

Wyoming Agriculture

VOL. 39, NO. 6

MARCH 2022

Published by Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation



‘Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week’ is Feb. 28 - March 5

BY KERIN CLARK

The importance of reading and agriculture are highlighted when we celebrate “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week” Feb. 28 through March 5, 2022. Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon has issued an official proclamation declaring the week of Feb. 28 as “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week.” While we recognize the value of reading and agriculture during this designated week it goes without saying that each of these are vital every day of the year.

Educating Wyoming elementary school children about agriculture and the role Wyoming farmers and ranchers play in keeping Wyoming strong is critical. The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) Committee started the “Ag Books for Kids” project in 2005 (18 years ago) with a goal of building the collection of accurate agriculture reading materials in our state’s elementary schools.

The grassroots strength of the Farm Bureau Federation enables the “Ag Books for Kids” project to reach across the great state of Wyoming. Each year the county Farm Bureau Federations purchase nearly 800 books to donate to Wyoming elementary schools. Farmer and rancher volunteer members many times conduct classroom book readings and activities to help students meet an actual farmer or rancher and learn directly from them about the food they grow.

In 2008, the WyFB YF&R Committee added the “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week” proclamation component to the “Ag Books for Kids” project. We appreciate Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon continuing to recognize the importance of reading about agriculture through this annual proclamation. Since the proclamation’s beginning in 2008, three Wyoming Governors have annually proclaimed “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy

Week.” The proclamation is also a great way to raise awareness for the “Ag Books for Kids” project.

The proclamation reads in part: “Wyoming is rich in agricultural history, and farming and ranching is an important part of Wyoming’s economy, contributing nearly 2 billion dollars annually; and many aspects of our daily lives, including the food we eat, clothes we wear, and medicine we depend on, are made possible because of agriculture; and literacy is a top priority for school children and non-fiction books are an important tool in teaching children about the world around them.”

Farm Bureau Federation members meet with Wyoming’s Governor each year during the formal proclamation signing. The meeting is an opportunity to talk about farming and ranching in Wyoming and the importance of educating Wyoming youth about agriculture. This year’s

formal proclamation signing will occur after this paper goes to print. Be sure to follow us on social media and check out wyfb.org for photos from the formal proclamation signing.

Wyoming students and teachers are encouraged to visit their school’s elementary library to check out the 2022 book “My Family’s Soybean Farm” by Katie Olthoff. You may also visit www.wyfb.org and click on the education tab for a virtual reading video.

Three contests are offered for Wyoming students to encourage use of the book and provide application opportunities for what is learned. The 2022 contests are: Coloring Contest for kindergarten and first graders; Poster Contest for second and third graders; and a Marketing Ad Contest for fourth and fifth graders. Contest rules/details are also available on the website. The county contest deadline is April 1, 2022. ■

Niobrara County Commissioners proclaim ‘Niobrara County Agriculture Literacy Week’



The Niobrara County Commissioners recognized the local importance of agriculture by proclaiming Niobrara County Agriculture Literacy Week for the week of Feb. 28 through March 4. Pictured at the Proclamation Signing (l to r) Commissioner Pat Wade, Commissioner Elaine Griffith, and Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation board members James Kruse, Lexie Dockery, Travis Krein, Chelsea Baars, and Kevin Baars. **See article on page 10.**

Waters that are jurisdictional and waters that are not

American Farm Bureau asks EPA to withdraw WOTUS rule

BY KERIN CLARK

What’s in one word? When it comes to regulating water a lot can be changed with one word. Back in 2009 when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to remove the word “navigable” from the Clean Water Act, I wrote an article in this publication that led with the same question...what’s in one word? Fast forward to 2022 and the one word is “jurisdictional.” The rule re-write to expand federal jurisdiction is an overreach of regulations that will harm the ability of farmers and ranchers to grow food while not recognizing the role of individual states in regulating water quality. The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation recently provided comments to the EPA regarding the rule re-write proposal.

“Just because waters are not jurisdictional and under the regulatory control of the Agencies, does not mean they are not protected by state regulations,” wrote Ken Hamilton, WyFB executive vice president in recent comments to the EPA. “It is critical the Agencies recognize this distinction.”

Concerns with the new proposed rule include:

- It will profoundly affect everyday farming and ranching activities through increased permitting requirements;
- Unclear rules could lead to potentially unlimited jurisdiction, including the unconstitutionally vague significant nexus test;
- The expansion of federal jurisdiction exceeds limitations set by Congress;
- The proposed rule exceeds the scope of the federal government’s authority.

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has provided extensive comments throughout the years regarding Waters of the United States (WOTUS). “We were encouraged by the previous rule-making process which resulted in the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR),” Hamilton wrote. “The NWPR sought to provide a brighter line as to what waters were jurisdictional and what waters were not.”

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CALENDAR
OF EVENTS

March

- 11 Wyoming Legislature adjourns
22 National Agriculture Day

April

- 1 "Ag Books for Kids" county contest deadline
19 "Ag Books for Kids" district contest deadline

June

- 1 WyFB Membership Committee Meeting - Casper

November

- 10-12 WyFB 103rd Annual Meeting-Casper

Visit wyfb.org
for calendar updates

Wyoming
Agriculture

Volume 39, Issue No. 6
March 2022

USPS 10331 ISSN 1071-0272

Official publication of
the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

307-721-7719
www.wyfb.org

Wyoming Agriculture is published monthly, except for combined July/August and December/January issues, by the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, 931 Boulder Drive, Laramie, WY 82070. Periodicals postage paid at Laramie, WY and additional entry offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Wyoming Agriculture*, PO Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

MISSION: To represent the voices of Wyoming farmers and ranchers through grassroots policy development while focusing on protecting private property rights, strengthening agriculture, and supporting farm and ranch families through advocacy, education, and leadership development.

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Ken Hamilton

EDITOR
Kerin Clark
kclark@wyfb.org

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Answering
agriculture's critics

Zippy Duvall

American Farm Bureau Federation President



I'm a big believer in taking the high road. When media present inaccurate or incomplete portrayals of U.S. agriculture, my job and the job of Farm Bureau is to help them understand where they went wrong and to set the record straight. We had our work cut out for us with a recent New York Times opinion video. It was so disappointing to see a respected media outlet present a distorted picture of agriculture without so much as acknowledging that farmers play an essential role in stocking America's pantries.

AFBF jumped into action. We drafted a response and had a productive conversation with decision-makers there, but unfortunately, they declined to accept my guest essay, which provides a more complete and honest picture of agriculture. What a disservice to their readers and to the disappearing tradition of honest debate. So, I'll use my own platform to share my response.

Before I do, I'll note that I'm intentionally omitting a link to their piece. These days, media measure success in clicks and views and this piece simply isn't worthy of your time or their publication. Still, it's important to set the record straight.

