

# Wyoming Agriculture

VOL. 41, NO. 4

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024

Published by Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation



## Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation sets policy

BY KERIN CLARK

**N**on-use of federal lands, road maintenance funding, state lands, water, drones and voting were among the many topics included in policies adopted at the 104th Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB). Held Nov. 9-11, 2023 in Cheyenne, Wyo., the meeting is an important step in the grassroots policy development process of the Farm Bureau Federation. The need for the protection of multiple-use of federal lands resonated through the discussions as Farm Bureau Federation members developed policy.

“County Farm Bureau Federation members start the policy development process at the local level discussing policy issues of concern to the members and their families,” said Ken Hamilton, WyFB Execu-

tive Vice President. “The annual meeting is the final step at the state level for the grassroots policy development process. Policies with national implications will proceed to the national convention for consideration.”

Voting delegates expressed their continued opposition to the concept of non-use of federal lands through rule-making and executive orders. “We see the use of the word conservation in many places starting with the 30 x 30 initiative, also known as ‘America the Beautiful,’” Hamilton said. “Having conservation as a beneficial use as proposed in the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) proposed federal rules is another concern for the management decisions of federal lands.”

**WYFB SETS POLICY ... Page 15**



It STARTS With You! The grassroots policy development process truly starts with YOU! The individual member showing up, stepping up and speaking up on issues that impact farming and ranching. The WyFB Annual Meeting was the culmination of the policy development process at the state level. From county meetings to district meetings to the 104th annual meeting...Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation members set the course for the organization in the coming year. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*

## Todd Fornstrom elected to eighth term as WyFB Federation President

BY KERIN CLARK

**T**odd Fornstrom, of Laramie County, was elected to his eighth term as President of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) at the organization’s 104th Annual Meeting held Nov. 9-11 in Cheyenne.

“Year after year, people are willing to show up and have input in the grassroots process that is Farm Bureau,” Fornstrom said. “Being elected to my eighth term is an incredible honor. After all these years of involvement, it is the people that continue to motivate me each and every year.”

**ELECTIONS ... Page 21**



WyFB President Todd Fornstrom addressed the delegates at the 104th annual meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. Fornstrom was elected to his eighth term as president of the organization. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*

## WyFB Federation honored Chris Brown with Distinguished Service Award

BY KERIN CLARK

**W**yoming Senior Assistant Attorney General Chris Brown was awarded the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Distinguished Service Award at the organization’s 104th annual meeting. Presented November 10 in Cheyenne, the award is given to those who have gone above and beyond in their service to agriculture.

“We are proud to recognize Chris Brown for his dedication to water law in Wyoming,” said Todd Fornstrom, WyFB President. “Knowledge of water resources, water law and the ability to represent the Cowboy State and constituents of the Cowboy State on all issues water are a few of the merits that define Chris Brown’s work.”

**BROWN HONORED ... Page 18**



Chris Brown (left) received the 2023 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service Award. WyFB President Todd Fornstrom (right) congratulated Brown. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*

## What’s in a word? WOTUS-Waters of the United States

BY KERIN CLARK

**T**he definition of a word or two carries great power. When the definition isn’t clearly expressed the power of defining regulations is in the hands of regulatory agencies. This discretion often leads to interpretations thus causing confusion and lack of clarity on what the law means.

This has been the case with the Clean Water Act (CWA) since its passage in 1972. Words and their definitions have continued to lead to different interpretations of the CWA in its 50+ years. Words such as: navigable - WOTUS - ephemeral - significant nexus - relatively permanent - adjacency. The power of one word can lead to federal government overreach without accomplishing the CWA goal of protecting the nation’s water.

**WATERS OF THE U.S. ... Page 22**

## WyFB Federation members donated the equivalent of 7,242 meals to help Wyoming families

BY KERIN CLARK

**W**yoming families facing hunger received a boost mid-November with the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Committee “Harvest for All” project. The 21st annual fund drive

and raffle to benefit the Food Bank of Wyoming raised \$2,414 which is the equivalent of 7,242 meals for Wyoming families facing hunger.

During the state annual meeting Nov. 9-11 in Cheyenne, county Farm Bureau Federations and Wyoming farmers and ranch-

ers donated money to help the food bank in their work with hunger-relief programs across the state of Wyoming. A raffle for alfalfa seed donated by Allied Seed, a tool set and a family gift basket also raised funds for the Harvest for All project.

**HARVEST FOR ALL ... Page 24**

**Upcoming Events**

- WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Conference  
February 2-3, 2024  
Laramie, Wyoming
- WyFB Legislative Meeting  
February 15-16, 2024  
Cheyenne, Wyoming

### Inside:

Got real milk.....2	YF&R Conference ..... 4	Annual meeting photos.....12-13
The people.....2	Meet the volunteer: Brian Asher..... 7	Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife..... 15
Reason for the season.....2	Membership awards..... 8	PFAS..... 17
Member-Cents.....3	Effective leadership ..... 9	Legislative updates..... 21
Scholarships .....3	Water seminar.....10	Legislative Meeting..... 24

[www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 2024

- 12 Registration deadline for WyFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet
- 18 Registration deadline for WyFB YF&R Conference
- 19-24 American Farm Bureau Convention-Salt Lake City, Utah

### February 2024

- 1 WyFB YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet-Laramie
- 2 WyFB Legislative Meeting pre-registration deadline
- 2-3 WyFB YF&R Conference-Farm Bureau Center in Laramie
- 12 Wyoming Legislature Budget Session Convenes
- 15-16 WyFB Legislative Meeting-Cheyenne

### March 2024

- 1 WyFB Scholarship application deadline
- 8-11 AFBF YF&R Conference-Omaha, Neb.
- 29 "Ag Books for Kids" contests county deadline

### April 2024

- 12 "Ag Books for Kids" contests district deadline

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

**MEMBERS:** Stay in the Loop! Make sure to stay up-to-date with WyFB by signing up for notices. To sign up, please email your preferred email address and phone number to Brooke Roes at [broes@wyfb.org](mailto:broes@wyfb.org).



Volume 41, Issue No. 4  
December 2023 / January 2024

USPS 10331 ISSN 1071-0272

Official publication of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

307-721-7719  
[www.wyfb.org](http://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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## Got real milk? The need for accuracy in the dairy case

**Zippy Duvall**

American Farm Bureau Federation President



The dairy aisles can be a bit of a puzzle these days due to the misleading labeling of plant and nut-based beverages as "milk." Don't mistake me here, everyone should have the options they are looking for, but they also need to know exactly what they are getting. According to the Food and Drug Administration, that's not happening with dairy. Roughly one in four Americans have felt misled when reaching for a non-dairy option because the term "milk" led them to believe they were actually getting milk.

Dairy alternatives have surged in popularity recently, offering consumers a wide range of choices such as soy, oat, almond, rice and coconut. But since these products

use dairy terms, like milk and cream, there has been a growing concern regarding the clarity of these labels and adherence to the standards of identity established by the FDA.

The FDA's standard of identity serves as a defining framework for products within the marketplace to ensure consumers get what they are paying for. For example, "jams" must contain a minimum amount of fruit, and the terms "cheese alternative" or "cheese substitute," must be used for products that don't meet a minimum standard for cheese. However, despite the existence of a standard for milk, enforcement by the FDA has notably been absent and allowed various plant and nut-based products to use terms like "milk" without repercussions.

This leniency has caused confusion for consumers and raised questions about fair branding practices. The American consumer has come to know and trust the health benefits of real, dairy milk, but this mislabeling has hijacked the term and trust in quality and nutritional value that goes along with it.

Farm Bureau proudly advocates for the interests of all farmers and ranchers, including dairy farmers, almond growers, soybean farmers, coconut growers and oat farmers. We value choice in the marketplace and along with that ensuring consumers are given accurate information about the food products they choose.

**DAIRY ACCURACY ... Page 3**

## It is the people

**Todd Fornstrom**

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President



I have lived in Wyoming my entire life. Lived on the farm, grew up traveling to towns all over the state, went to college in Laramie and raised a family back in that small town. This state and its people are strong, independent, proud, hardworking and resilient. Living in a beautiful place that is so diverse in so many ways make the people of Wyoming unique. My neighbors across Wyoming experience arctic like cold in some places, hurricane force winds in others, droughts, hail and the occasional tornado are all normal to our way of life and they still have faith and continue to do the work to feed our nation and world. These same

people take time to serve their communities on school boards, civic organizations, religious groups, youth groups, county commissions, and a wide variety of other voluntary endeavors. On top of that, year after year, these same people are willing to put down their daily activities of feeding, planting, tillage and roundups to show up and have input in the grassroots process that is Farm Bureau.

This almost decade adventure has taken me to nearly all 50 states and even a little further. The farmers and ranchers of this nation are the stewards of one of our nation's most important resources. This land sustains the most abundant, most

efficiently produced, and safest food supply in the world with the caretaking of the American farmer and rancher. The people doing the work, making the decisions and living through the good and bad are those same farmers and ranchers that are the grassroots voice.

Being elected to my eighth term and being allowed to represent these same people is an incredible, humbling honor. After all these years of involvement, it is the people that continue to motivate me each and every year. It is hard to put into words what an honor it is to represent people like our members that continue to show up and speak up for agriculture. ■

## Real reason for the season

**Ken Hamilton**

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President



As 2023 closes and 2024 begins, we need to take some time to look back on 2023 to see how things appear in our rear-view mirror. Obviously, there are a number of issues on the world stage that impact agriculture. Markets don't like uncertainty, and the ultimate uncertainty is military conflicts. Russia and Ukraine continue to disrupt events on the world stage which unfortunately appears to be turning into one of those long-term conflicts that will affect markets for a long time. The Middle East, the globes perpetual conflict area, heated up

suddenly so now those nations that didn't take sides in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict were provided another conflict to take sides. Of the latter, it was surprising the way many Americans chose sides. One nation in the Middle East has a working democracy while the rest consists of various authoritarian systems where there is very little or no rule of law but there is an overabundance of rule by gun. Yet some of our fellow Americans have exercised their constitutionally protected rights to support less than democratic groups. Not surprisingly, many

supporting these groups are also coming from our college campuses.

On the national front, impacts from unsound financial policies are being felt by the average American citizen, while the administrative branch is busy pushing the envelope on what is allowed by laws. Laws passed previously like the Clean Water Act and WOTUS, conservation as a use under FLPMA, and of course the whole panoply of actions to implement the 30 X 30 plan whether it's through federal land management or listing of endangered species.

**REASON FOR SEASON ... Page 3**

DAIRY ACCURACY... From Page 2

Earlier this year, the FDA came out with draft guidance on dairy terms, and while it acknowledges nutritional differences in non-dairy products, it gave these alternatives permission to keep using dairy terminology. FDA also left it to the companies producing non-dairy alternatives to choose whether to include clarifying nutritional statements on their labels, an ineffective approach to providing shoppers with information important to differentiating the products they consume.

This current guidance for milk substitutes risks setting a precedent that could lead to other trusted food names being misused and misunderstood for alternative products. Consumers deserve accurate labels at the grocery store so that they can make informed choices that meet their needs. That's why Farm Bureau is calling on FDA to amend the draft guidance and prohibit the use of terms such as "milk" on

products that don't meet the outlined standard of identity.

Our grassroots leaders, along with state and national staff, have been actively engaged in advocating for more accurate labeling practices, providing comments on the guidance, and submitting solutions adopted by other countries. For instance, in Canada and the EU, "almond milk" is labeled as "almond beverage," providing a clear distinction.

There is also potential to get this solved within the farm bill by passing legislation such as the Dairy Pride Act, which would prohibit any alternatives from using dairy terminology on their products.

At Farm Bureau, we will always support consumers' access to a variety of options, including non-dairy, but this issue surrounding labeling has brought to light just how important transparency and product standards are. We must continue to advocate for clarity and give consumers the freedom to make informed choices in the dairy aisle. ■

REASON FOR SEASON... From Page 2

On the state level, property taxes and how best to assess values resulted in an ill-conceived proposal to amend our constitution. The proposed amendment would create another tier for property tax that will carve off groups who don't have the political force to forestall a tax increase in order to give another group a tax decrease. With less than two percent of the population farming or ranching, we in agriculture should rightfully be concerned about how this plays out next November.

Meanwhile some of the changes the legislature made when times were tough like funding the State Engineer's office out of Water Development have not been changed back to funding from the General Fund as it had been since - like - forever.

And yet with all these problems, I can't help but reflect on just how lucky we are to live in the United States. In one of my favorite songs, it has lyrics that say, "Do you remember, when You walked among men; Well Jesus You know if You're looking below; It's worse now than then."

