



# Wyoming Agriculture

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## Celebrating 41 years of dedicated service

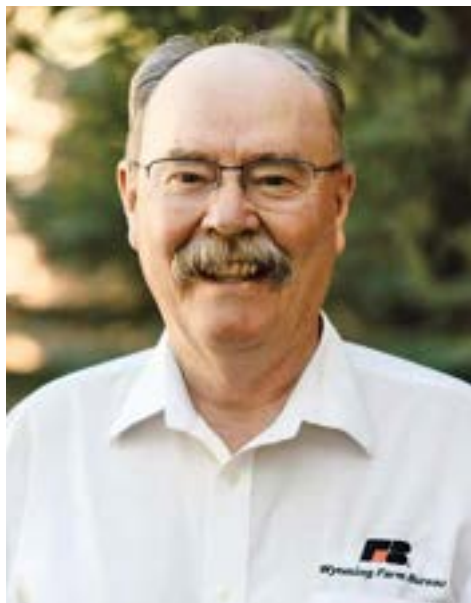
BY CALLIE HANSON  
FOR WYOMING AGRICULTURE

For 41 years, Ken Hamilton has been a staple figure in the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. Initially hired as a research and field assistant, Hamilton has made a name for himself for his continued dedication to Wyoming farmers and ranchers throughout his career with Farm Bureau.

“The Wyoming Farm Bureau has always been a strong voice for agriculture, and I’ve been proud to be part of that. It’s been an honor to help farmers and ranchers navigate the challenges they’ve faced over the years.”

His initial role as a research and field assistant tasked him with gathering information on key issues with WyFB members.

“My duties back then had me looking at different issues we were working on



Ken Hamilton

and finding background information,” he explains. “I had the responsibility to a handful of county Farm Bureaus in southern Wyoming and that was always one of the unique things about this federation is we always have staff traveling.”

“I have seen a lot of changes at Farm Bureau over the years, especially with the legislative and regulatory environment that agriculture operates in, but one thing has remained the same and that is the dedication to Wyoming agriculture.”

While Hamilton has had the chance to represent Farm Bureau through many major changes, many priorities and issues have remained the same over the years.

“When I first started at Farm Bureau, I was traveling a lot and that was fun the first few months but got old quickly,” he says. “The speed limit was 65 on the interstate and getting from Laramie to Rock Springs was a task. Now they’ve bumped

the speed limit up to 80 and that trip isn’t such a big deal.”

In addition, when Hamilton first began his career, all correspondence to WyFB members was conducted through the mail and official memos.

“I wouldn’t want to know what our postage was back then,” he says. “I worked for Larry Bourret at the time and he would write memos himself instead of having his secretary do it for him - which was pretty unheard of at the time.”

Hamilton described himself as a “flexible speller” and joked the memo and letter writing was never his strong suit. “I never wanted to be the type of person who constantly talked about the way things used to be, but sometimes you just can’t help it. So many things have changed over the years, but at the same time, many things remained the same.”

**KEN HAMILTON ... Page 3**

## ‘Gather at the Table’ at the WyFB 105th Annual Meeting

BY KERIN CLARK

“Gathering at the table is something we as farmers and ranchers enjoy,” said Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) President Todd Fornstrom. “Whether it be with our family for dinner, with friends at the annual meeting or in policy discussions, gathering at the table is a great way to have conversations.”

“For over a hundred years Wyoming farmers and ranchers have gathered at the table as county federations to put forward member issues and guide the organization,” he continued.

The WyFB 105th Annual Meeting will be November 7-9, 2024 at the Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center in Casper. For the 105th year in a row, Wyoming farmers and ranchers will “Gather at the Table” to participate in the grassroots policy development process. The state annual meeting is the culmination of the statewide policy development process that begins at the local level and then proceeds to the district and state level. Issues with national relevance supported by the state voting delegates then advance to the national level.



The Farm Bureau Federation’s grassroots strength begins at the county level when members discuss issues important to agriculture. Resolutions must be passed at both the county and district level before being considered by voting delegates at the state annual meeting.

“From county resolutions to state policy to national policy, all of the policy starts with our members,” Fornstrom continued.

WyFB’s four standing committees meet Thursday afternoon to discuss resolutions pertaining to their areas and make recommendations. The committees include: Natural and Environmental Resources (NER), State Government Affairs (SGA), Agriculture Tax (AG TAX) and General Issues (GI). The resolutions are then considered and discussed by the voting delegates during the general session.

**ANNUAL MEETING ... Page 15**



Celebrating Ken Hamilton’s  
*Retirement*  
from the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation



*Ken began his career with WyFB in 1983. He was named the Executive Vice President in 2004 and will retire on October 31, 2024.*

**MEET & GREET WITH KEN**

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7  
TIME: 4:15-6:15 PM  
LOCATION: RAMKOTA HOTEL IN CASPER, WY  
AT THE 105th WYOMING FARM BUREAU FEDERATION ANNUAL MEETING

*If you would like to send a message/letter/card for Ken please email your message to [dbrewer1@wyfb.org](mailto:dbrewer1@wyfb.org) or mail to WyFB, Attn: Dee Brewer, PO Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.*

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



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November**  
 5 General Election  
 7 WyFB Foundation Workshop/  
 Harvest for All Volunteer Event at 8  
 a.m. - Casper  
 7-9 WyFB 105th Annual Meeting -  
 Ramkota Hotel in Casper
- January 2025**  
 14 Wyoming Legislature General  
 Session Convenes  
 16-18 WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher  
 Conference - Cody  
 16-17 WyFB YF&R Collegiate  
 Discussion Meet - Cody  
 24-29 American Farm Bureau  
 Convention - San Antonio, Texas
- March 2025**  
 7-10 AFBF YF&R/Fusion Conference -  
 Denver, Colorado

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

## NOTICE

### Annual Policyholders' Meeting

December 5, 2024 – 8:00 a.m.  
 Mountain West Farm Bureau  
 Mutual Insurance Company  
 Farm Bureau Center, 931 Boulder Drive  
 Laramie, Wyoming 82070



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 strengthening agriculture, and  
 supporting farm and ranch families  
 through advocacy, education, and  
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 Tucker Hamilton, YF&R State Chair



# Get Ready for the 2025 American Farm Bureau Convention

**Zippy Duvall**

American Farm Bureau Federation President



Registration for the 2025 American Farm Bureau Convention is officially open! Whether you are a seasoned attendee or thinking of joining us for the first time, this is an event you do not want to miss. We're gathering in San Antonio, Texas, January 24-29, 2025, with a theme that resonates with what our farmers, ranchers and volunteers always do: step up, drive forward.

The American Farm Bureau Convention is the go-to event to meet other farmers and leaders, hear from experts, learn about new tools and trends and be inspired to step up and drive forward into the year ahead. It's also where we get to hear from powerful keynote speakers such as Eric Boles in our general sessions, further develop our leadership skills in our workshops and set the 2025 policy agenda for the leading voice of agriculture.

### New in San Antonio

Just like this year's theme, our staff is consistently looking for new ways to step up convention, and I'm excited to share just a few of those things for San Antonio.

This year, we will have a spotlight on our county leaders, those of you on the front lines, working for the betterment of our organization. Throughout convention,

you will see our county leaders being highlighted on the Trade Show floor, in our workshops and in many other convention offerings. New in San Antonio, the County President Celebration will provide a chance for us to applaud the great work of our county presidents, and for them to share ideas and inspiration. If you are a county president and joining us in San Antonio, please check out our agenda or reach out to your state's convention coordinator for more details and to register to attend.

