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The ONLY publication dedicated

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April/May 2021 • Volume 77 • Issue 4

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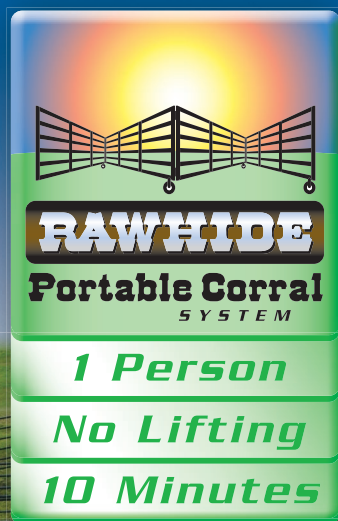
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On The Cover

A group of young Angus females graze on spring forage just outside Minden. Photo courtesy of Amanda Overleese.



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Even though March came in like a lamb, the frigid temperatures of the last few weeks in February will not be forgotten any time soon. The entire central section of the country was overwhelmed with the same frightful weather as temperatures plummeted and stayed well below freezing for days. This occurrence has forced many, including beef producers, to examine our energy preparedness and security.

Those in agriculture are resilient, regardless of weather conditions. We adapt and succeed, almost as a matter of pride, to the point of dealing with anything Mother Nature gives us. The near-catastrophic, record-setting frigid temperatures of late February forced us to examine the basic expectation of having power in a typical manner. Our need to be healthy, safe and able to function was threatened, as was our ability to be able to care for our livestock, regardless of the conditions.

Within this issue of the *Nebraska Cattleman* magazine, we will begin the process of understanding Nebraska's energy dynamics, the threats Nebraskans (specifically beef producers) faced during this weather event, what the potential solutions are and what can ultimately be averted in the future. Future issues of the *Nebraska Cattleman* will continue to explore this very complex situation, offer solutions and keep members informed of what lies ahead.

I have always been proud to be part of the Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) membership because NC is historically thoughtful in addressing issues and creating solid policy. In today's world when tough challenges occur, it is convenient to recognize or experience a problem and then rush to blame. That is not a new phenomenon by any means, but when frustration is coupled with the instantaneous platforms of social media, reflection and restraint do not stand a chance when the internet pitchforks are drawn and torches lit.

The third week of February saw unbearable frigid temperatures take a stranglehold over Nebraska and the central part of the country. I reached out to Dennis Houston, CEO of Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA), to gain a better understanding of the power generation that exists in Nebraska. Dennis suggested we include Courtney Dentlinger with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) in our discussions. Before working at NPPD, Courtney served as director of the state's Department of Economic Development in which she did an excellent job for the people of Nebraska. Our conversation was sobering and illuminated how close (minutes, if not seconds) Nebraska and the entire region came to a complete power disaster due to the weather conditions at the time.

NC members were calling staff looking for help and answers in the moment, highlighting the severity of the situation. Ranchers calving in extreme conditions need tools like heat lamps to keep newborn calves alive. Feedyards must have confidence that a power outage does not create even greater problems in their feedmills. All must have power to heat equipment so that it functions and they can operate to keep livestock alive and safe. Cattle producers want to be prepared in these dire situations and they look to NC leadership and staff to help find solutions.

If we assume that a similar extreme weather event will not happen for another 80 years, that is false hope. In December 2006, south central Nebraska

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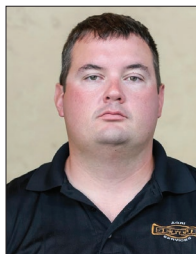
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Greetings fellow cattlemen and women. I pray that by the time these thoughts reach you that we've put winter in the rearview mirror, and your pastures are greening up and are filled with healthy calves. Spring is always an optimistic time of year at our place as we prepare for another growing season. It also brings a tinge of concern from the uncertain nature of what the future may hold for our operation and our industry. These feelings of cautious hope are magnified this year as the federal government transitions to a new administration, particularly when it comes to environmental policies, rules and regulations.

There are still plenty of unknowns about how President Biden actually plans to achieve his goals regarding climate and energy, but I think we can be sure that it will remain a focus over the next four years. It was a common talking point during his campaign, and it is unlikely to go away any time soon. We can also be sure that his approach will be much different than what we saw under President Trump.

President Biden’s campaign website states, “Joe Biden knows there is no greater challenge [than climate change] facing our country and our world. That’s why he is outlining a bold plan – a Clean Energy Revolution – to address this grave threat and lead the world in addressing the climate emergency.” It goes on to say, “Biden believes the Green New Deal is a crucial framework for meeting the climate challenges we face.”

If that doesn't make you cringe, it should. For those of you who know anything about the Green New Deal or its authors, they don't exactly view agriculture in a positive light. On the surface, it seems as if this approach would be detrimental to the cattle industry. Yet, when we dig a little deeper, I believe there are some things we can latch onto. What exactly is it about the Green New Deal that President Biden supports?

“It powerfully captures basic truths, which are at the core of his plan,” including “our environment and our economy are completely and totally connected.” Finally, some common ground we can get behind. Few people understand the reality of that statement better than farmers and ranchers. Our business models are intrinsically centered around protecting and preserving the natural resources we’ve been blessed with.

Likewise, Biden's talking points also include statements like, "Tackle water pollution in a science-based manner." Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) has multiple policies that call on legislators and regulators to use science-based approaches when dealing with issues that affect agriculture. Initially, it may appear that the outlook with the Biden administration is grim, but I think the reality is that we may have more common goals than we realize.

That said, how do we work together where our views intersect and seek to provide education and perspective in areas where ideas diverge? Let's be honest, very few of us have time to read the *Federal Register* or lobby our elected officials on important issues. That is where NC comes in. Your NC membership provides great value in keeping you well informed about the issues that impact your business, allowing you to focus on the day-to-day activities of managing your operation. More so, being engaged in the NC policy-making process gives you

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2021 Nebraska Cattlemen Midyear Meeting

The 2021 Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) Midyear Meeting is being planned for Wednesday and Thursday, June 9 and 10 in Fremont. The event's activities will start the morning of Wed., June 9, with the annual Midyear Golf Tournament at the Fremont Golf Club. For those of you not golfing, a tour is being planned to visit local attractions and businesses. Following the golf tournament and tour, all members are invited to attend the Welcome Reception at the Fremont Golf Club to enjoy an evening of food, drink and socializing with many NC members from across the state.

June 9-10, Fremont

Thurs., June 10, the Nebraska Cattlemen meetings will be held at Midland University with NC committee meetings, the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation Lunch and General Session. Added this year following the General Session will be a banquet to recognize and honor Nebraska Cattlemen and industry leaders, which NC was unable to do last December due to the cancellation of the NC Annual Convention.

Nebraska Cattlemen members are encouraged to make plans to attend the 2021 Midyear Meeting and take part in

industry discussions during the six NC policy committee meetings addressing animal health and nutrition, brand and property rights, education and research, marketing and commerce, natural resources and environment, and taxation issues. Many issues affect Nebraska cattle producers, and this is your opportunity to shape policy and provide direction for leadership and staff.

Watch for more information and registration materials on the Nebraska Cattlemen website, nebraskacattlemen.org, and on the NC social media platforms.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 9 (all events at Fremont Golf Club)

11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Midyear Golf Tournament
11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Area Tours
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception

Thursday, June 10 (all meetings at Midland University)

8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Committee Meetings I
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Committee Meetings II
12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation Lunch
2:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Committee Meetings III
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Midyear General Session
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Midyear Banquet

Times are tentative and subject to change prior to event.

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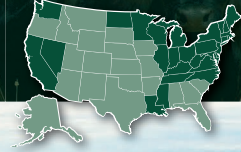
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LONG TIME COMING

Columbus to Host 2021 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska

By Crystal Klug, 2021 Cattlemen's Ball Promotions Chairman

For beef producers and patrons alike, the Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska is one of the social highlights of the year. Scott and Pat Mueller have been involved with the Cattlemen's Ball since its inception in 1997. Pat served on the Activities Committee for the first three years, and the couple always thought this unique event should be in Columbus someday. The Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charity, raising millions of dollars for cancer research.

In 2017, Scott decided to make "someday" a reality and contacted the Cattlemen's Ball advisory committee to pitch Columbus as a destination for the event. "My intent was never to host the ball, but offer a location to hold it," recalls Scott. "When the Advisory Committee came to Columbus to look at potential sites that day, they were under the assumption my family would host it. I agreed, and then went home and told my wife," he laughs.

Although Pat was not initially impressed with Scott's latest "project," the Muellers soon embraced the challenge and began forming committees in August 2018. By the time March 2020 hit, volunteers were in full force. Then COVID hit.

"Initially our team was disappointed because so much time and effort had already been done, but canceling was never an option, and we collectively decided postponing to 2021 was the only choice," Scott says. "Volunteers were very gracious in extending their duties another year."

In December 2020, with COVID numbers at a high in Nebraska, Scott made phone calls to find out the direction of the 2021 ball and was surprised with the feedback. "After reaching out to the

University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Governor's office and East Central Health District, my conversations were overwhelmingly positive," he explains. "With our event taking place outside and the likelihood of people receiving the vaccine by June 1, there was no hesitation from anyone about not being able to host the ball at full capacity."

Volunteers are currently hard at work again, and Mueller says it's been rewarding to bring people together, many who have never met each other, and work toward a common cause – raising money for cancer research. "Cancer is such a personal thing. Every one of us is impacted directly or indirectly by this

terrible disease. I'm looking forward to seeing what we are capable of doing as a team and watching what can happen when we all pull in the same direction," he says.

Highlights of this year's event include Nebraska Bush Pullers, concerts by Tracy Byrd, Easton Corbin and local favorite SideStep and, of course, beef on the menu. The Mueller family and 2021 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska volunteers invite you to join them for an unforgettable weekend in Columbus, June 4-5, as they work together to fund cancer research and find a cure! For lodging, concerts and events, or ticket information, visit www.cattlemensball.com. ■

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Cattle

Inject subcutaneously as a single dose in the neck at a dosage of 2.5 mg/kg (1.1 mL/100 lb) body weight (BW). Do not inject more than 10 mL per injection site.

Table 1. Increxxa Cattle Dosing Guide

Animal Weight (Pounds)	Dose Volume (mL)
100	1.1
200	2.3
300	3.4
400	4.5
500	5.7
600	6.8
700	8.0
800	9.1
900	10.2
1000	11.4

See product insert for complete dosing and administration information.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

The use of Increxxa Injectable Solution is contraindicated in animals previously found to be hypersensitive to the drug.

WARNINGS

FOR USE IN ANIMALS ONLY.

NOT FOR HUMAN USE.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. NOT FOR USE IN CHICKENS OR TURKEYS. RESIDUE WARNINGS

Cattle

Cattle intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 18 days from the last treatment. This drug is not approved for use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older, including dry dairy cows. Use in these cattle may cause drug residues in milk and/or in calves born to these cows.