I'm not sure if I agree with those lyrics. If we were to compare how things are today to

when Jesus was born, I have to think that we cannot help but count our numerous blessings. The Roman republic was a memory and most of those alive back then would not have even been aware of the democracy experiments of some of the Greek city states. Indeed, just like many of the world's citizens today, rulers back then used the sword to enforce their desires. Genocide was a common practice rulers used against not only their enemies, but their citizens. Starvation was a constant companion in many people's lives and things like a warm house was only the purview of the very rich or the rulers. Lives were short, food was short, and work was hard. If you couldn't pay off your debts, chances were good you would end up a slave for someone. Justice was arbitrary at best and sentences were harsh.

So, while we have challenges, we should never forget how centuries ago we were shown a way that recognizes human dignity and asks us to treat one another better. This lesson was provided during a time when rulers ruled through the sword and people's lives were a disposable commodity. Don't let our modern-day problems distract us from the real reason for the season. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. ■

# Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation scholarship opportunities

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation scholarship deadline is March 1, 2024. Nine college scholarships are offered each year. Scholarships are available for high school graduates and for those students who are continuing their college education. Applications are available at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org); click on the "Get Involved/Education" tab. Applications are also available at county Farm Bureau offices. For questions, contact Diane "Dee" Brewer at 307.721.7719 or [dbrewer1@wyfb.org](mailto:dbrewer1@wyfb.org). ■

# National News Updates

BY KELLY CARPENTER

## North American Wolverine Listed as Threatened

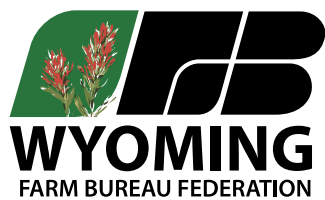
While wolverines are elusive, they have been a popular topic of wildlife managers for the past decade. On November 30, 2023, the US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the North American Wolverine as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with an interim 4(d) rule to tailor management to the species needs. The Administration's renewed efforts to protect the small-but-fierce mammal under the ESA with a recent proposal to list it as threatened is

more of the same top-down approach to natural resource policy. The proposed listing as threatened leans heavily on climate change models that help finalize the threatened listing due to their court-ordered deadline.

Specifically, regarding climate change models, scientists have used predictive modeling scenarios to indicate a possible decrease in snowpack in the coming decades. The wolverine is dependent on high-elevation snowpack for lifecycle stages. Although climate change is the main cited threat, the Service believes human mitigation can help the wolverine despite the warming trends forecasted.

## BLM Bans M-44 Devices on Their Land

During the week of November 20, the Bureau of Land Management announced that M-44— spring-loaded sodium cyanide releasing devices— will be prohibited. The agency manages nearly 390,625 square miles of land with agricultural users on much of that property interested in predator management. While the devices will still be able to be utilized on private and other federal lands, there is a current legislative effort to ban them on all government-owned lands. ■



# 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 [broes@wyfb.org](mailto:broes@wyfb.org) or call 307-721-7723.

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# 2024 WyFB YF&R Conference: Cultivating emerging leaders

By **TUCKER HAMILTON**,  
WyFB YF&R COMMITTEE STATE CHAIR

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee (YF&R) wishes you happy holidays! It is that time of year again! Yes, that time of year full of Christmas cheer and good food, but that is not what I am talking about. It is that time of year to consider attending the annual WyFB YF&R conference! This year the conference will be held at the Farm Bureau Center in Laramie, Wyoming on February 2-3. The theme is “Cultivating Emerging Leaders” and the topics that will be discussed include developing your own leadership skills and style, ancient grains, profitability, and hot topics in agriculture around the state. Other opportunities include networking and tours of fun things in Laramie. Something new this year is that the Collegiate Discussion Meet will be held on February 1st before the conference starts.

We are excited to have the conference at the Farm Bureau Center in Laramie this year. This building houses the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation as well as their affiliate insurance company, the Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company. This year the Federation celebrates 104 years of grass roots policy development and Mountain West celebrates 75 years since its creation by the Federation. This is an excellent opportunity to see where the Federation and Mountain West work

and interact as well as meeting the key players in how grass roots policy gets to the legislators and committees it needs to.

Our keynote speaker is Sarah Bohnenkamp. Sarah is a leadership and business coach who has her own consulting firm that serves clients on a state and national level. She wants to help people “bring more love and leadership into the world by helping cultivate trust, clarify vision, boost profitability, streamline operations, and nurture leaders.” You can expect to learn about the significance of developing your own unique leadership style, using your key qualities to improve faster, the importance of communicating in leadership, and the concept of “borrowing” leadership skills. Sarah is a great motivational speaker and wants to help us be “anti-average” leaders in agriculture.

The YF&R team is working closely with the University of Wyoming (UW) this year in scheduling several fun activities and events. On Friday morning we are meeting at the UW Laramie Research and Extension Center to hear from several different groups about ongoing research and topics. Topics include wool initiative-block chain supply tracking, hands on demonstration of PAP test for high altitude bulls, and other fun things. We are also working closely with the UW Food Science Club to cater for the entire YF&R event. I have never had an even slightly disappointing meal from the food science club! The UW Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter will also be joining us throughout the conference.

YF&R is super excited to host the Collegiate Discussion Meet this year at the annual conference instead of at the annual meeting in November.

The meet will be held February 1st. It is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected. A panel of judges evaluate contestants on constructive criticism, cooperation, and communication while analyzing agricultural problems and developing solutions. The winner of the event will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a trip to the national competition. If you are a college student and want to participate, please find that information at the events tab at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org)

The conference is going to be jam packed with fun things to do and interesting people to meet! I haven't even talked about the ancient grains, the places we



Annie and Tucker Hamilton

are touring, or the ski trip on February 4th! You will have to come to the conference to find out the rest. The Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee especially encourages any younger generation member of farms and ranches to attend this conference, however, it is open to all ages. It is a great place to meet people throughout the state, network with like-minded individuals for business ventures, catch up with old friends, or just get away from the home operation for a couple days. If you are considering coming, I recommend it! If you know anyone who might be interested, please encourage them!

You can see the full agenda, promotional material, or how to register for the conference at the events page at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org). Everyone is welcome and we hope to see you there! ■

*About the Author: Tucker Hamilton is a fourth-generation rancher in Northeast Wyoming near Newcastle. He and his wife Annie work with Tucker's parents in raising commercial cattle and hay. Tucker is actively involved in the community by being part of WyFB YF&R and serving on the Board of Directors of the Weston County Conservation District.*

## Conference Agenda

Locations: University of Wyoming and Farm Bureau Center

Host Hotel: Holiday Inn in Laramie  
Funding provided by Plank Stewardship Initiative

**Conference updates at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org)**

Thursday, February 1, 2024  
4 PM Collegiate Discussion Meet at UW

Friday, February 2, 2024  
8:00 AM -12:30 PM Registration and Welcome  
UW Meat Lab Tour  
Agricultural Research Conversations and Tours at UW Laramie Research and Extension Center  
Lunch

Following lunch, remainder of Conference at Farm Bureau Center, 931 Boulder Drive, Laramie

2:00 PM Anti-Average Leadership  
Sarah J. Bohnenkamp

You can expect to learn about the significance of developing a unique personal leadership

*brand, leveraging key qualities like curiosity and coach-ability, the critical role of communication in leadership, and the concept of "borrowing" leadership skills. You know you were not built for mediocrity, and leadership needs you, now!*

3:30 PM Farm Bureau Center Tours and Networking Break

5:30 PM Social and Dinner  
Plank Stewardship Initiative  
Appreciation and Address

Saturday, February 3, 2024  
7:00 AM Breakfast provided at Farm Bureau Center

8:00 AM Neolithic Brand: Creating more for Wyoming's Ag Sector  
Thomas Foulke, Senior Research Scientist at UW College of Agriculture, Agricultural Economics Department

*The Neolithic brand project is an effort to help create jobs and enhance incomes in Wyoming's agricultural sector by not just introducing new (old) crops, but by building out the supply chain and fostering adoption in the industry with new products.*

9:30 AM Break

9:40 AM The 3 Secrets for Increasing Profit  
Shanon and Melinda Sims  
*Ranching for Profit teaches that there are only three ways to increase profit in a business. Once we understand those, we can create a business that is attractive to the next generation.*

10:40 AM Break  
10:50 AM The 3 Secrets for Increasing Profit (continued)  
Shanon and Melinda Sims

12:00 PM Networking Lunch  
1:30 PM A look at agriculture issues  
Ken Hamilton, WyFB Executive Vice President  
Brett Moline, WyFB Director of Public and Governmental Affairs

2:30 PM Joel Currier, AFBF YF&R Committee  
4:00 PM Social Fun and Networking Activity

**Dinner on own. Let us know if you'd like to be paired with a group for dinner.**

Sunday, February 4, 2024  
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

**Skiing at Snowy Range Ski Area – near Centennial, Wyoming**  
Skiing is on your own. Group rates may be available for tickets.

# Retiring WyFB YF&R Committee members recognized

BY KERIN CLARK

**Y**F&R is...Leadership Development. Future. Networking. Personal Development. Agriculture. Opportunity. People. Wyoming.

The goal of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmer & Rancher program is to give young farmers and ranchers, serving as a committee within the organization structure, the opportunity to recommend programs and activities that will encourage participation of young farmers and ranchers in both the YF&R program and the Farm Bureau Federation. The WyFB YF&R Committee is composed of two members per district (five districts) and one at-large position. This year the WyFB YF&R Committee recognized four retiring committee members.

Crook County Rancher Raenell Taylor, along with the support of her husband Josh, served on the committee from 2011-2023. During her time on the committee, Taylor served as WyFB YF&R State Chair, a position that holds a seat on the WyFB Board of Directors. Her first WyFB event was the YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet during college and her county involvement started when Jw and Thea Nuckolls invited her to attend a county Farm Bureau Federation trip to an informational speaker event. From there, Taylor became a devoted Farm Bureau Federation member and active leader through the YF&R program. Taylor is now serving her second term as Northeast District Director on the WyFB Board of Directors.

Taylor is grateful for the opportunities provided to her as a young rancher. "The personal development and leadership growth aspect of the WyFB YF&R committee and program is one of the highlights," Taylor said. "Looking back to the person I was when I was elected to the WyFB YF&R committee compared to the person that I am now, I would honestly say I'm a completely transformed individual. The amount of leadership skills that have been instilled in me is indescribable."

Taylor expressed the value of networking is a large part of their livelihood as young ranchers. "Having the opportunity to meet other young ranchers, not only throughout Wyoming, but surrounding states as well, that have the same passion and love for our lifestyle has been super valuable," Taylor continued. "We have established a wonderful network of farmers and ranchers that we can call anytime for support or knowledge."

Taylor shared the memories in 12 years of service are many. "There were moments we would laugh so hard our muscles in our stomach would hurt, there were moments where we were sad and shed tears together, and there were moments where we truly shared and learned lifelong advice and guidance together," Taylor remembered.

She shared a specific memory that stands out is the first prayer she prayed in front of an audience at a WyFB Annual Meeting when she was the WyFB YF&R State Chair. According to Taylor, she had decided to write down her prayer but then forgot her pre-written prayer so instead prayed from the heart. "I had so many Farm Bureau members tell me it was truly heartfelt," she recalled. From then on, I never worried about what to say when praying in front of an audience. God always gives us the words when we need them the most."

Taylor stated she made time to be involved because she loves to serve and have the ability to positively impact Wyoming agriculture. "Serving on a committee that is enthusiastic about the future of agriculture has honestly been the best place to serve my time," said Taylor. "The camaraderie with other young farmers and ranchers to positively impact Wyoming agriculture through our voices has been a privilege."

"Our voice matters and if we don't tell our agricultural story, someone else will try to tell it for us," Taylor concluded. "If we want a strong future in agriculture, we have to make our voice strong."

Natrona County Farm & Ranch Bureau Member Aletta Grauberger represented the Central District on the committee from 2021-2023. During her time on the committee, Grauberger was a positive leader with the drive to accomplish much and lead the way on projects. She served as the WyFB YF&R Committee Secretary. She is also active on the Natrona County Farm & Ranch Bureau Board of Directors.

Grauberger stated the WyFB YF&R Committee had incredible value. "It gives you a purpose as well as tons of opportunities to grow and explore new skills and abilities that I didn't always know I had," she said. "Agriculture is important to me and this was a way to be involved with Farm Bureau on a higher level. I knew that the leadership skills I would gain and the relationships I would make would be invaluable."