The Ag Foundation's Flapjack Breakfast is a great opportunity to showcase everything our Foundation is up to and your chance to get your hands on the Foundation's "Book of the Year." We know your convention schedule can be tight, so this year, attendees can choose the "Sleep In (No Breakfast)" option in registration for only \$50. With this option, you can forego breakfast, still receive a free "Book of the Year" and donate to the great work the Foundation is doing.

### Something for Everyone in San Antonio

San Antonio is a wonderful place to gather with its warm weather and rich history, so if you're itching to get out and

see Texas agriculture, then we've got you covered with our full suite of farm and food tours catered for the whole family. From learning about Texas history to visiting numerous cattle ranches, vineyards and even a co-op cotton gin, there's something for everyone to explore. These tours are a great way to see how others in agriculture are innovating in the Lone Star state – you're sure to take home some great experiences.

We also have an exciting schedule of workshops, so whether you're passionate about policy, rural development, member engagement or reaching consumers, we have sessions tailored to your goals. You can hear updates about issues directly affecting our farms and communities like the farm bill, labor, trade and a deep dive into the 2024 election. Additionally, there will also be workshops focused on engaging the next generation, improving mental wellness in rural America and empowering members to share Farm Bureau's mission and purpose. Each of these sessions are going to be packed with knowledge from experts, ensuring that you leave feeling more equipped with the tools and insight you need to step up and drive forward.

AFBF CONVENTION... Page 16

# Reflecting on 41 years

**Ken Hamilton**

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President, Retired



Most of you have heard that I announced at our annual meeting in 2023 that I had intended to retire from my role as EVP for the Wyoming Farm Bureau at the end of October this year. Now that November is upon us, I wanted to take a little time to reflect on all of the things that happened over my 40+ years with the Farm Bureau and also thank all those folks who were and are a part of the Farm Bureau family.

Forty-one years ago I came to work at the Laramie office which at the time was at 21st and Garfield. Dave Flitner was WyFB president and Larry Bourret had taken the helm of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation after serving as the Director of the Department of Agriculture. My wife, Kathy, and I had been working on our family's ranch in the Big Horn Basin. If anyone remembers those times, they will remember that the 80s were not kind to agriculture. The chickens had come home to roost as far as overspending by our government.

The bills for the Vietnam war and excessive spending on the "New Deal" led to strong inflationary pressures and the subsequent rise in interest rates. Agriculture found themselves looking at 15- 20% interest loans in a business that at the best of times would return 5%. Something had to

give and give it did. Some of our Farm Bureau leaders I worked with lost their operations and left the agriculture world. Everyone was searching for some type of solution but like most problems of this scope there were few, if any, available. I know the Farm Bureau staff at the time experienced a wide range of emotions and heartbreak when we learned that another member was being foreclosed upon.

At the same time we were dealing with interest rates, we were working on an in-stream flow initiative, some endangered species issues (pre-wolves in Wyoming) and some of our long-time members will remember the "sage-brush rebellion" that folks in Wyoming and the West were advancing as a solution to some of our federal lands problems.

I've mentioned to folks that it seems that I've worked on a lot of the same problems for the last 40 years. We are still dealing with federal lands issues that threaten those members who graze on federal lands.

Years ago former Representative Dick Cheney advanced a Wyoming Wilderness Bill that took thousands of acres of Forest Service lands out of multiple use and was passed by Congress and signed into law. Yet today, we are seeing another attempt

to address wilderness designations under a law that stacked the deck against multiple use. Even though Wyoming has the highest percentage of Forest Service lands with Wilderness designations of any state in the Union, we still find ourselves negotiating for more.

Wolf introduction was advanced as a way to "restore the Yellowstone ecosystem." Farmers and ranchers knew that the Department of Interior's promise of placing wolves in Yellowstone and being happy with them there were, like many of their past promises, merely the beginning of their advancement of a large, efficient predator into the back yards of our members. At the same time grizzly bears were expanding to meet the recovery goal.

Today we have a mixed bag all because of a poorly written law that Congress refuses to update. Wolves are considered recovered in Wyoming. In a September 24, 1990 People Magazine article Norm Bishop, a Yellowstone Park Ranger, assured the Big Horn County Farm Bureau members that the "wolf population will not be allowed to expand beyond 150 over the next 30 years – excess wolves will be shot – and Bishop assures farmers they have nothing to fear."

REFLECTING... Page 7

# National news updates

BY KELLY CARPENTER

## Protest period comments

The WyFB has submitted comments during two Bureau of Land Management (BLM) protest periods. One set of comments was regarding the BLM's Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and the other was on the BLM's Final EIS for Rock Springs Resource Management. To participate in protest period comment submission, individuals or entities must have been involved in the process prior to the final comment period. The summary of our submission reiterated our policy and how certain aspects of the final proposals didn't line up with their final proposal.

## National Old Growth Amendment

In June 2024, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for its National Old-Growth Plan Amendment (NOGA) associated Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). NOGA would amend 120+ land management plans in the USFS system. This is problematic as each forest has different needs, and old-growth forests have unique management requirements and

plans already in place. Coalescing around NOGA is ineffective for the management plans that have already been completed. In addition, cooperating agencies need to play a central role in the NEPA process, and until now they have not been allowed to do so. WyFB submitted comments on behalf of membership and in accordance with WyFB federal land management policies, such as maintaining multiple use and sustained yield of resources from the land while using peer-reviewed science to do so.

## Beneficial Ownership Information reporting under the Corporate Transparency Act

We encourage our members to consult trusted sources, such as an attorney, to guide them through the reporting process for their companies, however we'd like to remind folks about potential looming beneficial ownership reporting deadlines. If you have created an entity since Jan. 1, 2024, then you will need to file with FiNCEN within 90 days of registration. If you had an existing entity prior to Jan. 1, 2024, then you have until Dec. 31, 2024, to file with FiNCEN. Visit the Department of Treasury FiNCEN site for more details. ■

KEN HAMILTON... From Page 1

Despite the recurring idea that there are less people involved in agriculture, Hamilton notes WyFB has seen a steady growth of membership over the years. However, there has been no shortage of change amongst the producers and types of agriculture products.

"They used to call Star Valley the Switzerland of the Rockies because there were so many dairy farms, and you just don't see many dairies here anymore," he says. "Sheep are the same way. We still have a good population of sheep producers, but it pales in comparison to 30 years ago."

Throughout his career, Hamilton has had the unique opportunity to represent farmers and ranchers through a variety of issues in the legislature. From transportation and water issues to raging wildfires, Hamilton has been fighting alongside Wyoming's farmers and ranchers for decades to ensure they had a voice in the legislature.

"You know, I'm of that age where when I was growing up, we were still shipping livestock via trains and now it's all done with trucks," Hamilton explains. "I think often about how countries like Brazil and Argentina have large agriculture sectors and a huge advantage over us with labor availability. In theory they should be able to dominate the world market but they simply don't have the transportation infrastructure."

Transportation, according to Hamilton, is the difference maker in the world market for U.S. ag products, including those produced in Wyoming. For many years, he has worked closely with legislatures to ensure transportation legislation continues to benefit farmers and ranchers.

Hamilton noted over the years, the logging industry has steadily declined, leaving many forests susceptible to fires as dead trees are an ideal fuel for wildfires.

"We have dodged the fire bullet for a while here in Wyoming, but we knew we wouldn't be lucky forever," he says. "These range fires have been really bad this year, but fire preparation isn't a simple thing and we aren't necessarily a fire hot spot," he says. "We have worked for years to support legislation that would support healthy forest and range management to minimize the risk of fires."

"I have been around through quite a few representatives and senators and I always wanted to make sure WyFB had a voice in those decisions and our membership would be represented when the pen meets the paper," he says. "Producers may not have a direct line to the legislature, but we do our best to ensure they have a voice."

