

HATS OFF to AG



Cover photo courtesy Pam Meyer

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2 HATS OFF TO AG

Appreciating America's Ag producers



Power Company of Wyoming LLC



Photo courtesy of Jake Keller

An Akaushi cow and calf at Brush Creek Ranch.

Do You Know What Ag Does For You?

- Agriculture** contributes to a healthy economy in the Upper North Platte Valley.
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SER Conservation District says "Thank You" to Carbon County Ranchers and Producers

Pasture-to-plate

Platte Valley ranch owners raise Akaushi beef for guests

By KayCee Alameda

When Brush Creek Ranch (BCR) owners Bruce and Beth White made the decision to offer ranch-raised beef to the ranch guests, they chose the Akaushi breed of cattle for many reasons including flavor, tenderness and its health benefits.

According to American Akaushi Association, Akaushi (pronounced, Aka-oo-she), were brought into the United States from Japan in the early 1990s. The beef contains a higher concentration of monounsaturated fat in relation to saturated fat, which is considered to be lower in cholesterol by the American Heart Association, be a preventative of coronary heart disease, and aid in weight loss. Akaushi beef is found to contain a significant source of oleic acid—a main compound found in olive oil, and considered "heart healthy." Akaushi beef is naturally a more marbled beef. Marbling is generally considered responsible for the palatability, tenderness and flavor of the beef; but it is believed that the monounsaturated fat is actually responsible for the flavor. The marbling found in Akaushi beef contains a much higher percentage of monounsaturated fat than any other beef in the United States, and as a result, the beef has a rich, buttery flavor as well as juiciness and tenderness throughout.

"The owners of Brush Creek Ranch have made a commitment to serve and promote a healthy beef product to the guests at the ranch," said Ranch Manager Ron Hawkins.

"With all the coverage of diet in today's market including the negative advertising of beef, it is our hope to generate a new interest in putting beef back on the table." Jake Keller, Assistant Ranch Manager for BCR, said. The ranch currently has 50 pure-bred Akaushi cows that were purchased in the fall 2016. He said they also run the original herd of 75 cows that are half-blood Akaushi, as well as 20 three-quarter Akaushi first calf heifers.

BCR's full-blood Akaushi cattle are registered and DNAed through the American Akaushi Association, and Keller said the ranch plans to eventually raise their own bulls for in-herd use, as well as possibly selling some to outside commercial producers. He said the ranch utilizes artificial insemination (AI) on the ranch's flood blood Akaushi cows, while the half or three quarter blood cattle are pasture bred with Akaushi bulls carrying genetics from Heartbrand Beef, the founders of the American Akaushi cattle.

According to Keller, Akaushi are a smaller framed, slower maturing breed of cattle.

"The mature cows probably average between 800 to 1000 pounds and don't reach full maturity until about 4-7 years old," Keller said.

BCR is a traditional spring calving operation, Keller said, and begin calving in March. In the summer, the cows and calves are turned out on pasture lands of the Sanger Ranch. Keller said BCR is an all-natural program for the cattle, vaccinating calves and cows for disease and sickness prevention.

"We also use a good mineral program to compliment our heard health practices," Keller continued.

"All the cattle are handled horseback and as stress-free as possible, in a traditional ranching manner."

The calves are weaned in October and sent to a feedlot in Wheatland, Keller explained, where they are grown out before being brought back to the ranch to graze for the summer until mid-fall.

"In mid-September, we send these cattle to a finish yard in Texas—Bovina feeders, the biggest Akaushi feed yard in America—where they are finished out on a grain ration for 250-300 days," Keller said.

"The Akaushi steers are slower gaining than a conventional steer, gaining around 2-2.5 pounds a day—these cattle are fed slower and take longer to finish so they can develop the intramuscular fat, or marbling."

Keller said the cattle are processed in Texas, and then the packaged Akaushi beef is brought back to the ranch to be served.

"It's exciting to be part of the process from calving clear through to seeing the carcasses hang on the rail, that's the whole pasture-to-plate concept at BCR," Keller said.

"I will go down to Texas in May when the cattle are processed and go through the grading process of the carcasses," he said.

The first ranch-raised Akaushi beef will be served to BCR guests in June, and Keller is anxious to hear the guest reviews.

"It is important to know what kind of product you are producing," Keller said, "and, we will get the chance to see the end result this summer."

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AG FACTS:



The cattle industry is the largest component of Wyoming Agriculture—accounting for over half of all cash receipts. Cattle also led the way in 2014 in terms of value of production at \$937 million. All livestock production was valued at \$1 billion.

Photo courtesy Pam Meyer

Source: Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

HATS OFF TO AG



Why monitor?