Grauberger says she has learned how important it is to step up and do the work or lead the way. "It only takes one person to get a movement or a project rolling," she said.



The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) thanked four retiring WyFB YF&R Committee members for their service on the WyFB YF&R Committee. WyFB YF&R Coordinator Kerin Clark (left) and WyFB YF&R Outgoing State Chair Quade Palm (right) recognized Raenell (Josh) Taylor, Crook County; and Aletta Grauberger, Natrona County. Not pictured are: Brent Horton and Elizabeth (Tyler) Foxworthy. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.

Grauberger emphasized the opportunities are endless when serving. "The networking with so many people and the fact that there is an opportunity for each and every person to grow as an individual and as a leader - from working on Ag Books to public speaking - makes involvement invaluable."

A couple of her favorite memories are winning the first ever WyFB Ag Trivia at annual meeting with Shawn & Kelli Chouinard and creating a blooper video reel at the 2021 WyFB YF&R Conference.

Grauberger's leadership goals for the future are to rejoin the committee and serve on the AFBF YF&R National Committee.

Brent Horton served as the Representative-at-Large on the WyFB YF&R Committee for 2023. He aged out this year so could not seek re-election. Horton and his fiancé (now wife), Jenn Tippetts Horton, enjoyed the opportunity to serve on the committee. "We sure wish we could've spent more time on the

YF&R Committee," Horton said. "It was a lot of fun to interact with everyone."

"Being a part of Farm Bureau will definitely become a bigger option to us and the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee helped form that," Horton concluded. "We will certainly stay involved in the organization."

Elizabeth and Tyler Foxworthy served on the committee from 2021-2023 representing the Northwest District. Elizabeth appreciates the opportunity to be involved locally with the Fremont County Farm Bureau Federation.

WyFB YF&R Committee members are provided vast amounts of training on leadership qualities and issues briefings as well as honing other professional skills. The committee members are a dedicated group of volunteers who work hard to ensure the ideals of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation are upheld and continue to represent young farmers and ranchers throughout Wyoming. ■

## Weston County's Tucker Hamilton elected WyFB YF&R State Chair

**T**ucker Hamilton was elected as the next Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Committee State Chair. This position also holds a seat on the WyFB Board of Directors.

"I am excited to serve as the WyFB YF&R State Chair and serve on the WyFB Board of Directors," Hamilton said. "It is really important to be involved with Farm Bureau."

"Farm Bureau is the voice of agriculture in Wyoming and all of the United States," Hamilton continued. "If we don't get involved and speak

up, then we won't have a voice in agriculture."

"We (ranchers) need to be involved," he concluded. "Sometimes it is hard to leave ranch work, but if we don't do it who will."

From Weston County, Hamilton is a Northeast District representative on the WyFB YF&R Committee and a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Wyoming rancher. Tucker and Annie recently married and work on the family ranch with his parents Monte and Francie Hamilton. They ranch in Northeast Wyoming near the Black Hills raising commercial cattle and hay. ■



Tucker Hamilton

## Collegiate YF&R Discussion Meet competition in February

**B**eing an advocate for agriculture is important and should be a part of everyone's business plan. Develop your leadership and advocacy skills and meet other young farmers and ranchers from around the state and around the nation by participating in the YF&R Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.

The competition will be February 1, 2024 in Laramie, Wyoming just prior to the start of the WyFB YF&R Conference. Any Wyoming college student with an interest in agricul-

ture is eligible to participate. A major in agriculture is not required for competition. The state winner receives a \$1,000 cash prize and an expense paid trip to the AFBF national competition March 2024 in Omaha, Nebraska to compete for college scholarships.

Topics and rules are available at wyfb.org. Collegiate Discussion Meet applications are due January 12, 2024. Contact WyFB YF&R Coordinator Kerin Clark at 307.534.6175 or kclark@wyfb.org with questions. ■

# WyFB YF&R County Involvement Program recognition

BY KERIN CLARK

Three county Farm Bureau Federations were recently recognized for achieving step four in the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) County Involvement 4-Step Program. The counties of Albany, Crook and Niobrara all held a YF&R event or activity during the year earning them the “Step Four” recognition.

Albany County’s activity for step 3 included “Ag Books for Kids” presentations in local schools and their step 4 activity was an educational tour of Frank Cattle. Crook County earned step 3 for having a YF&R aged member on the county board and their step 4 activity was a community “Goat Roping” event to get community involvement and encourage Farm Bureau membership. Niobrara County’s step 3 activity was having three young members as active board members, “Ag Books for Kids” and fair activities. Their step 4 activity was a Root Beer Float Social during the county fair corn hole tournament.

Sweetwater County was recognized for achieving 3 of the 4 steps in the program.

The Farm Bureau Federation’s strength is our grassroots involvement. The local level is where it all begins for the work we do for agriculture in Wyoming and across the



Two county Farm Bureau Federations completed all four steps of the YF&R County Involvement program. From left to right: Crook County FBF President Vance Steedley congratulated by WyFB YF&R Committee Member Cody Alps and Albany County FBF Member Samantha Starks recognized by WyFB YF&R Committee Member Tucker Hamilton. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.



Two county Farm Bureau Federations completed three of the four steps of the YF&R County Involvement program. From left to right: Sweetwater County FBF President James Ramsay congratulated by WyFB YF&R Committee Member Zack Guild and WyFB YF&R Committee Member Seth Allen congratulated Niobrara County FBF Board Member Kevin Baars. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.

nation. The WyFB YF&R Committee appreciates the work county Farm Bureau Federations do to surface young leaders in our organization. The County Involvement 4-step program is a way to recognize the counties for their work and encourage growth in county YF&R programs.

The four steps may be completed in any order.

**Step 1:** One new, regular YF&R member added

**Step 2:** Send one YF&R aged member to WyFB YF&R Conference and/or WyFB Annual Meeting

**Step 3:** Have one YF&R aged member actively involved on county level

**Step 4:** Hold one YF&R meet & greet and/or speaker activity each year.

Program applications are due each year by November 1. Please contact a WyFB YF&R Committee member with questions or for assistance in growing your YF&R program at the county level. ■



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For more information, contact Lucy Pauley at 307-777-8788 or email [lucy.pauley@wyo.gov](mailto:lucy.pauley@wyo.gov).

Succession coordinators work with the family to identify:

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- Where do you want it to be?
- How do you get there?

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\* Farm Bureau Recognition Program is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward on the purchase or lease of an eligible new 2022/2023/2024 Ford Maverick, Ranger, F-150 or Super Duty. This incentive is not available on F-150 Lightning®, F-150 Raptor®, F-650 and F-750 Super Duty. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease and take new retail delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by January 2, 2024. Visit [FordRecognizesU.com/FarmBureau](http://FordRecognizesU.com/FarmBureau) or see your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details. Note to dealer: Claim in VINCENT using #38656.

# The people of the Farm Bureau Federation

## Meet the volunteer leader **Brian Asher**

County: Park  
 Farm Bureau Federation Leadership  
 Position:  
 ● Park County Farm Bureau Federation President

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Describe farm and family background.

**Asher:** I'm a third-generation farmer of the land we farm today. My grandpa, Richard Asher, moved here from Nebraska after visiting Park County for an elk hunt. I'm glad he picked such a pristine spot. The view from the tractor seat never gets old. We used to grow sugar beets, barley, beans, and alfalfa for hay. The farm now has moved to more seed production. We now grow primarily grass seed, pinto bean seed, alfalfa seed, and malt barley. I enjoy the fast pace of the summer and the long rest of the winter. Like most farms in Wyoming, we start in full swing by April, start harvesting grass seed in July, and end up with alfalfa seed in October. The winter months are spent working on equipment in the shop and finding a frozen lake to ice fish! I pretty much farm to support my ice fishing habit!

I married my high school sweetheart 26 years ago and moved her into my grandparent's house on the farm. She was a town girl, so a little hesitant to say the least. But, since then, has fallen in love with the peace of the farm. You can occasionally catch her in her chicken print boots, singing to her chickens. It doesn't get much more country than that. We have a son, Austin, who is 24 years old and two beautiful daughters, Aspen 22 years old, and Jayden 19 years old. My favorite photo is of all of us loaded on a four-wheeler setting water together as we did frequently. Raising a family on the farm has been one of my great joys.

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

**Asher:** I was asked to attend a county meeting and have always enjoyed talking about agriculture. The world topics seem to get more perverse every year. Who would have thought that we would have a conversation about something so simple as the definition of a woman? For this reason, I think it is important to have common sense leadership in all positions available in the community to squash twisted ideology before it takes root. After attending the annual meetings, it is clear that the policy of the Federation has Wyoming agriculture's back. It is an assuring feeling that so many farmers/ranchers around the state face the same issues. We are very independent in Wyoming, but when it comes to the Federation, strength in numbers helps drive the commonsense policy.

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

**Asher:** My advice on how individuals can make a difference for Wyoming agriculture is to get involved. As the saying goes, common sense really isn't all that common. Thankfully I think it is more common in Wyoming, so let's keep it that way.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** What are some of the issues facing farmers and ranchers in your county?

**Asher:** Some issues facing Park County are grizzlies and property tax. There are accounts of grizzlies stealing calves out of barns and animal feed out of sheds. Catching a glimpse of a grizzly in the wild is quite an amazing site. But it is quite another thing to see it face to face on the lowland fields while setting water. There are so many in the surrounding mountains that they are forced to come down country from overcrowding. It is time to manage these amazing creatures like we do with all wildlife, hunting seasons, and predatory borders. Property tax is another issue facing Park County residents. It is a great time to sell property in Park County, but if you are not selling, you get the enjoyment of seeing skyrocketing property tax statements in November. My farm alone has seen over a \$5000 increase in 2023, and that is on top of a several



A picture of the young Asher family taken in 2006: Austin, Jayden, Brian, Aspen, Misti Asher.



Misti and Brian Asher irrigating malt barley.



Brian irrigating a meadow brome grass seed field.



Combining grass seed on Heart Mountain.

thousand dollar rise in 2022. I can combat the increase with the input cost I put into my farm and budget accordingly, but the elderly landowner on a fixed income doesn't have this luxury and it is becoming a real issue for Park County. The high real estate values also directly affect our workforce. Affordable housing is next to impossible to find in Park County. Many are traveling from neighboring counties, which in turn, raises their housing costs.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** How important is each member of the Federation?

**Asher:** As I said before, we are all independent in Wyoming and that is why each member in the Federation is important. One county member can bring an issue forward at a county meeting and have it catch fire through the district and state level to help guide legislation in Wyoming. ■

# Agent recognition for membership acquisition

In the 2023 membership year, the Wyoming agency force for Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company acquired 931 new memberships for the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. Thank you to these agents and their staff for their hard work to support Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation through their year-round membership acquisition.

**Exemplary Category**  
Lloyd Meineke, Sheridan County: 84

**Superior Category**  
Frank Kelly, Big Horn County: 69  
Dave Craft, Sheridan County: 61  
David Stauffer, Sweetwater County: 47

**Outstanding Category**  
Sammi Hegwer, Fremont County: 40  
Justin Hatfield, Natrona County: 37  
Nick Smith, Johnson County: 37  
Garth Simkins, Laramie County: 34  
Alex Bear, Sweetwater County: 32  
Kris Mull, Washakie County: 32

Becky Pearson, Campbell County: 32  
Sierra Booth, Uinta County: 28  
Andrea Robinson, Crook County: 28  
David Gilliatt, Park County: 23

**Excellent Category**  
Justin Hegwer, Fremont County: 23  
Tamey Peternal, Lincoln County: 23  
Rick Hughes, Carbon County: 20  
Zack Jacobsen, Albany County: 20  
Jordan Cain, Carbon County: 18  
Mike Hansen, Lincoln County: 18

Jack Swanson, Natrona County: 18  
Mark Whitt, Hot Springs County: 18  
Nathan Rayl, Laramie County: 17  
Justin Jeffers, Albany County: 16  
Joshua Tangeman, Laramie County: 16  
Bobby Pickle, Natrona County: 13  
Jason Bell, Laramie County: 12  
Erin DeFries, Sheridan County: 12  
Jake Huhnke, Fremont County: 12  
Matt Thornton, Natrona County: 12  
Bridger Mackey, Uinta County: 11  
Jackson Ayala, Teton County: 10  
Grant Curry, Goshen County: 10

# WyFB Membership Awards

BY KERIN CLARK

Membership in the Federation supports the Farm Bureau Federation's voice in the work we do to strengthen private property rights, strengthen agriculture and support farm and ranch families. Membership acquisition and retention is vital to the success of the Federation. WyFB recognized county Farm Bureau Federations for their membership work at the 104th annual meeting of the organization held in November.