Hamilton noted the legislature itself has changed with the times. "I think one of the biggest differences is how cordial representatives were back then compared to now," he said. "Used to, they could disagree and still go have dinner together. You just don't see as much of that anymore."

Throughout his decades-long career, Hamilton never gave much thought to the legacy he would inevitably leave behind as he wrapped up his time at the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation.

"I never gave much thought to my legacy or that sort of thing. In my mind, the most important part of what I did here was represent folks in agriculture," he says. "There have been times where our policies may not have completely matched my own beliefs but I always believed my place was to carry the policies of our members to policy makers in the legislature and beyond." ■

# WYOMING FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION Member-CENTS

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation believes constitutional government, the competitive enterprise system, property rights and individual freedom are necessary components for a strong agriculture, a strong Wyoming and a strong America. We are a centennial grassroots organization that cares about your future. Whether you are a farmer, rancher or a consumer of food...membership is a good investment to secure stability of agriculture here in Wyoming. As a member, WyFB provides you with exclusive benefits as a way to say thank you. These benefits may pay your annual membership fee many times over.

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

Current members may access member benefits at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org) and click on the "Membership/Benefits" tab. You may also utilize the Farm Bureau Member Benefits app on your phone to access your benefits. **Questions:** email [bsettelmeyer@wyfb.org](mailto:bsettelmeyer@wyfb.org) or call 307-721-7723.

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## Connections and skills

BY TUCKER HAMILTON  
WyFB YF&R STATE CHAIR

It was a cold January day, but the sun was shining brightly. I was standing amongst my fellow agriculturalists listening to a passionate young producer tell us about her diversification operations on her Hereford ranch in Jackson Hole. This was the first step I took into the Farm Bureau Federation, Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

Hello, my name is Tucker Hamilton and I am the current chair of the YF&R committee. I have been on the committee for five or six years, I forget exactly how long, serving this last year as the chairman. According to the committee's namesake, you need to be a young farmer and or rancher, so we limit our membership to those who are 35 or younger. Sadly, I age out this year and will hand the reigns over to those younger than me. It has been an exciting few years on the committee.

My first involvement with the YF&R committee was attending the annual conference they host that was in Jackson Hole Wyoming in 2017. It was an interesting conference that included a Brucellosis discussion panel, talks on working in a challenging economy, and working together as a family on your operation. One of the highlights of every conference is the tour that is scheduled. We toured the Jackson Hole Hereford ranch. It was fascinating to see what someone else, who raised cattle just like me, was doing differently and

how she was adapting to her local market and environment. It expanded my horizons.

I was elected as the YF&R committee member at large soon after that experience and began to serve the federation in leading young farmers and ranchers. The next year I was formally elected to a two-year term at the Northeast District meeting. A position I have held for several terms.

The top two things I have taken away from my experience with the YF&R committee are my connections with the other young farmers and ranchers across the state of Wyoming and outside of the state, and my leadership skills that have been developed within the committee. Being a part of YF&R is really an amazing experience. You get to travel, meet others who share your values, debate with inquisitive minds, and enjoy interesting experiences with your friends. The committee also gives you ample opportunity to develop your leadership skills, improve your public speaking, think in new ways, and springboard into other leadership roles after you leave the committee.

I would recommend to any young farmer or rancher who is less than 35 to check out getting involved with the YF&R committee with the Farm Bureau Federation. You will get hooked and come out the other end as a better person with broader horizons. It is also a load of fun. ■

*Tucker Hamilton and his wife Annie ranch with his parents Monte and Francie Hamilton. He is a 4th generation owner/operator of a commercial cattle ranch in Northeast Wyoming.*



Tucker Hamilton

### YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER CONFERENCE



JANUARY 16-18, 2025 • CODY, WYOMING



### WyFB YF&R Committee Representative-At-Large Position voted on at annual meeting

On Nov. 9 at the WyFB Annual Meeting, an at large position for the WyFB YF&R Committee will be voted on by state voting delegates. The WyFB YF&R Representative-At-Large position is a one-year term.

The objective of the Committee is to give young farmers and ranchers, serving as a committee within the federation structure, the opportunity to recommend programs and activities that will encourage participation of young farmers and ranchers in both the YF&R and total Farm Bureau program. This is an energetic

committee dedicated to the success of young farmers and ranchers and agriculture across Wyoming.

Potential committee members must be between the ages of 18-35 and a regular Farm Bureau Federation member. Those interested should notify your county president to request an application and nomination form or contact Kerin Clark at 307.534.6175 or [kclark@wyfb.org](mailto:kclark@wyfb.org). Application forms are also available at [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) (Click on "Get Involved/YF&R/Committee.") Forms submitted will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee at annual meeting. ■

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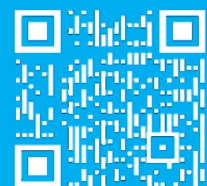
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# Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center Casper, Wyoming

## AGENDA: (Tentative)

Updates will be posted at [wyfb.org](http://wyfb.org) (Events Tab)

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

- 11:15 am YF&R Committee Meeting – *Teton Room*
- 12:15 pm YF&R Committee Lunch – *Teton Room*
- 3:00 pm Board of Directors' Executive Session – *Natrona Room*

### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7

- 7:00 am Standing Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs Breakfast – *Teton Room*  
Breakfast buffet is provided.
- 8:00 am Board of Directors' Meeting – *Natrona Room*
- 8:00 am WyFB Foundation Workshop – *Wyoming Theatre & Food Bank of Wyoming*
  - ◆ "Make it Magnetic: How to Attract Unbeatable Volunteers" – Margee Wolff, Vice President Leadership, Education & Engagement, American Farm Bureau Federation
  - ◆ "Feed the Need": Harvest for All Service Project – Food Bank of Wyoming (5150 Reserve Dr. Evansville, WY 82636)
- 11:00 am Registration – *Hotel Entrance*
- 12:00 pm Noon Luncheon for registered attendees – *South Ballroom*
  - Presentation of Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance Agent and VP awards
- 1:30 pm Standing Committee Meetings
  - #1 General Issues – Toni Swartz, Chair – *Central Ballroom*
  - #2 State Government Affairs – James Ramsay, Chair – *Wyoming Theatre*
  - #3 Agricultural Tax – Andrea Dockery, Chair – *Remington's Restaurant*
  - #4 Natural/Environmental Resources – Kyle Berger, Chair – *Teton Room*
  - \* Credentials and Nominating Committee meetings held after completion of Standing Committee meetings
- 4:15 pm Ken Hamilton's Retirement Social (Open to the public) – *South Ballroom*
  - Celebrating 41 years of service to the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
  - Light Hors d'oeuvres served
- 7:00 pm Taproom Trivia Night – *Gruner Brothers Brewing* (1301 Wilkins Circle Casper, WY 82601)
  - Trivia presented by: Andy Schwab, Northern Ag Network
  - Open to the public

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8

- 6:30 am Breakfast – *Remington's Restaurant*  
\* Complimentary breakfast is provided for attendees staying at Ramkota Hotel & Conference Center.
- 6:45 am County Presidents & Vice Presidents Breakfast Meeting – *Teton Room*  
\* Breakfast buffet provided.

