders to voluntarily reduce use without risking their rights, providing a locally driven tool to address drought conditions and meet interstate compact obligations while avoiding potential litigation.

The Forest Health Grant Program creates funding opportunities for preventative forest management projects aimed at improving water yield and quality, reducing wildfire risk and enhancing habitat for both livestock and wildlife. This program directs the State Engineer's Office to conduct groundwater studies in designated control areas at least once every ten years, evaluating aquifer recharge, water use and future development considerations.

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## Fornstrom testifies before U.S. Senate committee on diesel emissions policy

BY CALLIE HANSON

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President Todd Fornstrom testified before the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee March 11 about the impacts diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) requirements have on farmers and ranchers, emphasizing the need for policies that recognize the realities of agricultural operations.

The hearing examined S. 3135, the Cold Weather Diesel Reliability Act, legislation aimed at addressing reliability issues diesel-powered vehicles and equipment can face when operating in freezing temperatures. Fornstrom, a fourth-generation farmer from Pine Bluffs, spoke on behalf of nearly 12,000 members of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation and more than five million members of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

In his testimony, Fornstrom acknowledged agriculture's commitment to environmental stewardship while explaining that modern emissions systems have created additional operational challenges for farmers and ranchers across the country.

"Clean air and water are essential to



Laramie County farmer and Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President Todd Fornstrom testifies before the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee about the challenges diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) requirements create for farmers and ranchers. *CATHERINE PAGE/AFBF PHOTO*

successful farms and ranches," Fornstrom said. "Agriculture depends on natural systems, and the quality of the air and water surrounding a farm strongly influences crop growth, soil health, livestock well-being and overall productivity."

**FORNSTROM TESTIFIES ... Page 8**



Attendees of the National YF&R Conference were able to network with fellow young farmers and ranchers and explore Portland. *WYFB PHOTO*

## Young agricultural leaders gather for 2026 YF&R Leadership Conference

BY CALLIE HANSON

The 2026 Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Leadership Conference brought together an estimated 850 young agricultural leaders from across the country in Portland, Ore., March 13–16. The annual event focused on developing the next generation of Farm Bureau leadership through education, collaboration and networking, while equipping attendees with tools to strengthen agriculture and rural communities at home.

Members from across the nation, including a delegation from Wyoming, participated in a full schedule of general sessions, breakout workshops and networking opportunities designed to foster both personal and professional growth. Wyoming was represented by two members of the YF&R Committee as well as students from the Sheridan College Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter, highlighting the state's continued investment in developing young leaders in agriculture.

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CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS

April	
6	Ag Books for Kids District Deadline
24	Converse County Farm Bureau Federation Spring Fling - Douglas
June	
1	Membership Meeting – Casper
September	
9	Johnson County Resolutions Meeting
25	Natrona County Annual Meeting/Banquet
November	
12-14	Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting - Casper

Visit [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org)  
for event updates



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# Growing demand for American grown agriculture

**Zippy Duvall**

American Farm Bureau Federation President



**O**n my family farm in Georgia, every season begins with the same basic question: will the numbers work? Like farmers across the country, my family looks at the cost of seed, fertilizer, feed, fuel, and labor before we plant a crop or expand the herd. Farming has never been easy, but lately, it's been harder to make those numbers work.

I recently had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Agriculture Committee about the challenges farmers and ranchers are facing and what it will take to keep American agriculture strong in the years ahead.

As I shared with lawmakers, the story of today's farm economy is one of incredible productivity paired with increasingly tight margins. Farmers today are producing more than ever. Innovation and technology have helped us grow more food, fiber, and fuel using fewer resources than ever before. But productivity alone does not pay the bills.

Across the countryside, farmers are

facing a squeeze on their balance sheets. Input costs remain historically high while prices for many commodities have fallen significantly. At the same time, recent disruptions to global fertilizer markets and shipping routes are creating even more uncertainty around one of farmers' most essential inputs.

All of this is adding to the financial pressure farmers are facing. USDA projects farm income in 2026 to be \$48 billion below the highs we saw just a few years ago. Farmers are doing what they have always done. They are working harder, becoming more efficient, and adapting to change. Yet many are still struggling to stay ahead.

This challenge is bigger than a single tough year. It reflects deeper changes in the farm economy. If production continues to rise but demand doesn't keep up, prices fall and margins shrink. This is why strengthening demand for American grown agriculture products must be part of the conversation about the future of agriculture.

### Strengthening Demand for American Grown Products

Exports will always be critical to American agriculture. Farmers depend on global markets, and we must continue working to expand fair and reliable trade opportunities around the world. But global markets can also be unpredictable. Global competition is increasing, trade relationships can shift quickly, and supply chain disruptions can send ripple effects through the farm economy.

That's why growing demand here at home is so important. When American families choose food, fuel, and fiber produced by our farmers and ranchers, it strengthens rural economies and supports the people who work every day to feed and fuel our nation.

Biofuels are one example of how strong domestic demand can benefit agriculture. Ethanol and biodiesel have created major markets for crops like corn and soybeans while helping strengthen America's **GROWING DEMAND ... Page 3**

# A glimpse of the legislative session

**Kerin Clark**

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President



**T**he 2026 Budget Session adjourned on Wednesday, March 11. Wyoming is a true Citizen Legislature which means the legislators serve part-time while balancing their legislative work with their professional and personal commitments back at home. It is very important to recognize all the legislators for their time and service.

The biennial budget was adopted into law on March 6 with multiple items to note for agriculture. The Wyoming Livestock Board received funding for an additional field veterinarian as well as one-time funding for disease mitigation. The University of Wyoming (UW) received funding for veterinary medicine education to address the ongoing concern of the shortage of rural and large animal veterinarians. UW also received funding for a state match for rangeland health and crop science research. Wildfire management resources were supported through the budget with funding for the Office of State Lands and Investments Forestry Division for wildland fire module crews. Additionally, funding was directed to the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Income account to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants on private and state lands as well as wildfire restoration projects on private and state lands.

In the budget session, any legislation except for the budget bill must receive a

two-thirds vote from the House or the Senate to be introduced. Most of the legislation WyFB worked fell into our 11 policy priority issues areas of: private property rights, water, land use, federal lands, state lands, wildfires, wildlife, fiscal responsibility, tax policy, rural vitality and election integrity.

Private property rights are fundamental for our organization. We were pleased private property rights were protected when the corner crossing clarification bill did not pass Committee of the Whole in the Senate. The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals determined corner crossing under certain conditions is legal, however, this proposed legislation would have broadened the scope of corner crossing from federal lands to include state lands and local government lands. The legislation also weakened recourse for incidental trespass and damages to private property should someone corner crossing damage the adjacent private property.

Water is one of our state's most valuable resources and a priority issue for our organization. A multitude of water bills were signed into law including the voluntary conservation of water pilot program for the Colorado River, funding for a groundwater study in water control areas, a bill to modernize how Wyoming's irrigation and water districts can fund large scale maintenance of aging water infrastructure and the annual omnibus water bills.

Electrical reliability and private property rights drove discussion on the prescriptive easements for electricity delivery bill which has been signed into law. The Wyoming Rural Electric Association led a stakeholder group that included the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation on this legislation. The collaboration on the development of this bill is one that ensured strong consideration of private property rights while balancing the need for electrical reliability. This law provides for non-exclusive prescriptive easements for electric utilities with established delivery systems that were installed, and remain in use, on the property on or before January 1, 2006.

Wildland fire management is a key priority for our members and the state. Effective April 1, there will be additional funding for the State Forestry Division of the Office of State Lands and Investments for 24 employee positions to support wildland fire suppression modules. Some of these positions will be seasonal and several will be full-time positions. This investment in manpower for the state forestry department will certainly be helpful for the fire season. Additionally, amendments to the Wyoming state forestry good neighbor authority revolving account eliminated employment restrictions on state personnel hired to conduct good neighbor authority projects.