Recording information helps with management decisions

By Abby Perry
UW Extension

It's true—monitoring isn't a very enticing Saturday afternoon activity. It gets a bad rap for being boring, time consuming and at times confusing, but by making observations and recording information (monitoring), land managers can answer important questions that influence management decisions.

Forage monitoring strategies can be used to determine forage availability. Understanding available forage is important for setting leasing rates when a landowner wants to lease land to another producer for forage. If forage availability is known in relation to the pre- and post-management decision, then the economic viability of a weed treatment, for

instance, can be determined in an informed manner. Of course, other information, such as cost of materials, also factor into any management decision.

By regularly monitoring cattle, the producer may be able to recognize cattle with a natural resistance to parasites like lice or flies. If parasite control is of great concern on the ranch, recognizing the potential resistance may warrant culling cattle with more susceptibility and keeping cattle with greater resistance.

Insects and weeds are often nuisances in agriculture. Generally, there are treatment methods to help combat the problem, however catching an infestation in beginning stages is always best. An early start on these infestations usually means

better control, and more economically viable solutions. Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) is a common strategy in weed control that could be applied to many agriculture areas. Grasshoppers and alfalfa weevils are two insect pests that exhibit population explosions, however early detection is possible. To stem an outbreak, early scouting is critical. Once again, by recognizing the presence of the pest, there is greatly likelihood of gaining control, and that early control method is more likely to be an economic solution.

Monitoring and good record keeping can also be important for adhering to regulations and maintaining permits with federal agencies. Sometimes land owners who have federal permits may become targets by environmental

groups that do not understand local agriculture practices. Regular monitoring and good record keeping are tools that can help landowners combat potential lawsuits from environmental groups.

Monitoring doesn't just apply to large scale land management, it can also be important for small acreages and gardeners. Making observations in the garden can be important for early weed and insect detection in order to provide an effective treatment. Further, analysis of the observations can aid a gardener in planning for coming seasons.

There are also many opportunities for people to get involved in citizen-science projects, where people who don't necessarily have a background in science can contribute to research.

Generally, they contribute by submitting what they see (monitoring) to some kind of database. If a citizen wants to get involved in a project, he/she can do a quick internet search and select projects involving mammals, birds, weather, invasive plants, astronomy, and many others.

Remember though, monitoring only makes sense if you are monitoring for a purpose. As a land owner or land manager, gardener, or citizen-scientist, identifying your greatest challenges or limiting factors helps determine what kind of monitoring is most appropriate for you. Analyzing the results of the monitoring presents options and solutions. Monitoring, therefore, is a critical component of the problem-solving process; it's where you begin!

AG FACTS:

Wyoming has nearly 30.4 million acres of land used for farming and ranching
Source: Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation



Photo courtesy Pam Meyer

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Program updates for producers

Farm Service Agency informs on programs available

Staff Report

The Farm Service Agency has released information of value to agricultural producers on programs and aid available.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses. NAP provides basic coverage, equivalent to the catastrophic level risk plan of insurance coverage, which is based on the amount of loss that exceeds 50 percent or expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes higher levels of coverage ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Additional coverage must be elected by a producer before the application closing date. Producers who elect additional coverage must pay a premium, in addition to the service fee. Crops intended for grazing are not eligible for the additional coverage.

Eligible producers must apply for coverage and pay the applicable service fee at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office where their farm records are maintained. The application and service fee must be filed by the application closing date, which is April 1 (of the calendar year) for grass for grazing or grass for forage.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop, or \$750 per producers, per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interest in multiple counties.

Producers who elect higher levels of coverage must also pay a premium equal to: the producer's share of the crop; multiplied by the number of eligible acres devoted to the crop; multiplied by the approved yield per acres; multiplied by the coverage level; multiplied by the average market price; multiplied by a 5.25 percent premium fee. The maximum premium for a person or legal entity, that is a NAP covered producer, is \$6,563. If the NAP covered producer is a joint operation, the maximum premium is based on the number of multiple persons or legal entities comprising the joint operation.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers are eligible for a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification." To be eligible for a service fee waiver or premium reduction, the NAP covered producer must qualify as one of the following:

- Beginning farmer or rancher – a person or legal entity

who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; and materially and substantially participates in the operation.

- Limited resource farmer or rancher—a person or legal entity that earns no more than \$173,600 in each of the two calendar years that precede the complete taxable year before the program year and has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income for both of the previous two years.
- Targeted underserved farmer or rancher— a person or majority members of a legal entity who is a member of a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Groups include American Indians or Alaskan native; Asian or Asian Americans; Blacks or African Americans; Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders; Hispanics and Women.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions. These conditions include eligible adverse weather, eligible disease and eligible attacks (attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators).