PRECAUTIONS

Cattle

The effects of Increxxa on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Subcutaneous injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Cattle

In one BRD field study, two calves treated with tulathromycin injection at 2.5 mg/kg BW exhibited transient hypersalivation. One of these calves also exhibited transient dyspnea, which may have been related to pneumonia.

STORAGE CONDITIONS

Store below 25°C (77°F), with excursions up to 40°C (104°F). 100 mL: Use within 2 months of first puncture and puncture a maximum of 67 times. If more than 67 punctures are anticipated, the use of multi-dosing equipment is recommended. When using a draw-off spike or needle with bore diameter larger than 16 gauge, discard any product remaining in the vial immediately after use. 250 mL and 500 mL: Use within 2 months of first puncture and puncture a maximum of 100 times. If more than 100 punctures are anticipated, the use of multi-dosing equipment is recommended. When using a draw-off spike or needle with bore diameter larger than 16 gauge, discard any product remaining in the vial immediately after use.

HOW SUPPLIED

Increxxa (tulathromycin injection) Injectable Solution is available in the following package sizes:

100 mL vial
250 mL vial
500 mL vial

To report suspected adverse drug events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the Safety Data Sheet, contact Elanco at 1-800-422-9874. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or <http://www.fda.gov/reportanimalae>. Approved by FDA under ANADA # 200-666 Product of China.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION (ISI)

Not for human use. Keep out of reach of children. Do not use in animals previously found to be hypersensitive to the drug. Increxxa has a pre-slaughter withdrawal time of 18 days. Do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older.



Increxxa™
(tulathromycin injection)

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Rangeland Weed Prevention

By Hannah Gill, Contributing Writer

When it comes to weed management in pastures and rangeland, a pound of prevention is certainly worth an ounce of cure. With the end goal being fat calves on shipping day, ranchers don't want their livestock's nutritional intake to be pushed out by invasive weeds or brush, so it is important to know what weeds are out there and why before making control decisions.

"A lot of times, especially in rangeland, we see that nature just has flushes of things, and you might see a ragweed or annual sunflower or snow-on-the-mountain that is an annual weed that is really prevalent one year and, by the time we notice it, it might be fully grown and set-in seed. By that point, doing control measures on it really isn't going to do anything," says Ben Beckman, Cedar County Extension educator.

Basically, killing an annual plant that is already dying has no benefit, so it becomes a waiting game to see what happens next year. But with the issue on your radar, Beckman recommends

scouting for it earlier and then making a management decision.

"Knowing what you're up against is the first step," Beckman says. "The second is just looking at it and [asking yourself] is it worth the cost and effort and time? Sometimes, we have weed problems and we can do herbicide applications to try to treat it, but we're basically just slapping a Band-Aid on it and hoping that fixes it instead of trying to address the actual issue."

Weeds are often symptoms of overall environmental factors. Nature doesn't want to have an empty spot in it, so for some reason if there is one in a pasture, either from overgrazing or a drought, those weeds will likely establish.

"Following the 2012 drought, there was a huge flush of sunflowers across the Sandhills," Beckman says. "They were able to get established and then went away a lot of times on their own with proper grazing management. So looking at the pasture and trying to figure out why we're having these weed problems can help in the long term

to reduce the need for some of those management things."

In many cases though, control is necessary and can come in many forms. Fire is effective for some species like cedar trees, but for other woody species, fire only kills the top growth and encourages new growth from the base. Mowing or mechanical control, like chopping down weeds, is effective for small patches of things like thistles. Targeted grazing can also be effective.

"In the western part of the state for things like cheat grass patches, especially early in the spring because they green up fast, we can graze those hard and heavy to help reduce the amount of seeds those patches produce and help shrink them over time," Beckman says. "There are a lot of different tools in the toolbox for us to use. Sometimes the best way is to use a combination of a lot of different approaches, and when we do that, we see the best results."

When using herbicides to eliminate weeds or brush from a pasture, ranchers need to understand the difference be-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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¹Suarez VH, Lilschitz AL, Sallovitz JM, et al. (2009). Effects of faecal residues of moxidectin and doramectin on the activity of arthropods in cattle dung. *ScienceDirect*. 72(2009): 1551-1558.
²Environmental Assessment. Cydectin® moxidectin 0.5% Pour-On for Cattle. Fort Dodge Animal Health, June 1997.

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tween restricted use and non-restricted herbicides. Non-restricted-use herbicides can be purchased at any farm and ranch or outdoor supply store. The formulations usually make them less potent and less toxic with lower drift potential – which makes them less dangerous if applied incorrectly. To apply restricted-use herbicides, a person would have to go through an

Extension training process and then a licensing process through the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

“Typically, for a lot of our harder-to-control weed species like leafy spurge or things like that, you do need to use restricted-use herbicides to really get control of it,” Beckman says.

In that instance, a rancher will either need to obtain their own license to buy

and apply the restricted-use chemical themselves or hire someone who is already licensed. Often, someone who is licensed can come look at the pasture to identify weeds and then make recommendations for control methods and when those methods will be most effective, like using aerial application vs. ground application.

Weeds are often symptoms of overall environmental factors. Nature doesn't want to have an empty spot in it, so for some reason if there is one in a pasture, those weeds will likely establish.

“In general, when you have either a widespread problem or we've got monoculture-type production would be where we could see using an aerial application,” Beckman says. “The difficult thing when we use herbicides is that they are going to work against all broadleaf plants, so they are going to kill the beneficial native ones along with the bad ones.”

Some rough pastures, though, require aerial application because ground application would be next to impossible. For Travis VanEperen with Nebraska Aviation, using airplanes to get herbicides into steep draws and rough country is handy, especially with how GPS and mapping has improved to get precise applications in pastures.

“We use an online mapping system that gets shot to an iPad from the office computer, and the pilot can then see the pasture when they're going through it and the exact spot they're supposed to go to, instead of relying on a paper map and latitude and longitude coor-

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dinates to get to the field like we used to have,” VanEperen says.

In addition, VanEperen says they are always willing to go check pastures before they spray to identify weeds and make a recommendation for the best application method, control method and timing of control.

“From my perspective, if you’ve got a healthy pasture that doesn’t have an

opportunity for weeds to establish, it’s a lot easier to prevent a problem than it is to fix it,” Beckman says. “Identify what the problem is, the plant you’re dealing with and then look at how that fits into your whole system, why that is persisting or is there in the first place, and then you can start to pick out what control methods we need to utilize to get it under some sort of management.” ■**NG**■

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CONTROL TIMING FOR TYPES OF WEEDS

Annual species complete their entire life cycle from germination to production in one growing season and can be broken down into summer annuals and winter annuals.

Summer annuals are typically seen in the summer when they grow, so springtime is the best time to control these when they're small and actively growing. A general rule of thumb from a herbicide standpoint is – the smaller a plant is when we can control it, the better. It may take effort to get out there and do some scouting to identify weeds, but if you can make applications before a plant is four to six feet tall, you're going to get better control vs. when they're full grown and past the point of any control.

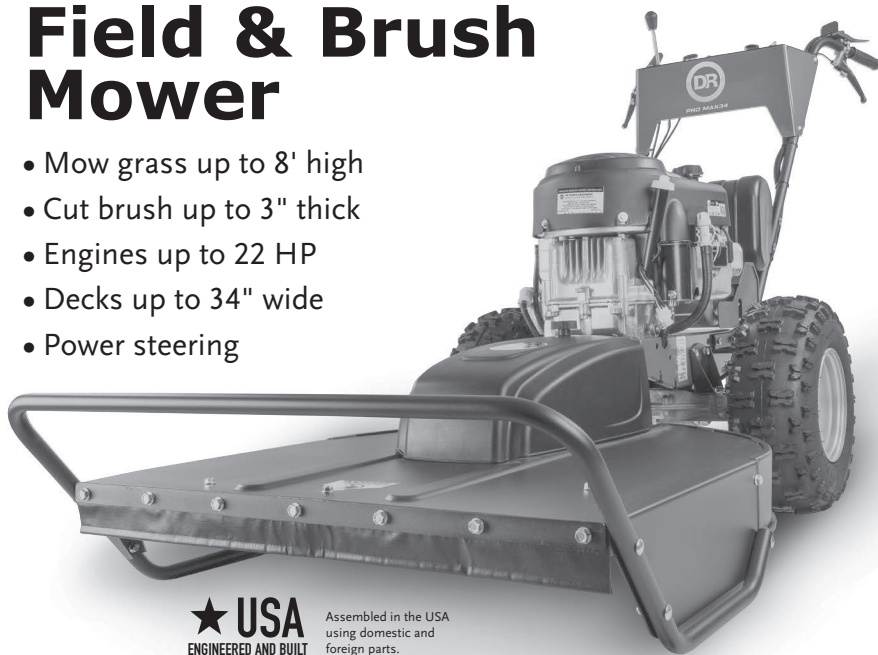
Winter annuals like field pennycress and mustards germinate in the fall and then have an early flush of growth in the spring. Fall is the ideal time for control because they grow fast in the spring, but some management can be done in the spring as well. Good note-keeping is helpful; if you can jot it down in the spring when you see the weed, it will help you remember in the fall to go out and look for it. Usually, winter annuals are the only green thing out there when a lot of things have gone dormant in the fall.

Perennial species keep coming back year after year. While it depends on the species, many times, a dual application in the spring is advisable to prevent the plant, like leafy spurge, from setting and producing seed. Then, it's recommended to come back and hit them again in the fall. This essentially reduces the reserves that plant has to keep going. It might take a few years, but eventually the plant's reserves are reduced enough to where it can finally be killed off and controlled.

Biennial plants, like thistle and mullein, take two years to complete their life cycle. Getting them under control in their first year of growth when they are in the rosette stage is ideal. The second year is when they have their reproductive growth and start producing seeds and flowers.

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What's the Buzz on Fly Control?

By Macey Mueller, Contributing Writer

As grazing season nears, producers should consider control methods to prevent flies from sucking the profit out of their cattle. University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension Educator Dave Boxler says three fly species – horn fly, face fly and stable fly – can have a significant economic impact on pastured cattle in Nebraska.

“Flies can reduce profitability and affect animal health,” he says. “I encourage producers who graze cattle to develop a fly control plan that best fits their specific economic situation and management system.”

“Doing something – even if it's less than recommended – is better than doing nothing.”

Horn Fly

The horn fly causes an estimated \$1 billion in economic loss to the cattle industry each year.

Boxler says its economic injury level (EIL) is 200 flies per animal, which is often reached in late May or early June in Nebraska, and results in reduced

milk production and weight gains. Research has shown that uncontrolled fly infestations negatively impact calf weaning weights 4 to 15 percent, while stocker cattle and replacement heifers experience up to an 18 percent impact in weight gains.