**BUDGET SESSION ... Page 6**

# Proposed Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger could be risky for ag supply chains

BY KELLY CARPENTER,  
POLICY ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

The potential \$85 billion merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern is sparking concern among agricultural shippers, as it threatens to further limit their transportation options. Railroads play a vital role in transporting bulk commodities like grain and fertilizer, and this consolidation could intensify the challenges faced by farmers reliant on a single railroad for service.

With the elimination of independent carriers, farmers and ranchers may experience a substantial reduction in bargaining power. This situation leaves them more susceptible to escalating transportation costs, which they cannot easily offset. Recent data indicates agriculture is increasingly carrying the weight of railroads' cost recovery, with revenues from farm-related rail transport soaring over the last 20 years.

Additionally, major rail mergers can introduce heightened systemic risks,

particularly for time-sensitive agricultural products. A decrease in independent networks amplifies the impact of service disruptions, raising concerns over food supply and national resilience.

The merger would establish the first coast-to-coast Class I railroad in U.S. history, linking 50,000 route miles across 43 states. While advocates argue that this consolidation may improve operational efficiency and service reliability, critics underscore that increased market

concentration could lead to unfavorable pricing and service conditions for agricultural shippers who already have limited alternatives. The implications of this merger could fundamentally reshape the agricultural landscape in rural America.

The American Farm Bureau Federation opposes the merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. ■

*This article was adapted from an AFBF Market Intel by Danny Munch. To learn more please visit fb.org/market-intel.*

## GROWING DEMAND... From Page 2

energy security. Expanding year-round access to E15 and supporting new markets like sustainable aviation fuel can help create more demand for farm products while supporting rural economies.

Another way to strengthen domestic demand is by ensuring that American-grown food is prioritized in programs that serve families across the country. Millions of meals are served every day through the National School Lunch Program and meals served to our men and women in uniform. When those meals include food grown by American farmers, they provide dependable markets for farmers while supporting the nutrition of families and service mem-

bers. Ensuring strong enforcement of Buy American provisions can help make sure these programs support American agriculture whenever possible.

That same principle applies beyond food. Policies like the Buying American Cotton Act are another way Congress can support demand for products grown by American farmers while also supporting domestic manufacturing. When we prioritize American-grown products, we strengthen the entire supply chain.

## Preserving Farmland for the Future of American Grown Agriculture

At the same time, we must protect the foundation of American agriculture

itself. Farmland is more than just land. It is a strategic national asset. Once farmland is converted to other uses, it rarely comes back into production. According to USDA, we lost 20.1 million acres of farmland between 2017 and 2022, along with more than 175,000 farms since 2017.

Keeping farmland economically viable is critical for food security, rural communities, and the future of agriculture. That's why getting a new, modernized farm bill across the finish line remains essential. The farm bill provides the risk management tools, conservation programs, and research investments that help farmers navigate uncertainty and keep land in production for the next generation.

## Keeping American Grown Products Competitive

Farmers don't want to rely on short-term assistance. What we want are strong markets and policies that allow us to compete and succeed.

As I said in my testimony, farmers are ready to innovate, adapt, and meet the needs of consumers here at home and around the world. But keeping American agriculture strong will require policies that support growing demand, fair trade opportunities, and reliable farm safety net programs.

Farmers and ranchers are producing at historic levels. Now we must ensure strong market opportunities here at home to keep family farms in business. ■

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## Rooted in Resilience: A look into the 2026 YF&R Conference

BY MORGAN STROH,  
YF&R COMMITTEE MEMBER

**M**arch 13th, 2026, young farmers and ranchers from across the states (and Canada!) gathered to improve leadership skills, learn, and network with fellow agriculturalists. This year, the annual YF&R conference was held in Portland, Oregon. The theme? Rooted in Resilience. And what an excellent theme choice.

Friday evening, young farmers and ranchers convened for the welcoming reception. A great time to network and get a breakdown of the upcoming days' events.

Saturday morning, we jumped right into general session, hearing from former Army Ranger, Keni Thomas. One thing Keni said stood out in particular: "Leadership isn't a rank or title; it is the example we set for the people we serve." He stressed the importance of lighting the way for those behind you. To be willing to step up when others cannot.

At the annual YF&R conferences, collegiate Farm Bureau members come to compete in discussion meets. The opportunity to help run state-level discussion meets has been incredibly fun, but seeing it at the national level was a whole new experience.



Morgan Stroh, Weston County

This year, the collegiate students discussed topics varying from succession planning to environmental impacts, urban sprawl, and more.

Many workshops were provided for the attendees throughout the convention. A contender for the YF&R's favorite workshop was Effective Communication. Keni Thomas was a hit keynote speaker, and nearly every attendee remarked that he was one of, if not their favorite, speaker of

the whole conference. So, to the surprise of no one, when it was announced that he would have a workshop with limited seats, people rushed to claim a place in this session. Communication is key to success. Clarity, simplicity, and specificity, as it turns out, are key to successful communication.

For this workshop, we split off into groups of three to run a communication exercise. What at first seemed to be simple puzzle building quickly revealed itself to be incredibly complicated. Try as the groups might, we struggled to communicate. Keni continued to remind us in the workshop, "If they're confused, it's your fault." By the end of the session, though some were surely frustrated, the point was clearly made: "Communication is only effective when the recipient of your message understands."

Sunday quickly rolled around. Many attendees rose early for group morning devotionals. Those who didn't attend arrived in time to watch Kait Thornton present for Sunday's morning general session. Kait Thornton is an apple grower in Washington state. She is also an influencer helping educate those outside of Ag on farming. "As a farmer, you have to have the per-

severance and passion if you're going to make it."

Monday started with the closing general session. We heard from a panel of YF&R members ranging from Oklahoma, Oregon, and Massachusetts. After the conclusion of the panel, everyone split off to start their tours. Many had the privilege of touring creameries, olive mills, and even an ostrich farm!

The 2026 Young Farmer and Rancher conference ended at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, where attendees got to explore the museum, experience unique planetariums, and dance till their feet were sore. ■

*Morgan Stroh works on her family ranch in Weston County, where she helps run a cow-calf operation. Her illustrious career as a self-proclaimed cow expert started back in 2006 when she began as a (very young) ranch hand. She has had the privilege to help cultivate one of the most docile herds in the Northern hemisphere. Although Morgan has been attending Farm Bureau meetings for two decades, this is only her second year in YF&R, but she's making it count by showing up to every meeting she can. From legislative to AFBF conventions, Morgan has gone all in.*

## NOTICE: Voluntary Water Conservation Program Act

W.S. § 41-3-117 through 41-3-119

**T**he Wyoming Legislature recently passed the Voluntary Water Conservation Program Act that created W.S. §§ 41-3-117 through 41-3-119. The Act establishes a voluntary water conservation program within Wyoming's portion of the Colorado River basin which includes the Green

and Little Snake Rivers and their tributaries. Any person with a right to beneficially use water under a valid water right that diverts water from within Wyoming's portion of the Colorado River basin may apply to the State Engineer for approval to participate in the program. Pursuant to the Act, the Wyoming State Engineer's Office hereby provides notice of the Act and how interested

persons can obtain program information. Any interested person may obtain program information by visiting the following link to the Wyoming State Engineer's Office website: <https://seo.wyo.gov/home/colorado-river-voluntary-water-conservation-program/voluntary-waterconservation-program>, or by emailing Jack Morey, Deputy State Engineer at [jack.morey2@wyo.gov](mailto:jack.morey2@wyo.gov).

Additionally, the State Engineer's Office will hold public meetings to provide additional information about the Voluntary Water Conservation Program at the following dates, times, and locations:

**Pinedale:** June 17, 2026  
2:00-5:00 pm  
Sublette County School District  
Administration Building  
665 N. Tyler Ave.  
Pinedale, WY 82941

**Lyman:** June 18, 2026  
9:00-12:00 am  
Lyman High School  
Auditorium  
1305 East Clark St.  
Lyman, WY 82937

**Baggs:** June 22, 2026  
1:00-4:00 pm  
Valley Community Center  
255 W. Osborne St.  
Baggs, WY 82321



### Member-CENTS

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation believes constitutional government, the competitive enterprise system, property rights and individual freedom are necessary components for a strong agriculture, a strong Wyoming and a strong America. We are a centennial grassroots organization that cares about your future. Whether you are a farmer, rancher or a consumer of food...membership is a good investment to secure stability of agriculture here in Wyoming. As a member, WyFB provides you with exclusive benefits as a way to say thank you. These benefits may pay your annual membership fee many times over.

