



# Wyoming Agriculture

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## Congresswoman Hageman talks agriculture and national policy

BY KERIN CLARK

“It is important for people in D.C. to understand Wyoming’s role in bettering the lives of every person in this country with our resource production,” said Congresswoman Harriet Hageman (R-Wyo.) in a February 14, 2023 interview with *Wyoming Agriculture*. “I spend a lot of time telling Wyoming’s story to make sure people understand what we do out here.”

*Wyoming Agriculture* asked Hageman what the biggest adjustment has been to influence people in D.C. “I have been incredibly impressed with the people I’m working with, both my own staff and other Congressional Representatives in my class,” she said. “These are people that recognize we are in dire circumstances in terms of food, international issues and foreign affairs and they want to fix things.”

“Incredibly intelligent people were elected to Congress this last time and there were incredibly intelligent people in Congress already,” she reiterated.

Hageman explained the challenge has been the knowledge, or lack thereof, of the administrative state and the impact it has on our state through overregulation. “They don’t have enough knowledge of the administrative state and the impact on everything from the livestock industry to the trucking industry to housing costs to agencies turning from addressing issues to overregulating for control,” she continued. “I’m doing a lot of work to educate people.”

She encourages Wyoming residents to help by sharing stories with her and writ-

ing positive letters to the editor to be engaged on the issues impacting Wyoming and the nation.

“I explain what happens to people when issues aren’t addressed,” she continued. “I have found people want to hear my stories.”

Elected to the United States House of Representatives on November 8, 2022, Hageman began her work as a member of the 118th Congress on January 3, 2023. Congresswoman Hageman has been appointed to the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Judiciary Committee.

The House Natural Resources Committee considers legislation about Energy and Mineral Resources; Federal Lands; Indian and Insular Affairs; Oversight; and Water, Wildlife and Fisheries. According to the Committee’s website, the oversight responsibility includes federal agencies, programs and policies within the Committee’s jurisdiction, including Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Commerce. Hageman noted some of her primary objectives to focus on while serving on this Committee include energy, water, reform of NEPA and ESA, and overregulation.

Regarding energy resources, Hageman stated it is important to protect all natural resources including coal, oil, gas, and uranium. “We need to expose the green energy scam for what it is,” she said. “The fact is green energy is anything but green or protective of the environment.”

Hageman expressed it is critical to educate the public about the importance of adopting energy policies that are rational



Harriet Hageman

and reasonable. “We need to ensure we adopt policies that do not cause energy poverty, food insecurity and ever-increasing housing costs,” she stated. “We need to push forward with policy to ensure we can access the resources we have here in the United States to make us energy independent, protect our food supply, and protect our farmers and ranchers who produce the food.”

Regarding water, Hageman emphasized the need to protect our water supply. Among the key issues she says are protecting and rebuilding our irrigation infrastructure and defining navigable water.

Protecting water resources is a high priority for farmers and ranchers. Wyoming Agriculture asked the Congresswoman for thoughts on how to avoid revisiting the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule each time there is an administration change.

Hageman believes Congress needs to step in and define what is a navigable waterway. “I also believe Congress needs to publicly make clear that we disagree that the administration has the authority to do what they’ve done with the WOTUS rule,” she said. “They are resurrecting and attempting to take jurisdiction of land and it is not the authority of the federal government to control all our water.”

“I will push back against that,” she continued.

Hageman explained there needs to be stability in how rules are adopted and regulated. “You can’t come in and immediately define a new rule,” she stated. “When an administration defines a new rule there has to be a change in circumstance. The change has to show there is something substantially different that warrants a new regulation.”

Hageman said efforts to reform the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will also be issues she will be looking at through the Committee. “The ESA has largely failed, and the numbers demonstrate that,” Hageman said. “It has become a full-time employment law for environmental attorneys and is clearly manipulated for public and private land use control.”

**HARRIET HAGEMAN ... Page 12**

## ‘Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week’ is March 6-11

BY KERIN CLARK

The importance of reading and agriculture are highlighted when we celebrate “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week” each year. Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon has issued an official proclamation declaring the week of March 6-11, 2023 as “Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week.” While we recognize the value of reading and agriculture during this designated week it goes without saying that each of these are vital every day of the year.

Educating Wyoming elementary school children about agriculture and the role Wyoming farmers and ranchers play in

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

The grassroots strength of the Farm Bureau Federation enables the “Ag Books for Kids” project to reach across the great state of Wyoming. Each year the county Farm Bureau Federations purchase nearly 800 books to donate to Wyoming elementary schools. Farmer and rancher volunteer members many times conduct classroom book read-

ings and activities to help students meet an actual farmer or rancher and learn directly from them about the food they grow.

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

Wyoming students and teachers are encouraged to visit their school’s elementary library to check out the 2023 book “Popcorn Country” by Cris Peterson. Three contests are offered for Wyoming students to encourage use of the book and provide application opportunities for what is learned. The 2023 contests are: Coloring Contest for kindergarten and first graders; Poster Contest for second and third graders; and a Marketing Ad Contest for fourth and fifth graders. Contest rules/details are available at wyfb.org. The county contest deadline is March 31, 2023. ■

### Inside:

AFBF in your corner ..... 2  
Say yes to be involved ..... 2  
Policy flavor of the year ..... 2

Member-Cents..... 3  
Smile, help and think ..... 4  
YF&R Conference recap..... 5

Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife.....7  
National news updates.....7