The horn fly is typically found on the shoulders, backs and bellies of cattle. Weekly monitoring for horn flies throughout the fly season is recommended, and producers should observe cattle from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. – before the heat of the day causes flies to move to the belly region.

“In our area of the country, it's not uncommon to see 2,000 to 3,000 horn flies per animal toward the later part of the fly season,” Boxler says. “We're also seeing an extended horn fly season as changing weather patterns cause temperatures to warm up earlier in the spring and stay warmer later into the fall.”

Several insecticide control methods are available to manage horn flies on cattle, including back rubs (oilers), dusters, insecticide ear tags, oral larvicides (insect growth regulators), pour-ons,

low pressure sprayers, mist-blower sprayers and air-projected capsules.

P.H. White Co., has been manufacturing the industrial-strength Cow-Life Cattle Rub since 1970. The rub can be charged with an insecticide and placed in a high traffic area to encourage cattle contact. The Tennessee-based small business has expanded its product line to include Flyps, which wick insecticide from the rub to cover more animal surface area and specifically treat the face; and Bullets, which attach easily to mineral boxes and feeders or attach to the high side of a rub to increase cattle contact.

Bob Williamson, P.H. White Co., plant manager, says the company's products are sold across the country to help producers treat flies and improve profitability.

“Flies are a real nuisance to cattle and decrease their ability to graze and gain weight,” he says. “Our cattle rub is a highly effective, low-stress method to control flies in any size herd.”

Williamson notes that it is especially important to keep rubs charged in order to reduce the chance of flies building a resistance to a specific insecticide.

“When you allow a chemical to get weak and the adult flies survive after contact, they will likely pass that resistance on to their offspring,” he says. “A lot of producers like our rubs because they are easy to keep charged with lethal doses of insecticide.”

Boxler adds that the efficacy of oilers and dusters increases 35 to 50 percent when cattle are forced to walk under them, such as in a gate or fenced alley leading to a water tank or mineral box where animals are likely to visit daily.

Other control methods like feed-through or insect growth regulator (IGR) mineral requires a steady intake to kill developing fly larvae in manure, but have no impact on adult flies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



P.H. White Co.'s Cow-Life Cattle Rub, Flyps and Bullets can be used in a number of combinations to help increase cattle contact with insecticide.



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Controlling fly infestations on pastured cattle is important to overall profitability and animal health.

Boxler says that while this is a very convenient control method, it can be ineffective if neighboring producers are not actively treating flies.

"If your neighbor doesn't have good fly control, the flies from their pasture will immigrate into your pasture," he says. "So, you may be getting great larval mortality in the manure, but you're not impacting the immigrating flies."

Insecticide ear tags are also a convenient treatment methodology. Boxler says ear tags should be applied during the last week of May or the first week in June to achieve maximum control through the fly season. Ear tags applied too early may decline in efficacy while fly numbers are still high, resulting in economic loss. Ear tag label recommendations should be followed for an optimal level of horn fly control.

Boxler says low volume sprayers and mist-blower sprayers will typically provide 7 to 10 days of control, while pour-on products will last from 21 to 28 days. Air-projected capsules can provide 21 to 35 days of control.

Regardless of the application method, Boxler says all insecticides have been placed into numbered mode of action (MOA) groups based on how they work against insects. He encourages producers to establish a rotation between MOA

groups during the fly season and from year to year to lessen resistance.

Face Fly

The face fly is a perennial issue for producers, especially in the eastern half of Nebraska where the average rainfall is higher. In addition to being a nuisance, face flies can cause damage to eye tissues and increase susceptibility to pinkeye (infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis). Pinkeye is a highly contagious bacterial eye disease that can affect performance and profitability through decreased weight gain, increased treatment expense and market discounts due to eye deformity and blindness.

Boxler says insecticide ear tags offer the best treatment for face flies, although oilers, dusters and feed-through minerals will also work. Both cows and calves must be treated for optimal control. In recurring cases of pinkeye, producers should consult their veterinarian for a commercial or autogenous vaccine.

Stable Fly

The stable fly feeds mainly on the legs and belly of cattle, and Boxler says

the EIL of five flies per leg is easily exceeded in most Nebraska pastures. UNL research has shown untreated animals had a 0.44-pound-per-head reduction in average daily gain compared to treated animals.

Weekly application of insecticides with a low-pressure sprayer or mist-blower sprayer is the best available option for stable fly control on range cattle. Boxler says cleaning up winter feeding sites may reduce localized fly development, as the decaying organic matter is a prime breeding site. Spraying into a windbreak or shaded side of a building in the afternoon can also often knock down large populations.

Despite the research and variety of products on the market, Gage County producer Terry Acton says fly control can be labor intensive, expensive and even a little frustrating at times. Nonetheless, the commercial cattleman says it's a necessity.

"Here in southeastern Nebraska, flies can be really overbearing on our cattle," he says. "Even though it can be tough to fight them, it's definitely something we have to do from a profitability and an animal welfare standpoint."

It has been especially important for Acton to change the MOA in his insecticides to decrease resistance. After successfully using a natural cinnamon and garlic mineral for two years, he says the efficacy was greatly reduced the third year.

Last year, Acton changed fly tags and also found success in the later part of the season using a 10 percent permethrin product that he applied with a small hand sprayer.

"In big groups of cattle, it can be a battle to get them to stand around long enough to spray," he says. "We had good luck making small piles of feed to get the cattle bunched up and then spraying as many as we could."

"Results don't come cheap or easy, but controlling flies is definitely an important management step." ■

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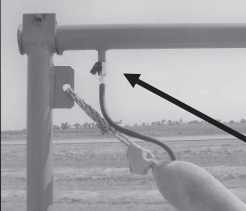


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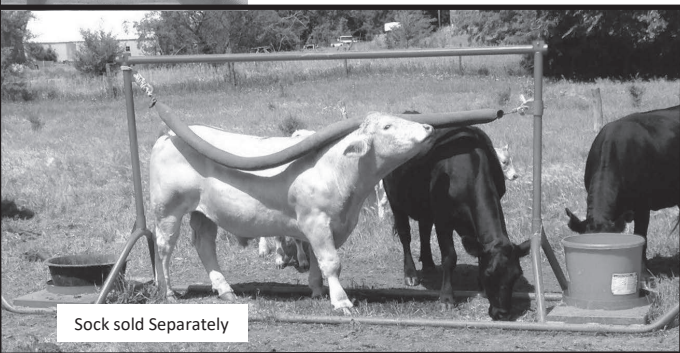
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The Complicated Issue of Power

By Lisa Bard, *Nebraska Cattleman* Editor

Valentine's Day 2021 was not a bastion of warm fuzzies in Nebraska. A cold snap had descended over much of the central United States and would prove to be one more "historic" and "unprecedented" weather event in the days after. In the end, the biggest challenge was an overburdened power grid that struggled – but ultimately persevered – to keep up with immense energy demand from Feb. 14 through Feb. 18. As with most difficult things that cause harm and chaos, the reality is that it could have been much worse.

For most of us, power is something we take for granted. When we flip the

switch, we expect the lights to come on. When we turn up the thermostat in the morning, we expect the furnace to fire up. When we go out to start the diesel pickup, we expect the engine to start because the heater we plugged in the night before kept the engine/fuel from freezing. However, if we have a better understanding of how, when, why and by whom power is delivered to our homes and businesses, we will never again take power for granted.

A Complex System

The complicated and complex systems that create and deliver power to

homes and businesses is ... complicated and complex. To simplify, power is generated at power plants and sold to public or private utility companies who, ultimately, deliver the power to customers. How that delivery is regulated is a very intricate dance that involves a balance of generation (supply) and load (demand) and is coordinated by various electric utilities, pools or organizations throughout the United States. In rural Nebraska (and beyond), the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) is the regulating organization. NPPD belongs to the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) in order to obtain power supply from a larger, more diverse, competitively priced and stable resource pool.

Here in Nebraska, public power districts, electric cooperatives and municipalities then deliver the regulated flow of power to their customers. There are more than 34 rural electric systems that provide electric service to consumers in most of the rural areas and many of the small towns in Nebraska.

This complex system involves many players along the route, and all work in tandem to provide power to individuals, businesses and organizations across the state.

Yet Another 'Perfect Storm'

The perfect power storm in February was caused by subzero temperatures over a very large portion of the United States that lasted for days. It significantly taxed energy generation, even when reserves were utilized and additional power plants were brought back into production. This event was complicated by low wind generation over the same time period, a natural gas supply shortage, and adverse impacts from the cold weather on certain fuel-relating and generating equipment. As tempera-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

WHAT IS:

ISO (Independent System Operators): An organization that coordinates, controls and monitors the operation of the electrical power system, usually within a single state.

RTO (Regional Transmission Organization): An organization that coordinates, controls and monitors a large, interstate electricity transmission grid and is responsible for moving electricity over a large, interstate area.

SPP (Southwest Power Pool): One of nine U.S. ISOs/RTOs that oversees the bulk electric system and wholesale power market in the central United States. SPP ensures reliable supplies of power, adequate transmission infrastructure and competitive wholesale electricity prices on behalf of its members within 17 states, including Nebraska. www.spp.org.

NPPD (Nebraska Public Power District): A publicly owned utility ISO and a political subdivision of the Nebraska, serving all or parts of 86 of Nebraska's 93 counties to generate and deliver energy and related services. NPPD belongs to the SPP. www.nppd.com

NREA (Nebraska Rural Electric Association): The private non-profit trade association for 34 rural electric systems that provide electric service to consumers in most of Nebraska's rural areas and many small towns. www.nrea.org

ERCOT (Electric Reliability Council of Texas): The ISO for 90 percent of Texas' electric load, managing the flow of electric power to more than 26 million Texas customers. ERCOT does not belong to SPP.

Generation: In power terms, it is the creation of energy supply for use by all types of customers.

Load: In power terms, it is the energy demands of all types of power customers.

Load Shedding: The deliberate shutdown of electric power in a part or parts of a power-distribution system, generally to prevent the failure of the entire system when the demand strains the capacity of the system.

Energy Emergency Alert Stages:

- Level 1 indicates all available generation resources are in use.
- Level 2 indicates load management procedures are in effect.
- Level 3 indicates firm load interruptions are imminent or in progress.

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tures dropped and remained low, the corresponding demand for electricity increased and, eventually, generation could not keep up with load. This combination of factors and its resulting consequences are so rare that SPP had never asked member utilities to shed firm load in its 80-year history. That became necessary beginning Feb. 14.