Visit [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) and click on the "Membership/Benefits" tab for a complete listing of value-added benefits.

Current members may access member benefits at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) and click on the "Membership/Benefits" tab.

You may also utilize the Farm Bureau Member Benefits app on your phone to access your benefits.

Questions: email [bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org](mailto:bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org) or call 307-721-7723.

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# Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation is now accepting requests for charitable contributions

Each year, the Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation is able to make charitable contributions thanks to a program offered by FBL Financial Group, Inc.

Requests will be considered for organizations who meet the following criteria:

- The organization must be classified as 501(c)(3) by the IRS.
- The organization must:
  - Serve Farm Bureau Members; or
  - Be an industry educational organization that provides direct or indirect benefit to Farm Bureau; or
  - Be a health organization that promotes practices or educational programs beneficial to Farm Bureau.

Requests should be mailed in hard copy format to Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation at the address below and be received in the state office or postmarked by May 15, 2026:

**Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation**  
 Attn: Diane "Dee" Brewer  
 PO Box 1348  
 Laramie WY 82073

For questions, contact Dee Brewer at (307) 721-7719 or [dbrewer1@wyfb.org](mailto:dbrewer1@wyfb.org)

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation supports legal efforts to protect farmers and ranchers. Foundation programs work with individuals, organizations, and government agencies for the purpose of promoting knowledge and understanding of human or civil rights or liberties secured by law.

## Criteria for Charitable Contributions Requests

The Charitable Contributions Committee will apportion the contributions budget by category of contribution within the four areas listed below.

### Social Services

Includes gifts to youth organizations, community-based organizations, and programs for hunger and homeless.

### Education

Included in this group are gifts to colleges and universities along with matching gifts of employees up to \$250 per year. Also included in this category are contributions to industry-related organizations.

### Agriculture

Gifts to 4-H foundations, FFA, agricultural exposition, natural heritage foundation grants, and gifts to living history farms are the basis for this category.

### Miscellaneous

All requests for capital funds and items that cannot be classified into one of the categories listed above will be classified in this category.

The Charitable Contributions Committee will review requests from organizations to fund programs that meet the

Committee's established priorities. The Committee's requirements for such requests are as follows:

### 1. Overview

An overview of the organization or project stressing objectives, long-range goals, market, number of clients, target audience, and past accomplishments.

### 2. Sources and Uses of Funds Statements

Budget or current financial statement that lists major revenue categories and major expense categories. If current figures are not available, a projection can be substituted.

### 3. Board Members

A list of the organization's current board with officers indicated. This should include current employment, special

qualifications and/or profession of each member.

### 4. Financial Statements

The most current audited financial statement available.

### 5. Tax Status

A statement of the organization or project's IRS tax status indicating that it currently qualifies as 501(c)(3) and includes the legal name and tax I.D. number. If the name of the organization or project currently requesting funding varies from the legal name, please explain the variation.

### 6. Contact Identification

Identify at least one individual who can answer questions relating to the above information and provide their daytime phone number and email address. ■

## Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife



### Rhoda's Spinach Salad

Recipe by Rhoda Moore and Connie Werner

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 bags of baby spinach
- 2 bunches of green onions, chopped
- 6 boiled eggs, cooled and sliced
- 1 small container sliced mushrooms
- 8 slices of bacon, cooled, cooked and crumbled
- 1 can of water chestnuts, drained and sliced

#### Dressing

- 1 cup salad oil
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1 small onion, diced
- dash of salt
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

#### DIRECTIONS

- Combine all the salad ingredients into a jar or other container. Shake to combine. Place in the fridge.
- For the salad, combine the baby spinach, onions, sliced boiled eggs, mushrooms, bacon, and water chestnuts into a large bowl.
- Toss to combine.
- Serve with the dressing! Enjoy!

This salad is perfect for your Easter Table. Wait to add the dressing until right before serving or allow each guest to use their desired amount.



For more recipes visit: [www.modernranchwife.com](http://www.modernranchwife.com)





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# WY delegation applauds Goshen irrigation tunnel funding

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. – On March 17, U.S. Sens. John Barrasso and Cynthia Lummis and Rep. Harriet Hageman, all R-Wyo., issued the following statements after the Department of Interior announced they will award \$100 million from the Working Families Tax Cuts law to make necessary repairs of the Fort Laramie-Goshen irrigation canal tunnel that collapsed in 2019. This announcement comes after years of efforts by the delegation to secure the resources needed to finally complete the reconstruction process.

“Today’s announcement is another example of how the Working Families Tax Cuts law is helping communities across Wyoming. After years of fighting to deliv-

er a solution to this problem, we are proud to announce the Goshen Irrigation District is receiving the help it urgently needs to repair and restore its aging irrigation tunnel,” said Sen. Barrasso. “Wyoming and Nebraska are still feeling the impact from the 2019 tunnel collapse. It revealed major structural deficiencies that must be fixed. We will continue to work with Governor Gordon, the irrigation district and the Trump administration to ensure Wyoming is able to finally complete the reconstruction process.”

“For over a century, the Fort Laramie Canal Tunnel has served as a critical pillar of agricultural life in eastern Wyoming. It’s a vital conduit for delivering water to thousands of acres of cropland stretching across

Wyoming and Nebraska. I am tremendously pleased that the Trump administration is directing funds from the Working Families Tax Cuts law toward a lasting, permanent repair of the Fort Laramie Tunnel, ensuring our farmers and ranchers have the reliable water access they need to feed our nation and keep our rural communities strong,” said Sen. Lummis.

“The Fort Laramie Tunnel has been a lifeline for southeastern Wyoming for more than a century and its sudden collapse brought hardship to many,” said Rep. Hageman. “The needs of this aging system represent how Washington must return to the kind of proactive approach to water infrastructure that made western life possible. The urgent \$100 million provided

by the Working Families Tax Cuts law in addition to the \$14.6 million I secured in community project funding will keep this critical region of the west irrigated.”

### Background Information:

In 2019, Irrigation Tunnel #2 on the Fort Laramie Canal collapsed, leaving more than 100,000 acres of cropland in Wyoming and Nebraska without water. After the collapse, inspections on Tunnel #1 on the same canal also revealed major structural deficiencies. New tunnels through the existing tunnel alignments are necessary to reinstate full operation for the Goshen Irrigation District in Wyoming and the Gering Fort Laramie Irrigation District in Nebraska. ■

# Nebraska Farm Bureau Mobilizes disaster relief fund in response to wildfires

**L**INCOLN, NEB. – In response to the devastating wildfires, Nebraska Farm Bureau has activated its Disaster Relief Fund to support farm and ranch families and communities impacted across the state. The wildfires, including one of the largest in Nebraska’s history, have caused widespread damage, leaving many families facing significant loss and a long road to recovery.

“The impact of these wildfires is heartbreaking for so many Nebraska families and communities,” said Mark McHargue, president of Nebraska Farm Bureau. “This fund allows us to come together and support our neighbors as they begin to rebuild.”

Initial funding will focus on urgent needs such as feed, hay, and fencing replacement. Efforts will remain flexible as additional needs emerge. Every dollar donated will go directly toward addressing wildfire impacts and supporting those affected.

“An immediate concern is the loss of grazing land, leaving thousands of cattle displaced and in need of supplemental feed. At the same time, we know that Nebraskans will step up, as they always do, to support one another at times like this. Farm and ranch families are resilient, and with strong community support, they will work through the challenges ahead,” McHargue said.

To provide donors with a tax-deductible giving option, contributions will be administered through the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization. No administration fee is charged, and 100% of donations will support those affected. Individuals and organizations interested in contributing to relief efforts can donate by visiting: <https://www.nefb.org/disaster>. Checks should be made payable to Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation with “Disaster Relief” noted in the memo line.

