

Midwest Messenger LIVESTOCK

ROUNDUP




Looking back...

Laurence Stover gets some help from kindly neighbors to stack his hay in 1945 on the farm in Naponee, Nebraska. Photo submitted by Laurence's daughter Rosey Lusiejn, Naponee, Nebraska.

Field trips to the farm

Pandemic brings out creativity in consumer communication

By Miranda Reiman
Certified Angus Beef

A world where families stayed home allowed them a chance to connect with rural families in a new way.

Sports tournaments canceled. Practices and recitals, even school itself – all put on hold as COVID-19 caused a shift in schedules, and subsequent media consumption.

Thousands of people watched online as a sloth slept at a metropolitan zoo. A children's book artist brought people into his home studio, virtually, to doodle with him during lunch.

That sparked an idea.

"How do we bring a ranch to people?"

When Margaret Coleman, Certified Angus Beef brand digital director, asked

Please turn to **FIELD TRIPS** on Page 20

A new grazing option on the horizon

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Anyone with a gluten sensitivity may be familiar with teff (*Eragrostis tef*), a cereal crop from Ethiopia that is gluten free and often used in cooking.

But they may be surprised to know that it is also gaining popularity as a grass grown for hay production and cattle grazing.

"Teff is a warm season annual grass that is being grown in the U.S. as a forage hay crop," said Jaymelynn Farney, associate professor and extension specialist with Kansas State University's Southeast Agricultural Research Center in Parsons.

"Once teff is established, producers are able to get two to three cuttings per year," Farney said, a recent guest on the Beef Cattle Institute's Cattle Chat podcast. "It is also a fine stem grass that is a good substitute for alfalfa

for horses that have metabolic issues."

The challenge can be in getting it to grow, Farney said.

"It is a very fine seed and getting it established is an issue. When we make the seed bed, we often use a cultipacker. If you drill deeper than 1/8-inch it will not grow," Farney said, noting another drawback for some producers is that it has to be planted each year.

An advantage is that teff is drought tolerant and grows rapidly. She said the quality can quickly deteriorate if it isn't cut when it first reaches maturity.

"I've seen teff go from perfect quality to poor quality in three days," Farney said.

Along with growing teff for hay, Farney said it can also be grazed with the right management plan.

"Teff is a shallow rooted plant so it can't be grazed until 45 days after it was planted or roughly the same

time you would take that first cutting of hay," Farney said. She cited a study in Oklahoma in which 850 stocker calves were raised on 320 acres of teff over the summer, and said the cattle thrived.

For cattle producers interested in using teff in a grazing management plan, "I recommend they get the first cutting of hay and then let it regrow a couple inches before turning out cattle to graze it," Farney said. The first cutting typically provides the highest nutrient quality.

For a brief overview of teff production and grazing, tune into the BCI Cattle Chat podcast.

For more in-depth information on growing teff, listen to a podcast that Farney recently launched called Dr. Js Beef. Episode 2 features the attributes of teff grass as a forage.

Universities open doors, help process meat amid shutdown

By Jager Robinson
Tri-State Neighbor Reporter

When agriculture is in trouble, partnerships help out in a big way, and that's been the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. pork industry was hit especially hard as major packaging plants including Smithfield in Sioux Falls shut their doors. Farmers with hogs ready to harvest were left with nowhere to bring their animals.

During the worst of it, the governor's office, the South Dakota Pork Producers Council, and South Dakota State University got together to come up with a way to help. They started with opening the SDSU meat lab for as much pork processing as it could handle.

While the capacity was modest, Joe Cassidy, professor and head of the animal science department at SDSU, said that SDSU was interested in doing its part to help provide a solution at a time when stress was high.

"(We're) not in this to make money, we just want to help where we can," Cassidy said.

One benefit of SDSU's involvement stems from its unique position as a state-inspected plant. That allows producers who are lucky enough to get on the waiting list to sell their packaged meat anywhere in the state.

In an effort to stay unbiased and impartial from the selecting process, South Dakota Pork worked closely with its producers to get carcasses in and out of the facility. Through the end of August, the SDSU facility will be at max capacity.

The pork council has been working to secure other sites for its producers, too. Executive director Glenn Muller said the council initially began working with Dr. Dustin Odekoven and the state veterinarian's office to minimize the number of pigs that would need to be euthanized.