I want to be clear about something else. People have every right to their opinions about agriculture whether positive or negative – even the New York Times. It's just disappointing that the New York Times would provide such an incomplete and misleading portrayal of agriculture in order to win the day. They're better than that.

So, here's the rest of the story. American agriculture leads the world in climate-smart farming, making up just 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, much lower than transportation, electricity generation and industry. It's not by chance that America has made progress quicker than our international counterparts. Through public and private partnerships and investments in innovative technologies, America's farmers and ranchers have been able to reduce per-unit emissions of livestock over the past 30 years by 8-26% depending on the species. We are able to grow more food using fewer resources than ever before.

Advances have been made in carbon sequestration as well. 140 million acres are enrolled in voluntary conservation programs. To put that in perspective, there are more privately owned acres re-

served for conservation than the size of California and New York combined. The use of no-till or low-till planting methods, which means the top soil is disturbed as little as possible, is now used on more than half of the corn, cotton, soybean and wheat planted across the nation. That's more than 200 million acres. And, the use of cover crops continues to grow, increasing 50% between 2012 and 2017. These practices not only reduce the amount of water, fertilizer and pesticides needed for crops, they help keep carbon trapped in the soil and out of the atmosphere.

The beef industry, which has become a target in the environmental debate, is also making great strides. Beef production accounts for just 2% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, much lower than the global average. Almost half of all farm acres are used as permanent pastureland. Those lands are good for raising cattle, and the soil remains undisturbed, which ensures it can continue retaining carbon. It's estimated that the land cattle graze contains 10-30% of the carbon stored in soil, making them crucial for carbon sequestration.

AGRICULTURE ANSWERS ... Page 11

Two versions
of the golden rule

Ken Hamilton

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President



We've all heard about the two versions of the Golden Rule. The first, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is taught to our children at a very early age. Most people agree that as an overall precept of how we should behave, this rule is the best.

The other Golden Rule, however, "He who has the gold rules" is less a way to live, but perhaps more of a reality. This is evident when watching the winter Olympics. Even though I've not kept up with them to a large degree, everyone is aware they are being held in China. The last Olympics that were held in China were used by world governments to encourage the Chinese to try to adhere to the first Golden Rule with their citizens. This time around, those governments were largely ignored by the rulers of the country because the Chinese economy had grown to a large enough degree that they could ignore calls to be less totalitarian with their citizens.

China appears to have adopted a two-prong strategy to control their citizens as well as insulate themselves from criticism from others in the world. Ever since Mao Zedong became leader in China, the ruling elite used force to ensure their citizens stayed in line. While growing up, even with

the controlled news blackout in communist China, we learned of millions of Chinese who died at the hands of their government. After President Nixon thawed U.S. Chinese relationships through his ping pong diplomacy, the U.S. has pursued a strategy of economic incentives to try and bring about a philosophical change in China's leaders. For a time, it looked like the strategy was working, but seeing things a little more clearly through the lens of history, it looks like the strategy of China's leaders was to give its citizens just enough wiggle room to open up the tremendous economic potential of their billion plus population. Instead of relying on force and guns, Chinese leaders found a new way to control their citizens.

Using economic rewards as a first line tool to control folks is not new, but it appears the Chinese leaders using both tools have lifted their economy from a third world economy to one which is challenging that of the U.S. In addition to using economic incentives and force, the Chinese have also begun a process of monitoring their citizens social profiles and giving rewards to those who are supporting the state by providing them better economic opportunities while those who don't meet the social criteria might get a visit from some government entity using force.

Because China's economic power has grown, they've also wielded that power on the worldwide stage. We've watched as groups like the National Basketball Association have submitted to the Chinese threat of economic sanctions to force NBA critics of China to "shut-up." Then we were treated to a number of NBA players coming out and criticizing those individuals who criticized China. Proof that he who has the gold can wield a lot of influence.

While I'm using China as an example, we in the U.S. cannot ignore how our own government utilizes this same tool. Want to advance a political agenda, then by all means use the power of gold to drive your agenda by either economically punishing someone who doesn't agree with you or rewarding those who do support your policies with money from the federal treasury. On a national level we see federal dollars come flowing out of Washington, D.C. in ever-increasing amounts. It should concern all of us that with that gold comes the power to dictate what we as citizens can and cannot do. Of course, this strategy depends upon the federal government being able to obtain the necessary gold to carry it out, but guess what? They can also use force to ensure we citizens keep sending them the gold to carry out their desires. ■

Court returns Gray Wolf to endangered species list across most of the U.S.; USFWS announces status review in Rocky Mountains

BY KERIN CLARK

State management remains for wolves in the states of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana while a Feb. 10 ruling by a District Court judge in California returned the gray wolf everywhere else across the U.S. to the endangered species list.

“We are concerned that a judge in California didn’t uphold what the scientists at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concluded about wolves in the U.S.,” said Ken Hamilton, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President. “Unfortunately, people in the upper Midwest and much of the rest of the nation must now live with a decision made by a judge in California.”

“Delisting the species nationwide two years ago was long overdue as wolf numbers across the country far exceeded scientifically established recovery numbers,” Hamilton continued.

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall expressed disappointment in the ruling through a Feb. 10 news release.

“AFBF is extremely disappointed in the ruling to return the gray wolf to the endangered species list. The gray wolf exceeded recovery goals and should be celebrated as an Endangered Species Act (ESA) success story,” Duvall stated. “The ESA is intended to promote species recovery and delisting, not to impose permanent protected status for animals that are now thriving. This ruling ignored ESA goals and threatens recovery efforts for other animals.”

“Farmers and ranchers share the goal of a healthy and thriving ecosystem,” Duvall concluded. “Management of the fully recovered gray wolf should be overseen by the states, which can best determine the most appropriate course of action for each region.”

In other wolf-related news, a notice of status review has been issued by the USFWS. The road to state management of wolves in Wyoming has been long and arduous with many U-turns along the way. On April 25, 2017, a Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. upheld

Wyoming’s wolf management plan confirming Wyoming’s management of wolves.

“Wyoming met its commitment for wolf recovery in 2003 and almost a decade and a half later the state was able to manage wolves as outlined by the wolf recovery plan,” Hamilton explained.

And now here we are in 2022 with the USFWS announcing intent on Jan. 31 to initiate a 12-month status review to determine whether a listing of a distinct population segment (DPS) of the gray wolf in the Northern Rocky Mountains or in the western United States under the ESA is warranted.

“A 12-month status review of wolves in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho may not mean anything, but recent statements by Interior Secretary Haaland indicates this is more about politics and catering to special interest groups that have the ear of the Secretary than about science,” Hamilton said.