As frigid conditions continued and even worsened, and with the SPP asking for load shedding, the NPPD went into various Energy Emergency Alerts (see sidebar on page 24 explaining EEAs), beginning on Feb. 14. By the time the five-day event was over, NPPD had cycled through all three levels and had to implement rolling blackouts in order to avoid prolonged, widespread

blackouts, as well as to keep energy flowing to necessary/critical customers such as hospitals and nursing homes. While inconvenient and problematic, the rolling blackouts were done to avoid a larger, uncontrolled shutdown that would have affected the entire state for many days, even weeks.

For Nebraska's cattle producers and feeders, loss of power is more than an inconvenience – it can mean a loss of life in a very short time. Ranchers and feeders rely on heat, light, thawed water, and functioning equipment and feedmills to care for livestock. With little to no advance notice of the blackouts, livestock producers were scrambling to adjust and to keep livestock safe, fed and alive. Even the self-reliant,

can-do attitude of agricultural operators was tested when they were faced with blackouts that – many felt – could have been communicated in advance so that the power loss could have been planned for and/or mitigated.

In reality, the blackouts were implemented in real time by real people, and was done only as a last resort and with very little time to notify customers of what was coming. According to SPP and NPPD, predicting and communicating rolling outages is difficult, due to the real-time nature of the power grid.

Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) can attest to that, as a rolling power outage hit the NC office during the weekly staff meeting on Feb. 16, with minimal warning. As expected and was typical, the outage only lasted for about 30 minutes.

FUN FACTS:

- Nebraska is the only U.S. state in which 100 percent of its electricity is provided by public power without involving for-profit utilities in its energy mix.
- Nebraska has 166 different publicly owned utilities, consisting of 30 public power districts, eight electric cooperatives and numerous municipalities.
- The five days of record cold (2/14 through 2/18) included rolling blackouts imposed by NPPD and other Nebraska public power districts to stabilize supply and demand throughout the SPP.
- An imbalance between power supply and demand for the ENTIRE SPP footprint made the rolling blackouts necessary to avoid a larger, uncontrolled shutdown.
- Rolling blackouts across Nebraska consisted of loss of power for periods of 30 to 90 minutes. In contrast, power was out in parts of Texas in the ERCOT grid for up to four days.
- The decision to implement rolling blackouts was made in real time by humans, not computers or algorithms.
- Rolling blackouts are implemented with very little warning as they are a last resort to balance generation and load.
- SPP did not implement rolling blackouts so that power could go to Texas' ERCOT. While a very small portion of Texas is part of the SPP, 90 percent of Texas is serviced by ERCOT, which cannot and does not share power with SPP or NPPD.
- SPP does not own transmission or generation assets, but acts somewhat similarly to the Federal Air Traffic Control system, which doesn't own the airlines but helps ensure safe flight operations of the air traffic.
- As a balancing authority, SPP allows NPPD and its customers benefits such as cost savings, enhanced reliability, availability of a diverse regional generation portfolio and easier access to marketing opportunities for excess energy.
- Prices for public power on pooled grids is more stable than that from self-contained grids.
- SPP's broad footprint helps ensure energy is available to members in the event their generation is not.
- A variety of for-profit companies supply natural gas for Nebraska customers.
- Due to the increased demand for natural gas during the cold snap, providers were forced to purchase more natural gas on the open market at higher prices.

At the Local Level

Two of the many local public power districts in Nebraska shared their thoughts about the load shedding that occurred. Chet McWhorter, Cuming County Public Power District general manager, says the loss of power was a surprise to him and his staff at their office in West Point.

"We were caught off guard just like everyone else," he says. "We were participating in a training session when the office went dark, along with the rest of the town of West Point."

Once they discovered what was happening, they began communicating with customers about the kind of situation they were dealing with. As always, everyone wanted more information, regardless of what type of business they were involved in. People like to know what is happening or going to happen.

"We used all of our social media platforms, along with discussions with the local newspapers and radio stations, so that as many as possible would know what we knew," McWhorter says. "I was pleased with the response from the public and feel that they at least

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

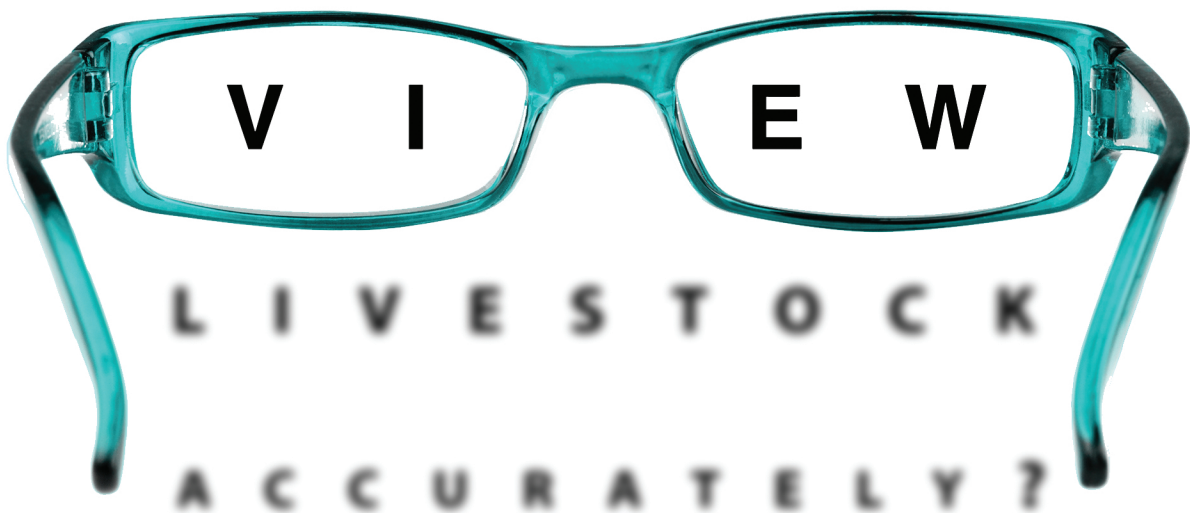
Nebraskans aren't strangers to extreme weather or sacrifice.

In early February, Nebraskans had to endure both when historic freezing temperatures forced Nebraska Public Power District to take emergency action to keep the lights and furnaces on for as many of our customers, families, friends, and neighbors as possible.

While the need for controlled, rolling power outages prevented more serious, long-term outages, we know weathering this event wouldn't have been possible without your understanding and commitment to conserve energy. Your actions helped minimize service interruptions during this unprecedented event, and **we are grateful and honored to serve you.**

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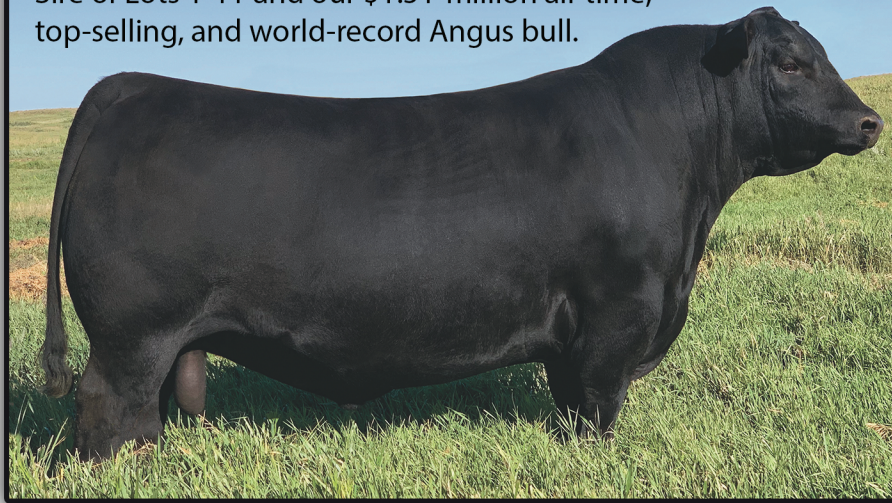
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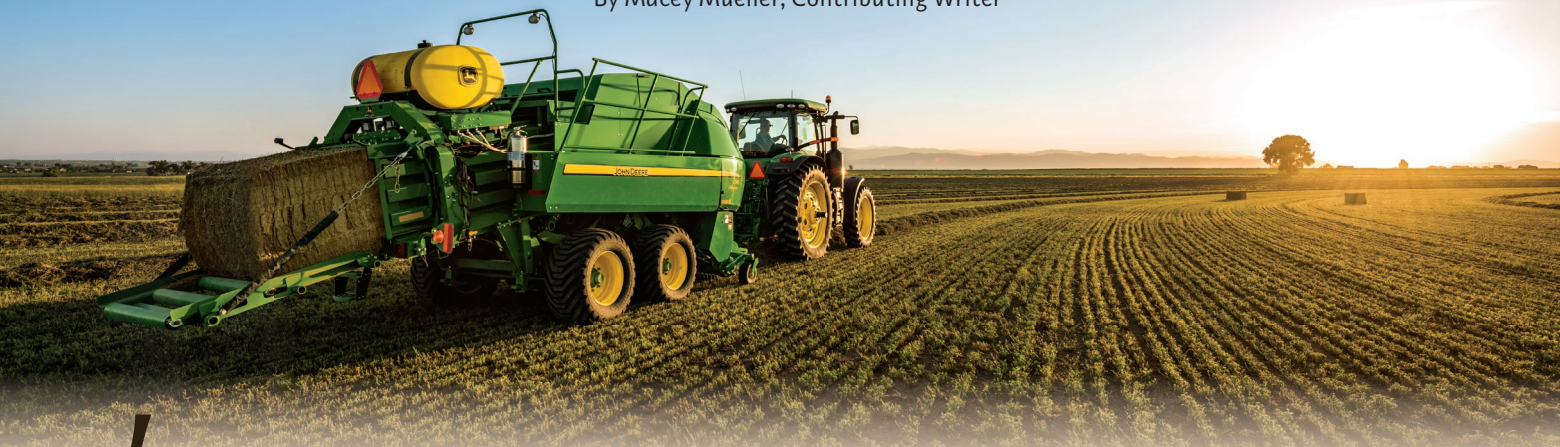
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Building a Better Bale

By Macey Mueller, Contributing Writer



If you've ever seen the rain clouds forming as you're headed out to finish baling a field or found yourself with hay that's gone bad too quickly, you know what a difference today's hay equipment technology can make in the speed, efficiency and quality of hay production. Today's hay tools are equipped with several new features specifically targeting hay quality while lowering input costs.

Mike Brown manages the KanEquip dealership in Syracuse where they carry a full line of New Holland hay equipment. KanEquip has 14 locations across Nebraska and Kansas and has been a trusted agricultural equipment dealer for more than 50 years.

Brown works with customers to find suitable tools to improve hay quality for their livestock. He says building a better bale is a combination of the right crop preparation and baling equipment. Cutting and drying the crop quickly helps retain more nutrients, while creating a dense bale cuts down on fuel, labor and supply expenses, and provides more animal nutrition and less spoilage.