The esteemed Bronze Boot and Bronze Hat awards are traveling trophies that recognize membership success. The Bronze Boot award is given to the first county to reach membership quota as well as sign one new regular member who is between the ages of 18-35. Big Horn County Farm Bureau Federation won this award for the third year in a row in 2023, earning the right to keep the traveling trophy permanently. For reaching this membership goal, they were also awarded Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company (MWFBMIC) CEO Jim Geesey's Life Membership dividend for the membership year.

The Crook County Farm Bureau Federation had the greatest increase in Century Club members from the previous year. They received the Bronze Hat award and will be able to display the traveling trophy for a year.

## MWFBM VP Memberships Awarded to Counties

Specific membership achievements are recognized by awarding the Century Club memberships of MWFBMIC vice presidents to the winning county Farm Bureau Federations. In 1948, members of the Federation saw a need for farmers and ranchers to have good insurance, so they formed an affiliated insurance company now known as MWFBMIC. WyFB appreciates the support of MWFBMIC in sharing the message of Federation's work for agriculture.

Goshen County won Dan Bleak's (MWFBMIC Vice President of Analytics & Development) Century Club membership for having the most (38) Century Club members.

Sheridan County won Erick Arens' (MWFBMIC Vice President of Sales & Marketing) Century Club membership for being the county with the MWFB agents who signed the most (84) new members.

Fremont County won Jeff Suloff's (MWFBMIC Vice President of Claims) Century Club membership for having the most (59) new Regular members.

Sublette County won Jamie Terry's (MWFBMIC Vice President of Organizational Development) Century Club membership for retaining the greatest percentage (95%) of all members from the previous year.

Membership strengthens the work we do for agriculture and rural Wyoming. Thank you to all the volunteers and our affiliate insurance company for the work you do in sharing Federation's message through membership acquisition and retention. ■



Big Horn County Farm Bureau Federation was the first county to reach membership quota and acquire one new Regular member under the age of 35. WyFB Membership Committee Vice Chair Kevin Baars (left) presented the Bronze Boot membership award to Big Horn County Farm Bureau Federation President Tim Beck. This was the third year in a row for Big Horn County to win the award. The trophy now stays with them permanently, and a new traveling trophy will be made. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.



WyFB Membership Committee Vice Chair Kevin Baars (right) presented the Bronze Hat membership award to Crook County Farm Bureau Federation President Vance Steedley for having the greatest increase in Century Club memberships from the previous year. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.

Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company Wyoming and Colorado State Director Todd Seeton (left) presented the Mountain West Vice President's Century Club Membership awards to county Farm Bureau Federations at the annual meeting. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTOS.



Goshen County FBF President Joe Campbell (right) received Dan Bleak's Century Club Membership award from Seeton for the most Century Club members.



Sheridan County FBF President Andy Edwards (right) received Erick Arens' Century Club Membership award from Seeton for the county with the MWFB agents who signed the most new members.



Fremont County FBF President Andrea Dockery (right) received Jeff Suloff's Century Club Membership award from Seeton for the most new Regular members.



# Building a culture of effective leadership and engagement

BY KERIN CLARK

“Do you know your why,” asked Jessica Cabrera, American Farm Bureau Federation Managing Director of Member Engagement. “You are a part of Farm Bureau for a reason. You have other things you could be doing, but you’ve chosen to be here today. Why do you think this organization is important?”

Cabrera posed these questions on November 10 at the 104th annual meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. “What would agriculture look like if Farm Bureau didn’t exist,” she asked. “Having a voice to develop those policies in your counties and those you are working on today is truly remarkable.”

Cabrera emphasized the value of Farm Bureau’s grassroots volunteer leaders. “This organization does not function properly if the county Farm Bureaus are not active,” she stated. “We cannot go to sleep at the wheel.”

Cabrera stated the first step to effectively leading a group of people is to know your why. “This is not the time for Farm Bureau members and leaders to be passive,” Cabrera continued. “Not with 1.5 percent of the American population farming, with an average age of the farmer at 57.5 years old, with the average consumer three plus generations removed from the farm, and with the global population influx projected to increase by two billion people by 2050.”

“Who is going to feed, clothe and shelter these people,” she continued. “It’s you. Farmers and ranchers organizing at the grassroots level is critically important to the future of this country.”

## Mission challenged or Mission driven

Mission challenged or mission driven? “Being focused on your mission, your why, is key to effective leadership and your organizational health,” she stated.

Cabrera shared characteristics of being mission challenged and offered mission driven best practices to give members tools to be a part of the solution.

## Mission challenged:

**1. Stuck in autopilot.** The mission is an afterthought. “Not paying attention to what you want to accomplish causes you to just go through the motions,” Cabrera explained. “You can’t just hit repeat over and over.”

**2. Reactive approach.** “Mission-challenged leaders will react to problems instead of taking a proactive approach to prevent problems,” she said.

**3. Focused more on how and who versus why.** “For this reason, you will get stuck doing things you’ve always done,” stated Cabrera. “You may be perceived as active because you have people on your board, you’re sponsoring something, or doing something but sometimes it is so disconnected from the mission you’ve lost sight of where you are going.”

**4. Focused more on me than we.** “When you work hard it is easy to focus on what you want because you are putting in the sweat equity,” she described. “A self-centered leadership focus will lead to poor communication and disengaged members because of a lack of connectivity.”

**5. Forget they are part of something bigger.** “This leads to silos when you are defined by narrow roles and responsibilities,” Cabrera said.

**6. Lack energy.**

## Mission driven:

**1. Help all members understand why Farm Bureau exists.** “You have to promote this characteristic,” stated Cabrera.

**2. Anticipate challenges.** “Always ask what we can do to prepare for the future,” Cabrera said. “Then prepare for anticipated challenges and take steps to prevent them.”

**3. Always ask questions.** “Always seeking input and feedback on how to best carry out the mis-



AFBF’s Jessica Cabrera motivated Farm Bureau volunteers to look at their culture of grassroots leadership and engagement and lead with purpose for the continued strength of Farm Bureau. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.

sion is necessary,” Cabrera explained. “Asking questions is a great way to explore new options and ensure you don’t get stuck.”

**4. Engaged at every level.** “The mission of Farm Bureau is the centrifugal force of everything you do,” she said. “Engaged members will know the mission and those they serve will see and hear the mission.”

**5. Members take ownership.** “They care, they believe, they volunteer because they recognize it makes a difference,” stated Cabrera. “It used to be people volunteered because it was the right thing to do. That mindset has transitioned and now people choose to volunteer if it is meaningful and purposeful.”

**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP ... Page 11**

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# Multiple entities engage in Wyoming water issues in an effort to serve the public interest

*Editor's Note: The Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation hosted a "Water in Wyoming" seminar on November 9th in conjunction with the WyFB Annual Meeting. The three speakers were: Chris Brown, Senior Assistant Attorney General with the Wyoming Attorney General's Office; Wyoming State Engineer Brandon Gebhart; and George Moser with the Wyoming Water Development Office.*

BY CALLIE HANSON

The complexity of water issues is no secret across the western region. With many basins and rivers crossing state lines, growing populations, and the looming threat of drought and shortages, there is a village of professionals working to keep the best interest of Wyoming's citizens at the forefront.

The Wyoming State Engineer's Office is the primary agency for all issues related to Wyoming water. Other offices, such as the Wyoming Attorney General's Office, and the Wyoming Water Development Office, work in conjunction with the State Engineer's Office to work through legislative issues and ensure the public is served.

According to Chris Brown, a Senior Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming is primarily a state of headwaters as opposed to a downstream state. This position is a major driver of interstate laws and regulations surrounding water.

Brown notes there are three decrees and seven compacts governing Wyoming's interstate rivers and streams. The court decrees include the Laramie River Decree, the Roxanna Decree, and the North Platte River Decree.

The seven compacts include the Colorado River, Upper Colorado River, Amended Bear River, Belle Fourche River, Snake River, Upper Niobrara, and Yellowstone River Compacts.

When two states have a disagreement about interstate water, any litigation starts in the United States Supreme Court. Decrees are essentially orders of the Supreme Court which divide the water between the states.

"In the early 1900s, the Supreme Court came up with this doctrine called the Doctrine of Equitable Apportionment," according to Brown. "These are some very general, high level rules about what the Supreme Court will look at when two states appear in the court over any interstate conflict, including water."

"What this all boils down to is communication and relationships between the states," Brown continued. "When another state has concerns we want to try and work it out with them because taking it to the Supreme Court can get really expensive and it takes a lot longer to resolve."



Brandon Gebhart is the State Engineer of Wyoming and notes his office operates under the mission of providing for the supervision and protection of both interstate and intrastate waters, with flexibility to meet the changing needs of the citizens of Wyoming.

Gebhart explains that while the state ultimately owns the water, that ownership is in trust to benefit the people of Wyoming. The overall functions of the State Engineer's Office (SEO) include permitting and regulatory responsibilities, interstate decree administration and representation, resource data collection, and water education.

The SEO has six administrative divisions, each with its own unique set of responsibilities and goals. These divisions include the board of control, ground water, interstate streams, surface water, administrative, and support services. The state is also divided into four water divi-



Chris Brown, with the Wyoming Attorney General's Office, visited with Tim Beck, Big Horn County, and David Garber, Sheridan County, at the WyFB Foundation "Water in Wyoming" seminar. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

sions, each with its own superintendent.

The Board of Control includes the State Engineer and Superintendents from each of the four water divisions. According to Gebhart, this board meets quarterly to discuss petitions and proofs.

"The Board of Control is responsible for the adjudication process for each permit. The adjudication procedure involves a field inspection to assure that the water is being put to a beneficial use as specified under the permit," according to Gebhart. "The Board of Control is also responsible for any changes to adjudicated rights, such as changes in point of diversion, change in use, change in the area of use, or abandonment of a water right."

The Ground Water Division is primarily responsible for issuing and maintenance of permits to appropriate groundwater. This division will also perform inspections leading to adjudication of rights to groundwater.

Gebhart notes, "In addition to processing and maintaining groundwater permits, the Ground Water Division maintains a statewide observation well network, conducts interference investi-

gations and water right adjudication inspections, prepares proof of adjudication for the Board of Control's consideration, reviews reports of water supply adequacy for subdivisions, and provides conflict resolution between groundwater and surface water appropriators."

With a high volume of interstate water interests within the state, the Interstate Streams Division represents Wyoming's interests within various commissions and organizations.

"A primary objective of the agency is to safeguard the State's current and future water supplies by preserving Wyoming's ability to use and develop our water allocations under interstate compacts and court decrees," Gebhart continued.

The Surface Water and Engineering Division is responsible for permit applications involving the use of surface waters. These permits could include diversion through ditches or pipelines, reservoir storage, in-stream flow, temporary industrial water hauls, and weather modification.

Together these divisions work towards the mission of benefitting the people of Wyoming and serving the interests of Wyoming within the region.

While the SEO handles a bulk of the legal and administration work, the state is also served by the Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) and the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC). The Commission is composed of 10 members appointed by the governor to represent the four state water divisions and the Wind River Reservation.

According to WWDO, their office "provides for the planning, selection, financing, construction, acquisition, and operation of projects. This can include projects for the conservation, storage, transmission, supply, and use of water, necessary in the public interest to develop and preserve Wyoming's water and related land resources."

WWDO Project Manager George Moser notes there is a lot of overlap between their office and the work of the SEO. Projects going through WWDO are divided into three levels. Level 1 focuses on reconnaissance work, level 2 studies determine feasibility and level three includes project design, permitting, land acquisition, construction and construction engineering.

## WYOMING FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION AUCTION

Silent and live auctions were held at the WyFB 104th Annual Meeting. All proceeds went to the Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation.

Contributions to the Wyoming Farm Bureau Foundation help support agriculture efforts in Wyoming. Visit the Foundation tab at wyfb.org to learn more.

**TOTAL RAISED: \$7,420**

A huge thank you to Mark McNamee for his auctioneer services, the County Farm Bureau Federations who donated items to the auction and the buyers who made this event a success!



**EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP... From Page 9**

**6. Be excited.** “When board members are excited about what they are doing, you will have a highly engaged team,” she said.

**7. Lead meetings for productive conversations.** “Sharpen one another and have open dialogue. Lead in a way that promotes more productive conversations in the meeting than in the ‘parking lot’ after the meeting,” she stated.