To be eligible for LIP:

- A producer's livestock must have died in excess of normal mortality, as a direct result of an eligible loss conditions, that occurred no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event.
- The livestock must have been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation on the day they died; and not have been produced for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation.
- Excluded livestock include wild free-roaming animals, pets or animals used for recreational purposes, such as hunting, roping, or for show.
- The notice of loss must be submitted 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is first apparent to the producer.
- An application for payment must be filed no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.
- Applicants must provide adequate proof that the eligible livestock deaths occurred as a direct result of an eligible loss. The quantity and kind of livestock that died, as a

direct result of the eligible event, may be documented by producer records existing at the time of the event; such a pictures, brand inspection records, heard improvement records, and similar reliable documents. These records must be accompanied by verifiable beginning and ending inventory records as proof of death.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes and guarantees loans to eligible socially disadvantaged agricultural producers (SDA) to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches.

Each fiscal year, the agency targets a portion of its direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loan funds to SDA farmers and ranchers.

A SDA farmer or rancher is a group whose members have been subject to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a groups without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of American Indians or Alaskan Native, Asians, Blacks or African-Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and women.

Direct farm ownership loans and farm operating loans are made by FSA to eligible farmers and ranchers. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions subject to federal or state supervision (banks, savings and loans, and units of the Farm Credit System) and guaranteed by FSA. Typically, FSA guarantees 90 percent of any loss the lender might incur if the loan fails.

Youth Loans

The FSA makes operating loans of up to \$5,000 to eligible individual youth, ages 10 to 20 years old, to finance income-producing, agriculture-related projects.

The project must be of modest size, education, and initiated, developed and carried out by the youth participating in 4-H, FFA, or a similar organization.

The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loans, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience in agriculture-related skills.

The loans can finance many kinds of income-producing agricultural projects.

The loan funds may be used to buy livestock, seed, equipment and supplies, as well as, buy, rent or repair needed tools and equipment or pay operating expenses for the project.

To apply, the applicant must submit completed plans and budgets signed

See "Programs" on following page

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Programs ... Continued

by the project advisor, and parent or guardian, along with the FSA application for loan assistance.

These loans have a maximum loan amount of \$5,000 (total principal balance owed at any one time cannot exceed this amount); have an interest rate which is determined periodically, based on the cost of money to the federal government (after the loan is made, the interest rate for that loan will not change);

will be secured, in addition to promissory notes, by liens on the products produced for sale on the chattel property including livestock, equipment, and fixtures purchased with loan funds; and have a repayment schedule which varies depending on the type of project for which the loan is made.

For more information about any of these programs, please contact the local FSA at 307-326-5657, ext. 2.

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Masters host 'Wild West Gardening'

Staff Report

The Laramie County Master Gardeners will host The Wild West Gardening Conference on April 22 and 23, 2017 at the Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne.

This conference is open

to everyone: beginners, advanced gardeners, specialty crop growers, and small acreage owners. Featuring 22 guest speakers, five hands-on workshops, and 25 classes.

For registration and schedule: www.eventbrite.com/WildWestGardening.

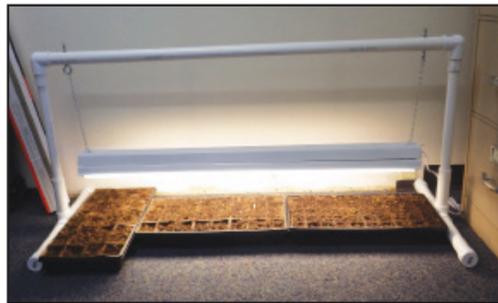
Make your own grow light

Get a jump start on your seedlings

By Abby Perry
UW Extension

Winter can be an integral part of successful growing cycle. It is a wonderful time to plan, research, order new varieties or find obscure

lights and found that they are full spectrum, which means they can provide the plants with the right kind of light. However, because light dissipates, it is important to keep plants in close proximity to the light source.



Photos courtesy Abby Perry

A shop light with full-spectrum bulbs on a PVC rack give light to seedlings.

favorites for your growing space. Late winter can also be a great time to start seedlings indoors, which provides a longer growing season and greater probability of reach-

I purchased PVC at the local hardware store, T12 shop lights and ballast, a length of chain, small hooks, and a timer. I didn't have any experience with a

timer, but it was very easy to program. It simply plugs into the outlet and then the ballast cord is plugged into the timer. I set it to provide 18 hours of light each day.

I moved the trays around so all the seedlings could get ample light. Within a few days, I had several tiny broccoli, beans, and peas popping through the surface. I thinned them accordingly, provided ample water, and the light did the rest.

If you have any questions about planning for the upcoming growing season, starting seedlings indoors, or how to make your own grow-light, contact the University of Wyoming Carbon County Extension office at 307-328-2642.



Sprouts!

ing maturity before an early fall freeze. Last year, I decided I wanted to try growing seedlings in my office with the aid of a home-made grow light.