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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March**
- 1 WyFB Scholarship Application deadline
  - 1 Estate Planning Workshop hosted by Crook County FBR and Crook County NRD--Sundance
  - 3-6 AFBF Fusion/YF&R Conference—Jacksonville, Florida
  - 17 Hot Springs County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Spring Meeting at 6:30 p.m.--VFW in Thermopolis
  - 22 Lincoln County Annual Growers Meeting at 4 p.m.—Civic Center in Afton
  - 31 “Ag Books for Kids” county contest deadline
- April**
- 17 “Ag Books for Kids” district contest deadline
- November**
- 9-11 WyFB 104th Annual Meeting--Cheyenne

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



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**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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# AFBF in Your Corner in Court, Again

**Zippy Duvall**

*American Farm Bureau Federation President*



**M**id-January, AFBF filed a new lawsuit challenging EPA’s latest WOTUS rule—joined by more than a dozen other organizations representing agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing and housing. Why? Because even though farmers and ranchers share the goal of protecting our nation’s waterways, they deserve better than this rule. They deserve better than a rule that requires a team of lawyers and consultants just to identify “navigable waters” on their land.

Of course, we would much rather sort out differences by coming together to find solutions. That’s what we tried to do when EPA announced its plans to issue

a new WOTUS Rule. Farm Bureau leaders and grassroots members came to the table, joining EPA roundtable hearings, and I had conversations directly with EPA Administrator Regan. But despite some helpful clarifications coming from those discussions, the new rule is still unworkable for America’s farm families. Most important, EPA has doubled down on the old “significant nexus” test, which is every bit as vague as it sounds—not a useful standard for identifying “navigable waters.”

We don’t set out for the courthouse. But sometimes we have to go there. In fact, WOTUS is a prime example of why AFBF advocacy must extend beyond Capitol Hill and

federal agencies—into the courts. Several WOTUS cases over the last several years show how litigation is an essential part of advancing Farm Bureau’s mission and your mission to fill America’s pantries.

Back in 2015, EPA replaced a decades-old, terribly flawed WOTUS rule with a new one that was even worse. The 2015 WOTUS Rule was an enormous federal land grab that would prohibit many commonplace, beneficial farming activities. AFBF and an industry coalition, along with many state and county governments, challenged that rule in court—and we won. Courts blocked the 2015 Rule in 28 states.

**WOTUS LAWSUIT ... Page 16**

# Say Yes to be Involved

**Todd Fornstrom**

*Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President*



**T**hey say the way to be involved is to say “yes” when an opportunity comes knocking. That’s how I think it happened four years ago at the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) annual meeting in New Orleans. With only two years under my belt as president of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB), and no intention of running for the AFBF Board of Directors, an opportunity emerged, and I said yes. The last four years serving on the AFBF Board has been a whirlwind.

The experience of working with fellow farmers and ranchers from all over the United States brought perspective. The idea that there could be a group of people that could be as independent as the members of the WyFB was foreign to me. After one meeting with this group of leaders I

could have sworn I was back in Wyoming. Whether these leaders were from New York, Florida, Indiana or Nevada, they all were working to promote agriculture. The history, the family and the passion to keep agriculture viable was represented from every corner of the nation.

Serving on the AFBF Board also brought opportunities to see and visit farms and ranches all over the country. Farm visits in California, Florida, Alaska, and Pennsylvania were firsthand evidence that working the soil, caring for animals, and producing food are what they love to do. Like you and me, they worry about not only the future of their farm or ranch but the future of agriculture as a whole. Like you and me, they face issues that impact their ability to grow food and stay in business. They all deal with gov-

ernment regulation, urban sprawl and the continued struggle for help on the farm. They all deal with rising fertilizer or feed costs and turn around to deal with the hail-storm or tornado that sets them back for the growing season or even a generation.

The people I met while serving on the AFBF Board all chose to wake up the next morning and go do the work they love. They are resilient. They remind me of many of Wyoming’s farmers and ranchers.

They also make the time to be away from their farms and ranches to make the future of agriculture prosperous. Volunteering and serving in leadership are a part of who they are; it’s a part of who we are in Farm Bureau and agriculture.

It was an honor and a lot of fun. I’m fortunate the opportunity came my way and happy I said yes. ■

# Policy Flavor of the Year

**Ken Hamilton**

*Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President*



**B**eing in agriculture, it sometimes is hard to keep up with what policy makers come up with for the latest “flavor of the month” or “flavor of the year.”

Several years ago, the Low Input, Sustainable Agriculture idea was floating around where someone decided that was going to be the best way to save agriculture and the earth. Then we ran into the

idea that we need to save biodiversity. This concept was so broad that “riding to the horizon” would have been easier than knowing when we accomplished the biodiversity goal. Like everything in the natural world, the complexities of understanding how one thing affects all others is difficult, if not impossible. We’ve seen that listing several species as endangered or threatened can put Fish & Wildlife in a

difficult situation where protecting habitat for one species can be detrimental to another. I remember the discussions regarding the Mountain Plover which thrived in rangelands many range professionals would consider to be degraded. Then along came the Sage Grouse which need rangeland in a much different state than that of the Plover.

**POLICY FLAVOR ... Page 16**

# Think F.A.S.T (Farm & Ag Safety Training)

The Think F.A.S.T. (Farm & Ag Safety Training) program is a initiative from the American Farm Bureau. The program is a free, on-line training program designed to proactively address on-farm safety concerns for youth. The program materials are free to members and non-members and are tailored for audiences 14- to 17-years old and focus on general safe-

ty, leadership and critical thinking skills applied to technical and agriculture-specific contexts.