- 8:30 am General Session with President Todd Fornstrom Presiding – *Wyoming Theatre*  
Delegates assemble by county
  - Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance: Cody Alps, WyFB YF&R Vice Chair
  - National Anthem: Stacy Berger & Family (Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation)
  - Welcome: Cole Coxbill, WyFB Vice President
  - Introduction of President: Raenell Taylor, Northeast District Director
  - President's Address: Todd Fornstrom, President
  - Executive Vice President's Report: Kerin Clark, Executive Vice President
  - Insurance Company Report: Jim Geesey, President and CEO, Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Ins. Co.
- 9:30 am Guest Speaker: Terri Moore, Vice President, Communications, American Farm Bureau Federation
  - ◆ "Remaining Relevant in a Changing World: Trends and Opportunities"
- 10:15 am Morning Break - *Hallway*
- 10:45 am General Session cont.
  - Appointment of Parliamentarian by President Fornstrom
  - Credentials Committee Report Presented by Committee Chair
  - Official Seating of the Delegates
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Election of Election Chairperson and (3) Election Clerks – Kristi Ellis
  - Explanation of Voting Methods on Resolutions and Revisions – President Fornstrom
  - Preliminary Nominating Committee Report and List of Candidates by Committee Chair
- 11:45 am Farm Bureau Member Memorial Presentation
- 12:00 pm Noon Luncheon – *South Ballroom*
  - Northern Ag Network Live Radio Broadcast
  - WyFB Foundation Silent Auction will be open during lunch
- 1:30 pm General Session cont.
  - Guest Speaker: Shelby Hagenauer, Senior Director, Government Affairs, American Farm Bureau Federation
  - ◆ "Federal Policy in the West: What You Need to Know"
- 2:15 pm Ice Cream Social – *Terrace*
- 2:45 pm General Session cont.
- 5:00 pm General Session Recesses for the evening
- 5:15 pm Cash Bar – *South & Central Ballroom*
- 6:30 pm Dinner & Award Presentations for Registered Attendees – *South & Central Ballroom*
  - WyFB Foundation Silent Auction Reopens
- 7:45 pm WyFB Foundation Live Auction: Andy Schwab, Auctioneer
- 8:15 pm Music by Davis & Mavrck

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

- 8:00 am General Session Reconvenes – *Wyoming Theatre*
  - Veterans Day Recognition
    - Patriotic Medley
    - Buddy Check Woobie – Creating a bond of understanding, where care and compassion uplift those who have walked the same path – Marty Martinez, Director, Veterans Services Center; Joshua Hepworth, Program Coordinator Sr., Veterans Services Center
  - Guest Speaker: Mark Truax, President & CEO, Pac/West Strategies
    - "2024 Membership Survey—Knowing Our Members & How to Best Engage"
  - Credentials Committee Report
  - YF&R Report
  - Final Credentials Committee Report by Chair to Determine Voting Ballot Numbers
  - Final Nominating Committee Report by Chair
  - Election of Officers, Election Chair presiding
  - ELECTION FORMAT – Repeated for the offices of President; Vice President; Director-at-Large; and YF&R Committee Representative-at-Large
    - Nominations from Floor
    - Candidates Address Delegates
    - Election of Officers
  - Approval of Format for Resolutions at 2025 Annual Meeting
- 12:00 pm Noon Luncheon for Registered Attendees – *South Ballroom*
- 1:00 pm General Session Reconvenes (if necessary)
- Adjourn Thank you for attending!

\* SGA Committee will meet in South Ballroom with the NER, GI, and Ag Tax committee chairs after the General Session adjourns to prepare 2025 Legislative and WyFB priority recommendations  
\* YF&R Committee will meet in the Wyoming Theatre after the General Session adjourns



## ATTENTION: County Farm Bureau Federation voting delegates To State Annual Meeting

Proposed resolutions were emailed and mailed to the county secretaries prior to annual meeting for distribution to county voting delegates. Delegates are encouraged to review and research the proposed resolutions prior to the state annual meeting. Please remember to bring your resolutions copies with you to annual meeting.

**GATHER AT THE TABLE**  
 WYOMING FARM BUREAU FEDERATION  
 105th Annual Meeting  
 November 7-9, 2024  
 Casper, Wyoming

**Make it Magnetic**

**FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**8:00-9:30 AM: Make it Magnetic: How to Attract Unbeatable Volunteers led by Margee Wolff, American Farm Bureau Federation**  
 In this interactive session, you'll explore the principles that attract members to volunteer opportunities and learn the tools you can use to help new volunteers stick with your organization for years to come.

**9:30-11:30 AM: Feed the Need with Harvest for All Service Project**  
 Join in on packing food boxes at the Food Bank of Wyoming as part of the WyFB "Harvest for All" project.

**NOV 7 | 8:00-11:30 A.M. | RAMKOTA HOTEL & FOOD BANK OF WYOMING**

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY:**  
 WYOMING FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

**REGISTER BY EMAILING:**  
 bssettmeyer@wyfb.org

*Cooking With the Modern Ranch Wife*

**Cheesy Hamburger Soup**

Recipe by Connie Werner

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 pd ground beef
- 1 lrg onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4-5 potatoes, chopped into bite size pieces
- 2-3 carrots, sliced into coins
- 1-2 celery stalks, chopped
- 6-8 cups chicken broth
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp parsley
- 1 tsp paprika
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2-3 cups heavy cream, half and half, or milk
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 2 cups cheddar cheese

**Directions**

- In a large pot, cook the ground beef until browned. Drain. Add onion and garlic and saute until the onion is tender.
- Add potatoes, carrots, celery, thyme, parsley, paprika, salt and pepper. Stir to combine.
- Pour in broth and stir. Cook over medium-low heat about 35-45 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
- Stir in heavy cream, shredded cheese, and milk.
- For thicker soup add 2 tbsp cornstarch to 1 cup of milk, stir to combine. Pour into soup.
- Cook on low for another 5-10 minutes until thickened. Enjoy.

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



**REFLECTING...** From Page 2

While not as blatant as Norm Bishop's statement, the Department of Interior's original recovery goal for grizzly bears was 200. Of course, by then there wasn't anyone from Interior ensuring that we had nothing to fear. Instead, we had environmental lawyers and activist judges refusing to let grizzly bears be delisted even though the number was five times higher than the original recovery goal. And people wonder why farmers and ranchers have trust issues with the federal government.

In 40 years, there have been a number of governors in our state. Governor Ed Hershler who had served for 12 years was replaced by Governor Mike Sullivan. Governor Jim Geringer was then elected for eight years followed by Governor Dave Freudenthal. Eight years later Governor Matt Mead was elected who was followed by Governor Mark Gordon. If you are keeping track of the political split, we've had three Democratic governors and three Republican governors during that time. Through all of those governors, Farm Bureau worked with them to bring agriculture's concerns to their policies. This meant we agreed with them sometimes and disagreed with them sometimes. Hopefully, all of them recognized whether we agreed or disagreed, we were carrying the message of our members.

The 70s saw our timber industry fall to the anti-logging campaigns of the environmentalists. Forty years later we have conflagrations on our national forests and millions of board feet of timber are burned while sawmills remain closed. One long time "lock things up" advocate is now saying our fires aren't the result of trees growing old and dying, they're the result of wind. And no, I'm not kidding. Meanwhile plastic grocery sacks are being vilified by the same types of folks who vilified paper sacks we used to put our groceries in because we were cutting down trees for them.

Agriculture has made tremendous strides in productivity in 40 years. We

have fewer acres of corn but vastly more corn. We have fewer cattle, but more pounds of beef. In 1983 there were about 4.7 billion people on earth. Now it's estimated that there are over 8 billion people. Our population has increased by 70% and yet widespread famines are rare. Food or lack of food is rarely the problem when famines strike. More than likely it's bad government policies and even after watching countries initiate policies that result in hunger and famines, we still see people try to adopt the same policies that result in these catastrophes. Go figure.

Robert Delano, Dean Kleckner, and Bob Stallman have led and now Zippy Duvall leads the American Farm Bureau. All brought their individual perspective to the organization and while they left their imprint on the AFBF, they also worked with the same system set up many years ago to represent our members. The staff at the AFBF kept things going throughout the presidents and helped carry out their vision.