"He's been very helpful in helping us obtain that goal," Muller said.

While the SDSU meat lab has a modest capacity of roughly 60 head per week compared to Smithfield's max capacity of nearly 20,000 per day, Muller said it wasn't about the numbers as much as providing another outlet.

"It's all about space in a barn," Muller said. "Anything we can do to provide more space for the remaining animals has been helpful."

Part of the process to alleviate some pressure has been through donations. Many producers have donated carcasses and pigs to local food banks and food giveaways. The first giveaway South Dakota Pork organized took place in Aberdeen May 22. Tentatively, the next giveaway is scheduled to take place in Yankton.

"Meat has been somewhat difficult to find, so we had a giveaway that was very successful," Muller said, noting the panic buying and supply chain issues that left grocery shelves sparsely stocked with meat.

"We felt we could assist in matching producers with

the consumer that is having a difficult time acquiring the product," he said.

South Dakota isn't the only state helping its producers. Many of the land grant universities across the U.S. have stepped up to help those in agriculture through the unexpected pandemic downturn.

At the University of Nebraska, the meat processing facility was opened to harvest just a few animals a week. It sent all of its processed meat to food banks.

"The producers are donating the pigs and collecting some of the processing cost," said Gary Sullivan, an associate professor for meat science at the University of Nebraska.

While Nebraska's facility isn't set up for the same level of capacity SDSU has been operating at, Sullivan said that they too are trying to alleviate pressure at the barns.

"It's not a large number, but it's a good cause and much better than euthanization of the animals," he said.

While meat labs across the country will stay open through the end of summer to help backlogs of orders, SDSU and Nebraska professors have been brainstorming the key lessons to take away from this pandemic and teach up and coming producers.

Sullivan said the Nebraska Beef Youth Leadership Symposium can help young producers understand the value of their product from beginning to end. At SDSU, Cassidy said it's more about how to remain there for the producers who need them most.

"We can connect stakeholders with services they might need," he said. "We try to help in everything from alternative marketing programs to nutrition adjusting rations for pigs."

It's important to place coronavirus in context, Cassidy said: "You want to plan your operation to be robust to get through good and bad times, but you have to be careful," he said. "If you build your business model around a pandemic, you may struggle to be successful."

Cassidy urges a continued focus on the behavioral health and a better approach to handling stress overall.

For Muller and his team at South Dakota Pork, he hopes consumers and producers have gotten a new appreciation for the food chain, from start to finish.

"Food safety has never been a concern in the U.S., but food security was a concern," he said. "I hope the general public realizes how important every individual is in the food chain."

With the Smithfield plant in Sioux Falls having ramped up to roughly 90% capacity, the worst of the pandemic may be behind producers. But there's still a question of whether the industry needs to rely less on big packaging plants and more on local lockers.

Such facilities require a substantial capital investment and a concrete marketing plan. Sullivan said he believes that consumers are coming out of the pandemic with a greater appreciation for what local meat lockers have to



Submitted photo

The SDSU Meat Lab is harvesting animals at its state-inspected facility in Brookings, S.D.

offer.

Muller estimated that nearly every meat locker in South Dakota is booked possibly through 2021. Some with the right tools on hand turned to at-home harvesting.

Whether the solution is through education, appreciation or expansion, Cassidy said that he has never seen a year quite like 2020 in his time as an educator.

"These are very interesting times," he said. "I'm coming up on my seven year anniversary as a department head and 19 years in the department and this is unlike anything I've ever seen."

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Field trips

Continued from page 18

her team, they soon partnered with cattlemen to make it happen. In the last days of winter, CAB handed over the keys to its social media account to a handful of Angus breeders, while consumers across the country asked everything from what the cows eat to the role of the ranch dog.

As of mid-May, 10 families had hosted "Field trips to the farm" in a Facebook Live format, reaching more than 130,000 viewers.

"It was just sharing an experience and sharing a lifestyle, with a little bit of education about what happens on the farm," Coleman said.

When Caroline Sankey visits her barn, the 3-year-old rarely has a big audience. But one sunny day in March, thousands tuned in to her family's Economy, Indiana, farm and saw her favorite part of the business.

"We have newborn baby calf," she said with a smile.

From Kansas to Georgia and South

Dakota to South Carolina, followers got a snapshot of what it's like to raise cattle in all different environments. Sometimes it was blue skies and cotton candy clouds, and others carried gray, overcast tones with wind – lots and lots of wind.