The program includes 10 modules that take 10 minutes each to complete along with follow-up competency quizzes. There are both online self-paced and in-person direct instruction options for Core Safety Skills and Technical Safety Skills.

The modules are: Attention and Distraction with ATVs and UTVs; Spatial Awareness with Livestock; Looking at Situations from Multiple Points of View with Tractors and Machinery; Task Breakdown and Job Safety with Personal Protective Equipment; Matching Tasks and Skills with Electrical; Decision Making for How to Complete a Task with Manual Labor; Situational Management with Bins, Silos

and Pits; Empowerment and Permission to Say No with Chemicals and Pesticides; Tough Conversations with Slips, Trips and Falls; and Impact of Injuries with Shop Safety. Each module also comes with a corresponding curriculum guide.

You can access the Think F.A.S.T. modules at [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org) (Go to Initiatives and then Agricultural Safety Awareness Program block). ■



## Member-CENTS

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

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.

**Current members may access member benefits at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) and click on the “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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# Smile, Help, and Think Outside the Box

BY QUADE PALM,  
WyFB YF&R STATE CHAIR

January in Wyoming, a time of year that brings with it snow, cold, and innumerable miles of bad roads across our state, changing at a moment's notice. This January also brought many of us to balmy Pinedale, where we enjoyed highs in the low teens as we gathered for the 2023 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer and Rancher Conference. Roughly 45 young people from across Wyoming ventured out to hear from 8 different speakers or panels on topics faced by agriculturalists across the nation.

This year our committee did a wonderful job of gathering speakers and presenters, a group that one would be hard pressed to find anywhere else. Conferences like this one are a true testament to the opportunities given through Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB), and through the WyFB Young Farmer and Rancher Committee. One of the more interesting topics, in my mind, was Jason Wrich's topic of Beef and Bitcoin, and his story of accepting Bitcoin as payment for beef to appeal to a niche market. While an unconventional idea in traditional cattle operations, this satisfied one very traditional craving; not one for beef, but one of a tax-free sale. While I'm still not sold on Bitcoin, I think it's just this kind of adaptations to our thinking that can benefit producers young and old alike.

Another topic discussed in a morning session was the importance of mental



Quade Palm. PHOTO BY JESS SALYER.

health and making it a priority. Darla Tyler-McSherry shared an impassioned personal story of tragedy and loss, and the warning signs that accompanied it that were all too easily overlooked at the time, when her elderly father took his own life. Clearly not the topic to start the day off bright and cheerful, but exactly the topic to be a reminder that life's not always pretty, and it's up to all of us to look out for one another. Agriculture is an inherently dangerous industry but is the most dangerous in terms of mental health. Mental health is a constantly evolving issue that is faced more often than we know. Most all of us would rather go rounds with that mean mamma cow in the corral before we'd be so bold as to ask a friend, family member, or neighbor if they're okay. As difficult as it can be to ask, talk, or even think about mental health, a simple conversation can be the difference between a good or bad day, or more extreme, the difference between

life and death for someone. We humans are a complex bunch, but a handshake or a phone call can sure bring the sunshine back into someone's day.

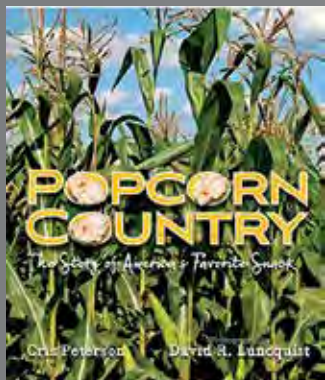
Driving home from these conferences is always a bit bittersweet, but it's often a great time to remember how lucky we are to live in our wonderful state and to be members in this organization. Who else is going to drive through the wind, snow, and ice for a day and a half to learn and improve themselves and others? I know who this year was, and I sure hope to have the opportunity to see even more next year at our 2024 conference. In the meantime, don't forget to smile, help someone out, and think outside the box. The future is bright and spring is out there somewhere! ■

*From Carbon County, Palm is a the WyFB YF&R State Chair. Palm is a sixth generation Wyoming rancher. He works on his family's ranch near Medicine Bow.*

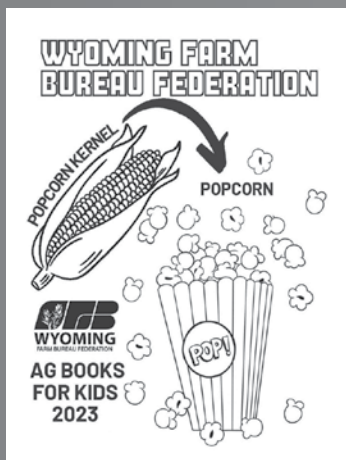
## Wyoming Teachers & Students K-5th Grades



### "Ag Books for Kids" 2023



Step 1: Read this book donated by your county Farm Bureau Federation.



Step 2: Complete contests (details at wyfb.org) by March 31, 2023

K-1: Coloring

2-3: Poster

4-5: Marketing Ad

Questions: [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) (YF&R tab) or [kclark@wyfb.org](mailto:kclark@wyfb.org)

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# WyFB YF&R 2023 Conference Recap

“Building Our Future” was the focus of the January 21-22, 2023 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Conference. Nearly 45 attendees participated in the two-day conference in Pinedale where networking, great speakers, fun, and education filled the weekend event.

The conference started off Friday morning with a guided tour at the Museum of the Mountain Man. Following the tour, the conference was filled with learning opportunities to help participants build their future in agriculture.