“Wyoming’s wolf numbers continue to be well above the numbers established for a recovered population,” Hamilton contin-

ued. “Indeed, wolves from Wyoming, Montana and Idaho are populating surrounding states, so to initiate a status review at this point comes across as purely political.”

Wyoming Gov. Gordon issued a response in a Feb. 3 news release.

“Secretary Haaland’s decision is very disappointing and indicates a strong disconnect between Washington D.C. and realities on the ground,” Governor Gordon said. “In Wyoming, wolves have been successfully managed by our state’s wildlife experts since regaining authority in 2017.”

“I firmly stand behind our state wolf management plan that has served as our guide to ensure a viable, healthy population for a species that has met all recovery criteria for nearly two decades. Managing Wyoming’s wildlife from Washington D.C. is not a good model and is counter to the intent of the Endangered Species Act,” Gov. Gordon continued. “I urge the Secretary to ensure that the status review is grounded in science and recognizes the states’ strong track record effectively managing this species.” ■



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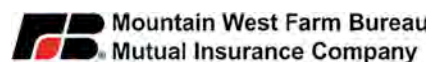
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Growing Generations: 2022 YF&R Conference

BY ALETTA ZIEHL
WYFB YF&R COMMITTEE SECRETARY

The 2022 Joint Young Farmer & Rancher Conference with South Dakota and Wyoming was an amazing highlight of the year already!

We started the conference with two wonderful tours. The Spearfish Brewing Company and the McNenny Fish Hatchery. The brewery tour was refreshing because small, local businesses need all the support they can get considering the impacts of everything going on. The staff was amazing, and the atmosphere of this brewery was so welcoming. The fish hatchery did not disappoint either. They have so many inventions and ideas working to better the fish habitats that you were sure to walk away with some new knowledge. Did you know that they offer internships and that their interns get to improve the fish hatchery in their own unique ways? My favorite part of the fish hatchery was seeing the space where all the different tanks were for the different stages of the fish's early life. There were tanks for when the eggs hatch and then as they grow they move to different tanks before going outside. I highly suggest both stops be on your list for your next trip to South Dakota.

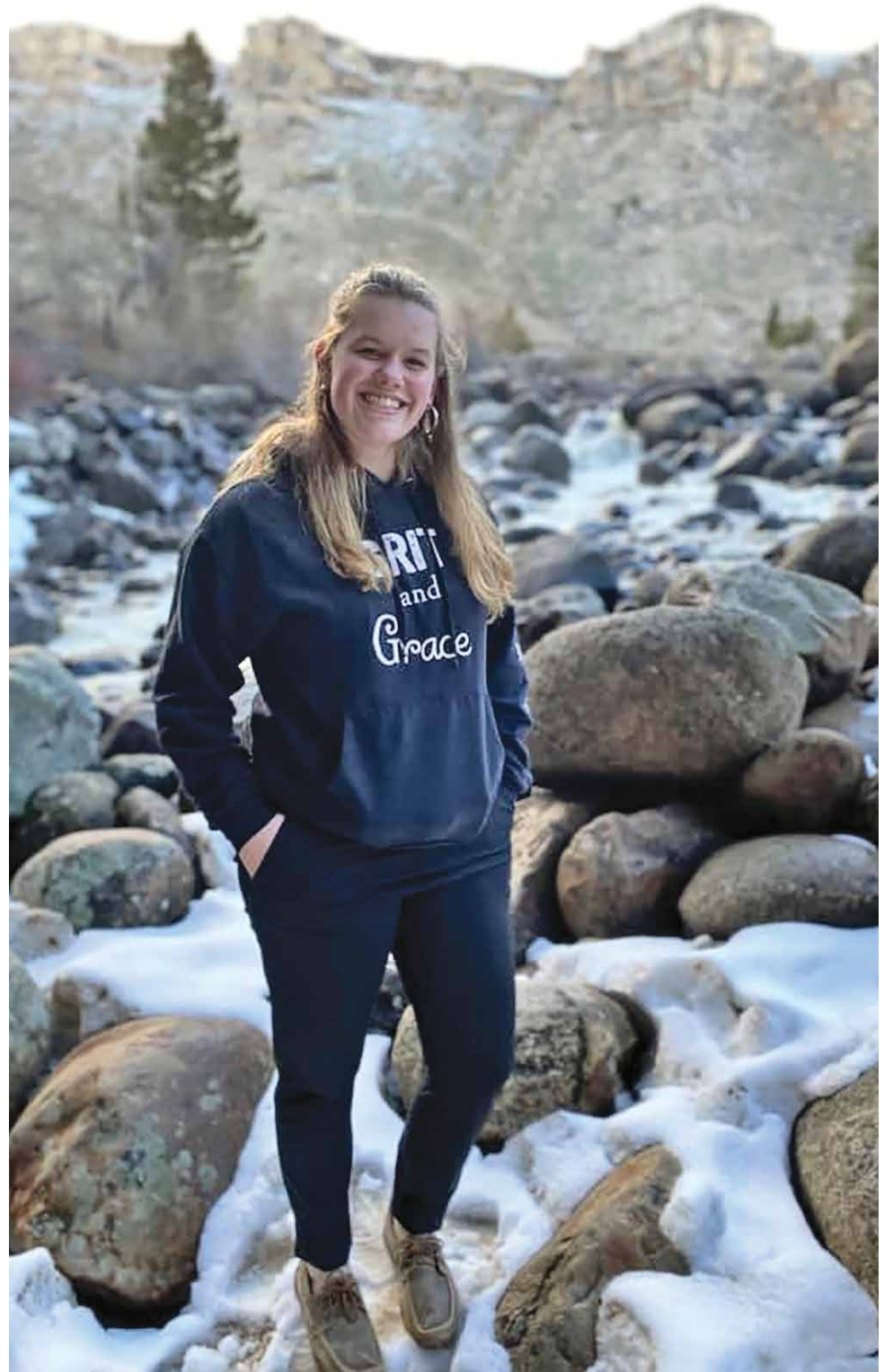
To finish off the first day we heard from Elaine Froese. She offered so many amazing strategies and steps for helping with farm or ranch generational transitions. Her words were so encouraging! A significant strategy I took away from her session was that if you want stake or

stock in the operation offer a buy-in such as helping fund a project or equipment on the farm or ranch. Froese's ideas did not stop there, she has so many amazing resources like books, a website, and an online class!

Jenga, Corn Hole, Connect 4, and Hammerschlagen were some amazing games we all played throughout the weekend. Hammerschlagen was presented by the South Dakota FB YF&R Committee; all you need is a stump, some nails, a hammer, and some great new friends. The goal is to hit the nail into the stump with the hammer the fastest, but you can't bend your elbow, you only get one swing at a time, and you're supposed to have a beverage in one hand!