"It was just real life on the ranch," Coleman said. "We've tried really hard to be authentic and relevant during this time."

Regardless of where the field trips took followers, the goal was the same.

"We wanted to show that they truly are family farmers and ranchers who care about what they're doing, care about their livestock, care about the product they're producing," Coleman said.

The leading branded beef team wanted consumers to see that its producers are people, too.

"Today's situation has really brought a heightened awareness to our food supply," said Nicole Erceg, CAB assistant director of communications. "Consumers are asking more questions than ever before about where their food comes from, but study after study shows people trust farmers and ranchers."

When they're unsure, connecting with a human is reassuring. Talking through

Submitted photos

TOP: The Certified Angus Beef brand has been bringing consumers to the farm, virtually, since March. The Facebook live effort began with Debbie Lyons-Blythe on her Kansas ranch.

BOTTOM: A screen shot from a virtual "field trip to the farm" event hosted by Certified Angus Beef. Caroline Sankey, 3, showed off her new calf in March as thousands tuned in to her family's Economy, Indiana, farm.

everything from feeding to breeding was really a backdrop to talking about all the people it takes to get beef to their tables, Erceg said.

Lydia Yon's granddaughters called the cows while she told the story of how it all started.

"We moved to Ridge Spring, South Carolina in 1996, and at that time we had 100 cows and three children under the age of five," she said. More than two decades later, "It's pretty fun to do this as a family. We all have our own independent jobs, but we are still together every day."

The cattlemen showed their favorite animals and talked about both the best and the worst parts of agricultural careers.

Several showed appreciation for all those essential workers involved in getting the beef they produce to consumers.

"We have a safe, secure and abundant food system, and we want to thank everyone....from those like us on the farm to the truckers on the road bringing that, and the friends there in the supermarkets who are bringing that to us every day," said Julie McPeake, of CAM Ranches in Arnoldsville, Georgia.

The mom of two young kids identified with schedule changes and the new work-from-home scenario, but appreciated the chance to connect with consumers on a larger platform.

"While COVID-19 has thrown us a loop, I hope some of these opportunities stay with us," she said.



LIVESTOCK CALENDAR

JUNE

- 26 Burwell Livestock Market, Special Cattle Auction, Burwell, Neb.
- 26 Ft Pierre Livestock, Special Pairs, Summer & Fall Calving Bred Cattle & Weighup Sale, Ft Pierre, SD
- 26 Lexington Livestock Market, Special Feeder Auction, Lexington, Neb.

JULY

- 1 Huss Livestock Market, Special Calf & Feeder Auction, Kearney, Neb. 23
- 1 Ogallala Livestock Auction Market, All Classes Sale, Ogallala, Neb. 22
- 2 West Point Livestock Auction, Weekly/All Class Feeder Auction, West Point, Neb. 23
- 3 Ericson Spalding Livestock Market, Weigh Up Auction, Ericson, Neb. 23
- 7 Creighton Livestock Market, Special Feeder Calf Sale, Creighton, Neb. 22
- 10 Lexington Livestock Market, Special Feeder Auction, Lexington, Neb. 22
- 11 Ericson Spalding Livestock Market, Special Cattle Auction, Ericson, Neb. 23

Share Your Thoughts!

Send letters to the editor to
Box 239, Tekamah, NE 68061,
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katy.moore@lee.net



Field Trip: Sankey Angus in Indiana

Certified Angus Beef brand was live. about 2 months ago

Take a field trip to cattle country with the Certified Angus Beef brand. Episode 3 takes us to Sankey Angus in Economy, Indiana. Cody and Lindsay Sankey will share the joys and struggles of raising cows and kids on the farm. They'll also talk about what cattle eat, challenges unique to their climate, and how raising cattle in Indiana differs from places like Kansas and South Dakota.