On the state level, Dave Flitner, Karen Henry, and Perry Livingston have led and now Todd Fornstrom leads the organization. All of them brought different perspectives and skills to the organization.

After 40 years, the list of who I would like to thank would be so long it would take up too much space. The members of county Farm Bureaus have dedicated countless hours to working for agriculture in their county as well as the state and even the nation. These folks also spend time raising their families in these communities. They spend their nights, weekends, and holidays working for the kids in the community by being volunteers in their 4-H, FFA, church, school, conservation district and enumerable other groups and organizations. Some have dedicated their time to running the WyFB and AFBF but all of them have helped support their communities and agriculture.

We've also been fortunate to have a dedicated group of folks who work, and have worked, for the organization. These

are the people who have kept the wheels running, changed the oil and fueled the organization up when it was needed. There really aren't enough "thanks" for them all.

After 40 + years of working on issues and problems, I'm very much aware that

walking out the door will not result in anything bad happening. In fact, just the opposite is likely to occur. I've seen a lot of good folks step up to take on the tasks needed. They will continue to do just that.

Thanks to everyone and thanks for everything. So long. ■

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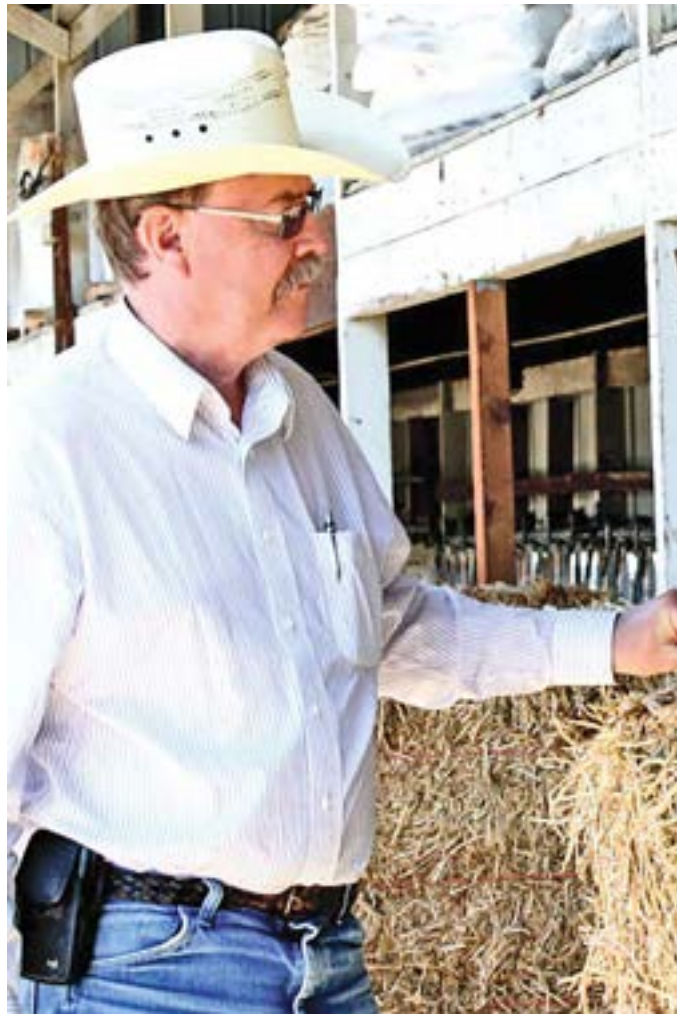
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# CONGRATULATIONS & THANK YOU Ken Hamilton

Celebrating retirement after  
**41 YEARS**  
of Service with the Wyoming  
Farm Bureau Federation



Always learning about agriculture and sharing his knowledge with others.

- Ken began his career with WyFB Oct. 3, 1983.
- He was named the Executive Vice President in 2004.
- He retired Oct. 31, 2024.



Hamilton began his career as a Research and Field Assistant in 1983. He was later named the Administrative Assistant and in 2004 he became the Executive Vice President.

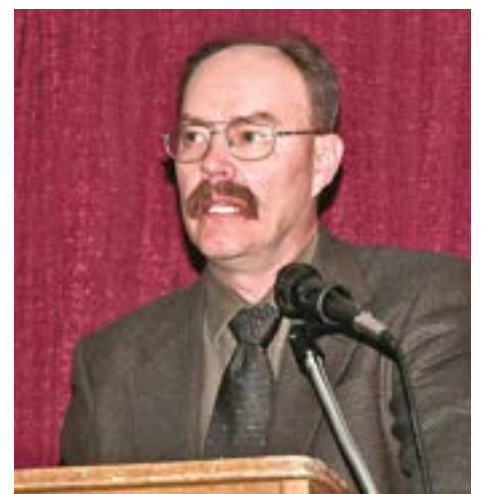


A smile and sense of humor are trademark traits.

Raised on a ranch in Big Horn County, Hamilton represented agriculture in many capacities throughout his tenure. Shown here he was helping with a video filming in the 1980s.



From interviews in the hayfield to the capitol to outreach events, Hamilton has greatly impacted the organization. In this photo, Ken and his wife Kathy are manning a booth at the Wyoming State Fair.



Delivering his executive vice president address to members in 2005 at the WyFB annual meeting.



Hamilton was named the Outstanding Alumnus for the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture & Natural Resources in 2015.



Hamilton's family in 2015 celebrating his award as the Outstanding Alumnus for the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. Left to right: Parents the late Merle and Eleanor Hamilton; Hamilton with wife Kathy and son Ian.



Hamilton in the Wyoming Capitol Rotunda where he spent decades representing Wyoming agriculture policies.



In 2018, the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation awarded Hamilton the WyFB Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to those who have gone above and beyond in their service to agriculture. WyFB President Todd Fornstrom (left) presented the award to Hamilton (right). Son Ian and wife Kathy joined in the presentation.



Hamilton speaks to member at the 100th Annual Meeting of the organization in 2019.



Farm Bureau is a family. It also takes family to support the work we do for agriculture. Hamilton's wife Kathy has supported him in many ways throughout his tenure with the organization from working booths to attending meetings to helping with transportation. In this October 2024 photo, Ken and Kathy Hamilton pose for a picture before a staff dinner celebrating his retirement.



Hamilton has shared his knowledge and represented Farm Bureau members at many levels including testifying at the Nation's Capitol on the need for Endangered Species Act reform in September 2023.



Hamilton's knowledge about agriculture, Wyoming and its people is incredible. He has represented Wyoming agriculture through many different platforms from newspaper articles to radio interviews to testifying at the legislature and so much more.



On the steps of the United States Capitol representing Wyoming agriculture.