"Building a better bale means those beneficial proteins are preserved for livestock and not wasted," he says. "If you put up bales with soft centers, a lot of times you're going to see spoilage, so we like that our balers create a tight center that you can't even poke your finger in."

Brown often looks at a customer's existing equipment to determine where improvements can be made. "We have a lot of information available to us that compares the functionality of different New Holland models and even that of other companies on the market," he says. "The data allows us to make comparisons between machines and identify potential upgrades that will benefit the customer."

Brad Dinkel is a third-generation agricultural equipment salesman and a co-owner of Dinkel's, located in Norfolk. He says New Holland's continued focus on building hay tools that increase productivity and help farmers get more done per hour is especially appealing to his customers. Specifically, the improvements made to increase bale density ultimately affect efficiency on several levels.

"Denser bales are important because more product in each bale means the hay will keep better and produce a higher quality feed for livestock," he says.

New Holland balers are now more compatible with higher moisture silage baling and are all equipped with on-board moisture sensors to help monitor the bale as it's being built. "If you know what you're putting in your baler, you're able to make higher quality hay," he says.

Dinkel's also offers a full line of New Holland cutting equipment, including windrowers, mower-conditioners and disc mowers. Dinkel says the self-

propelled windrowers feature improved steering and guidance systems, in addition to better efficiency. "Our windrowers are designed to travel quickly through the field without sacrificing cutting quality," he says.

21st Century Equipment is a John Deere dealer with 16 locations throughout western Nebraska, northeastern Colorado and eastern Wyoming and has been serving the regional agricultural industry since 1996.

Jake Johnson is a product specialist at the Bridgeport dealership and says John Deere has placed a special emphasis on its large square baler line, completely redesigning it to include features that make haying more efficient and convenient for producers.

The new BalerAssist system makes it possible to back out plugs from the cab with a remote, while the Bale Mobile App provides real-time yield mapping, bale documentation, bale monitoring and geo-tagging for retrieval.

Johnson says the John Deere 7 Series line of tractors, which are commonly used with square balers, have also been updated with transmission synchronization that creates a more seamless ride for the operator.

"Agricultural producers are continually getting more advanced in their use of technology, and John Deere equipment can play a key role in helping them make their operations more efficient," Johnson concludes. ■

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Wellness in Tough Times

By Susan Harris, MLS, Extension Educator, Rural Health, Wellness and Safety, University of Nebraska

At some point in our lives, we all experience the type of stress that is almost unbearable. It consumes us, eats us alive and spits us out into a new version of ourselves. Contrary to how it feels, we are not alone in this journey and we CAN recover. The key here is to ask yourself, your friends and your loved ones: “How can I best cope with today’s issues and bounce back during those moments?”

We have all heard the slogan “Nebraska Strong,” and the assumption of that translation is “Because we are Nebraskans, we should be able to handle anything that comes our way.” The Wellness in Tough Times Team at Nebraska Extension interprets that slogan very differently. Being Nebraska Strong can also mean that we have the strength to reach out for and accept help in times that are stressful. It takes strength to realize that we may be taking out our anger on others. It takes strength to muster up courage to acknowledge that stress is making life too difficult to manage. It takes even more strength to face that stress head-on and gather all defenses possible to conquer it.

Recognize and React to Symptoms of Ongoing Stress in Yourself

Do you find yourself experiencing new feelings or behaviors?

- Emotional – difficulty making decisions, lack of joy, moodiness or hopelessness.
- Physical – lack of energy, headaches, frequent illness, teeth-grinding.



wellness
in tough times

- Behavioral – sleeping too much or too little, alcohol or drug use, isolation, impatience.

If you are experiencing these feelings or behaviors, use helpful self-talk and let go of blame, telling yourself things like, “This is a learning experience.” “I did the best I could in that situation.” “I must remember to focus on controlling what is controllable.”

Keep things in perspective. Ask yourself “Are my fears realistic?” “Next year, how important will this be?” “Is my reaction beneficial?” “What can I do that is within my control?”

Be aware of automatic assumptions you make in certain situations. Sometimes when stressed, we tend to blame others for our issues. Try to look at the matter as a challenge to overcome with creative strategies rather than as a hopeless problem that others have caused.

Reaching out Is Nebraska Strong

Connect with a positive friend who is supportive, because starting a conversation about your stress can be the best therapy possible. Brittin Oakman wrote that being our messy, imperfect, authentic selves helps create a space where others feel safe to be themselves, too. Your vulnerability can be a gift to others.

Consider a confidential phone line program or a professional counselor if you feel overwhelmed and hopeless regarding any issue in your life. More and more Nebraskans (especially more men) are doing this. You are not alone. Nebraska is fortunate to have the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline, (800) 464-0258, available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time. Calls to

this number are answered by an experienced and knowledgeable individual who will recommend the appropriate contact for free confidential services to eligible individuals throughout rural Nebraska. Typical topics include: financial distress, financial counseling, farm mediation, relationship distress, any mental health needs, estate and succession planning, legal issues and more.

Self-Care for Stress Management

Self-care is not selfish. It is crucial to ongoing mental health. Develop a stress-resistant personality with these self-care tips:

- Stay active and sit less.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule with a consistent waking time. That’s right – a consistent waking time! If you are not sleepy at bedtime, it is not wise to try forcing sleep. What is important is focusing on waking at approximately the same time every day. This helps maintain that internal circadian clock in our brains, leading to better stress tolerance. In addition, get plenty of outdoor light in the morning, and lower household lights in the evening.
- Try cutting out processed foods that are formed and packaged.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid mental symptoms such as confusion and fuzzy thinking.
- Prioritize time for leisure activities or pick up a neglected hobby.
- Spend time with people and pets you love and avoid negative people.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- Look for humor in everything you do.
- Politely stand up for yourself and say “no” if there is too much on your plate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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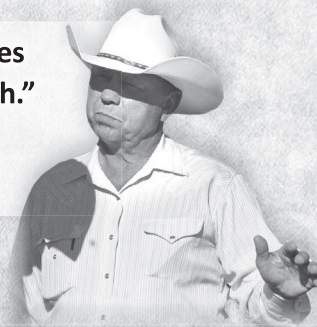
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- Share responsibilities and ask for help if you could use it.
- Realize that even if you are in a tough situation, others are living a worse scenario.
- Find ways to give to your community that cost you nothing, such as volunteering, performing random acts of kindness for strangers or making efforts to check in with those who

could use an uplifting conversation. Giving, itself, can be the best way to decrease your own stress!

Just Breathe

There is one more incredibly easy self-care regimen that is often overlooked: just breathe, and control that breathing.

Cortisol is the fight-or-flight hormone released in stressful situations. Excess cortisol threatens our physical and mental health. A growing number of scientific studies reveal evidence that controlled breathing reduces cortisol levels in the bloodstream. It can be helpful to address urgent need, but too much of it is harmful.

A solution to feeling stressed can be as simple as slowly counting to four while inhaling and counting to six while exhaling, continuing for several minutes. Longer exhales send a calming signal to the brain.

Could Others Be Reacting to Their Own Stress?

Everyone perceives stress differently and individuals react to stressful situations very differently. The difference we witness in each other is something to keep in mind as we navigate tough times. Some people hold it all in and withdraw from social connections. Some individuals lash out in anger. Others react with physical problems like headaches, upset stomachs or even chronic respiratory problems. Many suffer from sleep deprivation as stress builds, resulting in accidents and injuries.

Just for a minute, try dropping all judgments of someone and consider this: if a person you know is exhibiting a behavioral or physical change, perhaps it is a way of dealing with stress or a result of added stressors. Chronic stress may not look the same on them as it looks on you.

Mental health education is not black and white. It is not the ability to identify a weed or insect and apply exact solutions. At Nebraska Extension, we know that mental well-being is complicated and hidden to the untrained eye, but we also know the research behind stress and effective coping strategies to combat chronic stress. For a variety of resources to help lower stress levels, visit ruralwellness.unl.edu or contact Susan Harris at susan.harris@unl.edu. ■ Ng ■

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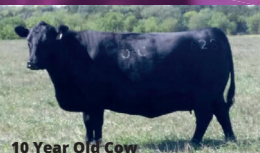
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Planning for the Future: Part 2

Understanding Social Security and How It Fits into Your Retirement

By Jessie Topp-Becker, *Nebraska Cattleman* Assistant Editor

This article is the second of a three-part series set to explore select government programs, and estate and succession planning. Keith Deras, senior vice president of The Harry A. Koch Co., (HAK) provides valuable insight into the Social Security program, answering some of the questions he receives most frequently.

When can I receive Social Security retirement benefits?

When it comes to receiving retirement benefits, it's important to remember that the age you begin collecting

benefits ultimately impacts how much you receive. You can start receiving retirement benefits at full retirement age, early retirement age or delayed retirement age.

For individuals born from 1943 to 1954, the full retirement age is 66; the full retirement age increases gradually if you were born from 1955 to 1960, until it reaches 67. Full retirement benefits are payable at age 67 for individuals born in 1960 or later.

"If you wait until your normal retirement age, you will receive 100 percent of your benefits with no earnings test," Deras explains. "Waiting is normally recommended, but a person's health and longevity might make a difference."

Individuals can receive Social Security retirement benefits as early as age 62. However, individuals who elect to do this will receive a permanent reduction in monthly benefits.

"You are also limited by how much earned income you have until your normal retirement age," Deras says. "If you make more than \$18,960 in 2021, you will give back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 above that limit for the year."

You also have the option to delay collecting retirement benefits beyond full retirement age. The amount of retirement benefit will increase up until age 70. Keep in mind there is no incentive to delay filing for your benefits after age 70.

"If your spouse does not have the 40 quarters necessary to qualify for Social Security, they can receive up to 50 percent of your benefits, which is in addition to your benefit," Deras explains. "If you predecease your spouse, they can elect to receive your benefit if it is greater than theirs. By waiting, your spouse can receive a larger benefit at your death with the full benefit paid at your retirement."

SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE FOR FARM WORK

Social Security earnings are calculated the same way for most American workers.

"For the most part, everyone who has earned income pays into Social Security," explains Keith Deras, senior vice president of The Harry A. Koch Co. "You will not receive a full quarter of the 40 quarters needed to qualify for benefits if you don't earn at least \$1,470 for a quarter, but you will still pay into the Social Security system."

That said, there are some earning types with special additional rules, including farm work.

For farm workers, your work may be covered by Social Security. According to the Social Security Administration's website, your wages from your farm work are covered by Social Security if:

- Your employer pays you \$150 or more in cash wages during the calendar year for farm work.
- You are paid less than \$150 in cash wages, but your employer reports total expenses for agricultural labor to the IRS of \$2,500 or more for the year.