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Realtime Comments

- Fred Dill** · 2:04 6 inches, wow
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- Shelly Fisher Patton** · 2:16 Hey Lindsey this is Shelley granddaughter your farm is up the road from ours
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- Jackie Baker** · 2:33 I like those gates and feeders!
Like · Reply · 6w
- Tom Wiseman** · 2:40 Bless you and your family. My old family farm in Montgomery Co. Is all grain. But seeing your operation brings back good memories 🙏
Like · Reply · 6w
- Laura Salinas de Garcia** · 2:47 Blessings, thanks for sharing
Like · Reply · 7w
- Rob Oakley** · 3:08 Tell her firdinan is doing well



Submitted photo from Nebraskaland Magazine/NGPC

RIGHT: An aerial photo shows the encroachment of eastern red cedar trees into the pastures and grasslands of the Loess Canyons in Lincoln County. **CENTER:** Members of the Loess Canyons Rangeland Alliance conduct a 3,000-acre prescribed burn April 22, to control eastern red cedar trees that have encroached on grasslands in southern Lincoln County. **LEFT:** Fire clears out eastern red cedar trees during a 3,000-acre prescribed burn in the Loess Canyons.

Loess Canyons landowners band together to confront eastern red cedar

By Renae Blum
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Mark Alberts' dad could recall going out with his grade-school teacher to cut down a cedar Christmas tree, and they had to hunt to find one.

Today things have changed, and the Loess Canyons, a roughly 338,000-acre landscape south of North Platte, is overgrown with eastern red cedar, a hardy, drought-tolerant invasive species.

While once looked upon favorably, the hardy, drought-tolerant invasive species is now recognized for its harmful effects on the Great Plains, including increased wildfire risk, diminished wildlife habitat, reduced streamflow and rapid spread. The Loess Canyons is one of the most infested areas in Nebraska, according to experts, with tree coverage of more than 75% in some areas.

The tree is well adapted to the area's fertile soils and crowds quickly into valuable grazing pastures. Studies show that in areas where grasslands have converted to a cedar woodland, livestock production decreases by 75%.

For the landowners in the Loess Canyons, the situation became clear. Doing nothing and lose the ability ranch in the area, said Scott Stout, a landowner and cattle producer, or do something.

After identifying prescribed fire as the best way to beat back the invasive eastern red cedar, they created two prescribed burn associations to conduct burns on each other's properties. Each association has close to 60 paying

members, and the larger of the two groups, the Loess Canyons Rangeland Alliance, has burned more than 85,000 acres since 2002.

Researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have taken notice.

"This is one of the few examples where we've seen a community come together to confront this issue head-on," said Dillon Fogarty, a doctoral student researching eastern red cedar at the university. They're also the only group in the Great Plains that has successfully halted the tree's spread in a hard-hit region, he said.

Prescribed fire wasn't the first solution landowners turned to, though. They first used mechanical methods to cut trees back, said rancher Tell Deatrich, but the trees came back quickly and in greater numbers than before.

They then turned to prescribed fire, pooling their resources together in what has turned out to be an effective management technique and a cost-efficient one. Fire, Fogarty said, can stop an invasion before it becomes a problem, but also can restore the landscape after cedars establish.

"If you look around at a burn, you will see half a million (dollars) in equipment and labor being shared," Deatrich said, so while burn prep can be expensive, the actual burn is cheap.

To participate, association members are asked only to do mandatory prep work on their property before a burn, provide lunch and water for the workers, and help at other burns.

"I help you, you help me, we both go help somebody else," Alberts said. "That's just the way it works."

Through it all, safety remains paramount. "We're all volunteers, we all have families, we all have operations at home," Stout said. "Being able to go to a burn, do this burn safely, and then go home to our families is the utmost priority on all of our burns."

Their efforts have paid off: Neither prescribed burn association has experienced any fire-related injuries.

While they initially encountered skepticism from other landowners and the public, the groups now have the local community's support and both associations continually gain new members.

"Being successful has been, I think, the key to getting new members – people noticing what's going on," Deatrich said. The landowners themselves have noticed healthier grass, improved soil health, increased wildlife habitat, and a rejuvenated water cycle – natural side effects of reintroducing fire to the landscape, he said.

Asked what landowners in other parts of the state should know, Alberts said, "The cedars are coming. Take care of them now while they're small." He advised talking to local Natural Resources Conservation Service office, as well as to landowners who have managed red cedar.

"The best time to control cedars was 20 years ago," he said. But that hasn't stopped him from moving forward.

"I don't want my kids or grandkids to say, 'Why didn't Dad take care of those when he could?'" he added. "The time to get them is now."