**Knowledge. Agriculture. Dedication. Leadership.**



*Thank You Ken Hamilton!*

Wyoming Classifieds

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

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New Members

**ALBANY**  
 Elizabeth French, Laramie; Monte Crabtree, Laramie; Rhiannon Cole, Laramie; Carley Pitts, Laramie; Cassie Fenske, Laramie; Donald Perry, Glendo; Robert Ronald, Laramie; Gabi Cepek, Seward, NE

**BIG HORN**  
 Stephen Anderson, Byron; Shannon Armstrong, Greybull; Dana Werbelow (REG), Shell; Rodney Galusha, Greybull; Josephine & Rodney Crosby (REG), Basin; Jo Ellen Gasvoda (REG), Worland; Chase Lukkes (REG), Deaver; David Tate (REG), Hyattville

**CAMPBELL**  
 Patricia Engel & Genell Hodges, Gillette; Michael Stroud, Gillette; Linda & Thomas Barbour (REG), Gillette;

Carolyn & C Jay Hollenbeck, Gillette; Alexis & Chad Bulkey, Gillette; Kathy Lee & William Russell Bell (REG), Gillette; Andrew Daigle, Gillette; Jerry Vandamme, Gillette; Tanya & Travis Burkhardt, Gillette; Justin Raber (REG), Gillette; Karen & Tony Hayden (REG), Gillette; Dawn & Clifford Hill, Gillette; Galen Kretschman (REG), Gillette

**CARBON**  
 Edwin Johnson, Sinclair; Randy Winter, Saratoga; Wayne Wagner, Saratoga; Cheryl Palmer, Rawlins

**CONVERSE**  
 Rose Miracle, Glenrock; Thomas Scheehle, Glenrock

**CROOK**  
 Jennifer & Ty Krell, Sundance; Mark Dick, Sundance; Sonja Tracy, Sundance; Susan Lynch (REG), Sundance

**FREMONT**  
 Amanda Wood, Riverton, Dwight Lamphier (REG), Lander; David Petersen, Lander; Shane Ooten, Lander; Jonathan Chism (REG), Riverton; Gordon Wrinn (REG), Atlantic City; Jesse Compestine, Lander; Shelley Dolbow, Riverton; Rosie Albright-Harris & Fredrick Harris, Riverton; Tamie & Alex Jones (REG), Riverton; Jerry Hawk, Riverton; Katherine & Raymond Oerter, Lander; Mildred Goggles, Fort Washakie; Jacqueline & Ronald Reemts, Lander; Jordan & Bret Hoover (REG), Pavillion; James Ausem, Riverton; Marci & Bruce Kamminga, Riverton

**GOSHEN**  
 Mary Meininger (REG), Torrington; Duane Packard (REG), Hawk Springs;

Greg Davidsmeier, Torrington; Hunter Dockery, Lusk; Jaylen Eldridge (REG), Torrington; Loren Isbell, Veteran; Tia & Jordan Farrell (REG), Torrington; Geraldine & George Zeimens (REG), Torrington; Amanda Trout, Torrington; Robert Cates, Laramie; Craig Roberts, Guernsey; Katrina Eisenbarth & Brandon Gifford, Yoder; Brent Mullock/Tri M Farms (REG), Torrington; Roger Huckfeldt (REG), Torrington; Ben Scott (REG), Torrington

**HOT SPRINGS**  
 Cindy Longwell, Thermopolis; Gary Clymer, Pavillion; Ciciley Basse, Thermopolis; Elizabeth & Kevin Mahoney (REG), Thermopolis; Becky & Farron Baird, Thermopolis; Cameron Burrows, Thermopolis

NEW MEMBERS ... Page 11

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**NEW MEMBERS...** From Page 10

**JOHNSON**

Cindy & Gary Craft, Sheridan; Linda & Tony Schiffer (REG), Buffalo; Holli & Wayne Jones (REG), Buffalo; Jarret Andrews, Buffalo; Bettina Nimick & James Wood, Buffalo; Pamela McFadden, Buffalo; Elizabeth Falxa/ Falxa Land Company Inc. (REG), Buffalo; Iberlin Livestock Inc. (REG), Buffalo; Kimberly Corbin & Aaron Williams, Buffalo; Lanna & Jeff Wing, Buffalo; Larry Murcavitch, Buffalo; Jeremy Yeager/ Yeager Cattle Company LLC (REG), Buffalo

**LARAMIE**

Caiden Lemmon, Pine Bluffs; Scott Hunter, Cheyenne; Michael Miller, Cheyenne; Karen Paulus, Cheyenne; Blake Ward, Cheyenne; Alyssa Hinckley, Cheyenne; Charles Olivas, Cheyenne; Randall Spencer, Cheyenne; Rebecca & Shawn Varland, Cheyenne; Amy & Brent Bouley, Cheyenne; Rexine Woolington, Pine Bluffs; Jeanne & Jack Hockersmith (REG), Pine Bluffs; Christopher Thiel, Cheyenne; Sydney Farrow, Burns; Jerry Brinkley, Pine Bluffs; Lisa & Gary Lamb, Pine Bluffs; Luana Lahti, Cheyenne; Mark Stokes, Cheyenne; Veronic Loya & Angus Gregory, Pine Bluffs; Katy Gosbee, Cheyenne; Valerie & Eric Millhouse, Cheyenne; Leticia & William Sejkora, Cheyenne; Rose Terlesky, Cheyenne; Richard Juschka, Cheyenne; Dorothy Kouba, Cheyenne; Ashley Jessen (REG), Pine Bluffs; Robert Priest, Pine Bluffs; Kevin Shryack, Cheyenne; Gerrie Bishop, Cheyenne; Derek Schmidt, Cheyenne; Eliza & Christopher Vallejo, Cheyenne; Hailey Cooper, Cheyenne; Abigail Hoard, Cheyenne; Emma Berg, Cheyenne

**LINCOLN**

Kenneth Shimmin, Diamondville; Kevin Akcerlund, Star Valley; Reed Pebbles, Thayne; Frank Chidesterm Alpine; Omar Fernandez, Star Valley; Robert Liebenritt, Alpine; Vincent Barbisan, Star Valley; Warren Ellis, Diamondville; Steve Wilson, Thayne; Zane Erickson, Afton; Jon Sides, Bedford; Branden Bolinder, Smoot; Allison & Larry Fluckiger, Afton; Joseph Kravetsky, Thayne; Aaron Wagner, Kemmerer; Jolene & Arlen Hatch, Kemmerer; Bobbie & Josh Jones, Kemmerer; John Stetzenbach, Kemmerer; Muhammad Mirza, Thayne

**NATRONA**

5 Bar T Ranch, Casper; Jerome Ressler, Casper; Andrew Carbajal, Casper; Erica Kohones, Casper; Lynette & Gary George, Casper; Alonzo Booth, Casper; Kelly & Leroy Meador (REG), Casper; Antonio Cortez, Casper; Alma & Tony Jerome, Midwest; Patty & Jerry Jackson, Casper; Nathaniel Brooks, Casper; Maureen Scribner (REG), Casper; Bess & Trenton Johnson (REG), Casper

**PARK**

5 North Ranch (REG), Powell; Dexter Bridges (REG), Cody; Jacqueline Miner, Cody; Julie Yeatts, Cody; Jeannine & Mark Wright, Powell; Noemi Marquez, Powell; Richard Jacobson, Cody; Thomas George, Powell; John Kendig, Ralston; Philip Moore, Cody; Greg Wise (REG), Powell; J Seratt, Powell; Rosalinda & Jonathan Ames, Cowley; Catheryn & Randolph Selby, Wapiti; Shawn & Troy Wiant (REG), Cody; Jason Neal, Powell;

Joseph Burrell, Cody; Marie Nolan, Powell; Ty Harris, Powell

**PLATTE**

Debra Miller, Wheatland; Pamela Metz (REG), Wheatland; William Farr/ Farr Ranch LLC (REG), Wheatland; Connie & Jon Lewis, Wheatland