Recap of our wonderful speakers:

- Kyle and Jessica Wade, AFBF YF&R Committee Members, talked about the places YF&R can take you
- ShayLe Stewart presented the Cattle Market and discussed profitability in 2023
- Mike Henn (Sublette County Conservation District), Gary Hayward (U.S. Forest Service), and Coke Landers (Green River Drift Permittee) spoke in a panel discussion about the Green River Drift
- Darla Tyler-McSherry, with Ask in Earnest, led candid and compassionate conversations about suicide for the farm and ranch community
- Shari Meeks, with the Sublette County Conservation District, shared how they are building a successful monitoring program in Sublette County
- American Farm Bureau Federation Chief Economist Dr. Roger Cryan talked about inflation, recession, and the Rancher/Farmer
- An update on the Green River Basin and the Colorado River Compact was presented by Mel Fegler (Wyoming State Engineer's Office) and Kristi Hansen (UW Ag Economics Department)
- Rancher Jason Wrich talked all things Beef and Bitcoin
- Senator John Barrasso spoke about national policy issues

The conference concluded with a Sublette Social Session where we were led in a “Sip and Paint” project and then enjoyed another dinner together.

Thank you to the 2023 sponsors for supporting this conference opportunity. Sponsor appreciation goes to Farm Credit Services of America; Converse County Farm Bureau Federation; Wyoming Farm Bureau

Foundation; Y2Consultants; Natrona County Farm & Ranch Bureau; and Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company.

WyFB is celebrating 20 years of the YF&R program. The WyFB YF&R program includes agriculturalists in the age range of 18-35. The objective of the YF&R program is to provide opportunities and experiences to young Farm Bureau members to strengthen agriculture leadership and involvement through the Farm Bureau Federation. ■



The Farm Bureau Federation is a true grassroots organization! The work of the organization is guided by members beginning at the local level and working up to the national level! Connecting with each level and sharing our stories together is invaluable. The 2023 WyFB YF&R Conference provided an opportunity where county FBF members could visit directly with WyFB President Todd Fornstrom, AFBF YF&R Committee Members Kyle and Jessica Wade and AFBF's Chief Economist Dr. Roger Cryan. Shown here in this picture WyFB President Todd Fornstrom (left) with WyFB YF&R Committee Members and AFBF YF&R Committee Members Jessica and Kyle Wade and AFBF Chief Economist Dr. Roger Cryan at right. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*



Hearing from United States Senator John Barrasso at the 2023 WyFB YF&R Conference was one of the many highlights for attendees. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY/KADRA CLARK PHOTO.*



Attendees enjoyed painting together and reflecting on all that was learned from the conference.



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# Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife

## Spicy Shrimp Tacos

By Connie Werner

Adapted from [www.natashaskitchen.com](http://www.natashaskitchen.com)

### Ingredients

2-4 shrimp per person, up to 1lb  
 1 garlic clove, minced  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 1/2 tsp black pepper  
 1/4 tsp cumin  
 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper  
 1 tsp Louisiana Brand Hot Sauce  
 1-2 tbsp olive oil

**Taco Toppings:**  
 extra fluffy flour tortillas  
 shredded purple cabbage  
 onion, sliced  
 crumbled Feta Cheese  
 Cilantro, fresh or dried

**Taco Sauce:**  
 1/3 cup sour cream  
 1/3 cup mayonnaise  
 1 1/2 tbsp lime juice  
 3/4 tsp garlic powder  
 3/4 tbsp "Louisiana" Brand Hot Sauce

### Directions

1. In a small bowl combine the ingredients for the taco sauce. Place in the fridge at least 30 minutes before serving.
2. Thaw shrimp according to package directions. Add minced garlic, salt, pepper, cumin, cayenne and hot sauce. Let sit 5-10 minutes.
3. In a large non-stick skillet over medium heat, add the olive oil. Saute the shrimp 1-2 minutes per side or until cooked through.
4. Heat tortillas in the airfyer at 400 degrees until edges are lightly browned and crisp or toast in a pan.
5. Cut shrimp into bitesize pieces. Assemble tacos with shrimp, toppings, and taco sauce. Enjoy!



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

## National News Updates

WY House Joint Resolution 0003- Wild horses and burros- best management practices

Representative John Winter introduced HJ0003 to the 67th Legislature to bring attention to improving wild horse and burro management practices. The joint resolution requests U.S. Congress enact policy to allow the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service to employ management practices to allow for additional means of removal of these equids from federal land, while maintaining the Appropriate Management Level (AML). Because the current equid population exceeds the AML, efforts to curtail wild horse and burro reproduction, as well as a host of other research has tried to use non-lethal methods of reducing the equid population to the AML. This Joint Resolution encourages all best management practices to reduce the horse and burro population, and unfortunately after making it out of the Wyoming House of Representatives it failed to make it out of the WY Senate Agriculture Committee.

Proposed USDA AHPIS EID rule

In January, the USDA APHIS released a proposed rule that would set electronic identification (EID) ear tags as the official type of identification for cattle and bison. This rule seeks to change the federal animal disease traceability regulations to require both visually and electronically readable tags for interstate movement of cattle and bison with the following exceptions: sexually intact cattle and bison under 18 months of age, nearly all breeds and ages of dairy cattle (primarily due to the increased risk of transmitting bovine tuberculosis), all show and rodeo cattle and bison, and those animals in the slaughter channels. This proposed rule would not change our local, Wyoming brands regulations, but would seek to add onto our current system. There is a 60-day comment period sent to end March 20, 2023, however our friends at AFBF are seeking an extension to this period. ■

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# 2022 ag trade includes wins and losses

AFBF / FEB. 10, 2023


2022 was a record year for U.S. agricultural trade, topping \$196 billion. Despite an 11% increase from 2021, it wasn't all good news for America's farmers and ranchers. While export values increased, overall export volume decreased by 6%. Imports of agricultural goods also increased by \$28 billion, creating a trade deficit for 2022. American Farm Bureau Federation economists analyzed the trade numbers in their latest Market Intel report.