Management Minute: Do's and Don'ts upon returning to work

By Justin Waggoner

Many businesses and organizations are now beginning to reopen after several weeks of modified operations or closures. A recent article – <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/05/01/returning-to-work-post-covid-19/> – highlighted several items that both employees and managers should consider when returning to work.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed

hands.

- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, work meetings, and travel. Continue to follow guidelines from state and local authorities for using face coverings in public spaces.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your work area, including keyboards, phones, handrails and doorknobs.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other

work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

- Know what to expect of yourself. You may experience a variety of emotions after returning to work, which is normal. Talking about your feelings with someone you trust is a healthy way to process this evolving situation.
- Continue to take care of yourself. Eat well, get plenty of rest and exercise, spend time with those closest to you.
- Take care of your children and your family. Parents could be concerned about their children's wellbeing when they must return to work. Make sure your children know proper hygiene practices and let them talk about what is going on to help reassure them.

- Seek help if you need to. If your feelings are too much to bear, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Mental health problems — in general and in response to a major event such as the pandemic — are real, diagnosable and treatable.

- Know your rights and the COVID-19-related guidance that has been given for your specific industry by visiting the CDC website and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration website.

Justin Waggoner, Ph.D., is a beef systems specialist at Kansas State University's Southwest Area Extension Office in Garden City, Kansas. For more information, contact him at jwaggon@ksu.edu.

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FRIDAY, July 3, 2020

Weigh Up Auction, 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, July 11 – Special Cattle Auction

www.ericsonlivestock.com view & bid: www.cattleusa.com
If you would like to purchase cattle on cattleusa.com please request approval prior to sale day.
Office: 308-653-3111 • Pat Mahony: 308-750-0486
Mike Mahony: 308-750-3791 • Tom Meyer: 308-750-2125
Curt Weber: 308-750-8592 • Stan Klug: 308-750-2142
Kevin Mahony: 402-340-3829 • Gerald Clinch: 402-841-6320

WEST POINT LIVESTOCK AUCTION

THURSDAY JULY 2ND, 2020
WEEKLY/ALL CLASS FEEDER

Feeders start at 12:30 PM
Expecting 750 HD

All of our cattle auctions will be broadcast live over the internet on Imauctions.com. Online bidding will be available. If you have any questions please call the office.

- K Brester** 110 Blk Strs/Hfrs, super set 825-875
- M Weiman** 85 BLk Hfrs, fancy 800-825
- J Sayers** 72 Blk Strs/Hfrs, w/v, green 600-700

Check our webpage wplivestock.com for more listings closer to sale date.

839 S Colfax • West Point, Ne 69788
www.westpointlivestock.com Office: 402-372-2493
Brian Brester: 402-750-5821 • Martey Stewart: 402-375-8913
Matt Brester: 402-380-8266 • Jim Schaben: 712-263-9449
Jon Schaben: 712-263-0755
Come and see what we have to offer!

LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

Custom Livestock loafing sheds, calving sheds, crowding tubs. 10x20 shed \$2200. 8' tub \$2600. Can build different sizes and configurations. 308-624-0499

Plastic gated irrigation pipe 30' 8" 20" gates. Pleasanton, NE 308-388-4501

Semen tank MVE-Millennium 2,000xC20 3-20ft-5-seat bleachers 4-solar-fencers 50-steel-posts 30-wood-posts Rolls: Barb Wire 5-rolls: Electric Fence-Wire 402-632-4697 712-259-4478

FEED/HAY

Net wrapped cornstalk bales for sale 1,400lbs. Will load, can deliver. Columbus area. 402-910-0613.

Looking for: Custom Hay Jobs Burt/Dodge/Washington County Area. Custom-rates, crop-share or short-term lease/2020 and beyond. Mower conditioner, rake and round baler. 402-720-9382

Farming is more than a job, it's a way of life, passed on through love and hard work to future generations.

Midwest Messenger
LIVESTOCK ROUNDUP
1-800-888-1380



LIVESTOCK RULE #1
RECEIVE THE MIDWEST MESSENGER,
LOOK THROUGH WEEKLY
SALE BARN ACTIVITY.
GO TO A LIVESTOCK SALE
BUY A COW!



800-888-1380
www.livestockroundup.com



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EXPERIENCE WORK

For You

WE GET RESULTS.

Midwest Messenger • Livestock Roundup

Chris Bentler 402-380-8244 • beutlerworkplace@hotmail.com



800-888-1380 • 402-374-2225