Donations by mail can be sent to:

### Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation

Attn: Disaster Relief Fund  
P.O. Box 80299  
Lincoln, NE 68501-0299

The Nebraska Farm Bureau is a grassroots, state-wide organization dedicated to supporting farm and ranch families and working for the benefit of all Nebraskans through a wide variety of educational, service, and advocacy efforts. Nearly 55,000 families across Nebraska are Farm Bureau members, working together to achieve rural and urban prosperity as agriculture is a key fuel to Nebraska’s economy. For more information about Nebraska Farm Bureau and agriculture, visit [www.nefb.org](http://www.nefb.org). ■



**COUNTY-LEVEL SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albany: March 31</li> <li>• Big Horn: April 2</li> <li>• Campbell: Variable</li> <li>• Carbon: April 15</li> <li>• Converse: March 1</li> <li>• Crook: March 30</li> <li>• Fremont: May 15</li> <li>• Goshen: April 1</li> <li>• Hot Springs: April 9</li> <li>• Johnson: April 1</li> <li>• Laramie: April 30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincoln: March 1</li> <li>• Natrona: May 15</li> <li>• Niobrara: April 1</li> <li>• Park: April 1</li> <li>• Platte: April 1</li> <li>• Sheridan: March 31</li> <li>• Sweetwater: March 15</li> <li>• Uinta: April 15</li> <li>• Washakie: April 1</li> <li>• Weston: May 1</li> </ul>
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Visit [wyfb.org/Get-Involved/Education/Scholarships](http://wyfb.org/Get-Involved/Education/Scholarships) for applications and contact information for each county.

### BUDGET SESSION... From Page 2

Bills to address landowner hunting licenses in limited quota areas and transferable landowner hunting licenses failed in the House and failed introduction in the Senate, respectively. The role landowners play in providing wildlife habitat cannot be underscored and is an important policy topic that we will continue to emphasize. We joined with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association to propose an interim topic to the Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife & Cultural Resources to address landowner recognition for the habitat they provide through their farm or ranch. If assigned, the requested topic would consider current compensation programs including damage payments and landowner licenses as well as explore additional options to recognize the landowner’s role for wildlife habitat.

Interim topics will be assigned April 1.

Multiple bills covering a wide range of tax policies were proposed and either failed introduction or were not considered for introduction. The proposals included a Constitutional Amendment to eliminate residential property taxes along with a trigger bill that would raise the state sales tax if the amendment to eliminate residential property taxes were to be passed. Taxes and government spending are policy conversations that have been ongoing for generations and will no doubt continue.

As we move into the interim to discuss topics for the 2027 legislative session, WyFB will continue advocating daily on behalf of our members to implement WyFB member policy. We are proud to stand up for you and with you as we work to keep agriculture strong here in Wyoming and our nation. ■

## Cowboy Poetry

BY BAYLA BERGER



# If Only You Could See Me Now

I leaned across the saddle horn  
My pony’s head hung low,  
I gazed across the cool blue morn  
The wind whispered, soft and slow.

I braised against the bitter chill  
That bit my nose and ears,  
But slowly all began to still  
To sweet thoughts and crystal tears.

If only you could see me here  
I promise I took hold,  
Of every word that reached my ear,  
Every story you ever told.

I promise I remember  
Each time you took my hand,  
Stoking up an ember  
That would burn to love this land.

I always fought to be like you  
Though then I didn’t see,  
That every goal I set to do  
Was to form yourself in me.

Every time I work a colt  
I pray to have your touch,  
To gently counter each revolt  
With a firm and guiding clutch

Yes, I know that you can’t see  
But this horse that wears your bit,  
Is everything you saw in me  
When you told me not to quit.

If only you could see me now  
You’d ride up by my side,  
Silently telling me you’re SO proud  
And I’d hug you one last time.

As I daily ride this narrow trail  
I will cherish every mile,  
For I am saved by crimson nails  
And my crown shall be your smile.

**LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE... From Page 1**

The conference emphasized cultivating strong grassroots leadership within Farm Bureau by bringing together young farmers and ranchers, collegiate members and industry professionals. Sessions were designed to provide timely, relevant information while encouraging participants to engage in meaningful discussions about the future of agriculture.

Breakout sessions were organized across six key focus areas: collegiate and young professional development, consumer engagement, member engagement and leadership development, innovation and niche marketing, on-the-farm practices, and policy and advocacy. These sessions allowed attendees to tailor their experience based on their interests and operations, while gaining practical knowledge they can apply in their own communities.

“Hearing from others in Portland gave me the opportunity to better understand my own strengths,” said Wyoming Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers State Chair Hannah Guild. “Through a strengths assessment and breakout sessions, I learned how to apply those strengths more effectively in my community and in leadership roles.”

In addition to educational sessions, the conference provided valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration. Attendees connected with Farm Bureau members from across the country, exchanging ideas and building relationships that extend beyond state lines. Evening events and informal gatherings further strengthened these connections, reinforcing the importance of a unified voice in agriculture.

“I really enjoyed the session, ‘Selling to the Public: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,’” Guild said. “It was a creative session where I was able to connect with others and hear fun, innovative ways they are engaging with their communities and adding value to their operations.”

“Another session I enjoyed focused on the book of the year and ways to connect with students,” Guild said. “We walked through the book and discussed ideas for making it engaging when visiting elementary classrooms. I came away with several new ideas I’d like to implement to help students gain a better and more accurate understanding of agriculture.”

Sheridan College student Tagg Mickelsen represented Wyoming in the collegiate discussion meet, engaging in thoughtful dialogue on key agricultural issues alongside peers from across the country.

“My experience competing for Wyoming was great. The panels offered great solutions and conversation to problems farmers and ranchers face everyday,” Mickelsen noted. “To represent Wyoming at the national level is something I’m very proud to have had the chance to do.”

Mickelsen prepared for the national conference with guidance from his advisor Angel Sparkman and YF&R Coordinator Alexis Lake, who scheduled time for him to consult with industry professionals prior to the meet.

“I believe college students should get involved with collegiate discussion meet to learn how to properly discuss and collaborate with peers, learn to be well spoken, and build confidence for future jobs and experiences” he said.

A key goal of the conference is to inspire participants to take what they have learned and apply it within their own operations and local Farm Bureau organizations. Whether through increased advocacy efforts, improved communication with consumers or the adoption of innovative practices, attendees are encouraged to bring new energy and ideas back to their states.

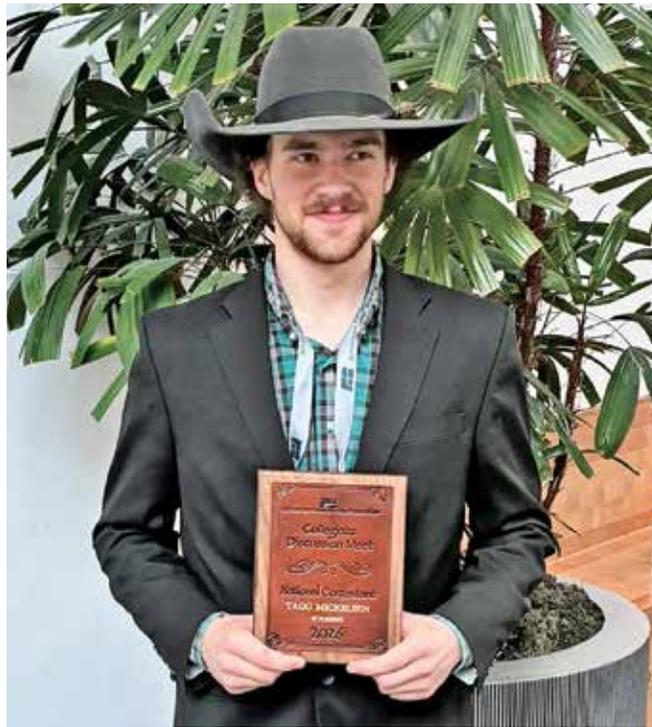
“One of the biggest takeaways I’ll bring home is a new perspective on thinking outside the box when it comes to our operation,” Guild said. “There are different avenues we can explore to supplement and expand what we’re already doing in new and creative ways.”