I did a little bit of research about using shop lights as grow



Seedlings thriving despite cold temps outside.

Where's the beef?

These are just a few of the items beef and beef byproducts go into that you probably use every day

SPORTS

- Footballs
- Basketballs
- Baseballs
- Baseball gloves
- Soccer balls
- Volleyballs
- MORE

AUTOMOTIVE

- Oil
- Tires
- Upholstery
- MORE

INDUSTRIAL

- Lubricants
- Explosives
- Pesticides
- Flootation agents
- Fertilizer
- Sandpaper
- MORE

CLOTHING

- Jackets
- Footwear
- MORE

HOUSEHOLD

- Biodegradable detergents
- Buttons
- Glues
- Wallpaper
- Papers
- "Camel hair" brushes
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<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rotational grazing 2. Pastures 'x, y, and z' have better plant cover, which helps to minimize evaporation 	<p>Vulnerabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water distribution availability in pasture 'x' 2. Invasive annual grass in pasture 'y'
<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Varying stocking rate by adding a yearling or stocker enterprise to the cow-calf enterprise 2. Conservative stocking rate (e.g., based on production in drought years and not average/above average years) 3. Use of seasonal forecasts to inform decisions 4. Collaborative monitoring in common allotments 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prolonged drought 2. Early spring giving the invasive annual grasses an advantage over native perennial grasses.
<p>Off Ranch Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Weather Service monthly and seasonal forecasts at: www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/forecasts 2. USDA Farm Service Agency Livestock Forage Program 	<p>On Ranch Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An adequate number of ranch employees to help manage livestock and water during summer months

Table courtesy of the University of Wyoming extension and USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub

Example strengths, vulnerabilities, opportunities and threats to identify on your operation when developing or revising a drought plan. Additionally, potential resources to consider documenting in your drought plan, so the information is readily available.

Drought not an if, but a when

Tips in preparing for lack of water

By Windy Kelley
Uw Extension

If you have spent any time in Wyoming, you know the climate is semi-arid. So drought is a common occurrence. In fact, the Saratoga area has experienced moderate to extreme drought 20 out of 43 years (47%) between 1969 and 2012 according to the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) on the U.S. Drought Atlas <http://droughtatlas.unl.edu/Home.aspx>.

In other words, we should be prepared for drought, viewing it through a lens of familiarity; ready to navigate the challenges it imposes. There are several management strategies available to proactively manage for drought—some will work better than others depending on conditions in a given year (e.g., weather, rangeland, market), available resources (e.g., access to water, weather forecasts, financial), and your personal risk tolerance. One of the best ways to wrap our minds around all of these factors and ensure everyone on the ranch is on the same page is to develop a drought plan.

Calling all Wrangling

Once all key decision-makers for the ranch are together, have them put pen to paper and start to brainstorm. Questions to consider include:

How has drought impacted the ranch in the past?

Which areas of the ranch have weathered drought better and why?

What decisions helped make the ranch or areas of the ranch more resilient to drought?

What decisions or practices would you like to implement differently (or the same), and why?

The above list of questions is by no means exhaustive, but should help get the ball rolling. Documenting and organizing past experiences, positive or negative, will help you better understand the ranch's strengths, vulnerabilities, opportunities, and threats associated with drought (see table above). This dialogue and sharing of information will help document the ranch's history, including what was tried in previous years and what worked or did not work. Your team should also take an inventory of on and off-ranch resources,

which could be drawn upon during drought preparedness, response, or recovery.

Once your planning team has documented past experiences and inventoried available resources, you can begin to develop a drought plan. The team will want to document 'key' decisions, and conditions or dates that will trigger when a key decision should be made. For example, if one of your potential management strategies is to vary the stocking rate, you would identify the most relevant seasonal precipitation and temperature forecasts to check before making a stocking decision.

If the forecast for April through May suggests above average precipitation with average or below average temperatures, you might consider maintaining or expanding your herd. But if the forecast is for above average precipitation and above average temperatures the implications are less clear. With above average temperatures, the atmosphere will have greater 'drying power,' which could negatively impact soil moisture.

If above average tempera-

tures are forecast to continue after May, along with average or below average precipitation, your business might be better served by reducing your herd size in April. By reducing herd size in April you might accomplish the following: 1) ensure sufficient forage for the remaining herd through the summer; 2) reduce the potential for overgrazing of a pasture, which could enable invasive species to move in; and 3) your return on the livestock you sell might be greater in April than waiting until July.

The above is just one example of management decisions to think through, discuss as a team, experiment with and document. Be sure to document not only the decision to be made, by when, or under what conditions, but also where to get supporting information (e.g., off-ranch resources from partners such as Extension, the Conservation District, or your nearest USDA field office). Additionally, monitor and document what happens, and adapt as conditions change or you observe what is or is not working.