Cotton, soybeans, poultry meat, beef and tree nuts experienced export volume growth. Hay, coarse grains, fresh vegetables and wheat declined in export volume and value in 2022. Drought conditions in the U.S. limited production of many crops. A volatile global market contributed to rising costs for wheat.


"It's encouraging to see the value of America's agriculture exports increase, but America's farmers and ranchers still face challenges from the weather and competition from other countries," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "The 2022 agricultural trade deficit demonstrates that there is more to be done by the Administration. The enforcement of current trade agreements and pursuit of new trading partners will enable America's farmers to meet the growing needs of families here at home and abroad."

In 2022, U.S. exports remained concentrated in the top six markets, led by China, Mexico and Canada. Export value to China had the largest major market year-over-year increase, at 16%. Despite that, U.S. market share in the Chinese market remained almost unchanged.

Read the full Market Intel at [www.fb.org/marketintel](http://www.fb.org/marketintel)



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# Semiannual cattle inventory and cattle contract library set the tone for the 2023 marketing year

BY **BERNT NELSON, AFBF ECONOMIST**  
AFBF MARKET INTEL/FEB. 2, 2023

Jan. 31 proved to be an important day for cattle producers as the cattle contract library pilot website went live on the same day USDA released its semi-annual cattle inventory report. Each of these provides important market information that can help cattle producers in 2023 and sets the tone for the cattle market in 2023 and beyond. This Market Intel will provide background and analysis of the inventory report and the new pilot program.

## USDA Semiannual Inventory Report

USDA's January and July cattle inventory reports, released toward the end of each respective month, provide the total inventory of beef cows, milk cows, bulls, replacement heifers, other steers and heifers and calf crop for the current year.

The story of the current cattle inventory has been building throughout the last year. Cattle producers were facing headwinds from high input costs, inflation and three consecutive years of drought in some of the most cattle-dense regions of the United States. Many opted to liquidate cattle, primarily replacement heifers, that would normally be kept and used to build herd numbers. As a result, marketings of fed cattle and, most importantly, heifers were high throughout the year, with several months of records for beef production. There has been much speculation regarding how many cattle, particularly heifers, were marketed and what that might mean for the overall cattle market outlook for 2023.

All cattle and calves in the United States on Jan. 1, 2023, were 89.3 million head, 3% lower than this time in 2022. This is the lowest Jan. 1 inventory since USDA's 89.17 million estimate in 2015 (Figure 1). The calf crop is estimated at 34.5 million, down 2% from last year.

At first glance the overall numbers do not seem like big market movers. To really understand the implications of this report we need to break down beef cattle (Figure 2). The inventory of all U.S. beef cows on Jan. 1, 2023, was 28.9 million,

down 4% or 1.16 million head from Jan. 1, 2022. This is the largest annual decline in beef cow inventory since 1986. Heifers kept as beef cow replacements were estimated at 5.16 million, down 6% for 2022. This is a very strong indicator that the industry is still in the contraction phase of the cattle cycle.

## Cattle Contract Library

Jan. 31 also marked the unveiling of the new website for USDA's cattle contract library. The Cattle Contracts Library Pilot Program, established by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, went into effect on Jan. 6, 2023. This program is designed to increase market transparency for cattle producers by establishing a cattle contract library similar to USDA's Swine Contract Library maintained pursuant to sec. 222 of the Packers and Stockyards Act (7 U.S.C 198a).

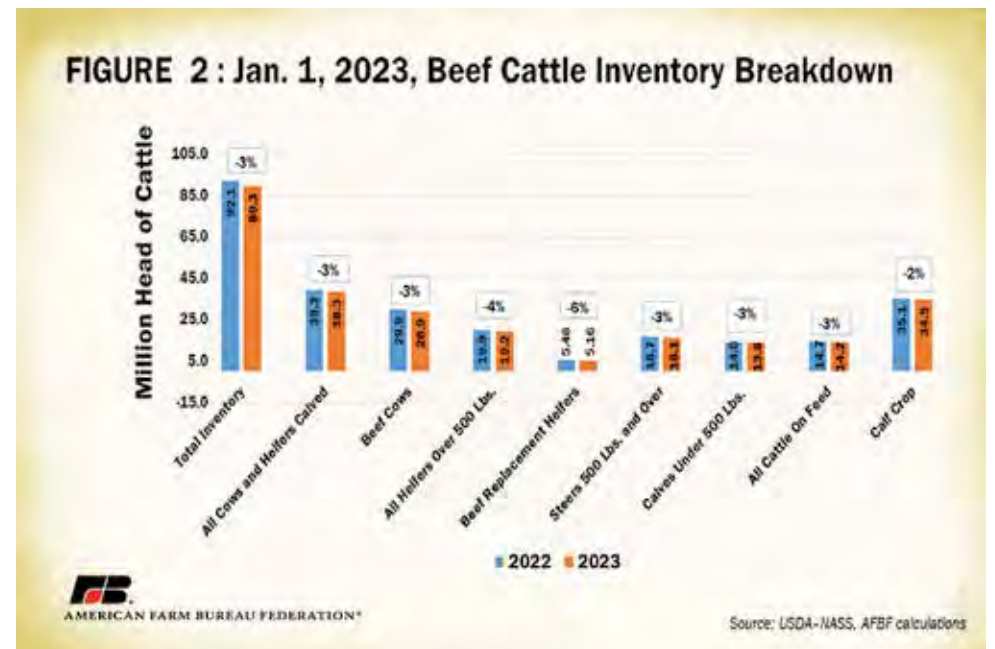
As of Jan. 6, packers who slaughter 5% or more of the total fed cattle slaughtered in the previous five years, must submit contract information for each active contract, oral or written, and every new active contract. This information, submitted by the packers, includes premium schedules, discount schedules, delivery and transportation, terms and payments, financing, risk sharing and other financial arrangements. AMS will also report on the number of head of cattle purchased under the terms of the contract. This information must be made available to producers along with any changes to contract terms within one business day of the contract being made available.