The conference also included opportunities to give back to the host community through outreach and service efforts, highlighting Farm Bureau’s commitment to strengthening not only agriculture, but the communities it serves.

As the conference concluded, attendees returned home with renewed motivation, expanded networks and practical tools to support their role as agricultural leaders. For Wyoming participants, the experience serves as another step in developing strong advocates for agriculture and ensuring the continued success of Farm Bureau at the grassroots level. ■



Attendees of the National YF&R Conference included members of the YF&R committee, staff and collegiate Farm Bureau members. WYFB PHOTO



Sheridan College student Tagg Mickelsen represented Wyoming in the collegiate discussion meet. ANGEL SPARKMAN PHOTO



Members of the Sheridan College Collegiate Farm Bureau joined Wyoming Farm Bureau state staff and YF&R Committee members at the National YF&R Conference. WYFB PHOTO

**FORNSTROM TESTIFIES...** From Page 1**Understanding DEF**

Diesel exhaust fluid is a liquid solution used in modern diesel engines to reduce emissions. The fluid, made from a mixture of high-purity urea and deionized water, is stored in a separate tank on vehicles and equipment equipped with selective catalytic reduction systems.

Rather than serving as a fuel or additive, DEF works as part of an emissions control process designed to reduce nitrogen oxide gases produced by diesel engines. When injected into the exhaust stream, the fluid breaks down into ammonia, which reacts with nitrogen oxide gases and converts them into nitrogen and water vapor—both naturally occurring components of the atmosphere.

The technology became common in agricultural equipment following the Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 4 emissions regulations, which were finalized in 2004 and phased in between 2008 and 2015. As equipment manufacturers adapted to meet stricter emissions standards, DEF tanks and emissions systems became standard features on many large tractors, combines and sprayers.

While the technology was designed to improve air quality, Fornstrom told lawmakers the systems have also introduced additional complexity and cost for farmers and ranchers.

**Reliability in Harsh Conditions**

One of the most significant concerns raised by agricultural groups involves the reliability of DEF systems in the demanding environments where farm equipment operates. Agricultural machinery frequently runs for long hours in dusty conditions and experiences constant vibration, temperature fluctuations and exposure to the elements.

For farmers and ranchers in Wyoming and other northern states, winter conditions create an additional challenge. Temperatures can drop well below freezing, which can affect the performance of DEF systems and the equipment that depends on them.

"Living and farming in Wyoming, dealing with DEF in the winter can feel like a battle against both the cold and the clock," Fornstrom said in his testimony. "Temperatures routinely drop well below freezing, and if DEF freezes or the SCR system triggers an engine derate, it can bring a tractor or combine to a halt right in the middle of critical planting or feeding windows."

Modern emissions systems often include sensors that monitor fluid levels and system performance. If a malfunction occurs, the equipment may enter a reduced-power mode—known as a derate—or shut down entirely until the issue is resolved. While designed to ensure emissions compliance, these shutdowns can disrupt time-sensitive farm work.

Fornstrom shared examples of farmers and ranchers experiencing costly repairs and operational delays tied to DEF-related issues. In one case, a rancher in Weston County experienced a cracked DEF tank after the fluid froze in cold temperatures. Although the initial repair was covered under warranty, the problem occurred again two years later after the warranty expired, leaving the rancher responsible for the repair costs.

In colder climates, farmers and ranchers may also rely on heating systems designed to keep DEF from freezing. While those systems help maintain the fluid in a usable condition, they can increase electricity costs and add another maintenance consideration for farmers already managing tight budgets.



WyFB President Todd Fornstrom visits with U.S. Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., in Washington, D.C. Lummis and Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, introduced legislation addressing challenges diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) systems pose for farmers and ranchers in cold climates. CATHERINE PAGE/AFBF PHOTO



WyFB President Todd Fornstrom at the U.S. Capitol representing the interests of Wyoming agriculture and nearly 12,000 Wyoming Farm Bureau members. CATHERINE PAGE/AFBF PHOTO



WyFB President Todd Fornstrom addresses the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. CATHERINE PAGE/AFBF PHOTO

**Contamination and Monitoring Concerns**

Farmers have also raised concerns about contamination and the complexity of the electronic monitoring systems tied to DEF. The fluid must remain a highly pure mixture of urea and deionized water, and even small amounts of dirt, oil or other contaminants can damage the emissions system or cause it to shut down.

Maintaining that level of purity can be difficult in agricultural environments where dust, mud and chemicals are common. Farmers must take additional care when storing and handling the fluid to avoid contamination that could lead to costly repairs or equipment downtime.

Electronic sensors designed to monitor DEF levels and system performance can also create complications. If a sensor detects a problem, equipment may automatically reduce power or prevent the engine from starting until the issue is resolved. Farmers and ranchers say these systems add another layer of complexity to machinery that is already highly sophisticated.

**Added Costs for Agriculture**

In addition to operational concerns, DEF systems have introduced new costs for farmers and ranchers, whomust regularly purchase the fluid itself and often invest in specialized storage infrastructure to maintain its quality throughout the year.

In colder regions, insulated or heated storage tanks, pumps and dispensers may be necessary to prevent freezing and maintain fluid integrity. These infrastruc-

ture investments add upfront costs while ongoing purchases of DEF create another recurring expense for farm operations.

Maintenance and repair costs can also be significant. Components such as sensors, injectors and pumps can fail over time, and repairs can be expensive once equipment is no longer under warranty. Unexpected downtime during critical planting or harvest windows can further compound those costs.

"The combination of fluid purchase, storage infrastructure, maintenance and operational management makes DEF compliance a recurring and often underestimated cost of modern farming," Fornstrom said.

Those costs come at a time when farmers and ranchers are already facing volatile commodity markets, rising input prices and unpredictable weather. Fornstrom told lawmakers the additional expenses and operational challenges associated with DEF systems can place further strain on farms and ranches.

**Legislative Proposal**

The Cold Weather Diesel Reliability Act seeks to address some of the concerns raised by farmers and ranchers who operate equipment in extreme temperatures. The legislation, introduced by Sens. Dan Sullivan of Alaska and Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming, would direct the Environmental Protection Agency to allow manufacturers to suspend automatic engine derates or shutdowns triggered by emissions-control malfunctions when temperatures fall below freezing.

The bill would also require the EPA to grant exemptions from DEF system requirements for vehicles and equipment operating primarily in regions where freezing temperatures are common. Supporters of the legislation say the changes would help ensure diesel-powered equipment can continue operating safely in cold conditions without risking unexpected shutdowns.

Fornstrom thanked the senators for introducing the legislation and urged Congress to continue addressing the challenges DEF systems pose for farms and ranches.

"We greatly appreciate the work of Senators Sullivan and Lummis and their commitment to solving some of the long-standing challenges associated with using DEF in cold climates," he said.

While the bill focuses on cold-weather reliability, Fornstrom said broader conversations about emissions systems in agriculture will likely continue. Farmers and ranchers, he noted, support environmental stewardship and also need equipment that works reliably in the demanding conditions where agricultural production takes place.

As policymakers consider future regulations, he encouraged them to balance environmental goals with the practical realities of farming and ranching. Finding that balance, he said, will be critical to ensuring both environmental progress and the long-term viability of American agriculture. ■

Please visit [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) to hear Fornstrom's full testimony.

# Rooted in Reading: Connecting classrooms to agriculture

Volunteers are stepping into classrooms across Wyoming to share the story of agriculture through conversations and the Ag Books for Kids program. In Niobrara County, Seth Allen, Kevin Baars and Traylin Bruegger recently visited local schools to read this year's Ag Book of the Year, *The Kindergarten Cowman*, helping students better understand the farmers and ranchers behind their food, fiber and fuel.