Want to see the seasonal

forecast for April through June 2017? Visit: <https://goo.gl/fPaZJ>

Learn more about drought planning and decision-making:

Considerations for Preparing a Drought Management Plan for Livestock Producers, UW Extension Bulletin-1220: <http://www.wyoextension.org/agpubs/pubs/B1220.pdf>

Two Common Drought Management Strategies and Some Considerations for Wyoming Cattle Producer, UW Extension Bulletin-1218: <http://www.wyoextension.org/agpubs/pubs/B1218.pdf>

Recent Article of Interest:

Making Proactive Decisions to Manage Drought, Nebraska Cattleman: <http://nebraska-cattleman.org/NCmar2017/files/54.html>

Don't have access to the Internet to view the above resources, or looking for additional information? Contact your local University of Wyoming Extension Educator Abby Perry at a ajacks12@uwyo.edu or 307-328-2642

Opinion/Editorial

Fired up about Ag Week

By KayCee Alameda

As I sit here writing stories about all facets of agriculture, I would be remiss if I didn't say that the fires and utter devastation of agriculture in four central and southern states have somewhat darkened Ag Week for me.

Cattle burnt into some unrecognizable, prehistoric form, laying in piles of 20 to 100. Ranch and farmland resembling environments found on another planet; homes and barns reduced to a mere pile of ashes. Over 2,300 square miles of ag land, tens of thousands of cattle,

and many homes, outbuildings and fences—completely destroyed.

Agriculture can become the most volatile industry in a matter of seconds—whether it be by fire, frost, hail, drought or flood—an industry completely dependent on natural occurrences. Yet, agriculture is a culture that is fuel by rugged landscapes and rugged individuals who are resilient and time-tested.

Four lives were lost in these fires by those trying to save their animals. It may seem incomprehensible to some, but for me, I completely

understand why they put themselves in harm's way to try to move their cattle herds or horses; it's the risk you take. I can almost guarantee these four never thought they were risking their own lives, they were just focused on saving their stock and their way of life.

Yet even with this huge loss of property and life, not one national media outlet has given this tragedy an ounce of coverage. Has the nation as a whole turned its back on the importance of the agrarian lifestyle?

Agriculture is an indus-

try a person either loves or hates, there is really no in between. It is an industry of hard work, birth and death, market fluctuations, triumph and tragedy—not really an environment for the weak at heart. This industry wakes up every morning with the intention of not only making a life for themselves, but also feeding and clothing the world. It isn't just hamburgers and bacon; agriculturalists are the true conservationists, the true animal rights advocates, the true business people—they have to be because their livelihood

depends upon it.

As the ag producers begin to rebuild from these devastating fires—and they will—it is important that everyone, everywhere, begin to reflect on the positive ways agriculture impacts their life. From food and water, to makeup, medication or refuges for wildlife—agriculture is all around you.

Agriculture is the one industry that none of us can live without.

Have a happy Ag Week!



HATS OFF TO AG



The importance of testing water, soils, and forages

University of Wyoming Extension offers information on testing for compatibilities and hazards on your land

By **Brian Sebade**
UW Extension

The University of Wyoming Extension offers many services such as workshops, publications, site visits, and applied research. A very important service that is often underutilized from the University of Wyoming Extension is information and education for testing water, soil, and forages. While Extension does not complete the testing in each office, we do provide information on multiple labs that are available for water, soil, and forage testing. Knowing what you have for resources is important. Whether you own or you are looking to buy property and/or livestock, a soil, forage, or water test can be very valuable.

Water Testing

A water test can not only benefit you and your family for the water you drink, but it can also be beneficial for irrigation and livestock water. We as humans might be worried about bacteria and minerals present in our drinking water, yet we often forget to think about the quality of water our plants and livestock are using. For example, it is not uncommon to find high levels of sulphur in many livestock wells across the state. Generally, sulphur levels are at a low enough concentration it is not a problem for livestock. However, sulphur in high enough concentrations can have some serious effects on cattle. A simple water can prevent a train wreck. You can get water test kits for livestock and

human consumption.

Soil Testing

Soil testing is another important analysis that can provide home and property owners with critical information. A basic soil test will provide information related to soil's physical and chemical properties. Understanding a soil's pH, organic matter content, salt levels, and physical make up are important for making management decisions. The pH of a garden soil or an agricultural area will provide data on what minerals will potentially be available to plants. Organic matter is a major building block of soil by providing increased water holding capacity of soils, holding soil together, nutrients for plants, invertebrates, and fungi, and buffering out chemicals imbalances in the soil. Increasing or decreasing the soil organic matter in a soil can have major impact on gardens, agricultural fields, and rangelands. A basic soil test will also provide the texture of a soil. The texture is key information for determining what types of plants will succeed in a particular soil. Texture also provides information related to irrigation requirements.