For seasonal agricultural workers, Social Security covers wages only if you are paid at least \$150 in cash for the job. All requirements listed below must be met for seasonal workers:

- You commute to work daily from your home.
- You are paid on a piece-rate basis.
- You are employed for fewer than 13 weeks during the prior year.

To learn more, visit www.ssa.gov or read SSA's *If You're a Farm Worker* handbook, which can be found by visiting <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10074.pdf>.

Can I receive Social Security benefits while I am still working?

Individuals who want to stay on the job or work beyond normal retirement age may wonder if they can claim Social Security benefits while continuing to work. The short answer is yes. There are two options for continuing to work as it pertains to receiving Social Security benefits: 1) individuals can continue working and start receiving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



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retirement benefits; or 2) individuals can elect to continue working and not receive retirement benefits until after full retirement age.

Individuals who opt for the first scenario listed above should keep in mind that benefits will be reduced if you earn more than the yearly earnings limit. After reaching full retirement age, the

benefit amount is recalculated and you are given credit for any months you did not receive a benefit because of your earnings.

As explained on www.ssa.gov, for individuals who opt for scenario two, if you decide to continue working and not start your benefits until after full retirement age, your benefits will increase for

each month you do not receive them until you reach age 70. Continuing to work may increase your benefits, because current earnings could replace an earlier year of lower or no earnings, resulting in a higher benefit amount.

Who qualifies for Social Security retirement benefits? How do I get my benefits?

As you work and pay Social Security taxes, you earn “credits” toward Social Security benefits. The exact number of credits you need to receive these benefits is dependent on when you were born. According to the Social Security Administration website, individuals born in 1929 or later need 40 credits.

“Typically there are four quarters in a year, so after paying into the system for at least 10 years, you should qualify,” Deras explains. “For 2021, you will need to make \$1,470 per quarter to equal a quarter.”

The exact amount of Social Security benefits you receive depends on the amount of earnings shown on your record, which can be found by checking your Social Security earnings history. To view your earnings history or to sign up to receive your benefits, create a “my Social Security” account at www.ssa.gov. If you cannot use online services, you can also apply by phone or by appointment at a local Social Security office. Due to COVID-19, some offices are closed to the public; however, employees are still assisting people by telephone. Check with your local office to learn how they can assist you during this time.

Planning and saving to achieve your retirement goals is important, and Social Security retirement benefits is just one tool that can help you get a grasp on your financial future. To learn more about the Social Security program, visit www.ssa.gov. ■

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Fencing: A Pasture Management Tool

by Grace Vehige, Contributing Writer

Since barbed wire's origin in 1874, farmers and ranchers have used fencing for multiple functions, including as boundaries, property markers and management tools. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Extension published a guide called *Fence and Water Development for Effective Grazing* written by Jason Gross and Rick Stowell. This fencing resource covers the functions of fences, as well as tips and tools for developing the proper layout and scheme for your operation.

Fencing schemes can be adapted to fit the type of terrain you face and operation you run. With many diverse tools, products and brands, it can be difficult to identify the best method for any given situation, especially with all the environmental and operational factors that play a role.

The Value of a Well-Established Fence

For Rick Stowell, professor and Extension specialist in animal environment at UNL, the value of a well-established fence for pasture management has one key takeaway, and that is pasture management itself.

According to Stowell, people are always working to achieve better use of their land so producers must be able to manage what pasture they currently have.

"I put fencing needs into two broad categories," Stowell says. "One is to be able to identify the boundaries for your permanent and temporary grazing areas,

and then, two, is to develop small subplots or sub-paddocks, where portable fencing is used to move the cattle from subplot to subplot."

Steve Niemeyer, a beef educator for UNL Extension, echoes Stowell. "Good fence management helps with the grazing of pastures and forages, and that will help control for proper rest and time for regrowth," he says.

Types of Fencing

According to Stowell, and as outlined in *Fence and Water Development for Effective Grazing*, there are three main categories of fencing: permanent, semi-permanent and portable fencing.

Each type of fencing caters to different operational goals. For example, permanent fence can be utilized to establish boundaries around pastures or fields that will be frequently grazed, as well as around water sources; whereas portable fencing may be used to graze off corn residue or cover crops within fields where fencing is not desired year-round.

Stowell describes the fencing options, beginning with permanent fencing, which is typically barbed wire or electric high-tensile wire. Between the two, electric fence is the most common permanent fencing resource. Semi-permanent fence is relatively similar except it uses different materials and is able to be moved every once in a while. Portable fencing, however, is readily moveable, using stakes that are comparatively easy to get in and out of the ground and single strands of wire.

"The folks who are serious about managing their pastures more effectively are going to usually have at least two, and probably all three, types of fencing," Stowell says.

Niemeyer notes the mention of pivot fence in the resource guide, one of the lesser known layouts, that may be used effectively with a center pivot irrigation system.

Factors to Consider

Aside from the different materials and price options with fencing tools, there are other factors to consider. Such considerations are operation size, type of forage system, farm resources and access to water and shade.

"Fencing doesn't work by itself. You also need to think about water and cattle traffic lanes," Stowell states.

While the basics of fence design may seem simple, Stowell says producers can face issues if not attentive to underlying factors. Developing a plan and investing in quality layouts will pay off in the end.

"The longer you can stay in the pastures, the cost of your operation will be lower," Niemeyer explains. "Better fencing and more opportunities for grazing will save [producers] time on those other aspects, like not having to put up hay or not spreading manure."

Looking for More Information?

Whether you are seeking more information about fencing options, or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

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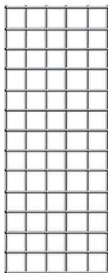


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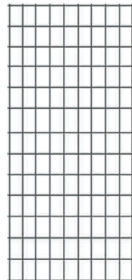


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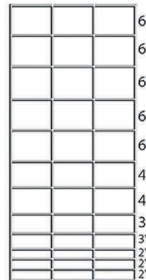
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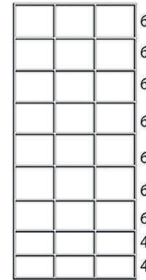
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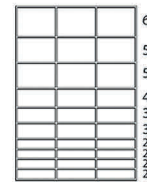
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understood what was happening, even if they didn't like it."

Communication with customers is very important during an event like this, notes Gwen Kautz, Dawson Public Power District (PPD) general manager. Many public power districts and electric cooperatives, including Dawson PPD, turned to social media to keep customers up to date on the sudden impact of the rolling blackouts.

"Even though we shared on social media, we only reach a certain demographic," Kautz says. "Pare that down to one element — we can put information out there, but we can't make people read it."

McWhorter adds that there is a lot of misinformation being spread across those same social media channels.

"At the end of the day, we are still battling against misinformation," he says. "Many in our area believe that they got their power shut off so that Texas could have it."

Another difficult issue was explaining why rolling blackouts were necessary to prevent a large-scale catastrophic

failure of the electric grid to customers facing sub-zero temperatures without electricity and struggling to prevent larger problems on their operations. The rolling blackouts are not like the typical outages Nebraskans deal with during severe weather, so the questions and uncertainty were also atypical.

"SPP did what they had to do to protect the grid," Kautz says. "Could it have been communicated better? Yes. But we also want our customers to know that we had no notice either. What made it different from a regular outage was people feeling like it was a choice we made."

Learning Opportunity

Each and every public power district responded to the critical balance of load vs. generation and, in the end, load shedding had to happen and had to happen quickly. The challenge then became how to effectively communicate the coming blackouts to customers who would have no notice and no time to adjust, adapt or pivot. This challenge

was met as best as possible given the situation, but all involved realize that this event — now that it is no longer an immediate threat — has become a learning opportunity.

In essence, how do we all communicate more effectively with our members and customers in times of crisis? How do we create or implement alternatives for customers should this happen again? Local public power districts are talking to their customers, Nebraska Cattlemen is talking to our members and brainstorming ideas to help our members, and Nebraska Rural Electric Association is doing the same. SPP and NPPD are both conducting reviews of the storm event so that they can improve next time something like this happens.

As we learn more about all sides of this issue, we hope that the shift from blame to problem solving and creating solutions occurs on all sides. Tell us your stories, concerns, ideas and thoughts at NCmag@necattlemen.org. ■NC■

EVP PERSPECTIVE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

experienced two severe ice storms in a matter of weeks that crippled the area. Bad can and will happen again. If there are legitimate solutions to this energy challenge, we must first make a fair assessment of the challenges and reasons for the problem, prior to moving forward, especially with our rural and agriculture brethren. NC staff and leaders remain committed to ensuring that will happen. ■NC■

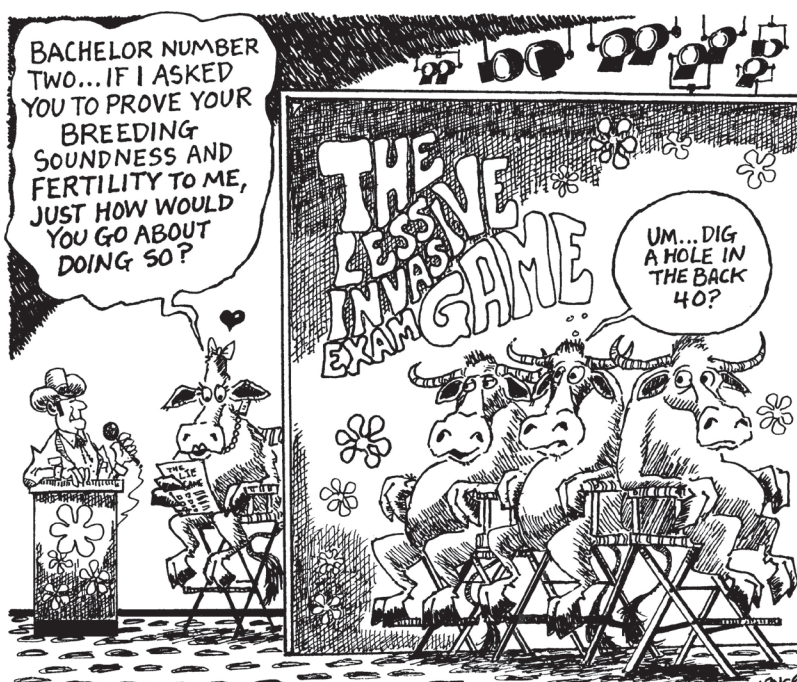
FENCING • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

are curious about Nebraska fence laws, there are resources and contacts available for you.

"The main resource I would recommend, especially for Nebraska cattlemen, would be the *Extension Circular* or a local or state extension specialist who is working with grazing livestock," Stowell concludes.