Agricultural literacy goes beyond a single week — it's about building connections that last a lifetime. Converse County's John Werner and Abby Kukowski continued that effort in a Converse County elementary classroom, reading *The Kindergarten Cowman* and connecting Wyoming students to agriculture, one page at a time. ■



Seth Allen (YF&R Committee), Kevin Baars (Board of Directors) and Traylin Bruegger (county board) visited schools in Niobrara County to share the Ag Book of the year, *The Kindergarten Cowman*. COURTESY PHOTO



YF&R Committee member John Werner and WyFB member Abby Kukowski read and completed activities with students in Converse County. COURTESY PHOTO



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## CARBON

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## CONVERSE

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## CROOK

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**NEW MEMBERS ... Page 11**

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**NEW MEMBERS...** From Page 10

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Amanda Moore, Sheridan; Colleen Gariffa, Sheridan; Guadalupe Aggers, Sheridan; Michelle & Jason Miller, Sheridan; Carole & Jeffrey Shipps, Sheridan; Joshua Tatman, Sheridan; Mandy Galloway, Sheridan; Neilson Leach, Ranchester; Rex Shepperd, Big Horn; Chad Donley (REG), Sheridan; Mary Foster, Sheridan; Jason Lonabaugh, Sheridan; Lawrence Gill, Sheridan; Sarah Jo Sinclair, Sheridan; Dudley Stookey/CC&D Farming, Big Horn; Mark Bede, Sheridan; Brandon Payne, Sheridan

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Chad Espenscheid/Piney Creeks Ranch (REG), Big Piney; Cody Saxton, Pinedale

**SWEETWATER**

Guy Vandenberg, Green River; Anita Todd, Rock Springs; Connor Allred, Rock Springs; Debbie & Mark Peterson, Green River; Elsa & Waldo Sanchez, Rock Springs; William Chung (REG), Whittier, CA; Gina & Jack

M Murphy, Rock Springs; Kristen & William Gitchel, Rock Springs; Carol Delong, Reliance; Barry Doorn, Rock Springs; Tricia Green, Rock Springs; Jose Valenciano, Green River; Deborah & Soong Harmon, Rock Springs; Jennifer & Jake Berg, Rock Springs; Scott Mcgillis, Green River; Jamie & Bradley Watts (REG), Farson; Shauna & Matt Weber, Green River; Christine & Lawrence Folks, Rock Springs; Kurt Hunter, Rock Springs; Joseph & Sandra Schmidt, Rock Springs; Sam Hannah, Rock Springs; Brian Mccrea, Green River; Colin Malec, Rock Springs; Luke Brownlee, Green River; Maria Mahoney, Green River; Seth Jones (REG), Farson; David Miller, Green River; Rita Osborne, Rock Springs

**TETON**

Teresa Schrader (REG), Bondurant; Emma Daigle, Jackson; Amy & Shawn Asbell, Sheridan; Jeter C Case, Jackson; Leslie Lindquist, Jackson; Landon Kellogg (REG), Alpine

**UINTA**

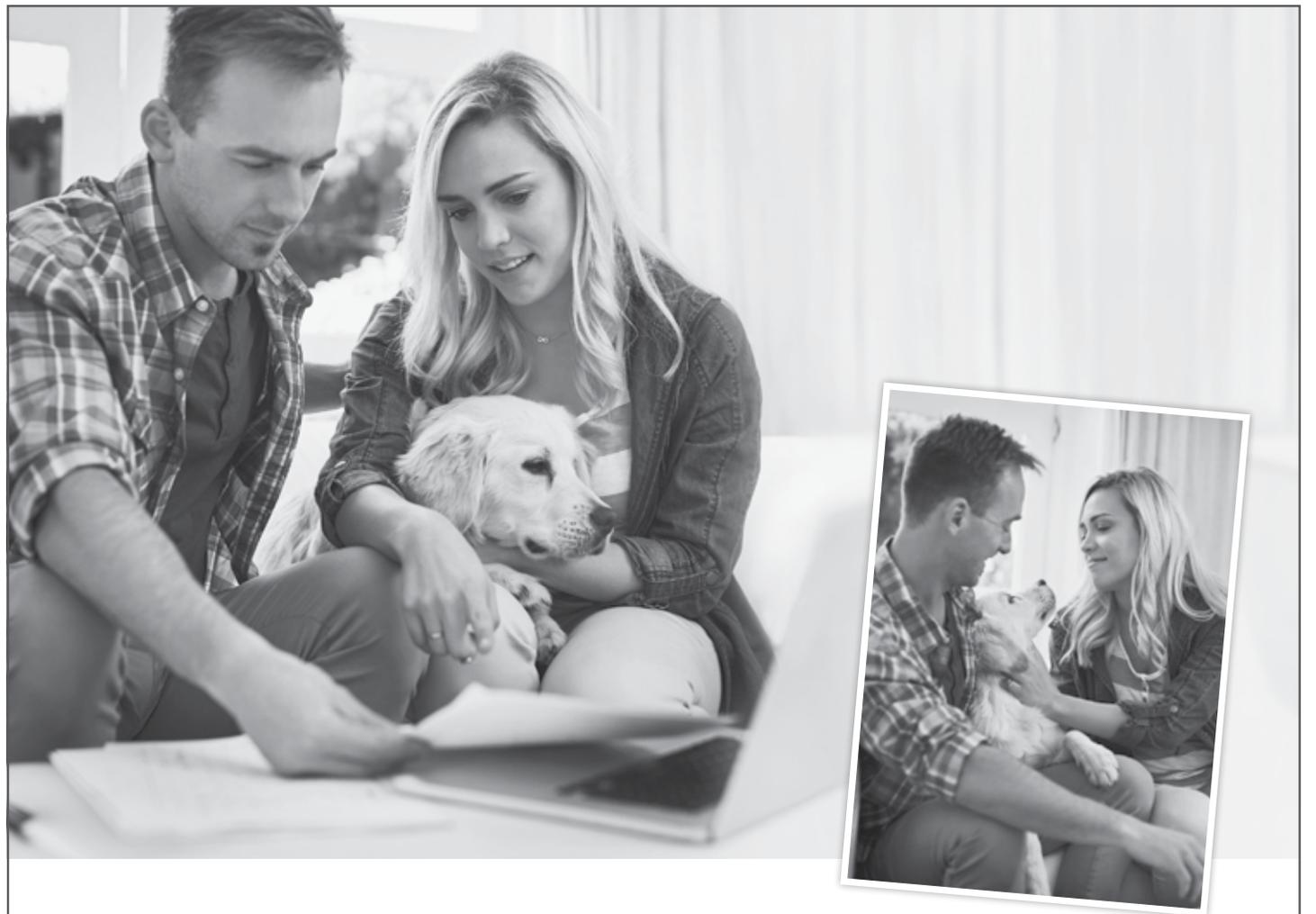
Robert Unruh (REG), Evanston; Morgan Heaps, Evanston; Keaton Clark, Lyman; Melvin Krieger, Evanston; Lisa & Jeff Green, Evanston; Christy Campbell, Thermopolis; Jennifer & Michael McMurtrey, Evanston; Sandra & Woody W Lowe, Evanston; Colten Johnson, Evanston; Thomas Rowles, Evanston; Jessica & Eric Major, Lyman; Robert Taylor, Fort Bridger; Lacey & Weston Maxfield (REG), Lyman; Phil Dewitt, Lyman; Verlynn & Robert F Anglen, Fort Bridger; Diane Nixon, Evanston; Candida & Jensen Odde, Smoot

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# Middle East tensions raise spring planting concerns

**FAITH PARUM, PH.D., AFBF ECONOMIST**  
Originally Published 3/9/226

American farmers are entering the 2026 spring planting season amid geopolitical tensions involving Iran and nearby Persian Gulf countries, which adds uncertainty to global energy and fertilizer markets. This timing matters because fertilizer purchasing, field preparation and early season fertilizer applications are already underway, limiting farmers' ability to adjust if input prices spike suddenly. Anecdotally, farmers are already considering reducing corn acres planted in exchange for crops like soybeans that are less exposed to fertilizer price volatility.

At the same time, many farmers are already facing significant cost pressures as production expenses remain elevated, reducing working capital that would normally help absorb unexpected shocks. In this environment, disruptions in global energy markets can quickly translate into higher input costs for farmers. One reason these geopolitical developments matter for agriculture is the region's role in global energy and fertilizer markets, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Strait of Hormuz is central to energy and fertilizer trade. Oil flowing through the Strait averaged about 20 million barrels per day in 2024, roughly 20% of global petroleum liquids consumption. Because energy is a major input to fertilizer production and trans-

portation, disruptions or heightened risk in the region can amplify volatility across agricultural input markets.