Cabrera emphasized that creating this culture doesn’t happen overnight. “We have to build a culture on purpose by instituting traditions and consistent practices so everyone knows what to expect,” she said.

“It takes courageous leaders to change an established culture,” she explained. “It takes people who are willing to try something new and pave the way for the future.”

With this in mind, Cabrera shared three items to build a mission-driven culture for the county Farm Bureau. “First, put your mission front and center. Second, talk about it all the time. Third, align your actions with your mission,” she explained. “You will see results when you do this for your Farm Bureau.”

**Leadership culture**

Building the organizational health of a county Farm Bureau also requires building a culture of excellent leadership. “You have to get the mission front and center and then you need to build a culture of excellent leadership,” Cabrera said. “Leading well and with purpose is so influential to the health of your organization.”

Cabrera conducted a survey in 2020 of aspiring and current agriculture leaders to learn more about leadership perceptions.

From this survey, she identified what they reported to be the top five behaviors of bad leadership:

1. Not communicating.
2. Prioritizing productivity over people.
3. Unwillingness to change.
4. Poor strategizing and decision-making or no decision-making.
5. Not leading by example.

“If you find yourself falling into one of these bad leadership traps, it’s okay, but now is the time to turn a corner,” Cabrera said. “If you are willing to change, you are going to be effective as a leader.”

Transitioning to what leaders should do to be effective, Cabrera said starting with the end in mind is key. “We have to be actively en-



Farm Bureau is a grassroots membership agricultural non-profit that organizes farmers and ranchers at the local, state and national level so that we can serve as the voice for agriculture. AFBF Managing Director of Member Engagement Jessica Cabrera presented a “Talking About Farm Bureau” workshop during the county presidents and vice presidents breakfast meeting held during the 104th WyFB Annual Meeting. Cabrera also spoke to the Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company insurance agents regarding membership. *KERIN CLARK PHOTO.*

gaged and build a culture that will reflect the outcomes we want,” she continued. “This culture of expectation becomes what everyone inherently agrees with and then everyone keeps each other accountable.”

Cabrera acknowledged establishing hard line expectations with volunteers is challenging. “Grassroots is messy. If you are trying to make it look polished and clean you are doing it wrong,” she stated. “It is going to be messy because people are volunteers, but I’m going to give you a solution for tidying it up a bit with five leadership practices that will help build a culture of effective leadership.”

**Show up:** gateway to opportunity. “Many people don’t show up to a meeting because they don’t think it will be meaningful,” Cabrera said. “If you don’t show up, it won’t be meaningful. I can guarantee the times that meaningful things happened took place when you showed up.”

**Step up:** gateway to growth. “This is about becoming active by putting your care into action and raising your hand to step out of your comfort zone,” she explained.

**Link up:** gateway to impact. “Farm Bureau is the nation’s largest general farm organization. We are the voice of agriculture. This means our mission serves the entire farming/ranching/agriculture sector and there are many interested stakeholders,” she exclaimed. “Effective leaders think about bringing other perspectives to the table to increase your reach and be a good neighbor.”

**Team up:** gateway to success. “When you team up you will have a more vibrant county Farm Bureau. Many minds together are better than one,” Cabrera said. “Pull somebody else into the activity, let it go slower, let it be a little messier, you’ll be better in the end.”

**Speak up:** gateway to influence. “There is no way to influence the direction of this organization and the future of agriculture without speaking up,” Cabrera said.

“Lead with purpose in mind,” Cabrera concluded. “If you cultivate a culture of grassroots leadership and engagement in your county Farm Bureau, I am confident you will see the fruit of your labor as time passes.” ■

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IT STARTS WITH *you*

# PHOTO GALLERY



104<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 9-11, 2023  
CHEYENNE, WYOMING

Stories by Kerin Clark. Photos by Kadra Marie Photography/Kadra Clark.



It starts with you... the grassroots county organizations. County Farm Bureau Federation presidents play an important role in this grassroots organization. Four retired county presidents were recognized for their service. WyFB Vice President Cole Coxbill (right) presented the retiring gifts. Left photo: Chris Starks, Albany County (2022-2023). Center photo: Thad Dockery, Fremont County (2007-2022). Right photo: Dick Dovey, Platte County: 2007-2023. Not pictured: Chelsea Hunter, Niobrara County (2019-2023).

**W**yoming farmers and ranchers rolled up their sleeves for business at the 104th annual meeting to develop policy to guide the organization in the coming year. While working hard on policy development, they also took a few opportunities to celebrate with their fellow farmers and ranchers.



**Bottom right photo:** Ag trivia was open to the public and presented by WyFB Interns Abbi Havey and Sydnie Fornstrom. Lots of fun and great conversations about Wyoming agriculture with the general public. Thanks to Westby Edge Brewing Company in Cheyenne for providing the location. **Photo at left:** The winning team members were Hannah Klein, Spencer Axtell, Corey Forman and Cole Coxbill.



Ice Cream Social: Who doesn't love a good ice cream break?!? Goshen County members Lane and Shaina Hageman and Collegiate Farm Bureau member Aspen Nesvik getting ready to enjoy ice cream.

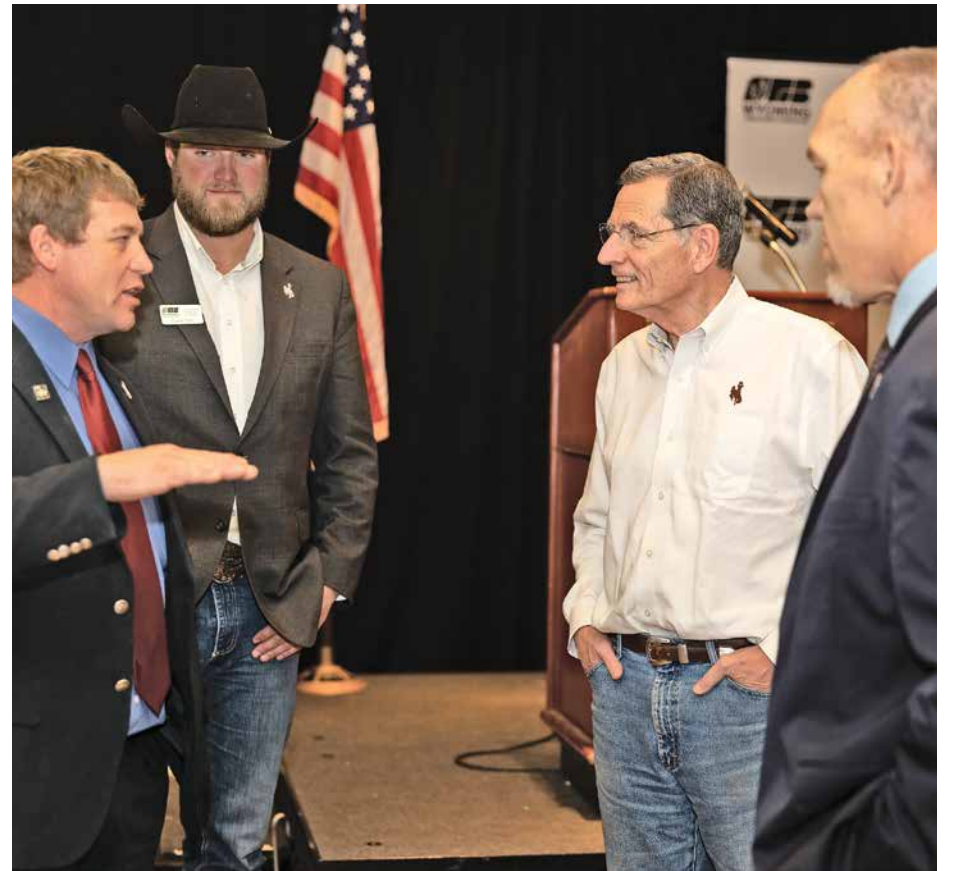


Entertainment by BJ Jamison at the Awards Banquet. The dance floor was full. An evening of fellowship was enjoyed listening and dancing to great music by BJ Jamison.





University of Wyoming Collegiate Farm Bureau members at the 104th annual meeting. These members participated and contributed to several areas of the meeting from serving as parliamentarian to mic runners during policy discussion to meeting interns. From left to right: Dalia Weber; Hailey Rasmussen; Leah Allen; Jordan Anderson; Sarah Turner; Aden Scheer; Mattie Wakefield; Aspen Nesvik; Abbi Havey; and Sydnie Fornstrom. They meet on campus every other Wednesday during the school year. Follow them on Instagram at [uwo\\_cfb](https://www.instagram.com/uwo_cfb).



United States (U.S.) Senator John Barrasso spoke at the WyFB annual meeting. Senator Barrasso also introduced Legislative Assistant Tori Teegarden. Teegarden joined Barrasso on stage and shared issues on which she works for Senator Barrasso. One of those issues addressed was "The Ranching Without Red Tape Act" introduced by Senator Barrasso to streamline the permitting process for range improvements made by ranchers on federal lands. U.S. Senator Cynthia Lummis and U.S. Representative Harriet Hageman were unable to attend so provided video message updates. After speaking, Senator Barrasso visited with WyFB members during the ice cream social. Shown here is WyFB Vice President Cole Coxbill; WyFB YF&R 2023 State Chair Quade Palm; Senator Barrasso; and WyFB President Todd Fornstrom.



University of Wyoming (UW) sophomore Sarah Turner served as the parliamentarian for the business sessions of the WyFB Annual Meeting. From Cheyenne, Turner is a member of the UW Collegiate Farm Bureau and is studying agriculture education and animal veterinary science at UW. She became an accredited parliamentarian in 2021 after being the high individual in the National FFA Parliamentary Procedure contest. Turner is shown here with WyFB Vice President Cole Coxbill; WyFB President Todd Fornstrom; and WyFB Executive Vice President Ken Hamilton.

STAFF LONGEVITY



WyFB Office Manager/Executive Secretary Dee Brewer (left) celebrated her 35th anniversary with the Farm Bureau family on July 1st. Brewer was congratulated and thanked for her service by WyFB President Todd Fornstrom.



WyFB Executive Vice President Ken Hamilton (left) was congratulated by WyFB President Todd Fornstrom for celebrating his 40th anniversary with WyFB on October 3. Following a photo memory slideshow presented in Hamilton's honor, he thanked the members for their support over his 40 years with the organization. Hamilton also announced he will retire at the end of October 2024.



Northern Ag Network's Colter Brown (right) recorded a podcast interview during the WyFB Annual Meeting. He visited with (l to r) WyFB President Todd Fornstrom, WyFB Executive Vice President Ken Hamilton, and Courtney Briggs with the American Farm Bureau on issues relating to water, the Farm Bill, public lands, wildlife, WOTUS and more. Visit [wyfb.org](https://wyfb.org) and click on the "News" tab for a link to the podcast.

Annual Meeting Sponsor Recognition



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ALL CLASSIFIED ADS must be received by the 10th of each month to appear in the next issue. Members may place two (2) complimentary ads, up to 40 words each, per issue. Real estate sales not included. Complimentary ads will run for three issues unless requested otherwise. Non-members may submit an ad at a minimum rate of \$5 per ad (50 cents per word). The appearance of any ad in *Wyoming Agriculture* does not constitute an endorsement or approval of the product or service offered.