AMS will be conducting a series of stakeholder webinars to assist stakeholders in using this new tool. The webinars were scheduled to begin in February.

## What does it all mean?

This report is bullish. The cattle inventory is down in every category of beef cattle, with the greatest declines coming from beef replacement heifers that are responsible for next year's calf crop.

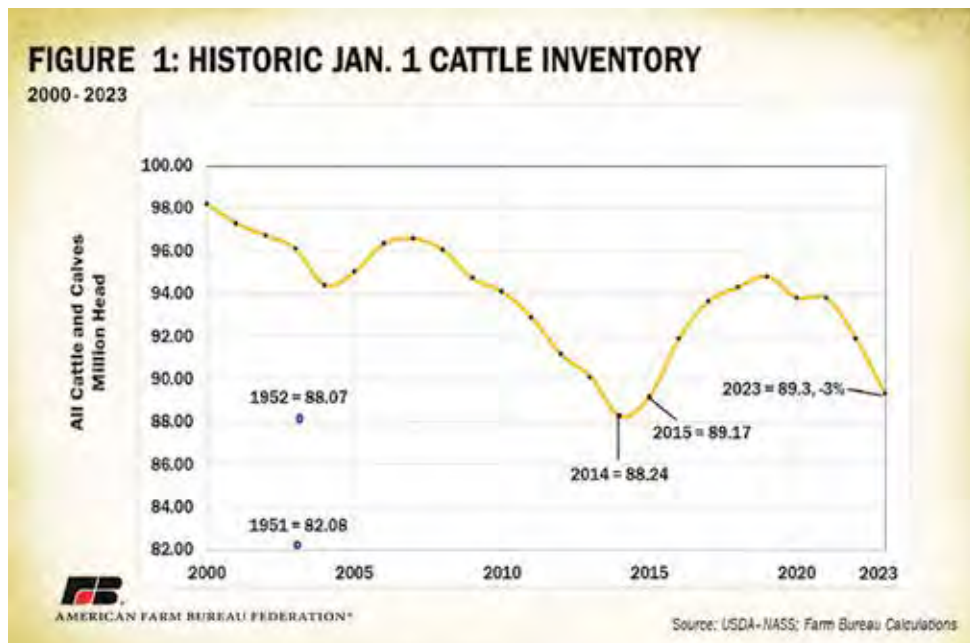
The latest Cattle on Feed report estimated that heifers on feed represent 40% of all cattle on feed -- the highest



percentage of heifers on feed since 2002. The declining inventory of beef heifers is a clear indicator that beef production will decline in 2023, 2024, and maybe even farther.

Drought is still a big challenge facing farmers. Farmers will have to see profitability improve before cattle numbers will begin to grow again. A change in the drought situation would help pasture and

rangeland recover and present an opportunity for a larger corn and hay crop. Any improvement in the drought situation would provide more profitability in the cattle business. When this happens, producers will have to retain more heifers to increase herd size. This will tighten beef cattle supplies even more and provide another level of price support until the cattle inventory begins to rise again. ■



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## Uinta County in the Classroom for Ag Books

Uinta County Farm Bureau Federation President Kristi Ellis visits local elementary schools regularly during the school year to share agriculture's story. The 2023 "Ag Books for Kids" book "Popcorn Country" by Cris Peterson was a hit with the fourth graders. Ellis explained that after reading the book, they watched a video of a slow-motion popcorn kernel popping and then they popped three different kinds of popcorn to see which one was what kind of variety. ■



### HARRIET HAGEMAN... From Page 1

Wyoming Agriculture asked Hageman for an update on the January 2023 USDA mandate through a proposed rule to set electronic identification tags as the official type of identification for cattle and bison. "This rule is about USDA, APHIS and the Administration controlling and dictating what farmers and ranchers do with their property," she said. "It will have an impact on our food supply and not in a good way."

"It will be astronomically expensive," she continued. "The estimated cost of this rule is up to \$26.1 million per year."

"The purpose behind this rule is to track the spread of disease," she said. "Tracing animals does not prevent outbreak. Unfortunately, local ranchers living near state borders, and many others, will bear the cost of this burden."

Hageman noted the rule remains open for public comment until March 20. "We will be ready (to take action) once it is fi-

nalized," she explained. "We can use the Congressional Review Act to stop the rule from being implemented."

With no shortage of issues to focus on, Hageman expressed she will be "pushing back against the radical Biden policies that are counterproductive, counterintuitive and are going to negatively impact every person in this country."

On the House Judiciary Committee, Congresswoman Hageman has been appointed to serve on the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government. Hageman explained this committee will be looking at all kinds of issues and specifically those related to the first, fourth and fifth amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The first hearing for this committee was February 9, 2023.