On Saturday, the morning conference attendees had the opportunity to choose between two events. The event I participated in was the Sip N' Paint. Two wonderful leaders from Sip N' Paint Parties on the Go company taught a large group of agriculturalists how to paint a picture of the Northern Lights. Yes, there were a few mimosas shared around too! The couples that participated got to make "couples' paintings" so when their paintings are hanging on the wall together, they will match and look like they are from the same perspective! What fun!

Saturday afternoon's breakout sessions had some unbeatable options such as listening to Heather Maude and Natalie Kovarik. Natalie Kovarik is a Ne-



Aletta Ziehl. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

braska rancher, a digital creator and so much more. Kovarik talked about how with social media it is about consistency, and it is important to find your niche. She encouraged us not to try and be on every social media platform, just be on one and do it well. Heather Maude is a South Dakota rancher who grew up in Wyoming. She shared about the downfalls and successes of their beef and pork production, as well as their meat sales and how the Coronavirus has challenged them to adapt but has not dragged them down as they continue to grow each year.

Before closing out the conference we had a round pen beef discussion with Heather Maude, Luke Kovarik, and Justin Tupper. We then heard from American Farm Bureau Federation's Randy Dwyer who serves as the Director of Advocacy & Grassroots Development, and finally a discussion about Testifying Before Congress with South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation President Scott Vanderwal and Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President Todd Fornstrom.

The conference ended on a high note with encouragement from these leaders to be eager and willing to testify in front of Congress and reminded us that it is the role of the Farm Bureau to guide us through these steps to achieve our goals as a federation.

If all this amazing learning isn't enough of an excuse to join us, could you believe that I met more new friends than I can count? Be on the lookout for our 2023 Young Farmer & Rancher Conference location and theme. Facebook is a great place to see what the committee is up to! ■

About the Author: I am from Casper and serve as the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer & Rancher Committee Secretary! I enjoy the small feeder hog operation we run, as well as helping the local 4-H and FFA kids with their show hogs. Haying season keeps me busy in the summer. My favorite part about Farm Bureau is the family we all become and all the fun we have together. I hope to get to meet you at one of the upcoming events!

Wyoming Teachers & Students K-5th Grades



"Ag Books for Kids" 2022



Step 1: Read this book donated by your county Farm Bureau Federation. A VIRTUAL reading by the book author is available at wyfb.org/education/ag-books-for-kids/

Step 2: Complete contests (details on website) by April 1, 2022

- K-1: Coloring
- 2-3: Poster
- 4-5: Marketing Ad

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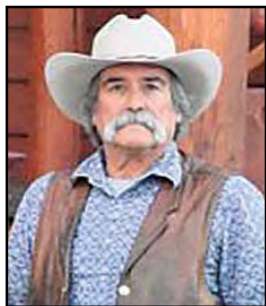
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The People of the Farm Bureau Federation

Meet the volunteer leader Todd Fornstrom

County: Laramie County
Current Leadership Positions:

- Laramie County Farm Bureau Federation Board Member
- Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President
- American Farm Bureau Board Member

Wyoming Agriculture: Describe your farm background.

Fornstrom: I run Premium Hay Products which is an alfalfa pellet mill, run a trucking business and a custom combining business. I also work with my father farming near Pine Bluffs. The diversified farm consists of irrigated corn, wheat, alfalfa, and dry beans.

Wyoming Agriculture: Family, education, hobbies.

Fornstrom: I graduated from the University of Wyoming in December 1996 with a degree in agriculture business. Graduating a semester early gave me an extra half year with my mother at home and on the farm before she passed. Laura and I were married in 1997. We had four kids in five years. Our oldest daughter Taylen and her husband Shawn Mollett are both teachers in Laramie County. Our son Wyatt will graduate in May from the United States Military Academy at West Point and is engaged to be married to Allie Gibbs. The twins, Sydnie and Maddie, are in their sophomore year of college. Our levels of volunteer work and activity have always centered around our family. When the kids were young, they all attended Farm Bureau meetings with us. We've always appreciated the family friendly atmosphere at Farm Bureau meetings. When it comes to hobbies, farming and family come first. I enjoy what I'm doing in agriculture, so I don't really consider it work. I do also enjoy visiting with people and traveling.

Wyoming Agriculture: How did you get involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?

Fornstrom: My mother is the reason I'm involved in Farm Bureau. Little did I know a trip to Jackson for the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting in 1994 as a college student would be the hook that started my involvement. Now whether this was a plan by mother or not she is the one that gets the credit. She had been diagnosed with cancer and my dad insisted someone attend the meetings with her. She was active in everything she did from Farm Bureau to serving on the school board. When I started Farm Bureau volunteer work my goal was to be a part of the solution, but not necessarily hold a position in leadership. The intent of helping and putting the effort where needed was comfortable and relatively easy and natural for me. That is where getting involved took over and the Farm Bureau experience took off for me.

Laura and I have been involved in many different levels of Farm Bureau leadership over the years. We both contin-



The Todd Fornstrom Family: Shawn and Taylen Mollett; Maddie; Laura and Todd; Sydnie; Wyatt; and Allie Gibbs.

ASHLEY CHRISTIANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY.



ue to serve at the county level and have held state committee leadership positions. I served as state chair of the WyFB General Issues Committee and Laura served as state vice chair of the WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee. Leadership training is an incredible benefit of belonging to this organization. The opportunities afforded to our members are incredible. To me being involved is about getting back to the basic values of life and being a part of the solution.

Wyoming Agriculture: Why do you make the time to be involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?

Fornstrom: My mother is the reason I became involved in Farm Bureau and

the reason I stay is the people. I've found throughout the years this organization, which we call the "Voice of Agriculture," is really exactly that. There isn't another platform out there where I can be exposed to the development of regulations and policies and the people that have a say in those policies. It has been important to me. It is a must. It is a part of my business.

Wyoming Agriculture: Can you share an example of a policy that has had a positive impact on your farm?

Fornstrom: One policy example dates back to when we were dealing with brand inspection increases on lambs that were cost prohibitive. There was policy that

had an impact on letting everyone know what was going on in the system. We developed policy to address this imbalance and it was good to have the input within the membership to point out the issue. It was rewarding to me for everyone to see the other point of view.

Wyoming Agriculture: What advice do you have on how individuals can make a difference for Wyoming agriculture through the Farm Bureau Federation?