**SHERIDAN**

Darrin Goyn, Sheridan; Jordan Van Winkle, Sheridan; Shalyn Ballew, Sheridan; Stonewall Gaddy, Sheridan; Mary Ann Clark, Marble Falls, TX; Camile & Oscar Rucki (REG), Sheridan; Brock Hovey, Ranchester; Nancy & David Dearcorn (REG), Dayton; Daniel Roberts, Sheridan; Charity & Kenneth McKenzie, Sheridan; Michael Sorensen, Sheridan; Tom Aksamit, Sheridan; Brian Allred, Sheridan; Susan Garber-Johnson & Eric Johnson, Story; Gregory Busche, Sheridan; Karen Kjeldgaard, Ranchester; Rob Camenzind, Sheridan; Duke Chesnut (REG), Sheridan; Jay Godley/ J& L Cattle (REG), Banner; Carol & Willis Perkins, Sheridan; Brandi & John Clifton, Sheridan; Cael Smith, Sheridan; Jennifer & Heath Steel, Sheridan; Jason Koltiska (REG), Sheridan; Daniel Rider, Sheridan; James Latham, Sheridan; Douglas Wiltscheck, Sheridan; Anne & Bruce Zimmerschied, Sheridan; Jill Morrison, Sheridan; Melissa Watt, Sheridan; Thomas Duncan, Sheridan; Elizabeth Wilson, Dayton; Garald Fulkerson, Sheridan; Kerri Wambolt, Sheridan; Lance Phillips, Sheridan; Mike Romanjenko, Story; Shaun Christiansen, Sheridan; Kristin & Tony Kassen, Sheridan; Eric Heinrich/ Heinrich Ranch (REG), Sheridan; Carol Hill, Sheridan; Kyle Brantz, Sheridan;

Heidi & Danny Schneider, Sheridan; David Grody, Sheridan; Sierra & Matthew Gomke, Sheridan

**SUBLETTE**

Guston Lozier, Big Piney; Mary Lisa Baxley, Pinedale; Allen Hafner (REG), Cora; Wynne & Justen Phelps (REG), Riverton; Lance Scribner, Pinedale

**SWEETWATER**

Cherise & Brandon Hetrick, Story; Rhiannon & Travis Archibald, Green River; Alice & Larry Metz (REG), Farson; Jessica Moore, Green River; Lisa Maes, Green River; Heather Sweet, Rock Springs; Paul Erramouspe, Rock Springs; Brandy Lewis, Green River; Jeffrey Winters, Rock Springs; Michael Straube, Rock Springs; Z/C Livestock (REG), Pinedale

**TETON**

Michael Neill, Wilson; Kasey Mateosky, Jackson; Whitney Fessler, Moran; Jenny Carr, Jackson

**UINTA**

Jamie Lopez, Lyman; Floyd Trussell, Lyman; Shunae & Travis Shelton, Lyman; Amy Downing, Evanston; Gabrielle & Jeff Harding, Lyman

**WASHAKIE**

John Noland, Worland

**WESTON**

Kaiann & Brian Holt, Sundance; Holly & Garrett Borton (REG), Newcastle; Jeremy Kelly (REG), Newcastle; Ann & Allen Slagle (REG), Newcastle; Mary & Curtis Rankin (REG), Upton



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

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- Where is the operation now?
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- How do you get there?



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# American Farm Bureau Convention registration is open

“Step Up, Drive Forward” is the theme of the 106th consecutive American Farm Bureau Convention, a “can’t miss” event that offers attendees unique insights on the policies and perspectives that will affect farms, ranches and agribusinesses in 2025 and beyond. The convention will be held Jan. 24-29, 2025, in San Antonio, Texas.

“Farmers and ranchers are always looking to the future, whether that’s finding ways we can be more innovative and efficient or building up our local communities,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “The 2025 American Farm Bureau Convention will showcase that spirit across agriculture and the Farm Bureau family as we step up and drive forward together. I look forward to seeing you in January in San Antonio as we gather together to kick off another year of feeding, clothing and fueling our great nation.”

Duvall will give his annual address to Farm Bureau members during the convention’s opening general session on Sunday morning, Jan. 26. Eric Boles, a global expert in talent development, change management and cultural transformation, will address attendees as closing general session keynote speaker on Monday, Jan. 27. Boles is founder and CEO of The Game Changers Inc., a leadership training and development company headquartered in Lakewood, Washington. He learned principles of peak performance, team dynamics and leadership from his experience as a wide receiver with the National Football League’s Green Bay Packers and New York Jets.



A full lineup of engaging workshops will be available at convention. Workshops will be offered in four tracks – public policy, rural development, member engagement and consumer engagement. Topics will include the farm bill, hot topics in public policy, the 2024 election, farmer mental health, farm transition planning and engaging the next generation of agriculturists.

A vibrant trade show with exhibitors showcasing cutting edge innovations in agricultural technology, tools and services is also sure to capture the attention of attendees.

In addition, numerous optional farm- and ag-related day tours are available for attendees who wish to explore the Lone Star State. These include working farms and ranches, a beef cattle feedyard, a greenhouse, a

turfgrass operation, vineyards, a cotton gin and the historic town of Luckenbach. Attendees can also sign up to explore a buggy barn, the Chisholm Trail Museum, the National Museum of the Pacific War and more. Details about additional tours will be posted when available.

Members may register for the Convention and tours at [annualconvention.fb.org](http://annualconvention.fb.org). A room block for the convention has been reserved by the state Farm Bureau Office. Please reach out to Brooke at [bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org](mailto:bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org) or 307-721-7723 before Dec. 6, 2024 to secure a room. Rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. ■

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# Federal Lands in the West

BY LILLY STEWART, WYFB INTERN

The Idaho Farm Bureau has a podcast they affectionately refer to as “Dirt Road Discussions.” In June for Episode 60 titled, “How Do Western States Federal Lands Work,” our very own Wyoming native, Keith Hamilton, was invited onto the show along with two other people to join him in the discussion of federal lands. Cam Hammond and Ott Clark came together as hosts to dig into the questions of: what are federal lands, how do farmers and ranchers use them, and why are they important.

The podcast was exceptionally informative and easy to understand, especially for someone that does not come from an agricultural background. They introduced vocabulary and concepts including what it means for federal lands to have multiple uses, grazing permits, some legislation from the 1800s, and potential endangerment to America’s ability to feed the country affordably and nutritious food if farmers and ranchers lose the ability to use the land.

Some of you are probably still asking yourselves, what exactly are federal lands? They are the lands owned and managed by the federal government. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the United States Forest Service (USFS), and the National Park Service (NPS) are all examples of federal land management agencies. The panel described that the concept of federal lands came to light shortly after Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana Purchase. Then, to get the land homesteaded and for the American

people to move West. The enactment of the Homestead Act of 1862 helped entice settlers to leave the crowded cities for the wide-open spaces. In short, the Homestead Act gave 160 acres to each homesteader for a tremendously inexpensive price, we are talking \$18! Man, I wish that was still the case!

However, there was a catch. In the Eastern United States 160 acres was quite a bit of land to run livestock on, but out West you could run about five cows on 160 acres, if you’re lucky. As the folks of Wyoming know, sage brush and the wind speeds grow well out here. To get more people to move westward, Hamilton says on the show, “The BLM’s first charge was to dispose of this land that hadn’t been homesteaded. Congress changed that mission to a management situation, so homesteads grew from 160 to 640.” However, this had very little impact, especially in the state of Wyoming because Hamilton follows up with, “In Wyoming we are about 47 % federally owned.”

Today, about half of the land in the West is owned by the federal government. Ranchers use the land to graze their cattle through grazing permits purchased from the federal government. “This saves the government about three million dollars because the grazers are out on the land every day,” said Ben Menges, a member of the panel and fifth-generation farmer in Arizona. “They have their eyes on how the land is being altered and if human intervention is needed. This is also a huge economic incentive for people to care for

the land, because it is literally the hand that feeds us.”

Hamilton says, “Grass is a renewable resource, so if it is managed properly, it regrows every year. It is a revenue stream for the federal government that they have, that they wouldn’t have if they didn’t have us as grazers.”

The land is well maintained by ranchers. The lands are grazed in rotational patterns to mimic historical buffalo herds of the West. The grazing also “prevents fires... because we can control a little bit of the understory that fires take off with,” Hamilton states. The western US population knows how detrimental wildfires are and if grazers are feeding their cattle it helps with fire fuel mitigation.