TO SUBMIT ADS, send your ad along with your name, phone number and member number or member county to [kclark@wyfb.org](mailto:kclark@wyfb.org) or mail to WyFB, ATTN: Classifieds, P.O. Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

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## BIG HORN

Roberta Creason, Deaver

## CAMPBELL

Glenda Lindsey, Gillette; Sheyllyn Lotter, Gillette; Laurie & John Kluz (REG), Gillette; Roberta & Raymond Bengé, Wright; Donald Lara, Gillette; Kenneth Belgrade/ Gang of Four, LLC (REG), Minneapolis, MN; Larry Lampman, Gillette; Logan Lampman, Gillette; Jamey & William Pownall (REG), Gillette; Robin & Curtis Wendling, Moorcroft; Toni & Zachary Seff (REG), Aladdin

## CARBON

Brittany & Marshall Moore, Cheyenne; Cesar Garcia, Rawlins; Daniel & John Itzen (REG), Rawlins; Yanti & Robert Jaure, Rawlins; Zane Jacobsen, Encampment; Ray Markham, Medicine Bow; Elissa Petersen, Rawlins

## CONVERSE

Teresa Clark, Glenrock; Melissa & Jimmie Stoneking, Evansville; Dee Ann Mortenson, Glenrock

## CROOK

Julie Altaffer, Sundance; Rodney Steele (Reg), Sundance

## FREMONT

Richard Bestul, Lander; Sharon & John Birbari, Lander; James Hulsey

(REG), Dubois; Andrew McWilliams (REG), Lander; Gary Calvert (Reg), Lander; Steve Osborn, Lander; Kayla Freese, Lander; Melanie Shepperson, Casper; Tara & K.C. Anderson, Riverton; Marykay Winchester (REG), Riverton; Daniel Smedts (REG), Lander

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Melissa Butler, Etna; Eric Tjai, Sacramento, CA; Johan Hansen, Thayne; Lynn & David Block, Alpine; Parker Draney, Afton; Cooper Weston, Afton; Celeste & Guy Jacobson, Afton

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Scott Talbot, Casper; Brian Gangl, Casper; Pamela Paulsen, Casper; Harry Bondi, Casper; Pam & Eric Paulson, Casper; Daniel Robinett (REG), Powder River; Roger Burns, Casper; Michael Akers, Casper

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**WYFB SETS POLICY...** *From Page 1*

Members passed policy supporting the historic uses of BLM land as stated in the Federal Land Policy Act of 1976 and the Taylor Grazing Act. "Multiple-use of federal lands is important for the health of the lands and the economy of the communities and the people who utilize and steward the land," Hamilton continued. "Our members oppose the concept of preservation of federal lands through non-use of the lands."

Farm Bureau Federation members discussed road maintenance in Wyoming. Fuel taxes are collected to fund road repairs in Wyoming. The voting delegates expressed the desire for electric vehicles to contribute to the state's infrastructure repair. "The discussion centered around addressing how electric vehicles can pay to support the state's infrastructure with some kind of equivalency to the fuel tax paid by petroleum fueled vehicles," Hamilton said. "Our members support Wyoming collecting revenue on electric vehicle charging stations and adding a registration fee for electric vehicles to be equitable to the fuel tax paid by petroleum fueled vehicles."

Delegates raised concerns regarding the operations of the Office of State Lands specific to lease renewals. "Policy was passed calling for the State Land Board to prioritize production agriculture by ensuring current lessees in good standing retain first right of refusal on their existing leases," Hamilton explained. "Continuity and planning are important to all businesses."

Water is vital to agriculture in Wyoming. Policy passed to address the need for the Wyoming State Engineer's Office to base groundwater permits on the aquifer recharge. "Voting delegates called for the legislature to clarify the law for the issuance of high capacity well permits to address protecting the underground water resource," Hamilton said.

Wyoming landowners provide habitat for Wyoming's wildlife.

Herd objectives in many areas of the state far exceed the state's objective numbers thus impacting forage, fence lines and animal health. Farm Bureau Federation members emphasized the need for the Wyoming Game & Fish Department to manage species to meet the herd objectives rather than raising objective numbers. "Members also specifically passed policy asking for the Game & Fish to more aggressively manage elk numbers," Hamilton said.

Regarding animal identification, voting delegates reaffirmed policy opposing mandatory animal identification.

Protecting private property rights is at the core of the organization's mission. Voting delegates expressed continued concerns about drones trespassing on private property.

The right to vote is valued deeply by Federation members. Members called for a Wyoming state residency requirement to vote in Wyoming and also voiced strong opposition to rank choice voting.

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has always stood on the principles of individual freedoms and constitutional government. "Our members strongly believe individual freedoms and constitutional government are vital," Hamilton concluded. ■

*The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general agriculture organization. The purpose of the 104th annual meeting held Nov. 9-11, 2023, was to develop policy to guide the organization in the coming year. Visit [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org).*

*The mission of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is 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.*



Sweetwater County Farm Bureau Federation Voting Delegate Dixie Suddreth during the general session of the WyFB Annual Meeting. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*



Hot Springs County Farm Bureau Federation Voting Delegate Paul Ward during the general session of the WyFB Annual Meeting. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*



*Cooking with the  
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## Blueberry Delight

Recipe by Connie Werner | Source: [www.lecremedelacrumb.com](http://www.lecremedelacrumb.com)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 prepared graham cracker crust
- 1 (8oz) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 (14oz) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 (21oz) can blueberry filling or topping

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large bowl mix together cream cheese, lemon juice, sweetened condensed milk, and vanilla.
2. Mix until smooth. Pour into the prepared graham cracker crust. Cover and chill 2-3 hours or overnight. Place the pie filling in the fridge to chill.
3. Remove from fridge and pour the blueberry topping over the pie. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Enjoy!

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# What are PFAS?

BY KERIN CLARK

**F**irefighting foam, stain resistance, non-stick cookware, waterproofing on clothing, fire retardant. What do these items have in common? They are everyday products in a class of 5,000+ chemicals that have been used for decades and are known as PFAS.

PFAS is short for per- and polyfluorinated substances that are a group of chemicals used to make coatings that are resistant to heat, grease, stains and water. PFAS has become an emerging issue of concern for agriculture. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is advocating for the protection of farmers and ranchers in PFAS regulations.

AFBF Senior Director of Government Affairs Courtney Briggs talked about PFAS November 10 at the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting. Briggs explained these proposed regulations may impact agriculture as passive receivers of the chemicals.

“Agriculture is a passive receiver,” Briggs explained. “We receive PFAS chemicals through the water supply or through the use of biosolids because water utilities treat the water and PFAS travel through the water coming out in biosolids.”

Briggs noted farmers have been beneficially land applying biosolids (organic

matter) for decades. “The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has celebrated and encouraged this practice,” Briggs explained.

“PFAS chemicals do not breakdown naturally in the environment,” Briggs continued. “Once in the environment they move through water and tend to attach themselves to organic material.”

Briggs noted the scientific community and health care advocates have indicated a correlation between PFAS exposure and negative health outcomes. “Note that it is a correlation; the science has yet to prove a causation,” she said. “However, the federal government has jumped right into regulating PFAS. We are doing our best to make sure farmers are protected as passive receivers.”

Briggs explained more research is needed on the EPA road map of regulatory steps listing all the statutes they intend to use to regulate PFAS. AFBF has expressed concern that EPA could regulate farmers and ranchers for perceived contamination they did not create. The EPA’s first step has been to regulate PFOA and PFOS, the most commonly used PFAS chemicals, as hazardous materials under the Comprehensive Environmental, Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), otherwise known as the Superfund law.

“It is a joint and several liability statute. CERCLA strictly identifies who is liable for clean up,” Briggs explained. “However, the rulemaking makes no mention of passive receivers or protecting passive receivers from liability.”

Briggs stated EPA Administrator Regan has assured AFBF President Duvall the EPA doesn’t intend to go after farms. “The way the proposals read, if a farmer has a contaminated farm field or anything leaching off their field they would be required to pay for cleanup and remediation of the field and neighboring sites. This could absolutely devastate a farm,” she said.

“We are working with Congress to amend CERCLA in order to ensure we have a carve out that provides a liability shield for agriculture,” she continued. “Senate EPW is currently working on a bill that would protect passive receivers.”

The EPA’s second step is to set a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for drinking water. “The agencies released their proposals of setting the MCL for drinking water at 4 parts per trillion. This is incredibly low. So low, in fact, we don’t even have the technology to test lower than 4 parts per trillion,” said Briggs. “Unfortunately, the requirements associated with meeting this 4 parts per trillion standard

will be incredibly difficult for rural communities to meet. The costs of acquiring the technology, labor and testing required in the proposed rule will be extraordinary and will inevitably be passed on to rate payers.”

According to Briggs, EPA’s regulatory roadmap will bring forward more regulatory proposals. She noted the last item on the roadmap is a risk assessment for biosolids. “AFBF has been urging EPA to move that question up on the list,” she said. “At this point the concern is whether to apply biosolids beneficially to the land. Not all biosolids are bad, but it is a risk at this point with the unknown regulatory proposals.”

“If farmers don’t continue to accept biosolids, we are going to have a landfill capacity problem,” she continued. “The State of Maine has outlawed the use of biosolids, and they are trying to walk that back because they realize they only have five years worth of landfill capacity remaining.”

“This is a very complicated issue that feels like the cart is being put before the horse,” Briggs concluded. “They want to go after the chemical companies, but need to recognize they are pulling in passive receivers that don’t deserve this liability attached to them.” ■

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# Merry Christmas

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!

*“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”*

*Luke 2:11*



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# Getting Started in Ag: Livestock Marketing Options

**M**arket prices for cattle and most other livestock are at or near record highs. While this may seem like a relatively easy time to market your livestock, it remains important to seek out the best marketing alternative from the many that are available.

Every dollar counts for new or beginning producers. When prices are high, shoot for the highest value possible—but make sure you have a firm grip on your financial position before you sell. Know what your break-evens are and how your expenses are structured; put time into planning the best marketing approach for your operation. What works for one livestock business may not be the best fit for others. Match your production with a marketing strategy that best suits the size and scale of your operation.

## Traditional Auctions

Buyers bid for livestock until a price is settled on in an “English” auction. This is one of the oldest methods of price discovery and remains one of the most effective. This option is most commonly used by sale barns, where producers bring their animals to the auction and the auction company sells them for the best price possible via competitive bidding among multiple buyers. It can also be used onsite in your operation; a method often used to conduct breeding livestock sales.

There are advantages to this approach, especially for producers with fewer animals to sell: a larger number of buyers are exposed to the animals, sellers can group smaller lots together to form larger lots, and the marketing is often completed for the seller if the animals are consigned ahead of time.

Disadvantages to the sale barn approach may include the costs involved in transporting the livestock to the barn, as well as the yardage costs associated with selling and housing the stock at the barn. Another disadvantage is market timing; if your livestock sell on an unexpectedly down day, without a reservation price, it can result in a substantial cost, otherwise known as price risk.

## Online and Video Options

Another form of auction is commonly referred to as the video auction. Most video auctions also offer an online option. The basic premise is the same as the sale barn approach, with the difference being that the auction company broadcasts the sale on a satellite TV channel, over the internet, or both. Buyers can bid onsite at the auction, phone in their bids, or place bids over the internet.

The main advantage of a video auction is that your cattle are exposed to a wider group of potential buyers. Another advantage is that the cattle stay home and are

shipped directly to the buyer after they are sold. This eliminates the costs associated with hauling them to a sale barn and helps both buyer and seller by reducing stress on the livestock. However, video auctions tend to be geared for larger-scale operations, i.e. those selling larger lots.

While video and online options are better suited for producers with larger lots of animals, it can be a viable option for smaller-scale producers, depending on how their operation is structured. This might be achieved by co-marketing with a neighbor. For example, suppose I only have enough calves for half a load and that my neighbor is in a similar position. If we sell our calves together on the video auction, assuming our cattle are similar in type and quality, we can most likely achieve a better outcome than if we sell separately.

## Direct Marketing

Direct marketing may be another viable option, depending on your livestock operation and the type of animals you sell. The main advantages of selling directly to a buyer include: costs are minimized for the seller; there is no transportation, nor any sale commissions or fees, and the buyer can take delivery at the seller's place. The disadvantages of this approach lie in the seller's ability to negotiate for the best price. Part of being involved in production agriculture is often negotiating prices for commodities sold; it can also be an uncomfortable facet for many producers.

Direct negotiation often raises difficult questions such as, do you hold out for the highest price and risk losing a buyer? Do you take the first price offered? Or is the best course of action somewhere in the middle?

In these scenarios, farmers and ranchers often face several forms of risk. Producers tend to have high upfront costs in production, meaning that they often must sell to cover expenses and are more likely to make concessions on price due to worries about finding more than one buyer.

As discussed above, it is important to put some time into preparing a plan for marketing your production. This includes knowing your break-even costs, developing a strategy, and not waiting for a first offer. Direct marketing can also involve selling animals to multiple buyers on a smaller scale, such as selling slaughter-ready or locker animals directly to consumers.

## Managing Risk

It is important to carefully consider risk when developing your market strategy. You should evaluate any downside price risk protection when it is available. Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) insur-



Figure 1. Livestock Arriving at an Auction Yard, J.P. Hewlett



Figure 2. Negotiation.FarmManagement.org

## BULLETINS & TEMPLATES:

Why Negotiate?

Questions to Answer Before Meeting

Preparing for the Discussion

Understanding Frames and Reframing

Negotiation Template

Preparing a Negotiation Template

Guide to the Negotiation Template

Bargaining for a Better Market Outcome

ance, part of the Federal Crop Insurance program, can help limit downside price risk with minimal cost exposure compared to futures and options. Developing a plan using futures and options markets can be a way to limit risk and lock in profit; however, it should be carefully considered and developed in cooperation with a market advisor and your lender.