Fornstrom: Stand up and be counted. Nobody ever knows what you think until you let them know. Farm Bureau is the most respected voice in agriculture that gives you a stance and is trusted by legislators, county commissioners and other organizations. When I was growing up, I thought making laws and debating issues fell on the shoulders of people far far away. The Farm Bureau Federation has opened my eyes to the reality that the creation of our local, state and federal laws and regulations can and should begin locally and not from the top down. This idea that the "grassroots" are the foundation and that is where the direction of our government comes from seemed foolish at first. As time has passed, the experiences surrounding this organization have reinforced this basic idea of our system of governing. This thought that like-minded people getting together to discuss pressing issues sounds like the group of farmers back home at the coffee shop. However, when we as farmers and ranchers take those coffee shop discussions and apply them to the policy development process, we can make a difference for farming and ranching in Wyoming and America. By getting involved and sharing your voice you are a part of the solution. ■

Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife

Mom's Gold Coast Chicken Enchiladas



For more recipes visit www.modernranchwife.com

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups cooked chicken, diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1 (4oz) can diced chilies
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3 oz cream cheese
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup milk or heavy cream
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- flour tortillas 10 or more

DIRECTIONS

- If chicken is not already cooked. Dice chicken and saute in butter until done.
- Preheat oven to 350°. In a skillet, melt butter with cayenne and chili powder. Add onion and garlic. Cook until onion is tender. Stir in the green chilies, sour cream, cream cheese, and soup. Mix well. Reserve 1 cup of mixture. Set aside.
- Add the chicken, salt, and 1/2 cup cheddar cheese to skillet. Stir to mix. Heat the tortillas in the microwave for 30-40 seconds to soften. Fill each tortilla with chicken mixture. Roll up and place seam side down in a greased 12x8inch dish.
- In the skillet, combine reserved mixture, mozzarella and milk. Stir until cheese is melted. Pour over tortillas.
- Cover with foil and bake 30-35 minutes or until bubbly.

WyFB comments regarding Greater Sage-Grouse land use plan amendments

BY KERIN CLARK

Noting that healthy rangelands are critical for ranchers and the Greater Sage-Grouse, the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation provided comments on scoping topics for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to consider as the agency begins the NEPA process to develop additional environmental analysis to amend land use plans.

“The (BLM) rangelands are critical for local communities as well as the Greater Sage-Grouse,” Hamilton wrote.

Hamilton noted the 1970s decline in the sheep industry coincided with a decline in sage-grouse numbers. “While coincidence is not causality, one cannot ignore this trend if the nation is serious about sage-grouse,” Hamilton wrote. “It would be helpful for the BLM to provide in their environmental analysis the change in numbers and species of livestock from the 1950s to present.”

WyFB comments asked for the increase in possible predators shown to prey on sage-grouse or their nests to be considered.

Recognizing the need for current management programs to be state centric, WyFB suggested the BLM select a state-by-state process for the analysis. Hamilton pointed out one example is increased threats to rangeland ecosystems from invasive species that have an impact in Wyoming. “Cheat grass is an invasive species that has shown to change fire regimes in areas where it has become dominant,” he wrote. “We suggest enhancing cheat grass control with livestock be considered in an effort to prevent or reduce impacts caused by this invasive species as well as practices to prevent the spread of new invasive species.”

Hamilton indicated while livestock grazing is important control for invasive species, it can also reduce fuel loads to control fire. Additionally, WyFB noted livestock grazing should not be considered as a “disturbance event.”

“Since livestock actions mimic other natural processes, grazing should not be considered a disturbance event,” Hamilton wrote.

Regarding wildlife species, WyFB recognized the BLM does not have management control over Wyoming wildlife and thus WyFB asked the BLM to work with state and local wildlife managers to enhance control over species which have been shown to impact sage-grouse. “We feel particular efforts should be directed towards those species that were limited or non-existent in the 1950s but have increased their range and numbers since that time,” Hamilton explained.

The BLM notice states climate change will be considered. “We have raised concern over the nebulous nature of the science in predicting what some of these climate changes may be,” Hamilton wrote. “Currently the western U.S. is impacted by drought. Whether this is a result of climate change or not can be debated, however, there are a limited number of actions the BLM can take to address drought.”

“Water development can have positive impacts on sage-grouse,” he continued. “Efforts by the BLM to enhance current water sources can benefit both livestock and sage-grouse.”

The impact of feral horses cannot be overlooked. “Numerous wildlife professionals have pointed out the impact feral horses, particularly in areas where they are over their numbers, have on other wildlife species in addition to sage-grouse,” Hamilton wrote.

“We will continue the dialog as the scoping process continues,” Hamilton concluded. “Our members utilize federal lands to raise livestock which contributes in numerous ways to our nation’s food supply.” ■

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NEW MEMBERS ... Page 10




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Getting started in ag: Dealing with inflation and supply chain disruptions

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many disruptions, one of the more serious may be inflation. Virtually everyone involved in production agriculture is dealing with the effects of inflation at present. In addition, indications are that it may be with us for a considerable time. If you are just starting out in agriculture, you may be unaware of the many ways inflation can sap the profitability of your business, how to properly quantify its effects or strategies for dealing with it. Inflation can be most easily defined as too much money chasing too few goods and services, leading to rising prices. Inflation is often viewed as a hidden tax because as prices rise you often have no choice but to pay more.

Supply chain disruptions and inflation are often interconnected. For example, manufacturing disruptions that have come about due to Covid or other issues, have reduced supply and led to increasing prices. This scenario is playing out in many ag-related sectors, from machinery and related parts, to crop inputs, to livestock to pharmaceuticals and other ag-related industries.

It is important to plan ahead with as much detail as possible for this type of risk. The more you budget and outline alternative scenarios to address potential supply and price issues, the better are your chances of identifying both weak links and potential opportunities. Keeping as many options open as possible helps keep your business able to adjust quickly as conditions change.

Input Price Effects

Agriculture is often hit hard in times of significant inflation because it is an input-heavy business. Most crop or livestock operations are dependent on significant inputs e.g., seed, fuel, feed, fertilizer, and machinery parts are just a few of the basic essentials that cannot be omitted. In addition, most farmers and ranchers are not able raise prices in response to input price increases. And, while commodity prices may increase in inflationary times, these increases are frequently not substantial enough to offset price hikes on the input side.

For example, the price of 5-600 pound feeder cattle in Wyoming has increased 17 percent from this time last year, while prices for nitrogen and diesel fuel have increased 149 percent and 40 percent respectively, Table 1. Rising prices are often followed by rising interest rates that presents another set of problems. The Federal Reserve will likely change policy to reduce the money in supply at some point, in turn leading to an increase in the cost of borrowing outside capital.

Clearly inflation can wreak havoc in a farm or ranch budget. The question be-

Table 1. Wyoming cattle and input price comparison

	Jan. 2021	Jan. 2022	% change
Feeder cattle (500-600lb) \$/cwt	\$170.34	\$200.60	17.76%
Selected Input Prices (IL report)	2020	2021	% change
Nitrogen Fertilizer (Dry, price/ton)	\$366.67	\$912.00	148.73%
Diesel Fuel (price per gallon)	\$2.03	\$2.85	40.39%

Source: www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/lswwysums.pdf

www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/gx_gr210.txt

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Multi-Temporal Risk Analyzer
 By: John P. Hewlett, University of Wyoming
 Dr. Jay Parsons, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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comes how to best to plan for it. Proactive managers can adjust the values in their partial or enterprise budgets. However, these price increases must be accounted for on a longer term basis, potentially over several production cycles. Keeping a long term focus should be a central goal; as a result, it is important to account for the time value of money in the budgeting process, as well as variable prices.