Forage Testing

Knowing what you are feeding livestock is important for many reasons. There are different forage tests available that can provide information on toxicity, protein content, energy, and mineral levels. A forage test is critical for suspected high nitrate

levels in forages that can lead to poisoning or death. Many grains crops, especially oats, experience increased levels of nitrates during drought or other stresses from the environment. Testing for nutrients and minerals is also a good idea to help save money. Data related to forages can explain if forages are high or low in certain nutrients or minerals. Knowing what you have is an excellent starting point to make sure livestock are not underfed or you are not spending too much on expensive supplements.

County Extension Offices provide testing information for water, soil, and forages. Many of the offices also have a hay core which can be used to extract hay from the center of hay bales for testing. There are many options available for selecting a lab. Please select a lab that will fit best with your knowledge, response time, and expenses allowed.

Additional resources can be found at:

<http://www.forage.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/WI-A2309-ForageSampling-Undersander-et-al-20051.pdf>

<https://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edcomm/pdf/CIS/CIS1178.pdf>

http://www.wyoextension.org/publications/Search_Details.php?pubid=1341&pub=B-1201

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AG FACTS:

Hay is by far the leading crop in Wyoming in terms of value of production totaling \$317 million in 2014. All crop production totaled \$473 million in 2014.
Source: Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

Photo courtesy of Pam Meyer

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Reflections from files of the Grand Encampment Herald

Ore processing to resume

The Tramway, Concentrator, Roaster and Smelting Plant will all resume work in three weeks. Steam Plant will then be installed.

Reprint of this story from the March 11, 1904 issue of The Grand Encampment Herald brought to you courtesy of Grandma's Cabin, Encampment, Wyoming. Preserving History - Serving the Community.

General Superintendent Martin gave out the information this week that the North American Co's concentrator will resume business before the end of the present month, also that the tramway would again take up the work of transporting ore from the Ferris-Haggarty mine within two weeks, and that the blast furnaces at the smelter would blow in either April 1 or April 4.

The repair and improvement work at the plant has so far advanced that there is no longer any question about the time when the several departments can be in a position to resume work.

Certain repairs to sheave wheels and other parts on the tram line will have to be made before ore can be hauled, and in a few days the train will be started for that purpose. The buckets will receive what repairs they need as they are turned over at the transfer stations. During the shut-down the buckets have been "hung up" or rather hung down to prevent them from becoming filled with snow and ice.

More men are being added

at the plant almost every day. As the telephone line from the general office to the Ferris-Haggarty is temporarily out of commission, Mr. Martin has not had a communication from Supt. Houle in ten days, but it is expected that Mr. Houle is about ready to make a demand for a big force of miners, such as was employed last year during the shipping period.

Between the tunnel level and the upper much ore has been broken down during the winter, sufficient, it is said to keep the tram busy for some weeks. Considerable ore for the summer shipments will be taken from the upper levels of the mine.

George French, of Iowa

City, Iowa, an expert electrician and water works man, arrived here Monday to take charge of the water works and to assist in the electrical department.

The report that work was to be commenced at once upon a huge steam plant for power purposes at the smelter proved a mistake, such a thing was being considered but the expense for fuel to operate such a plant would be prohibitive.

THE REAL PIONEERS

"The Pioneer" at the Old Timer's dance, March 1, was Mr. Henry R. Jones. In fact, he and his partner, Hon. Frank O. Williams, are

the pioneer residents of the Valley, having lived here continuously since 1873, though they have been in Wyoming since 1866, of the three who preceded them here, E. W. Bennett, is dead, and William Cadwell and Wm. Bauer have left the State. The Hon. J. C. Brewer was a close second, he having lived here since 1875, when he took up what is now known as the Baggott Ranch on the Encampment River.

Of the ladies at the pioneer ball Mrs. J.C. Brewer was the oldest in point of residence; she having come here early in 1880, while Mrs. Jones did not come to reside permanently until July of the same year. The latter was here in the valley in the fall



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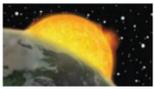
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Reflections from files of the Grand Encampment Herald

of 1879, during the Indian scare, at the time of the Thornburg massacre, returning to Laramie for the winter. Mrs. Jones came to Wyoming in 1877. The old Jones & Williams ranch house still has the loop holes made for defense against expected Indians who, however, did not cross the range.

Minor Notes:

Smith Bros., photographers, have installed a fine new photo camera, and are prepared to do first-class work. They have recently repapered the lower floor of their building and now have a very tasty and creditable gallery. They solicit your patronage.