## Add Value Where You Can

Regardless of the marketing plan you choose, it is important to add as much value to your animals as possible. Taking some relatively small steps can add considerable value when sale time arrives. Regardless of the scale of your operation, lot uniformity can add significant value.

Working with a vet to develop a vaccination and preconditioning program is one of the easiest and highest returns on investment you can make as a producer, as well as reducing your disease and production risk. Cow-calf operations might also consider weaning and backgrounding calves to add value.

## Examples of 3rd Party Certification programs for cattle:

- 1) Beef Quality Assurance Program (BQA)
- 2) Non hormone treated cattle (NHTC)
- 3) Certified All Natural
- 4) Age and Source Verified
- 5) Certified Organic
- 6) Breed Specific—i.e. Certified Angus Beef

Consider adding value through third-party verification programs as part of your marketing plan. These programs can assist in finding buyers and marketing your livestock, often with minimal documentation required. These programs may pay a premium for practices you have already implemented in many cases.

## For More Information

For more information on livestock marketing and other risk management options, including online courses, tools, and more, visit RightRisk.org. For a series of online bulletins and modules on negotiation, including Bargaining for a Better Outcome, visit negotiation.farmmanagement.org.

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

## Steps to Improve Bargaining Position:

- 1) Form a reserve price
- 2) Have a best alternative to negotiated agreement (BATNA)
- 3) Set a target price
- 4) Know your break-even (cost of production, market information)
- 5) Start the negotiation/ Offer the first price
- 6) Focus on the target price
- 7) Be prepared to make a counteroffer
- 8) Be willing to make more than one counteroffer

From: negotiation.farmmanagement.org

**ELECTIONS...** From Page 1

"It is hard to put into words what an honor it is to represent people like our members that continue to show up and speak up for agriculture," Fornstrom concluded.

Fornstrom and his family farm in Laramie County. He and his wife, Laura, have three daughters, a son, a daughter-in-law, and a son-in-law. Fornstrom runs Premium Hay Products, an alfalfa pellet mill, and runs a trucking business and custom combining business. Fornstrom also works with his father farming near Pine Bluffs. The diversified farm consists of irrigated corn, wheat, alfalfa, and dry beans.

Fornstrom served on the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Board of Directors for four years, is a former Laramie County Farm Bureau Federation president and a former member of the WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Committee.

Voting delegates elected Cole Coxbill, of Goshen County, to his eighth term as WyFB Vice President. Coxbill and his wife, Sammie, have three children. They run a commercial agriculture spraying business, raise cattle, farm and have an agriculture trucking business.

Coxbill served on the AFBF YF&R Committee for two years where he was elected as AFBF YF&R National Chair. This position gave him a seat on the AFBF Board of Directors for one year. He is also a former WyFB YF&R Committee Member where he served as State YF&R Chair. Coxbill is a board member of the Goshen County Farm Bureau Federation.

"Our 104th annual meeting theme 'It Starts With You' describes it all," Coxbill said. "The grassroots power starts with the individual farmer or rancher getting involved in their county Farm Bureau Federations. I have the honor of serving all those members from across the state."

"It is an honor and privilege to have the membership put their trust and belief in me to be a representative on their behalf as the organization's vice president," Coxbill concluded.

Lane Hageman, of Goshen County, was elected to his third term as the Director-at-Large. Hageman and his wife Shaina live and work on his family's cow/calf ranch in southeastern Wyoming.



Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors. Front row: Todd Fornstrom, President; Tucker Hamilton, YF&R State Chair; and Cole Coxbill, Vice President. Back row: Raenell Taylor, Northeast District Director; Lane Hageman, Director-at-Large; Justin Ellis, Southwest District Director; Thad Dockery, Northwest District Director; Tim Pexton, Central District Director; and Kevin Baars, Southeast District Director. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

Hageman also serves on the Goshen County Farm Bureau Federation board of directors. He is a former member of the WyFB YF&R Committee.

"I appreciate the opportunity to be elected to another term as Director-at-Large on the WyFB Board of Directors," Hageman said. "I enjoy representing the state membership and being a part of the leadership of this organization. I am confident in the work we are doing and look forward to the future."

Fornstrom, Coxbill and Hageman are all graduates of the University of Wyoming. Fornstrom graduated in 1997 with a degree in ag business. Coxbill graduated in 2006 with a degree in civil

engineering. Hageman graduated in 2018 with a degree in ag business with a farm and ranch management focus and a minor in economics.

In addition to the three statewide elections, five District Directors and the Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Committee State Chair serve on the state board.

The YF&R Committee elected Tucker Hamilton, of Weston County, as State YF&R Chair.

Rounding out the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors are Raenell Taylor, Northeast District Director; Kevin Baars, Southeast District Director; Tim Pexton, Central District Director; Thad Dockery, Northwest District

Director; and Justin Ellis, Southwest District Director. ■

*The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general agriculture organization. The purpose of the 104th annual meeting held Nov. 9-11, 2023, was to develop policy to guide the organization in the coming year. Visit [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org).*

*The mission of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is 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.*

# Policy Development and Legislative Updates

BY BRETT MOLINE

How members develop policy

Each year WyFB's annual meeting culminates our policy making process. Policy changes are formulated throughout the year by members starting at the county level, moving to the district level, then to the state meeting. At the state meeting, each proposed resolution will be assigned to a committee, where if it passes, the change will move to the general meeting. Each change in policy will be vetted at least four times.

WyFB policy is important because it tells the state staff what position to take on issues of concern. It is the members' policy that dictates what stance is taken on issues of concern.

The last policy step at each annual meeting is to establish legislative priorities for the upcoming Wyoming state legislative session. The State Governmental Affairs committee, along with WyFB Board of Directors members, and chairs of

other WyFB committees update the legislative priorities, making the list pertinent to the next session. This priority list will be sent to each Wyoming legislator and may be viewed at [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) by clicking on the Advocacy tab.

How we use policy

WyFB lobbyists use policy to determine if WyFB is in favor of or against legislation. WyFB has policy against increasing taxes and fees, and policy favoring lowering taxes and fees. WyFB has policy against increasing fuel taxes. A proposed bill during the recent interim meetings would have increased fuel taxes and lowered vehicle registration fees. WyFB communicated to legislators what our policy is, in this case on both sides of the issue, pro and con. Another piece of legislation would have added residential uses to the uses State School Trust (school sections) land could be leased for. WyFB spoke against this portion of

the proposed bill. WyFB has policy supporting keeping State School Trust Land in production agriculture uses.

Legislative interim meetings update

The Transportation Committee looked at several bills during the interim to increase the state fuel taxes, both on gasoline and diesel. This increase would have been offset by a decrease in vehicle registration fees. The idea was to keep Wyoming vehicle owners neutral on costs with the increased fuel taxes being paid by out of state drivers. WyFB has policy on both sides of the issue, being in favor of decreased fees and against increased fuel taxes. All the proposals brought forward died in committee. There might be a bill sponsored by individual legislators dealing with this issue.

The Revenue Committee worked a bill in the interim which would have changed how state school section leases work.

The proposed bill would have added residential uses for leasing state lands and would have changed the law to use market value for paying for improvements if the leased land was sold. WyFB spoke against adding residential uses for leases. School sections can be leased currently for industrial, commercial, and recreational uses. These uses will be somewhat self-limiting. However, residential uses could be far more reaching given the ability for residents to travel. WyFB spoke against the bill with the desire to keep as much School Section leases as possible in production agriculture.

The Agriculture Committee finished work this fall on a bill to strengthen the ability for landowners to be compensated for forage consumed by big game species where the game herds are over herd objective numbers. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission would be tasked to develop rules to make the program work. WyFB supports the draft legislation. ■

**WATERS OF THE U.S....** From Page 1

Farmers and ranchers care for the land and water while growing food and fiber. They are stewards of the land who share the goal of protecting the nation's water. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) have been working for decades for a clear and fair rule for our nation's water. Farmers and ranchers deserve a rule that provides clarity and enables landowners to protect the resources with which they've been entrusted.

AFBF Senior Director of Government Affairs Courtney Briggs works on water and conservation issues. Briggs spoke on Waters of the United States (WOTUS) November 10 at the WyFB Annual Meeting.

"When Congress undertook the authorship of the Clean Water Act, they decided they would prohibit any discharge of pollutants from a point source into a navigable water without a permit," Briggs began. "Congress went on to define navigable waters as 'Waters of the United States' and they stopped there. No more context was given as to what 'Waters of the United States' meant."

"In those situations where the statute is unclear about something as important as the definition of 'Waters of the United States' it's left to the regulatory agencies to determine," Briggs explained. "That is why we've seen this ping ponging back and forth of regulatory definitions over the last several decades because it really depends on who is in power."

"The Administration has discretion to give whatever interpretation they want which leads to lack of clarity and certainty for the regulated community," she continued.

**Different administration rules**

Briggs referenced the interpretation the Obama Administration claimed. "The Obama rule was so expansive it allowed the federal government to assert jurisdiction over private property," Briggs said. "AFBF rolled out a very cleverly designed campaign called 'Ditch the Rule' because really what we were fighting about was ephemeral features."

"An ephemeral feature is a category of water that is an area of landscape that has the ability to hold water after one rainfall—like ditches and low spots in a field," she explained. "Under Obama's Administration, ditches would have categorically been a federally regulated and protected water."

"Thankfully the courts agreed with AFBF that the Obama rule was a wild expansion of federal government overreach," Briggs continued.

The next definition of WOTUS came from the Trump Administration through the Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR). "We supported the NWPR because it drew a line on jurisdiction and deregulated the protection of ephemeral features leaving the management of those features to state governments," Briggs stated.

"The CWA is unclear about a lot of things but if you look at Section 101(b), Congress was very clear that they intended for the protection of our nation's waters to be a shared responsibility between the federal government and state governments to work together to protect our nation's waters," she explained. "AFBF felt the Trump Administration's NWPR protected and respected congressional intent because it left ephemeral features to the states to regulate."



AFBF Senior Director of Government Affairs Courtney Briggs spoke to members attending the 104th annual meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. Briggs discussed federal environmental policy issues. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*

Another administration change found a new rule when the Biden Administration repealed the NWPR and finalized their rulemaking early in 2023. "AFBF had a lot of concerns with what the Administration proposed," Briggs explained. "They were leaning into a regulatory test called the significant nexus test which allowed agencies to aggregate waters together to encapsulate entire watersheds as jurisdictional."

"In order to implement significant nexus, they left terms ambiguously defined," she continued. "It gave agencies the latitude to assert jurisdiction however they please. Once again, all the power is going back to the federal government through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and landowners are left to prove they don't have a jurisdictional WOTUS on their property."

**Supreme Court WOTUS cases**

The Biden Administration finalized their WOTUS rule in March 2023 while simultaneously the Supreme Court agreed to hear oral arguments in *Sackett v. EPA*.

"*Sackett v. EPA* really is a blockbuster CWA case," Briggs said. "In order to understand the *Sackett* decision, you have to look at the *Rapanos v. United States* Supreme Court decision."

"*Rapanos* is a well-known CWA case decided in 2006 with a rare 4-1-4 decision," Briggs continued. "It is one of those cases that created more questions than answers. Two tests of jurisdiction were born out of this case."

Briggs explained the significant nexus test was authored by Justice Kennedy. She noted out of the nine justices he was the only one to support the significant nexus test. The second test born out of this case is known as the relatively permanent test. Briggs noted this test was authored by Justice Scalia and supported by three other justices.

"As its name suggests if you have a relatively permanent connection to a downstream water then you can be regulated as a WOTUS," Briggs explained.

According to Briggs, many environmentalists hang their hat on a footnote in

*Rapanos v. U.S.* where Justice Scalia talked about seasonality.

"What is a season," Briggs asked. "The answer is 90 days. So, Justice Scalia must have meant a relatively permanent stream means 90 days of flow? However, in the same footnote he says a stream that flows 290 days could be a relatively permanent stream."

"My point in telling you this is to illustrate that the door is wide open on what relatively permanent means," she continued.

With the background of the *Rapanos* case, Briggs next shared the background of the *Sackett* case.

"The *Sackett*'s are a couple in Idaho trying to build their dream home on a plot of land near Priest Lake," Briggs explained. "They started some earthmoving and the Army Corps of Engineers slapped them with a cease-and-desist letter and said you are filling in a wetland and violating Section 404 of the CWA."