Using the MTRA tool

Consider the following example corn budget using the Multi-Temporal Risk Analyzer (MTRA) tool from RightRisk.org to understand the effects of increasing interest rates. MTRA is designed to calculate the effects of a proposed management change over time. Its ability to show the influence of the time value of money over a 20-year period is particularly useful in this case. We can reveal

the effects of inflation in specific parts of a crop or livestock budget, such as rising input prices like fertilizer or feed, as well as gauge the direct effects of inflation over a long period (up to 20 years) using MTRA analysis.

For example, we can calculate the long-term effect of an increase in nitrogen fertilizer price taken from an example corn budget. Assume nitrogen fertilizer expense in our corn budget increases from \$200 per acre to \$400 per acre. We enter \$200 as the most likely value under added costs. The tool allows for a range of values for each revenue or cost category (most likely, low, and high) to account for the possible variability.

We enter \$400 as the high value if we anticipate a potential expense of \$400 per acre and \$100 for the low, where we assume that the effects of inflation will be long-term in nature. We select all 20

years for the effect of these changes by clicking ALL and enter 5 percent for the interest rate to account for the time value of money. Further, we estimate corn grain revenue using the Wyoming average price over the past five years as \$3.46/bu and yield as 150 bu/ac, giving an average total revenue of \$519/ac. We enter this as the most likely, high, and low values in the added returns section and click ALL to select all 20 years to keep this revenue estimate constant, in order to gauge the effects of changing fertilizer expense. Next we click RUN to generate the output analytics.

Output is presented on a cash- and a net present value-basis (NPV-basis). In addition, it can be viewed as a single simulation result or a cumulative probability distribution; the result of 1,000 randomly generated draws from possible outcomes.

NEW MEMBERS ... From Page 8

SHERIDAN

Leslie & Mark Baltz, Sheridan; Amanda & Jack Johnson, Sheridan; Laureen Powell, Sheridan; Kylie Green, WYarno; Joan & Leon Eliason, Sheridan; Brittney & Tyler Thomas, Sheridan; Linda Oetken, Sheridan; Peter Grazing Association, Inc (Reg), Sheridan; Teri & Randy Rowland, Banner; Pam & Mike Winterholler (Reg), Sheridan; Holly Charles-Johnson & Christian Johnson, Sheridan; Steve Smith/ Giles W. Gordon-Pritchard Farming Ltd. (Reg), Arvada; Brandi & Jesse Gray, Sheridan; Addrienne Sims, Sheridan; Luke Roush, Sheridan

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Stephanie Frodsham, Pinedale

SWEETWATER

Kristy Wardell & Mike Freimuth (Reg), Kemmerer; Diana & Victor Wire, Rock Springs; Morgan & Kadin Shubert, Rock Springs

TETON

Faith Hamlin, Fairlawn; Amy & Scott Evans, Jackson; Patricia & Michael Lavin, Moran; Jane Gollither/Diamond Cross Ranch LLC, Moran

UINTA

Jamie & George Applegate, Mountain View

WASHAKIE

E. Rick Hernandez, Worland

WESTON

3T Ranch LLC (Reg), Upton

Commissioners declare Niobrara County Ag Literacy Week

SUBMITTED BY CHELSEA BAARS

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's agriculture? That's right. In the least populated county of the least populated state, we find ourselves face-to-face with some real-life heroes – the farmers and ranchers of Niobrara County. However, their capes are often mistaken for a pair of boots and a dusty hat. Their work is challenging and the hours can hardly be considered “traditional”. Like Superman, they even have their fair share of villainous foes – weather, pests, regulations, unpredictable markets, etc. Despite farmers' and ranchers' remarkable efforts to feed countless people, make significant contributions to the economy, and serve as some of the most vigilant environmental stewards around, our heroes scarcely receive the same fame and attention as the infamous Superman. Nevertheless, that's where the Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation (NCFB) comes in, and thanks to the Niobrara County Commissioners, that mission is being spread even further as the week of Feb. 28 – Mar. 4 has

been declared Niobrara County Ag Literacy Week.

As a local, non-profit organization led by volunteer ranchers, it is NCFB's mission to protect, defend, and advocate for farmers and ranchers. One way that mission is accomplished is through the “Ag Books for Kids” literacy program for students K-5. This effort is worked in conjunction with the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmer and Rancher Committee who reviews and selects ag related, non-fiction, children's books for accurate information, realistic depictions, and age-appropriate appeal. In the program's eighteenth year, “My Family's Soybean Farm” by Katie Olthoff is the 2022 Ag Book.

For over 15 years, the volunteers of NCFB have taken time away from their farms and ranches to visit the K-5 classrooms of Lusk and Lance Creek. They chat with the children about agriculture, read the current year's Ag Book, and complete an activity that relates to the story. These opportunities are a chance for children to meet a genuine rancher, ask questions, and learn about

a new ag topic. Additionally, the program works to focus on many different subjects as topics have included beef, pork, dairy, wheat, machinery, and more. An effort to create a genuine appreciation for all farmers and ranchers and the important roles they play in the food we eat, clothes we wear, and the medicines we depend on, is vital to raising the next generations of society.

As families, even in Wyoming, have become increasingly removed from the involvement and knowledge of food production, the need to teach children about agriculture is greater than ever. The Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation encourages you to be proactive and take 15 minutes a day to read an accurate Ag Book during Niobrara County Ag Literacy Week (Feb. 28 through March 4). A collection of books used in the Ag Books for Kids program is available at LEMS, Lance Creek School, and Niobrara County Public Libraries. To view a list of ag accurate books, or learn more about the Ag Books for Kids program visit <https://www.wyfb.org/education/ag-books-for-kids/>. ■

Obituaries



Peggy Jean (Duff) Collins

November 18, 1928 – February 4, 2022

Mrs. Peggy Jean Collins, age 93, of Glendo, Wyoming passed away February 4, 2022 at Douglas Care Center in Douglas, Wyoming.

Peggy was born Sunday, November 18, 1928 in Gering, Nebraska the daughter of the late John and Fern (Beatty) Duff.

She grew up on farms in the Nebraska panhandle area and Southeast Wyoming. She graduated from Sunrise High School in 1946.

Peggy worked for several government farm agencies in the Douglas, Casper, and Laramie offices. She was a secretary for the Wyoming Wool Growers.