"This hearing focused on the first amendment and the FBI work with Twitter to block anything discussing the Hunter Biden laptop issue and efforts to suppress anything about Covid that didn't fit their narrative," she explained.

"The federal government's efforts to use third party companies to violate the first amendment rights of those speaking out was a violation of those who were speaking and also all of the citizens of this country," Hageman said. "We have a first amendment right to speak and the courts have held we have a first amendment right to hear and they suppressed that right."

Hageman explained the next steps for the committee will be to further expose and address the violation of the first, fourth and fifth amendments of the Constitution. "We know Google and Facebook have willy-nilly turned over personal information to the FBI without search warrant," she explained. "We have to get to the bottom of the relationships between federal agencies and private companies and how they are using these relationships to circumvent the Bill of Rights."

In addition to her committee assignments, Congresswoman Hageman was elected by the freshman class to represent the newly elected members of Congress on the Policy Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hageman explained the Policy Committee is one of four positions that are elected from within the freshman class of representatives.

"The policy committee's role is to set the policy that comes up and is worked on by the House of Representatives," Hageman said. "Protecting the legacy industries in Wyoming are my priorities from a policy standpoint."

"The overarching umbrella is the attempt to streamline and reign in the administrative state," she concluded. "We must make fundamental changes to the Administrative Procedure Act so we can do that." ■




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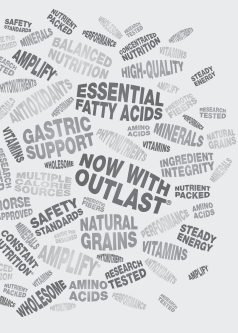
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# Getting Started in Ag: Irrigation System Alternatives

**A**gricultural productivity in much of the Western U.S., including Wyoming, is tied closely to the availability of irrigation water. Most of the highly productive land in the West is irrigated. If you are new to farming or ranching, it is imperative to educate yourself about irrigation options and determine which system(s) might work best for your operation. The goal should be to identify the most efficient use of available water in the most cost-effective manner possible.

## Important Factors to Consider

It is important to remember that no single irrigation system or setup is going to work for every operation. A variety of factors should be considered when deciding which system works best for an individual farm or ranch. Cost is often the deciding factor for many managers. As with most equipment purchases, the more acres the irrigation equipment can be used to cover, the more economical it becomes. Conversely, it may not be cost effective to purchase a \$120,000 sprinkler to cover 20 acres.

The irrigation water source, whether groundwater or surface runoff, may also greatly influence the system of choice. The layout of the property is another factor to consider; some operations may favor one type of system over another simply due to the way fields are laid out or the distance to available water. The availability and distance to electrical power sources may also be an important consideration. The irrigation system selected might be determined simply by the level of access to electrical power, including type of service, e.g., single phase versus 3-phase power.

Soil type and water holding capacity can also be a factor in deciding which system would work best. For example, heavier soils may be more conducive to sprinkler irrigation than flood irrigation due their ability to hold water for longer periods. Of course, there are many other factors to consider—largely dependent on the unique characteristics of an individual operation and the people involved.

## Flood Irrigation Systems

Flood irrigation has been around nearly as long as humans have cultivated plants for food. This method is still utilized throughout Wyoming and the western U.S. in many different forms. Flood irrigation in much of Wyoming can be as simple as using a ditch to flood a hay meadow or as complex as using gated pipe on a surge system to irrigate row crops.

Dirt or cement ditches can be used for flood irrigation. Typically, siphon tubes are used to deliver water from the ditch in a consistent way. More advanced systems use gated pipe in which aluminum or PVC pipe is slotted with spacings, often 20 to 40 inches, with moveable gates that open and close to evenly distribute water. Flexible plastic pipe, sometimes called plastic ditch, can be used to flood irrigate as well. This type of pipe is utilized once per season and often works in places where ditch irrigation is impractical.

The main advantages of flood irrigation systems are their lower cost, when compared with other systems such as sprinklers or drip. This can be especially true if it is possible to gravity flow water without the expense of pumping.

Disadvantages of flood systems are that they tend to be the most inefficient way to spread water over a large area, especially in drought years. They are more prone to losing water through evaporation and seepage, depending on how the system is set up. These systems are also labor intensive; many hours are required to monitor, change water, and lay out and pick up pipe. Flood irrigation may also require specialized equipment, such as ditchers, corrugators, and other soil management equipment, depending on which crops are grown.



**IRRIGATION SYSTEMS...** From Page 14

**Sprinkler\Center Pivot Irrigation Systems**

Sprinkler irrigation is one of the more efficient methods to apply water to cropland. Most sprinkler systems are of the center pivot variety, where the sprinkler rotates around a central point. However, there are also many side roll and hand line options available. Sprinklers allow more precise control over the amount of irrigation water applied and the timing of application compared to flood systems, especially with center pivots.

In times of drought, this can be invaluable, especially when watering crops up. Center pivot irrigation tends to be much less labor intensive than most flood systems. Hand lines and other sprinklers that require manual labor to change irrigation sets are exceptions.

The primary disadvantage of center pivot sprinklers is their cost. This is especially true when converting from a flood irrigation system to center pivot; both new pipelines and electrical service lines are often required to make the change. It is important to remember that sprinklers require regular maintenance, parts, and upkeep, which adds to their cost of operation over and above the cost of water and electricity.

**Drip Tape Irrigation**

Extended periods of drought highlight the need to become increasingly more efficient with irrigation water use. Drip tape systems are one of the options gaining in popularity. This type of system uses tape (a hose with small perforations) to deliver water with very little evaporation. The tape or hose can be placed above ground or buried below ground with the water seeping up toward the crop. The buried tape is placed at spacing appropriate for the particular crop, e.g., every 30 inches.