"The *Sackett*'s had environmental consultants and attorneys that said no this isn't a wetland," Briggs continued. "The Corps used the significant nexus test to say there was a subsurface (underground) connection to a tributary that fed into Priest Lake. The *Sackett*'s challenged that decision and have been represented by Pacific Legal Foundation for several years."

"The high court handed down their decision in May 2023 and all nine justices unanimously said you can't use significant nexus as a regulatory test anymore; it is too ambiguous, too vague, and too unfair to landowners," Briggs continued. "That's a significant win as the ruling upheld AFBF's belief that the agencies clearly overstepped their authority."

The second major win in the *Sackett* case was the narrowing of the interpretation of the term "adjacency." The CWA says you can regulate tributaries and wetlands that are adjacent to these tributaries. "What does adjacency mean? We have been debating this for decades," Briggs said. "AFBF has always argued adjacency means directly abutting."

"People on the other side of the issue say 'adjacency' should mean if it is in the neighborhood, even if it is located several miles away," she continued. "The court came back and said they agree with AFBF in that you have to be directly touching to be adjacent."

The Supreme Court's rejection of significant nexus makes relatively permanent the regulatory test. "That's why it is important to understand the confusion surrounding this test. It is now the regulatory test, and we have that large window of 90 days to 290 days for the agency to try to understand what relatively permanent means," explained Briggs. "We were hopeful the *Sackett* case would inject some clarity and certainty to the regulated community but in some cases it just has not done that."

**Legal challenges to 2023 rule**

AFBF has teamed up with a number of industry groups to file legal challenges against the Biden Administration's WOTUS rule. The first case was filed in the Southern District of Texas with the Texas and Idaho Attorney Generals. The second case was filed in the District of North Dakota with a coalition of 24 state attorney generals, including Wyoming.

AFBF was a party to both cases until early November. "The judge kicked us out of the District of North Dakota Court because you can't really be party to two cases and we filed in Texas first," Briggs

explained. "We asked the judges to grant a preliminary injunction. Basically, that halts the rule from being implemented."

Preliminary injunctions were granted by both judges for 27 states, including Wyoming. "The judges came back and said we will stay this rule because we think you have a likelihood of success on the merits of challenging this rule," said Briggs.

"Unfortunately, the judges in both cases only applied their decisions to the plaintiffs leading to a patchwork of rulemaking exacerbating the confusion on the ground of what is and what isn't a WOTUS," she continued. "If your state's attorney general didn't join the lawsuit then your state doesn't reap the benefit of the preliminary injunction. Wyoming's Attorney General was involved in the lawsuit, so the Biden rule has been stayed in Wyoming, but if you go to Colorado the Biden rule is the law of the land there."

**EPA/Army Corps conforming rule**

The agencies released a "conforming rule" in September 2023 to address the Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. EPA*.

"We were happy they were getting rid of the significant nexus test and narrowing the definition of adjacency," stated Briggs. "However, we were unhappy the agencies didn't give any context regarding the relatively permanent test."

"They gave no context as to what kind of benchmark or what kind of flow regime would be used," she continued. "Landowners have no idea how the agencies are going to implement the relatively permanent test."

"This test is now the law of the land and will determine whether the federal government has control of your land and they will not explain to the public what this means," expressed Briggs.

**What's next**

There seems to be a lot of confusion and back and forth between Corps Districts and Corps headquarters on how to implement WOTUS, according to Briggs. "I'm talking to people on the ground from environmental consultants to Corps officials," she stated. "For anyone trying to obtain a jurisdictional determination from the Corps, it is a very confusing and convoluted process. It was before this 2023 rule and now it is even worse because Corp officials don't know what to do with the rule."

Briggs explained legal proceedings are on path for AFBF to adjudicate the merits of their case over the next several months. "We are refining our complaint to address the conforming rule that was finalized in September and the lawsuit will continue," she stated.

Briggs also noted to keep an eye on state actions to expand authority over water and private property. "The CWA says it is a partnership between the federal government and the state governments to protect the nation's waters," she said. "I've heard of a number of states looking at the inventory of what water the state is regulating to expand waters the state can regulate to address any perceived gaps in protection."

Briggs cautioned to watch for state overreach as well as federal overreach. "Colorado is looking to expand what they can regulate," Briggs concluded. "If the federal government isn't expanding their overreach on your state's water, it doesn't mean state governments aren't looking at how to expand this government overreach." ■

Obituary



# Lois Van Mark

November 1, 1956 – October 27, 2023

**F**uneral services for LOIS ANN VAN MARK, 66, were held Thursday, November 2, 2023 at North Hills Baptist Church, in Lingle, with Pastor David Anderson officiating. Burial followed in the Valley View Cemetery in Torrington. Lois died October 27, 2023 at Banner Community Hospital in Torrington. Memorials may be given to Valley Christian School. Arrangements are by the Colyer Funeral Home and condolences may be sent to [www.colyerfuneralhome.com](http://www.colyerfuneralhome.com).

Lois was a fourth generation Goshen County resident. Her Van Mark great grandparents homesteaded south of Torrington where the family still farms and her Benzel grandparents homesteaded in the Table Mountain area. She was born November 1, 1956 to Jack Bill and Hanna June (Benzel) Van Mark. She attended Goshen County schools until she and her

family moved to the Washington DC area in 1974. After graduating from Springfield High School in Silver Spring, Maryland in 1975, she attended Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, graduating in 1982 with a BA in Fine Arts. She did additional study at Hawk Eye Tech in Graphic Design and the University of Wyoming in Political Science.

Lois managed the family farm south of town. Additionally, served as President of the Goshen County Farm Bureau and Wyoming Wheat Growers. She was appointed, then elected to the Torrington City Council and elected as a Goshen County Commissioner. While a County Commissioner she famously said to the road and bridge guys-always grade/plow my road last.

Governor Mead appointed her to the Wyoming Wheat Commission where she served as Chairman and represented Wyoming on

the Board of Directors of US Wheat Associates. Because of her work with US Wheat Associates she worked to promote purchase of US wheat to foreign buyers by hosting international visitors to Goshen County and traveling abroad to see for herself their unique requirements.

A lifelong Republican she was Chairman of the Goshen County Republican Party and President of the Goshen County Republican Women. She spent many hours in the Republican booth during fair week popping popcorn and talking politics with anyone wanting to visit.

During the George W. Bush Administration and the Donald J. Trump Administration she was appointed as the Executive Director of the USDA Farm Services Administration.

Lois was preceded in death by her parents Jack and Hanna (Benzel) Van Mark. She is survived by her sisters Ruth Van Mark, Deb (Anthony) Wendtland, and Jackie Van Mark; nephews Kit Wendtland, Taylor (Gabby Moore) Wendtland and Gabriel Sweeney. ■

**WYOMING WATER...** From Page 10

Funding for these projects is broken up in various ways, with levels 1 and 2 being funded at 100 percent by the WWDO. These projects must have a sponsoring public entity and applications must be received by March 1 for levels 1 and 2 and September 1 for level 3.

“These all come together at the November meeting. The Commission and Select Water Committee will consider a total package of dollars requested for planning and construction projects prior to the legislative session,” Moser says. “This ultimately leads to omnibus water bills.”

Following events in 2020, the legislature created emergency water projects. Moser notes these are usually related to imminent failures or those forecasted to happen within a few days and tend to be geared towards fairly catastrophic failures.

Moser notes of particular interest to Wyoming farmers and ranchers is the Small Water Project Program (SWPP), which provides grant funding to develop small projects.

“A lot of these are range projects that benefit and improve the overall watershed condition and health,” he stated.

According to WWDO, projects eligible for SWPP grant funding assistance include the construction or rehabilitation of small reservoirs, wells, solar platforms, pipelines and conveyance facilities, springs, wetland developments, environmental projects, irrigation works, windmills, rural community fire suppression systems, and recreational projects.

“The state of Wyoming does not allow state dollars to go to private entities, so the major piece of this is these projects need to demonstrate an overall benefit and improvement to the health of the watershed,” explained Moser.

Moser notes some projects have been on private land, however they provide a public benefit and were able to qualify, with many of them being sponsored by local conservation districts.

Coming out of a historic drought, water issues are on the front burner for many producers across western states. While water supply may not be endless, Wyoming farmers and ranchers have an endless stream of support to keep their farms and ranches afloat. ■



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\*Company provider of Farm Bureau Financial Services. LI201 (3-23)

**HARVEST FOR ALL...** From Page 1

Uinta County rancher Hannah Guild is the chair of the sub-committee that oversees the "Harvest for All" project. "It's very rewarding to see a group come together to help raise money that goes to such a good cause," Guild said. "The members of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation are incredible and see the need to help those families in our state get food on their tables."

In addition to the fund drive, WyFB YF&R Committee members volunteered in May at the Food Bank of Wyoming in Casper. Ten members participated on May 18 where they packed food boxes for the Food Bank of Wyoming.

"It is an even more rewarding experience for WyFB Young Farmer and Rancher Committee members that get to participate in volunteering at the food bank, where we get to actually see the food, and help pack it up to be sent to families," Guild stated.

Food Bank of Wyoming Director of Development Jill Stillwagon shared their appreciation for the group's continued service through the "Harvest for All" project.

"As an organization, we are grateful for the continued partnership with the WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee! As a collective, they have dedicated their time volunteering at the Casper Distribution Center this past year and raised funds to support neighbors in Wyoming that are facing food insecurity," Stillwagon said. "At a time when 1 in 9 people in Wyoming are experiencing food insecurity, with the funds raised from the 21st annual Harvest for All we will be able to provide over 7,000 meals – an incredible impact!"

The WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee is in its 21st year of joining with the American Farm Bureau Federation YF&R Committee in what is called a "Harvest for All." Throughout the program's twenty-one-year span, the WyFB YF&R Committee has partnered with Farm Bureau Federation members to raise 6,044 pounds of food, \$36,278 and 122 hours of volunteer time to help those facing hunger in Wyoming. ■

*The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general agriculture organization. Members work together from the grassroots to develop agricultural policy, programs and services to enhance the rural lifestyle of Wyoming. The mission of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is 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. On the web, www.wyfb.org.*

*Food Bank of Wyoming is the largest hunger-relief organization in Wyoming and provides food and essentials directly to people facing hunger through more than 150 Hunger Relief Partners across the state. We've put the power of community to work for our neighbors in need. We serve as the Wyoming Distribution Center of Food Bank of the Rockies, which is a proud member of the Feeding America network. Everything we do is fueled by the support of our community, volunteers and donors, and every dollar raised in Wyoming stays in Wyoming. For more information, visit wyomingfoodbank.org.*

Food Bank of Wyoming is the largest hunger-relief organization in Wyoming



The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Committee is in its 21st year of the "Harvest for All" project. The project raises funds to help those facing hunger in Wyoming. Shown here are WyFB YF&R Committee members at the WyFB Annual Meeting: Cody Alps, Goshen County; Seth Allen, Niobrara County; Tucker Hamilton, Weston County; Raenell Taylor, Crook County; Quade Palm, Carbon County; Aletta Grauberger, Natrona County; Kelli Chouinard, Park County; Zack and Hannah Guild, Uinta County. KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.

## WyFB Legislative Meeting Feb. 15-16

The 2024 Legislative Meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation will be held at the Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne on February 15-16.

The Legislative Meeting begins with registration at 11 a.m. and a noon luncheon to follow on Thursday, February 15. If their schedules permit, the House Agriculture Committee Chair and the Senate Agriculture Committee Chair will address the members during the noon luncheon. Thursday afternoon activities include state legislative briefings from WyFB lobbyists and membership awards. The guest speaker will be Meteorologist Don Day with his presentation "It's Weather, Not Climate."

Wednesday evening provides the one-on-one visits with the legislators and elected officials during a Legislative Mixer produced by the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

and the Wyoming Rural Electric Association. This event will be held off-site at the Cheyenne Frontier Days Multi-Purpose Building at Frontier Park.

A speaker's forum on Thursday morning, February 16 will wrap-up the Legislative Meeting. Check [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) for an agenda as the meeting date gets closer.

**Pre-Registration:** Please email registration forms (available as the meeting gets closer at [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org)) by February 2 to Brooke Roes at [broes@wyfb.org](mailto:broes@wyfb.org).

**Hotel Reservations:** A room block has been secured at the Comfort Inn and Suites (201 W. Fox Farm Road) for the nights of February 14 and 15. To make a reservation, call Comfort Inn and Suites at 307.514.6051 by the reservation deadline of January 23. Refer to the "Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation" for our group discount rate of \$125. ■