When the Glendo Dam construction was starting to hire, she was the second person hired. She was the secretary for the project and worked very hard to make sure everyone's checks were correct.

She was an original member of the Glendo Community Church. She enjoyed singing, playing the organ, and helping with church gatherings.

Some of Peggy's hobbies included gardening, bowling, painting, playing cards, cooking, and swimming. She even water skied at the lake.

She was a wonderful homemaker and could make the best homemade chicken noodle soup. Other favorites were her chicken dumplings, pot roasts, and her dinner rolls.

When her husband was away contracting, Peggy would drive tractor, feed cows, or anything else that needed to be done on the farm and ranch.

Peggy is survived by two sons

and two daughters-in-law, Jay Brooks (Kathy) Collins of Glendo and Larry Martin (Chris) Collins of Glendo; six grandchildren, Cally (Garrett) Lynch of Minot, North Dakota, Lauren Collins of Jackson, Wyoming, Cale Collins of Glendo, Chloe Collins of Glendo, Daniel Collins of Glendo, and David Collins of Glendo; one great grandson, Sawyer Paul Lynch; three half-sisters, Joan Parmeter of Nebraska, Sarah Losey of Iowa, and Dee Fitts of Colorado; and many nephews, nieces, and cousins.

Peggy was preceded in death by her parents; husband of 48 years, Robert Brooks “Buck” Collins, on January 16, 2002; and brother, Martin Duff, on August 23, 2007.

Funeral service was held February 13, 2022 at the Glendo Community Church in Glendo, Wyoming with Pastor Bennie Hill officiating.

A memorial to the Glendo Community Church – Window Replacement Fund in her honor, P.O. Box 372, Glendo, Wyoming 82213 would be appreciated by the family.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.gormanfh.com ■



George LaVern Ochsner

May 12, 1933 – February 13, 2022

Funeral services for George L. Ochsner, 88, were Saturday, February 19, 2022 at the First Wyoming United Presbyterian Church with Reverend Matt Gordon officiating. Burial followed in the Valley View Cemetery. George died at his home north of Torrington on February 13, 2022. Memorials may be given to the Wyoming Junior Hereford Association, the Prairie Center Fire Department or the Mennonite School. Condolences may be sent to www.colyerfuneralhome.com.

George was born May 12, 1933 to Godfrey and Esther Ochsner. He was born in his original homestead house 20 miles north of Torrington, Wyoming. George's education consist-

ed of attending several country schools in the Burge Community. George was married 64 years to the woman he adored, Ruby Arnold Ochsner. They set a great example of Christian love and marriage for many. Their union brought four children: Tena (Elden) Baldwin, Rodney (Deb) Ochsner, Dixie (Steve) Roth, and Blake (Chrissy) Ochsner. The love of ranching was instilled in all four children. George was blessed with eight grandchildren: Erin (Jeff) Hinton, Jason (Shannon) Baldwin, Jeremy (Angela) Ochsner, Vanessa (Chris) Crisman, Sarena (Cody) Assmann, Rustin (Britte) Roth, Katie (Devin) Martin, B.W. (Terra) Ochsner. He adored his fourteen great grandchildren

and was looking forward to welcoming two more this summer. George was blessed to still have his three siblings: Jack Ochsner, Delores Hatch, and Marge Smith.

George will be remembered as a hard-working, honest, family and cattleman. He was always striving to improve his ranch through land and cattle. His great knowledge will be missed by many. George never knew a stranger! George was recognized for many things but being selected to the Hereford Hall of Fame, in Kansas City, and having the ranch chosen for the 2020 Wyoming Environmental Stewardship Award were among his favorites. George was involved with many Ag related organizations and church.

George's great insight, love of life, love of family and friends, will be missed by many. His legacy will continue through his children and grandchildren! His final words would be: “Now everyone get out and get to work!” ■

WOTUS RULE ... From Page 1

According to Hamilton, the NWPR sought to address the concept of Federalism where federal jurisdiction should be limited solely to navigable waters. In the Supreme Court Rapanos decision, the Court found that jurisdictional waters should be limited in scope. WyFB has always maintained that states should have authority over intermittent and ephemeral waters. Ditches and areas that only have water in them after a precipitation event are non-navigable waters and thus should not be within federal jurisdiction.

“We believe the rules need to be clear about jurisdictional waters,” he continued. “Exempting intermittent and ephemeral streams as WOTUS and allowing states to address the needs in these water bodies provides a much more efficient mechanism.”

According to Hamilton, allowing states to take on the role envisioned by section 101(b) of the Clean Water Act will allow the flexibility necessary to address the wide range of conditions found throughout the United States.

WyFB comments also noted the critical nature of irrigators having the ability to modify or repair their water delivery structures without undue delay. “The intersection between water quantity and quality is critical for Wyoming, particularly as it relates to the regulatory process,” Hamilton wrote. “Should restrictions and delays occur, the economic impact would be considerable, as would the potential loss of the water right.”

Farmers and ranchers in Wyoming and across the nation have a strong interest in water quality issues. Water truly is the lifeblood of agriculture; it is an essential ingredient in growing food.

WyFB has participated in water quality regulation on both the state and national level for decades. “We have worked to ensure farmers and ranchers have the necessary tools to protect the water utilized by their farms and ranches while at the same time working with state and federal water quality agencies to structure clear rules,” Hamilton continued.

Waters that are jurisdictional and waters that are not. The Navigable Waters Protection Rule provided a clear distinction on this question.

“Now, less than two years later we again are asked to review an extensive re-write of these rules,” Hamilton wrote. “The short timeframe for the new proposal causes concern, and the quick repudiation of the previous rules shows a philosophical shift in these Agencies.”

“Getting it right for agriculture is critical,” he concluded. “Clean water and clear rules are important to farmers and ranchers.”

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), along with 21 other agricultural organizations, recommended the Biden administration withdraw the proposed rule, citing jurisdictional issues and lack of stakeholder engagement.

“Farmers and ranchers rely on clean water to grow the food America’s families rely on, so we work hard to protect the resources we’re entrusted with,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “We need rules that are clear and can be interpreted by farmers without spending thousands of dollars on legal fees. We had that with the Navigable Waters Protection Rule. The proposed new rule threatens to take us back to vague and complicated regulations that will keep farmers from growing the nation’s food while protecting the environment.” ■

AGRICULTURE ANSWERS ... From Page 2

These advances are being made in all 50 states and Puerto Rico by families on both large and small farms. Critics like to point the finger at so-called “factory farms,” but the reality is, of the just more than two million farms in America, almost all of them are family owned and 1.9 million of them are classified by the government as small family farms. We need operations of all sizes if we are to feed a country that is about to surpass a population of 330 million people and a world that will soon pass the 8 billion mark.