You can access the fencing resource, as well as other Extension publications, by visiting beef.unl.edu. ■NC■

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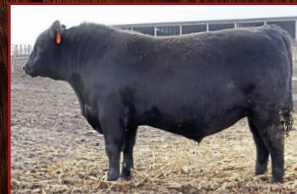
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By Jesse Fulton, M.S.
Extension Educator and Director of
Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance



The Beef Industry Believes in BQA and so Should You!

Greetings Nebraska beef producers. In my previous articles, I have discussed the importance of becoming Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified and how doing so upholds consumer confidence in beef and beef products.

Today, I want to talk about how the beef industry is making moves to use BQA as their animal welfare gold standard, and how that is good news for you. Now, like I previously mentioned, consumers care about the welfare of food animals whose product may eventually end up on their table. This leads consumers to ask questions about how their food is raised – in this instance, beef. In order to provide consumers with answers, many restaurants, food service and retailers adopt and implement animal welfare programs. One

such instance is the BQA certification requirement set forth by most of the major beef packers. If you are unaware, Tyson requires 100 percent of the cattle they purchase to come from BQA-certified feedyards. Cargill requires 90 percent. Both of these beef packers also require transporters who haul cattle to their plants to be BQA transportation (BQAT) certified.

Another instance where the beef industry is buying into the BQA program is through adopting the BQA program in its sustainability efforts. Sustainability has been the talk of the beef industry for several years now. Many organizations have or are releasing sustainability goals or implementing sustainability programs. Others are participating in sustainability initiatives such as the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

(USRSB). You may wonder how this relates to BQA. Well, to be straight forward, the USRSB considers that participation in the BQA program meets the animal welfare metric of its initiative.

Companies are either already implementing or discussing implementing some sort of animal welfare program.

So why should this matter to you? With the adoption of BQA across the industry as the standard animal welfare program, it means producers will not need to worry about implementing additional animal welfare programs in their operations in order to market their cattle. What do I mean by this? Think if every food service, restaurant or retailer had their own animal welfare program – one created by someone who has never been a part of a cattle operation. Producers would find themselves working to adopt welfare programs on their operations that may have unrealistic expectations to market their cattle. The BQA program comes from recommended guidelines developed by cattle producers, veterinarians, academic representatives and other animal wel-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46



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- 10 University of Nebraska Bull Sale, Lincoln
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- 19-21 7 Triangle 7 AI Training, Akron, Colo.
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fare experts, as well as industry-related research.

While the terrible February arctic temperatures and blizzards have taken a toll on farmers' and ranchers' psyches, the articles and pictures from around the country of calves inside producers' homes and truck cabs have demonstrated the dedication our industry has to animal welfare. However, those

positive feelings consumers are getting at the moment will subside and be replaced with a call to action to provide a more objective measurement of animal welfare improvements.

Animal welfare is a leading discussion topic for the beef supply chain. Companies are either already implementing or discussing implementing some sort of animal welfare program.

The other good news for beef producers is we have done a great job of highlighting the leading industry program that has proven to increase animal welfare across the U.S. beef industry for more than three decades, and how this program should be used as the tool to measure the industry's progress.

After visiting with Ashley McDonald, senior director of sustainability with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, it is clear that as the goals and targets are discussed in these different venues, there is recognition that trusted, science-based training programs like BQA are the only real, feasible approach to objective improvements to animal welfare. While others setting goals for our industry who are not directly involved in animal production should make you nervous, the bright spot is, if they can stay focused on programs like BQA, it will provide the needed data to show marked improvement in animal welfare across the United States. It also benefits beef producers who are already implementing BQA best management practices on their operations.

Join your fellow producers and help the industry by becoming BQA certified and implementing BQA practices on your operation today! The BQA program is offered through in-person and online training. To become BQA certified in person, contact your veterinarian, a Nebraska Beef Extension educator in your area, or find an in-person BQA training happening near you by visiting bqa.unl.edu. Jesse may be reached at nebraskabqa@unl.edu or 308-633-0158.

If you cannot make an in-person training, or you are in a time crunch and need to be certified immediately, then maybe the online BQA modules are a better option for you. These online training modules take approximately two hours to complete and are located at www.BQA.org. The online training modules are offered for free, 24/7. At the completion of the modules and exam, you are awarded a BQA certificate immediately, sent directly to your email. ■ Ng ■

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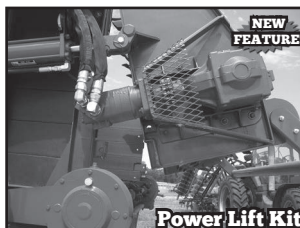
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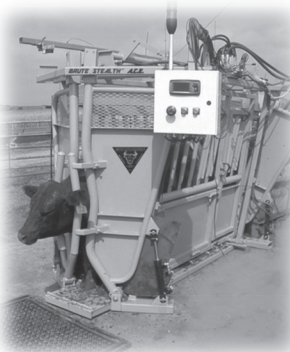
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A recent report showed the number of companies with a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions pledge more than doubled in 2020. Here in the United States, our biggest beef retailer (Walmart), the nation's (or world's) largest quick service restaurant company (McDonald's) and all major packers now have sustainability goals related to greenhouse gases, water quantity/quality and/or animal welfare. These companies are responding to customer questions about how their food is produced. While this may be viewed as "just another challenge" for the industry amidst the many issues we face, I would encourage you to think about it instead as a "challenging opportunity." The cattle industry is not immune to consumer pressure and, in the past, the industry has stepped up to turn a challenge into market-enhancing opportunities.

Bill Rishel discussed past industry paradigm shifts at the Beef Improvement Federation meeting last year. One such shift since the 1970s is our industry embracing genetic improvement to increase beef quality. Seeing market share decline through the 1970s and 1980s, because our product was not meeting standards, cattlemen and women responded to put us on the path we are on today, meeting consumer demand for high-quality beef. To combat the decline in consumer demand for beef, the industry put together a long-range plan to encourage improvements in beef quality. That same group has done so again, encouraging sustainability improvements for the industry.

While progress and change can be unsettling, there are no other industries that can compete with the benefits provided by the U.S. beef industry.

Whether it is biodiversity, carbon sequestration, preservation of open space, organic fertilization or water quality filtration, beef remains king. The U.S. beef industry converts human-inedible feedstuffs into a high-quality, nutrient-dense protein (upcycling), while at the same time providing wildlife habitat. While we can be confident that we are providing significant benefits for Americans, we must also be aware that they still expect us to take the call to address welfare and climate issues seriously. Today's influencers want a commitment to large-scale, continuous improvement, and they want that progress to be verified by others outside the cattle and beef industries.

Consumers may not care about the specificity of goals, but they do want their brands and retailers to evaluate and set robust improvement goals based on verified data. Many companies and consumers have given their proxy vote to these influencers to make the right decision on products that are carried and served. By default, these influencers make policies and purchasing decisions for global beef companies; they make policies for companies about reimbursing employees' meals; and they write letters on behalf of investment firms with trillions of dollars that can be invested with, or withheld from, companies related to the beef industry. These are the influencers we must reach, and they are not interested in cute pictures of kids with cattle. They are solely interested in quantifiable, demonstrated improvement.

While the hard part is making that demonstration in a meaningful way, there are efforts underway to do just that. There are numerous ways to contribute to the improvements in both the positive impacts of the beef and cattle industry, as well as our reputation with decision makers. Cattle and beef producers can and do participate in ecosystems services markets. Cattle producers can keep records on all aspects of the operation to identify areas that may be low-hanging fruit to make

A circular graphic with a black background and white text. At the top center is the 'FINK' logo, which consists of the word 'FINK' in a stylized, outlined font inside a hexagonal border. Below the logo, the words 'BEEF GENETICS' are written in a smaller, plain white font. The main text of the advertisement is arranged in several lines: 'Saturday • April 10' in a large, bold font; '70 ANGUS & 40 CHAROLAIS BULLS' in a slightly smaller bold font; '50 of the Angus are 18 MONTHS OLD,' in a bold font; and 'includes 25+ heifer bulls' in a bold font. A horizontal grey band with a thin black border contains the text '*Update: Females have sold, thank you for your interest!' in a white, italicized font. Below this band, the text 'Bulls: 3-year guarantee feet, semen • Complete BSE by 13 months • Athletic, not fat • DNA • No feet trimming • No clipping • Free delivery No reserve price • Marketing assistance!' is written in a white font. The next line is '12:00 pm • Randolph • Kansas' in a bold white font. To the right of this line is the 'DVAuction' logo, which features the text 'DVAuction' in a bold, italicized font inside an oval, with 'Promoting Real-Time Auctions' in a smaller font below it. The bottom section of the circle contains the contact information: 'Galen Fink: 785.532.9936' in a bold white font, followed by 'finkbeefgenetics.com' in a plain white font, 'Gene Barrett:' in a bold white font, '785.224.8509' in a bold white font, and 'barrettcattle.com' in a plain white font.

FINK
BEEF GENETICS

Saturday • April 10
70 ANGUS & 40 CHAROLAIS BULLS
50 of the Angus are 18 MONTHS OLD,
includes 25+ heifer bulls

**Update: Females have sold, thank you for your interest!*

Bulls: 3-year guarantee feet, semen • Complete BSE by 13 months • Athletic, not fat • DNA • No feet trimming • No clipping • Free delivery
No reserve price • Marketing assistance!

12:00 pm • Randolph • Kansas

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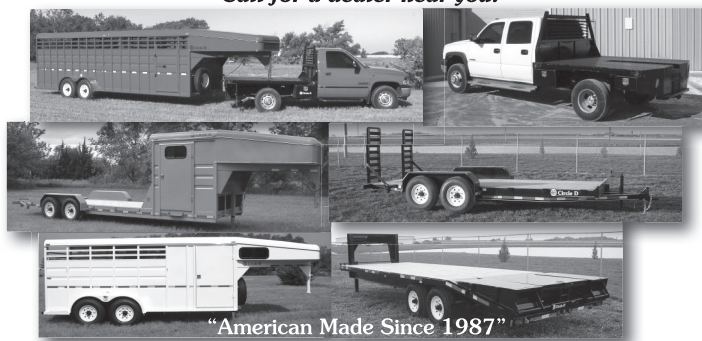
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By Jana Jensen
Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation Fundraising Coordinator



Leaving a Legacy

When I lost my father five years ago from a sudden heart attack, I wondered, "What kind of a legacy would Dad have wanted to leave?" Then I thought to myself, "My dad left my two siblings and me with a sense of responsibility to carry on, a strong work ethic and love of the land."

He grew up with the belief that you must leave the land in better shape than when you were handed the reins – and my siblings and I carry on that belief. My children will be the fifth generation on our family's ranch, and

I trust we have passed that belief on to them. The legacy that my father learned from his parents and grandparents is being instilled in future generations.