## The Middle East's Role in Global Fertilizer Supply

Iran holds some of the world's largest natural gas reserves, and natural gas is the key feedstock used to produce ammonia, the foundational input for most nitrogen fertilizers. Urea, which contains about 46% nitrogen, is the most widely used solid nitrogen fertilizer globally and plays a central role in crop production systems.

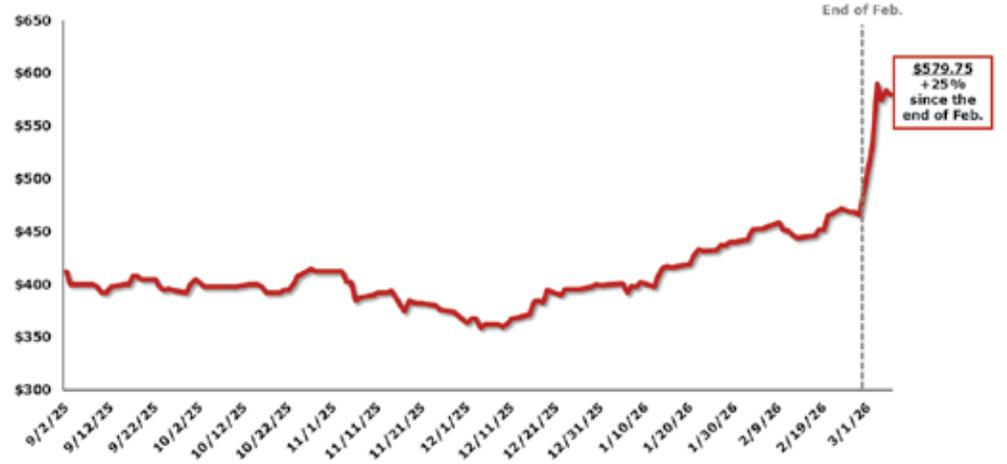
The Middle East is an important hub for nitrogen fertilizer production and exports. Countries exposed to disruption in the region account for nearly 49% of global urea exports and about 30% of global ammonia exports, reflecting the concentration of fertilizer production and export capacity in and near the Persian Gulf. Major exporters include Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The potential disruption extends beyond Iran's own fertilizer production. Large volumes of urea, ammonia, phosphates, sulfur and petroleum produced in Gulf countries move through the Strait of Hormuz each year. Egypt also represents a vulnerability in nitrogen markets because fertilizer production there depends heavily on natural gas supplies, which can affect output when gas availability is disrupted.

**FERTILIZER CONCERNS ... Page 13**

## Urea Prices Climb Above \$500 per Ton

Daily Last Trade Price, Urea FOB U.S. Gulf March 2026 Futures Contract (JCH26), Sept. 2, 2025-Mar. 6, 2026

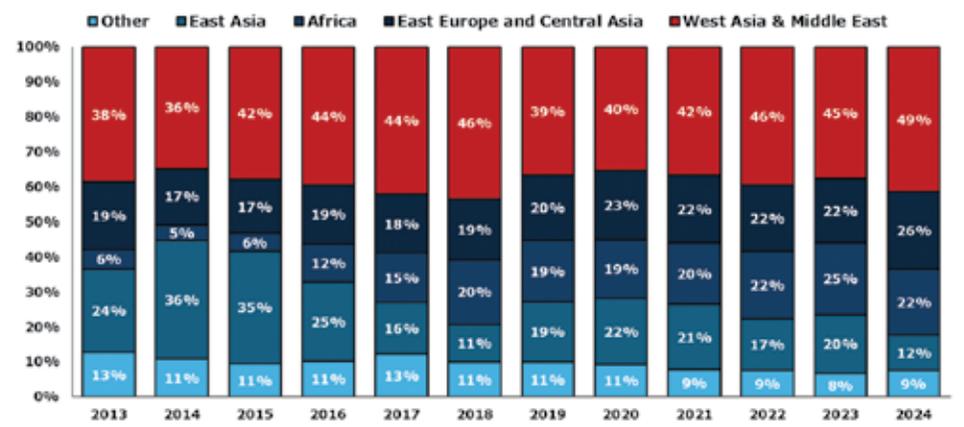


American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: Barchart; Analysis by American Farm Bureau

## Almost Half of Urea Exports are from the Middle East

Percent of Urea Exports by Region, 2013-2024



American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: IFA; Analysis by American Farm Bureau



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**FERTILIZER CONCERNS...** From Page 12

Taken together, the concentration of fertilizer production, fertilizer inputs and shipping routes in the Persian Gulf means disruptions in the region can influence a substantial share of globally traded nitrogen fertilizer.

**Fertilizer Is a Global Market**

Fertilizer markets are globally integrated, so supply disruptions in one region can influence prices and availability elsewhere. The United States relies on both domestic production and imports to meet fertilizer demand, and import exposure varies by nutrient. Roughly 97% of potassium is imported, 18% of nitrogen and 13% of phosphate. This import exposure increases sensitivity to global trade disruptions, particularly during seasonal demand peaks.

This means that even though the United States does not directly import large quantities of fertilizer from the Middle East, domestic fertilizer markets still respond to price movements in the region. For instance, if countries that rely more heavily on Persian Gulf fertilizer supplies, such as India or Brazil, are forced to seek alternative sources, their demand may shift toward other global suppliers, increasing competition for available product and driving prices higher for U.S. farmers. Global fertilizer supply conditions can also be affected by policy actions in other major producing countries. For example, China has periodically considered or implemented fertilizer export restrictions to prioritize domestic supply, which can tighten global availability, particularly for phosphate

fertilizers. They currently are restricting exports until the end of August 2026.

**Impacts on Energy Markets**

Fuel prices also influence farm operations more broadly. Diesel powers many aspects of agricultural production, including field preparation, planting, fertilizer application and crop transportation. Rising energy prices therefore affect both fertilizer production costs and on-farm operating expenses.

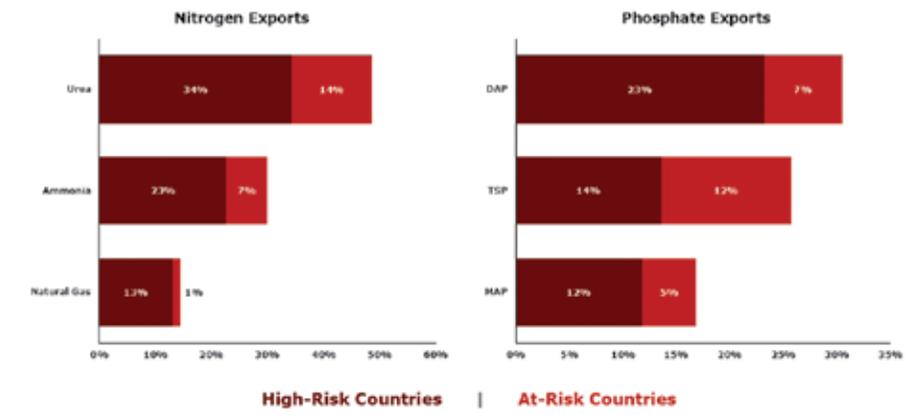
**Pressure Compounded by Planting**

These developments come just as fertilizer and fuel demand rises ahead of spring planting. In the South, including Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia and the Carolinas, corn planting can begin as early as late January and continues into March, with cotton planting beginning as early as February and continuing through May. Winter wheat planted last fall is also breaking dormancy across the Southern Plains and requires nitrogen applications during early spring growth.

In the Corn Belt, including Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Nebraska, corn planting generally begins in late April through mid-May, followed by soybean planting shortly afterward. Farmers in these states are currently finalizing fertilizer purchases and preparing for spring fieldwork.