A sleeping city was awakened Monday night at midnight by the explosion of dynamite, the firing of guns and

the united yell and whoop of at least eighty Indians who were on the war path just because a man brought his bride to town. The groom, being a very Frank sort of a fellow, ponied up the cash for several rounds of the joyful cup and the assembly dispersed.

Charles and Marion Sanger are busy breaking horses now days.

Rolla Sanger is working for Gus Barkhurst on Brush Creek.

Mr. Powell was down from his camp 8 miles up the river last Tuesday.

W. E. Finrock branded his calves the first of the week.

Ranchmen assert that the winter has been to open for the good of the range, which now shows the need of moisture. The snowfall below the mountains has been very

light this winter.

The members of the billiard club are enjoying the new table recently installed in the club's new building on South Freeman avenue.

A Dillon young lady secured a horse whip and proceeded to beat up a young man, whom, she claimed, had insulted her. The fellow protested innocence.

Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Fisher entertained a few friends at games Thursday evening. Refreshments were served.

A large number of persons attended the public reception at the M. E. church last Friday evening. A program of songs, recitations, etc., was given and refreshments were served. The event was a very enjoyable one, and served the purpose of getting many persons acquainted who had not previously met.

Wyoming's Land

4% of Wyoming's land is Indian trust land.

6% of Wyoming's land is state owned.

42% of Wyoming's land is privately owned.

48% of Wyoming's total land area is federally owned.

- Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

Wyoming has nearly 30.1 million acres of land used for production agriculture. *Wyoming Agriculture Statistics 2010*

An ad from the March 20, 2013 Hats off to Ag edition of the Saratoga Sun.

Past & Present: The Saratoga Sun



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State FFA degrees earned by Valley students

Knotwell, Miller and Burton awarded highest state FFA degree

By KayCee Alameda

The acronym “FFA” stands for Future Farmers of America. However, FFA is not just for students who want to be production farmers; FFA is also for students who might go into careers such as teachers, doctors, scientists, business owners and many other fields.

Three local students earned the highest degree that the Wyoming state FFA association can bestow upon a member: State FFA Degree. Konnar Knotwell and Bailey Miller of Encampment, and Sarah Burton of Saratoga, were awarded with their state degrees earlier this year.

Konnar Knotwell

Konnar Knotwell has been part of Encampment’s Loch Leven FFA Chapter for five years. She has held the offices of parliamentarian, reporter, vice president and President. “I decided to join FFA because I wanted to broaden my leadership skills and help to improve our FFA Chapter,” Knotwell said, “I am vividly involved in agriculture and I knew it would be a great fit for me.”

Knotwell placed first in her chapter in the FFA Speech contest her freshman year. During her junior year, she was in the prepared speech contest with a topic, “Modern Day Cattle Rustling.”

Being very active in FFA, Knotwell has competed in livestock judging at the state FFA contest in Cheyenne. She has shown many animals in FFA at Carbon County and Wyoming State Fairs, as well as in smaller jackpot shows around the region.

“I believe that my hard work that I put into my animals has paid off for me,” Knotwell said.

Knotwell decided to apply for a state FFA degree because

she knew she had much of the “groundwork” done for the degree.

“I had incomes and expenses from 2009 all the way to 2016,” Knotwell said, “and, I was an officer of the Encampment FFA Chapter for four years and have taken an agriculture class since I was in eighth grade.”

Knotwell has been involved in agriculture her whole life and believes she is very experienced in the field.

In order to earn a state degree, FFA members must be involved in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), where students can learn more about multiple careers and occupations, expected workplace behavior, develop specific skills within an industry, and are given opportunities to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. Knotwell’s SAE is market beef.

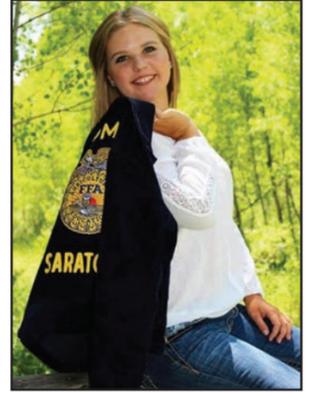
Although Knotwell does not plan on applying for a national degree, she does plan to stay involved in agriculture throughout her life.

Bailey Miller

Bailey Miller has been a member of the Encampment Loch Leven FFA chapter for five years, where she has served in many office positions.

“I decided to join FFA because of my livestock,” Miller said, “at that time I didn’t realize what FFA really included, and I’m so glad that I joined because I got to do so much more than show my livestock. I got to be a leader, go on trips, and meet a lot of new people that will be lifelong friends.”

Miller has shown sheep, breeding heifers and market beef in FFA. She has also been a part of the poultry and



From left, Konnar Knotwell, Bailey Miller and Sarah Burton were all awarded state FFA degrees.

livestock judging teams at the state FFA contest.