What does it mean to leave a legacy? It means putting a stamp on the future and contributing to future generations. People leave a legacy to know that their life mattered. Gaining clarity on what you want your legacy to be can give your life meaning and purpose.

A legacy is something we leave behind after we are gone. A legacy can be comprised of the intangible memories

and feelings people hold for someone. Many times, a teacher or coach leaves a legacy of a skill, attitude or way of thinking. And a legacy can also take the form of a bequest or donation directed to something specific.

A legacy can be left as a future gift in your will to support something that is near and dear to your heart. Perhaps you have always loved and supported the FFA program at your school, so in your will you leave a gift to support the FFA programs and projects in your school.

You don't have to be famous to leave a legacy. Just ask yourself: Who left a lasting influence on my life? Whoever that person was, they left a legacy that affected you and others.

I think of individuals like R.B. Warren. He left an impression – he left a legacy with his students and livestock judges all across this nation. We may chuckle, but the man made an impact on his students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in one form or another and many others. A fund was established by faculty members and former students at UNL to honor his legacy. I was never a student of R.B.'s, but I listened to him justify his placings at many 4-H and FFA livestock judging events through the years and I was one of the many who had to give reasons to the man and hoped he wouldn't spit on my boots during my reasons. Yes, he left an impression!

To leave a legacy means to leave the places you go and the people you meet a little better than you found them.

If you have interest in leaving a legacy, the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation would love to help you explore those options. Please contact me, Jana Jensen, Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation fundraising coordinator, to discuss how you might leave your legacy. I would enjoy sharing the *Planning Your Legacy* workbook, a guide to providing for your family and supporting the community you care about. Please contact me at janajensen@nebcommfound.org or (308) 588-6299. ■ NC ■

MAY 31 DEADLINE NEARS FOR CLS/NCF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Central Life Sciences (CLS) is proud to partner with the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation (NCF) in support of Nebraska's future agriculture leaders through the creation of a new Central Life Sciences Scholarship. This scholarship(s) will be dedicated to a Nebraska student(s) pursuing a degree in an agriculture-related field of study and will be awarded in June during the Nebraska Cattlemen Midyear Meeting.

Central Life Sciences is launching a program to reward scholarship dollars based on purchases of Altosid® IGR-included beef products within the state of Nebraska. As a producer, you can support local

students with your purchase of feed or mineral that contains the feed-through horn fly control of Altosid® IGR. For every ton purchased between Jan. 1 and May 31, 2021, Central Life Sciences will donate \$10 per ton to a scholarship fund established by NCF. Visit AltosidIGR.com/rebate to submit proof of qualifying purchases by May 31, 2021.





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By Jeff Willis
NCIG Director



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FedNat Insurance Company, most commonly known as FNIC, is the culmination of 17 individual insurance agencies uniting and transforming their brands, experiences, stories and futures into one. Eleven of these agencies are located in Nebraska, where they have a history of supporting their local communities and developing meaningful client relationships. You may recognize some of them from your area: Blair Insurance Agency, Burt County Insurance, Farmers & Merchants Insurance, First State Agency, Gregory's Insurance, INSUR, Insurance Services at First National Bank, Pathfinder Insurance Agency, Penner Insurance Agency, York State Agency and The Harry A. Koch Co.

All of the agencies have been part of First Insurance Group LLC, a subsidiary of the Lauritzen Corporation. We've successfully operated as a decentralized group of individual agencies for many years. However, it was clear that the

more we worked together and shared resources, the better we could serve our partners. FNIC unites our insurance agencies' cultures and values as we come together as ONE powerful entity. This new identity is a meaningful and decisive step that will lead to greater efficiencies, improved access to our teams of talented people and strengthened support of the communities in which we work.

First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO), also affiliated with the Lauritzen Corporation, has long been a supportive and collaborative partner. Our new name and logo proudly highlight that relationship in an exciting way, and signal our joint stability, breadth of knowledge and depth of resources.

NCIG

In January 2019, Nebraska Cattlemen and The Harry A. Koch Co. created the

joint venture Nebraska Cattlemen Insurance Group (NCIG), with the purpose of providing risk management and insurance services specific to Nebraska's beef producers. The Koch Co. is proud to support the beef industry and we're excited about the future with Nebraska Cattlemen as FNIC. Our name may have changed, but our relationship with Nebraska Cattlemen hasn't. We will continue to support NCIG, our clients and the Nebraska community by building relationships based on our guiding principles, including trust, integrity and communication.

FNIC's headquarters are in Omaha, with office locations and experts where you need them to be. Our team of more than 250 employees, supporting multiple insurance and risk management areas, truly operates as an extension of your operation. We see and comprehend the details and offer risk management services specific to the work you do. To learn more about FNIC, visit our website fnicgroup.com.

Learn more about NCIG at <https://nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig/> or by contacting Jeff Willis, NCIG director at NCIG@necattlemen.org or (402) 861-7045. ■**NC**■



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improvements in the herd and the land. There are opportunities to participate in research or pilot projects, or the ability to utilize agronomic and livestock

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economic benefits of farming and ranching.

Showcasing those improvements not only benefits the entire industry through protecting our domestic market share or opening international markets, but they can also benefit your operation. Regardless of the challenge or the goals that might be set, the U.S. cattle and beef industries have the capacity to meet them, but we must make the choice to do so. ■ Ng ■

LEADER'S LETTER • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

an avenue for directing NC's efforts to protect and improve the beef industry.

For both NC and the United States of America, our diversity is our greatest strength and also our biggest challenge. How we approach that juxtaposition will greatly impact the future of our organization and our nation. Will we view it as an opportunity and pursue it with intensity? Or will we allow it to divide us? Time will tell, but in the meantime I remain cautiously hopeful. ■ Ng ■

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NC Affiliates Meet, Feedlot Roundtable and More

Burwell Cattlemen Meets

Jeremy Martin, Ph.D., nutritionist with Great Plains Livestock Consulting, speaks about spring nutrition considerations at the Burwell Cattlemen's annual meeting in early March. NC President-Elect Brenda Masek also visited with the group, giving a state legislative update.



Platte Valley Cattlemen Convenes in Humphrey



Platte Valley Cattlemen Board members (left to right) Scott Hellbusch, Tyler Engstrom, Boyd Hellbusch, Brian Steffensmier, Eric Frese, Jeff Martenson and Travis Dicke (in front of the table) welcome guests to their annual banquet Feb. 13 at the Community Center in Humphrey. Platte Valley Cattlemen recognized Agri-Business of the Year Kit Held, Kit Held Seed & Chemical; and Cattleman of the Year Mike Drinnin, Drinnin Feedlots, Inc. They also awarded two youth scholarships for \$1,000 each, and listened to guest speaker Jill Pillen, UNL Board of Regents.

Stolle Presents to Northeast Nebraska Cattlemen



The Northeast Nebraska Cattlemen gathers for their annual meeting in February at Geno's Steakhouse in Wayne. NC staff member Jeff Stolle gives a market update, including a 2020 review and future projections. Northeast Nebraska Cattlemen is proud to support students through a scholarship program and encourage youth in their area to apply.

Sunderman Speaks at Feedlot Roundtable

USDA AMS Region	Minimum Needed	Needed for Robust
Texas-OK-NM	6,000/week	13,000/week
Kansas	14,000-15,000	21,000
Colorado	2,000-3,000	5,000
Nebraska	26,000	31,000
Iowa-S MN	11,000	16,000

Stephen Sunderman, NC Marketing and Commerce Committee chairman, presents "Options for marketing fed cattle and what fed cattle exchange entails" at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Feedlot Roundtable in February and March. UNL teamed up with the Iowa Beef Center, Iowa State University Extension and the Nebraska Beef Council to offer these webinar sessions for the benefit of cattle producers.

Bacon Visits with NC Staff

Nebraska 2nd District U.S. Rep. Don Bacon met with NC President Bill Rhea and NC President-Elect Brenda Masek in Kearney Feb. 18 to learn about the issues important to NC members. After spending time at the Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic, Bacon asked what he can do to best represent cattle and beef producers, especially with his service on the House Agriculture Committee. Rhea and Masek covered a wide range of issues, including live cattle marketing, electronic logging device regulation related to live cattle hauling, and the outlook for the current two-year term in Congress. The same week, NC Board member Lewis Coulter met as part of a group with Bacon in Scottsbluff. Bacon has consistently sought out NC policy positions in his three terms serving Nebraskans.

York Hamilton Cattlemen Gathers at Chances R



Max McLean, McLean Beef, speaks to the York Hamilton Cattlemen at their annual meeting in January at the Chances R restaurant in York. His discussion included an overview of his family's new animal processing and retail meat business. NC President Bill Rhea also attended and gave a legislative update.



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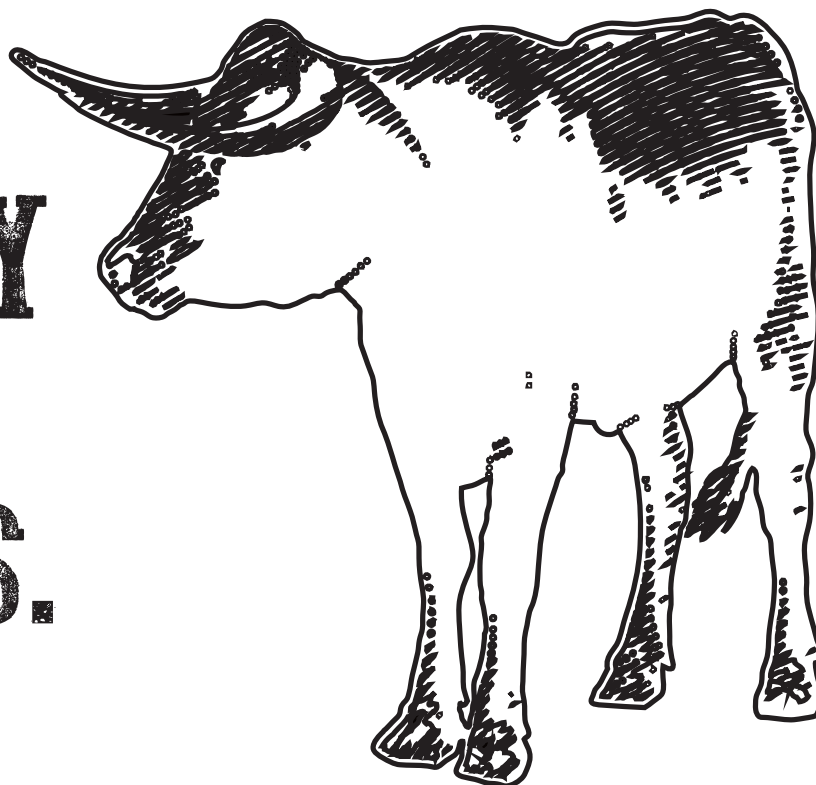
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