Further north, producers in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota typically plant from May into early June, with most activity concentrated in May. Farmers in these northern regions face a shorter planting window due to colder climates; and even though their planting

**Percent of Global Fertilizer Market Exposed to the Strait of Hormuz**  
Percent of Nitrogen and Phosphate Fertilizers at Risk to Disruption



American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: FFI; Analysis by American Farm Bureau

season occurs later, fertilizer prices and availability may still be affected by earlier supply disruptions or shipping delays in global markets.

In total, about 50% of nitrogen applied to corn, 28% applied to cotton and 42% applied to spring wheat is typically applied in the spring. As a result, disruptions to fertilizer supply chains during this early period could have outsized effects on input availability and prices, potentially affecting crop yields and farm operational schedules during the most critical months of the planting season.

**Bottom Line**

Markets remain uncertain, and the duration of disruptions in the Middle East will ultimately determine how much fertilizer and fuel prices move in the months ahead. While the United States is the world's largest producer of oil and natural

gas, fuel and fertilizer markets remain globally interconnected.

Countries exposed to instability in the Persian Gulf account for nearly half of globally traded urea exports and roughly 30% of ammonia exports. Because these products are essential for crop production, disruptions in the region can influence fertilizer availability and prices well beyond the Middle East.

As farmers prepare to plant the 2026 crop and finalize fertilizer purchases, developments in global energy and fertilizer markets will be an important factor shaping input costs and farm budgets in the coming months. The administration has announced plans to help ensure the safe passage of fuel shipments through key global shipping lanes. Expanding these protections to include agricultural input supplies such as fertilizer should also be a priority given their importance to food production and national security. ■

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**POLICY PRIORITIES...** From Page 1

Water District Funds for Maintenance Projects modernizes how irrigation and water districts plan for and fund large-scale infrastructure maintenance, allowing districts to set aside and invest funds for long-term repairs. Wastewater and Stormwater Infrastructure Study requires a comprehensive statewide assessment of wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to help prioritize future investment and planning.

**Land Use and Environmental Regulation**

Prescriptive easements for electricity delivery addressed prescriptive easements for electricity delivery and was signed into law following collaboration among stakeholders, led by the Wyoming Rural Electric Association. The legislation establishes a framework for nonexclusive easements for electric utilities with infrastructure installed prior to January 1, 2006, while balancing the need for reliable electricity delivery with strong protections for private property rights. The

law also includes requirements for public notice before easements are granted.

**Federal Lands**

Two joint resolutions related to federal lands and mineral policy were approved. House Joint Resolution 2 calls on Congress to increase Wyoming's share of federal mineral royalties from 50 percent to 87.5 percent, aligning the state more closely with revenue distributions seen in Alaska. Reduced royalty rates at the federal level have already impacted funding for education and emergency services across Wyoming.

Senate Joint Resolution 1 requests Congress allow Wyoming to manage mineral leasing on federal lands within the state. Supporters say this change would reduce delays, regulatory uncertainty and leasing disruptions that have contributed to inconsistent mineral activity on federal lands.

**State Lands**

Legislation clarifying subleasing requirements for state lands was signed into law. The bill defines excess rental rates, and a monthly fee per head of non-owned livestock while establishing a maximum

rental rate not to exceed 50 percent of the annual animal unit month rental rate. The legislation also clarifies that a sub-lease is not required when the common ownership of the entities holding the lease and owning the livestock is not less than 80 percent.

**Wildfire**

Wildland fire management remains a priority, with additional funding and staffing authorized for the State Forestry Division. The budget provides resources for 24 positions supporting wildfire suppression efforts, along with significant investments in restoration and invasive species management. Amendments to the Good Neighbor Authority also expand the state's ability to partner on federally funded land management projects.

**Wildlife**

Several wildlife-related measures were considered during the session, reflecting ongoing conversations about landowner wildlife habitat stewardship. A bill addressing landowner license limits in limited quota hunt areas ultimately failed. WyFB policy supports transferable landowner hunting licenses. While related legislation failed in-

troduction, the issue remains under discussion, and WyFB joined the Wyoming Stock Growers Association in proposing an interim topic to evaluate landowner recognition for wildlife habitat and explore solutions.

**Fiscal Responsibility**

The biennial budget was adopted March 6 and will take effect July 1, 2026. Key items impacting agriculture include funding for an additional Wyoming Livestock Board field veterinarian and resources for disease mitigation, as well as support for veterinary medical education through the University of Wyoming with a requirement that participating veterinarians practice in the state.

The budget also includes significant investments in wildfire prevention, rangeland research and invasive species control, supporting both agricultural operations and broader natural resource management efforts.

**Tax Policy**

Several tax-related proposals were introduced but did not advance during the budget session, including measures related to property tax elimination and sales tax increases tied to constitutional amendments.

HB 45 was signed into law, updating the long-term homeowner tax exemption process by simplifying application requirements and allowing continued eligibility verification through county assessors.

**Rural Vitality**

Legislation to establish the Cowboy State Agricultural Trust Fund did not advance. The proposal aimed to support agricultural research, workforce development and education through investment earnings and matching funds.

Funding for the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Fund was approved, including support for invasive species control projects such as cheatgrass treatment efforts in Park County.

**Election Integrity**

WyFB supported nine election-related bills aligned with member policy emphasizing voter identification, paper ballots and election security. Elections-voting machine and voting system tests was signed into law and requires testing of voting systems at least two weeks prior to elections, while other proposals addressing ballot processes and identification requirements did not advance.

**Additional Legislation**

Beyond the member-driven policy priority issue areas, WyFB supported legislation granting peace officers authority to enforce English language proficiency requirements for commercial motor vehicle operators which was signed into law. The organization also supported legislation establishing misdemeanor penalties for violations of the Prohibit Red Flag Gun Seizure Act, which was signed into law.

**Looking Ahead**

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation continues to engage in policy discussions on behalf of its members. Many of the issues considered this session—including water management, landowner rights, wildlife policy and rural investment—will continue to shape future legislative efforts and interim committee work.

WyFB will remain actively involved in those conversations, ensuring the voices of Wyoming farmers and ranchers are represented at every level of the policymaking process. With interim topics scheduled to be determined April 1, 2026, the organization will continue preparing for the next phase of policy work. ■

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# Wyoming SNAP Waiver Approved in D.C.

**W**yoming Farm Bureau Federation President and Laramie County farmer Todd Fornstrom traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the American Farm Bureau Federation Board Meeting, where agricultural leaders from across the country gathered to discuss current issues impacting farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

While in the nation's capital, Fornstrom also attended a U.S. Department of Agriculture announcement approving Wyoming's SNAP Food Restriction Waiver. The waiver will limit the purchase of sweetened, carbonated beverages in the first year, followed by candy in the second year, as part of an effort to expand access to more nutritious food options through assistance programs.

The announcement brought together federal and state leaders, including USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Dr. Ben Carson and Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon, highlighting the collaboration behind the initiative.

"Being in person to witness the excitement for making wholesome food available to our food assistance programs across our country was a proud moment," said Fornstrom. ■



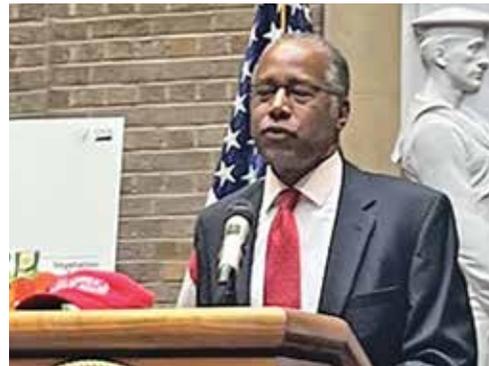
WyFB President Todd Fornstrom joined Federal and state officials to highlight Wyoming's newly approved SNAP waiver. *COURTESY PHOTO*



Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon speaks on the state's SNAP waiver and its impact. *TODD FORNSTROM PHOTO*



HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. shares remarks on Wyoming's SNAP waiver. *TODD FORNSTROM PHOTO*



Dr. Ben Carson discusses efforts to expand access to nutritious foods through SNAP. *TODD FORNSTROM PHOTO*



USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins outlines the approved SNAP waiver for Wyoming. *TODD FORNSTROM PHOTO*



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- How do you get there?



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