Miller has competed in a few speech contests and has been very successful.

“I’m currently in an aquaculture class where we are raising fish and plants,” Miller said.

Miller decided to apply for the state degree because her older brother, Brett, had and she believed it was an “amazing award.”

“My Ag teacher also pushed me to fill it out as he was confident that I had the ability to get it,” Miller said. “Throughout my FFA career I kept a portfolio which made the application process much easier in the end.”

Miller’s SAEs are market beef, horse and market lambs. She is not sure if she will apply for an American Degree, but definitely plans on “looking into it.”

Sarah Burton

Sarah Burton is a member of the Saratoga Stuart McPhail FFA Chapter, where she has been involved since seventh grade. Burton served as the reporter her freshman and sophomore years, the secretary her junior year, and she is currently the president of

the chapter.

“In seventh grade, I thought that I only had to join FFA because my brother and sister were both in it,” Burton said, “but, after my second year of being involved, I realized that I enjoyed being a part of FFA and that I should stick with it.”

“There has only been myself and one other person from my class in our chapter, which is disappointing, but it also showed me how special it is to be a part of this association. It isn’t something that everyone can say they were in.” Burton said she has put “110 percent” into her chapter because she feels FFA is a very important association.

“FFA is the one of the things I will miss the most about high school,” Burton added.

During her freshman year, Burton competed in creed speaking and livestock judging. She competed in agricultural sales during her sophomore and junior years, and public speaking her junior year.

“I have also helped every year with our Ag Mechanics contest that we have been hosting for three years,” Burton said. “My favorite has been, by far, Agricultural

Sales. I like this Career Development Event (CDE) because it shows a different side of agriculture that a lot of people may not realize exists. It was extremely fun and interesting to be able to interact with people and sell a product to them.”

Burton decided to apply for her state degree because she felt it “showcased all of the hard work” she has done for her chapter and herself.

“It is always amazing to see how many members are awarded their state degree at state convention,” Burton added, “and I have been very excited to get that opportunity for a long time.”

“In fact, I remember watching both my brother and my sister walk across that stage to be awarded their degree.”

Burton is very proud to have been awarded a state degree.

Burton’s SAE is in placement, where she worked in the areas of recreation and natural resources, as well as food service.

“I do not plan on applying for the American Degree,” Burton added, “because my SAE project wasn’t as productive as anticipated, due to the fact that I was traveling a lot for other activities.”

HOEON Spring Fling

Photos by Mike Armstrong



Kids play the Medicine Bow Lions Club dart game at Friday’s Spring Fling.



Fio Wailes, with the Cent\$ible Nutrition program, attends to her booth Friday.



Cathy Craig, 4-H Youth Development Educator, gives information about 4-H programs during Friday’s event.

Kids seem to enjoy both painting and being painted at the Spring Fling.

Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow school, groups hold spring fundraiser

By Mike Armstrong

The inaugural Spring Fling, at HEM High School was a carnival for North Carbon County to raise funds in a way that involved several other clubs.

Crystal Clark, who was manning the National Honor Society stand, her husband, Paul Clark, and the principal of HEM, Steve Priest, came up with the idea last year.

Clark said the concept was to come up with a way to fundraise not strictly focused on one class or or-

ganization.

Entry fees are spread between all the school’s clubs and the money made at each organization’s booth is kept by that group.

The focus was not only making money, Clark said. It was also to bring together the community served by the School. She said she felt the carnival had achieved both goals.

Priest said before it was always an individual club doing an activity fundraiser, making it hard for the community to support all the organizations. Priest said, “The idea was to

do a big event including clubs and classes so every group gets a little money from the door and then from their activity. I think it has been a successful first year and we hope to grow.”

Kathy Thompson, one of those running a stand, said, “We did all we could do to have a really good time today and it was great. Seems like people were happy and we sold 130 plus tickets here.”

Among the stands and attractions were educational stalls, a kissing booth, a balloon dart game and face painting.

Fio Wailes, from the

Cent\$ible Nutrition Program at the University of Wyoming, was giving out samples of trail mix to help families eat better for less. Wailes had just been in Saratoga giving a workshop to families on nutritional meals.

“We provide 17 nutrition classes for adults and then we have programs we develop for children,” Wailes said.

Wailes travels the county to teach classes, and the carnival was an excellent opportunity to reach an audience of all ages.

Cathy Craig, a 4-H/Youth Educator, was at the carnival

to promote programs and information about Carbon County 4-H.

Craig said, “From Aerospace to Woodworking, 4-H has many projects to review.”

Craig was at the carnival to possibly find an adult leader for 4-H in Hanna. Currently, Hanna 4-H children go to Elk Mountain.

The inaugural Spring Fling at HEM was a success for founders and participants with many indicating they are looking forward to next year.