We will meet the challenges ahead while protecting the environment by working together. It’s one of the reasons AFBF was a founding member of the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance. The group, now more than 80 member organizations strong, consists of agriculture, food, forestry, sportsmen and environmental groups. Naysayers might claim Farm Bureau and groups

like the Environmental Defense Fund and The Nature Conservancy don’t have anything in common, but we all saw the need to break through historical barriers to find solutions to our environmental challenges. Together, FACA came up with more than 40 recommendations that are having a real impact, helping to shape the Growing Climate Solutions Act, which passed in the Senate with bipartisan support, and USDA’s new Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities pilot programs, which are a direct outcome of FACA’s work according to Secretary Vilsack. Both respect the role of farmers.

Together we can be proud of the advancements we have made in climate-smart practices and our commitment to continuous improvement. Can we do more? Absolutely. But it will take all of us, not just the farmers and ranchers, to create a better world. That doesn’t happen by mandates or by perpetuating a false narrative. It will happen through honest dialogue about

investments in innovation and partnerships with farmers.

It’s easy to forget that we live in a country with an abundance of safe, healthy and affordable food. Without the worry of where our next meal will come from, we’re free to pursue our dreams and careers. Agricultural advances give many that freedom with only 2 percent of the population now supplying food to the other 98 percent – a complete reversal over the decades.

It’s really important for us, as farmers, to deliver the message about our commitment. Remember that 87% of the public trusts farmers. However, very few understand how food is produced. Farmers are in the best position to provide an honest window into agriculture. Sharing real, positive stories from the farm is one of the most effective ways to counter misinformation. America is listening. Let’s reassure all those who put their faith in us that we are humbled by it and determined to do the right thing for our land and our animals. ■



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RIGHT RISK ... From Page 9

The graph showing the cumulative probability distribution on a present value basis is of particular interest, Figure 1. The cash-basis most likely revenue of \$519/ac less the fertilizer expense of \$200/ac is easily calculated leaving a net revenue of \$319/ac per year. The NPV-basis results are much lower due to the effect of the time value of money; the 5 percent interest rate entered to account for inflation.

The most likely net revenue is estimated as \$4,025 or \$201 per acre per year with a 50/50 probability over the 20-year time frame. In other words, we could expect a net revenue on average of \$118 less per acre due to the projected inflationary increase in fertilizer prices, given our assumptions. Further, we see there is a zero percent probability of net revenue falling below \$78/ac on a NPV-basis and 100 percent probability that the high will not exceed \$274/ac, given the range of fertilizer values. This is just one example of the type of questions MTRA can help answer.

Mitigation Strategies

Numerous strategies may help limit the negative effects of inflation. First, consider locking in critical input prices in advance. Forward pricing brings stability to a budget and can offset other unavoidable price increase, though this means resisting the temptation to hold out for lower prices. Suppliers are often eager to work with you, as this adds an element of stability to their business as well.

Second, evaluate whether inputs are

providing an adequate return on investment. For example, \$100 per acre phosphorous may make sense at a given commodity price but it may not make sense at \$400 per acre. It comes down to knowing what is affordable in your situation. Making sure that every input or expense delivers a positive contribution to the bottom line can help keep overall expenses manageable.

Third, consider diversifying operating input suppliers where possible. This can help reduce expense increases due to supply chain disruptions. Fourth, carefully evaluate your enterprise mix with an eye on risk and uncertainty. For example, a livestock enterprise might provide extra benefits in the form of manure for fertilizer and soil health when added to an all-crop enterprise mix. Adding an alternative hay crop with minimal fertilizer requirements may reduce risk, while offering stable cash flow.

Finally, it is important to stay informed and up to date on input supplies, availability and prices. The more informed you are about changing prices and other factors, the more accurate your forecasts will be. For more information on strategies to deal with inflation and other risk management issues, visit RightRisk.org.

John Hewlett is a farm and ranch management specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Hewlett may be reached at (307) 766-2166 or hewlett@uwyo.edu, and James Sedman is a consultant to the department.

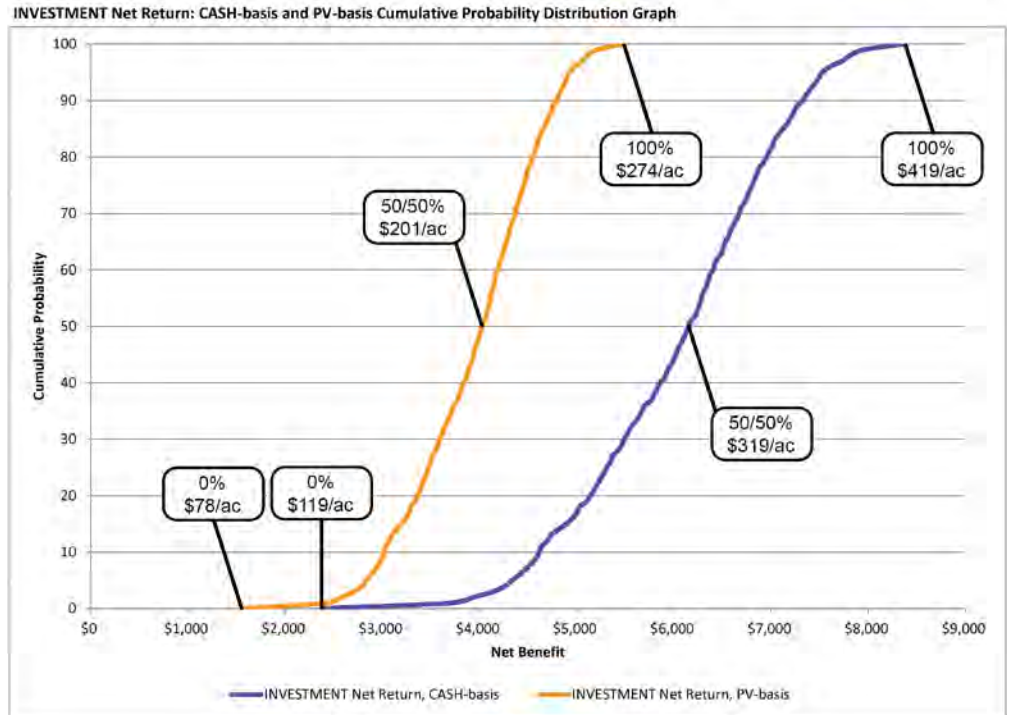


Figure 1. MTRA estimated net revenue per acre of corn, cash- and net present value-basis probability distribution at 5 percent inflation



The Wyoming Growing Internship Program offering practical on farm/ranch experience to beginning farmers and ranchers is now accepting applications.

Hosts and interns interested to participate in 2022 should check the online application forms and other materials available under the Hosts or Interns tabs at: GrowinG-WY.org

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