These systems can save substantial water when compared to conventional systems. In addition, drip systems can be made to fit just about any shape of field, unlike many sprinkler-based systems. Their main disadvantage is their initial cost, often double the cost of center-pivot systems. Furthermore, an accurate guidance system is necessary for planting and other field operations to ensure the crop aligns with the buried drip tape.

**For More Information**

Visit [farmanswers.org](http://farmanswers.org) for more information about irrigation systems and how they may fit individual operations. This site also offers a section devoted to programs available to assist new producers in purchasing irrigation equipment through Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) cost share. Visit a local NRCS office for more information on cost share programs available in your area.

For a detailed comparison of various pivot-based irrigation systems, visit [RightRisk.org](http://RightRisk.org) and select Applied Risk Analytics under the Resources tab. ■

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**APPLIED RISK ANALYTICS:**

**Hay Producers Evaluate Pivot Irrigation Alternatives**

- The guide provides an example utilizing the Multi-Temporal Risk Analyzer Tool (MTRA)
- MTRA offers users the ability to compare production changes or decisions over a 20-year timeframe
- Outlines an alternative to traditional pivot irrigation
- View at [RightRisk.org/AppliedRiskAnalytics](http://RightRisk.org/AppliedRiskAnalytics)



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**WOTUS LAWSUIT...** From Page 2

Our litigation wins against the 2015 Rule helped persuade the EPA, under a new administration, to replace it with a more clear, workable WOTUS Rule in 2020. But activists challenged the 2020 Rule in court. So AFBF again led a litigation effort—this time on defense—defending the reasonable rule we had advocated for. AFBF successfully

defended the 2020 Rule in each of the six cases we were involved with. Our legal efforts helped keep the rule in place for almost three years and, importantly, provided support for a similar rule in the future. But the legal battle was cut short after another change in administration.

This brings us to the present: another administration, another WOTUS Rule, and another round of litigation. Not where we wanted to be, but where we need to be un-

der the circumstances. In our system of checks and balances, the courts are an indispensable check on unlawful agency actions. Litigation is slow, cumbersome, expensive, and often uncertain. But it's a tool we can use, and a weapon we must guard against, as we work for laws that protect your ability to farm. We'll continue to be in your corner in every forum where issues vital to farmers and ranchers are decided, including the courts. ■

**POLICY FLAVOR...** From Page 2

The next flavor to come down the pike has been the word “sustainable.” We now have sustainable being bandied about for a number of things. Companies, once they decided that goods could be marketed better, soon began to add “sustainable” to their marketing program. Like the word “natural,” that has been bandied about almost with abandon, the term sustainable could be measured by any number of yard sticks. The green groups loved this term because everyone wants to be sustainable right? If you weren't sustainable, then you were a greedy capitalist. Something a number of the green groups hate with the same intensity as a toxic waste dump, if not more. While many of us watched to see if this term would be around in a year, we soon discovered those who liked this term were busy convincing regulators they should carry out their mandates based on how these groups defined sustainable.

We in the agricultural community began to ask the question that should have been part of the discussion all along. What happens when the person goes out of business? That certainly doesn't sound very sustainable. Many people recognized that without a sustainable economic sys-

tem, sustainability was not practical. Now that those economic capitalist ideas are part of the picture, some decided that we need another term.

Recently we've heard regenerative agriculture being talked about. Some in agriculture have been using these techniques to enhance their farms or ranches. While this has been going on, there are a number of individuals out there who want to use it for more regulations. The idea being that if someone is not doing what they think should be done then they are not using regenerative techniques.

One phone call I fielded was from a person traveling to Wyoming to meet up with an individual around Cody that was all about biochar. The person, while traveling from someplace on the East Coast, was sure biochar could save us, but apparently had forgotten to find out where this person lived. Perhaps finding out that here in the West it was several miles between gas stations the individual felt perhaps a better address than Cody, Wyoming would be helpful. Somehow or another my phone number came up on the internet search. This person decided to call me, because after all with the word “farm” in the name, I should surely be familiar with this biochar expert. I did look

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**Ken Hamilton**






*WyFB Executive Vice President*

the name up to see if they were a Farm Bureau member (they were not) and then politely told the lady I didn't know the individual. At this point my “crack pot” antenna went up and even though the person was sure I now needed to be educated about the benefits of biochar, I excused myself from the conversation because of another commitment.


Having now had my curiosity peaked by the question, I did look into it and

discovered, yes there are some benefits possible. This individual's inspiration was based on a film “The Need To Grow” narrated by actress Rosario Dawson. For those of you who are not familiar with Ms. Dawson, she was (and maybe still is) the girlfriend of Senator Cory Booker, who currently sits on the Senate Ag Committee. You'll be pleased to know the film, narrated by Ms. Dawson describes agriculture as the most destructive activity on earth.

The interesting thing about the many “new techniques” that someone outside of agriculture suddenly discovers is farmers and ranchers have been implementing new techniques for generations. Those in agriculture keep plugging along using what works, adapting techniques that will increase the bottom line or benefit the land. They do all of this while forgoing the concept of trying to convince a politician or regulator that they need to force that technique on everyone else. Through all the efforts by people outside of agriculture to tell them what to do, they have increased the number of non-ag folks they feed on the same amount of, or less, land than 30 years ago. Farmers and ranchers also recognize that in order to feed a population in a sustainable manner they still need to be around tomorrow. ■

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