The BLM and USFS have a mandate to develop their resources in a multiple use and sustained yield manner. Recently, a transition has been underway of putting conservation on par with other types of multiple use including grazing, outdoor recreation, and energy development.

Due to the policy change in conservation as a use, ranchers could lose grazing permits. At first glance this may appear appealing to some to let the land be completely wild and free of human impact, but Hamilton argues that “If conservation becomes on the same level as the rest of our uses, we run the risk of adversaries in our communities thinking that we don’t need to graze this land.”

“So, they can approach our BLMs and say when that permit comes up for renew-

al ‘we need to put that land into conservation use for 3-5 years’. What that will do to that family rancher is enormous,” Hamilton continued. “You also lose all the benefits associated with caring for the land if there are no cattle to graze the land.”

Menges said it loud and clear, “The best use of land that the public owns is to feed the public.” Unfortunately, as a general public we just do not understand how important the use of federal lands is to the farmers and ranchers in the West. It comes down to that “without our federal lands, they (the American people) may go hungry someday” as said by Keith Hamilton.

Considering that 94-96% of Americans want to consume beef products it is important to be able to offer them at an affordable price and high quality. I highly encourage listening to this podcast if you are interested in getting a deeper dive into the issue and rules and statutes associated with federal lands. It will also be great for people to listen to that are experiencing the push back and issue firsthand. It can arm you with facts and wisdom to be able to advocate for your own ranches. “Dirt Road Discussions” is available wherever you get your podcasts and a link is at wyfb.org.

Issues in agriculture may seem so far away. Consumers may not feel the burden of these issues as early on as our American farmers and ranchers, but one day you may be at the grocery store and realize that beef just is not what can be afforded for dinner anymore. ■

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**ANNUAL MEETING...** *From Page 1*

**Make it Magnetic Foundation Workshop and Service**

The WyFB Foundation is hosting a “Make it Magnetic” workshop and service project the morning of Nov. 7 from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Margee Wolff, American Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Leadership, Education & Engagement, will lead the “Make it Magnetic: How to Attract Unbeatable Volunteers” workshop from 8 to 9:30 a.m. In this fun and interactive session, you’ll explore the principles that attract members to volunteer opportunities and learn the tools you can use to help new volunteers stick with your organization for years to come.

Following the workshop, participants will shift to a service project at the Food Bank of Wyoming where we will pack food boxes as part of the WyFB Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) “Harvest for All” project.

The workshop and service project are free and open to the public. Attendees are requested to register by emailing [bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org](mailto:bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org).

**Ken Hamilton Retirement Celebration**

A meet and greet social to celebrate Ken Hamilton’s retirement will be Thursday, Nov. 7 from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Ken began his career with the organization in 1983. He was named the Executive Vice President in 2004. After celebrating his 41st work anniversary on Oct. 3, Ken officially retired on Oct. 31, 2024. All are invited to attend. If you would like to send a message/letter/card for Ken, please email it to [dbrewer1@wyfb.org](mailto:dbrewer1@wyfb.org) or mail to WyFB, ATTN: Dee Brewer, PO Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

**Taproom Trivia Night**

Members can gather around the tables at Gruner Brothers Brewing on Thursday, Nov. 7 at 7 p.m. for a fun Trivia Night. Northern Ag Network’s Andy Schwab will entertain and lead the trivia game. This event is open to the public.

**Speakers**

Members will hear reports from WyFB President Todd Fornstrom, WyFB Executive Vice President Kerin Clark, and Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company President and CEO Jim Geesey to start the general session on Friday, Nov. 8.

“Remaining Relevant in a Changing World: Trends and Opportunities” will be presented by Terri Moore, American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Vice President for Communications, at 9:30 a.m. on Nov. 8.

“From the communications revolution to food supply chain demands and political stalemates, it’s a new world,” Moore said. “How do we maintain trust and influence amid changing realities? We will zoom out to see the big picture trends that shaped our past, impact our realities today and provide insight into potential opportunities and threats we can expect in the future.”

AFBF Senior Director of Governmental Affairs Shelby Hagenauer will discuss “Federal Policy in the West: What You Need to Know” at 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 8.

“Congress and the Administration have been actively working on policy issues that impact the West, from BLM’s management of public lands to Congress’s approach to the Endangered Species Act and forest management,” Hagenauer said. “We will talk about what has happened in 2024 in these and other key Western agriculture areas and what may happen in 2025.”

On Saturday, Nov. 9, Mark Truax with Pac/West Strategies will present findings



**Margee Wolff, AFBF Vice President of Leadership, Education & Engagement**



**Terri Moore, AFBF Vice President of Communications**



**Shelby Hagenauer, AFBF Senior Director, Government Affairs**

from the 2024 membership survey and discuss member engagement opportunities.

**Entertainment, Reports and Elections**

Friday evening’s banquet is a time to celebrate our farmers and ranchers and present awards. To conclude the banquet, members will be treated to music entertainment by Davis & Mavrick.

With appreciation and thanks to America’s Veterans, Saturday Nov. 9 will begin with a Patriotic Medley

recognizing our veterans. Following the patriotic singing, Marty Martinez, Director, Veterans Services Center and Joshua Hepworth, Program Coordinator Sr., Veterans Services Center from the University of Wyoming will share about the Buddy Check Woobie program for Veterans. The business session will include resolutions consideration, elections, and a WyFB YF&R report.

**Foundation Auction**

The WyFB Foundation will hold the third annual silent and live auc-

tion at the awards banquet on Friday, Nov. 8. All proceeds from the auction will go to the Foundation.

**“Harvest for All” Fundraiser**

The WyFB YF&R 21st annual “Harvest for All” fund drive will take place at annual meeting. Monetary donations will benefit the Food Bank of Wyoming. Please bring your monetary donations to the registration desk at annual meeting. Additionally, the WyFB YF&R Committee will hold their annual playing card raffle, so plan to buy your playing card raffle chances from any WyFB YF&R Committee member during annual meeting.

**Vendor Tradeshow**

The vendor tradeshow will open with registration on Nov. 7 and close with the meeting adjournment on Saturday, Nov. 9. There will be a variety of vendors which include, but not limited to, services such as banking, real estate, insurance and more.

**Agenda**

The agenda is on page 6 and available at [www.wyfb.org](http://www.wyfb.org). Pre-registration has closed. Contact Brooke Settlemeyer at [bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org](mailto:bsettlemeyer@wyfb.org) or 307-721-7723 with questions.

Plan to “Gather at the Table” with your fellow Farm Bureau Federation members to chart the course to keep agriculture strong at the 105th Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation. ■

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ENTERTAINMENT

**Davis & Mavrick**

The Annual Meeting Banquet is a time to celebrate our farmers and ranchers, enjoy fellowship and music entertainment.

FRIDAY | NOV 8 | 8:15 P.M.

**AFBF CONVENTION...** *From Page 2*

The American Farm Bureau Convention is also a great chance to learn how you can drive forward in your own leadership development. Throughout the week, our Young Farmers & Ranchers program will showcase the hard work and passion of our young leaders through the Excellence in Agriculture Award, Achievement Award and the Discussion Meet. Meanwhile, our national Women's Leadership Committee will host networking events aimed at leadership, advocacy and collaboration, such as the Saturday morning Women in Ag Meet and Greet. Additionally, our national Promotion and Education Committee will once again be hosting the Communicate, Collaborate and Influence (CCI) training – open to all Farm Bureau members who are looking to sharpen their skills in connecting with consumers and sharing the story of agriculture.

**The Trade Show Experience**

The Trade Show floor will be buzzing all week long. At the Cultivation Center Stage, you can catch live panels, fireside chats and some of the most

engaging and insightful voices in agriculture. This is also where the Final Four in the Discussion Meet and Ag Innovation Challenge will take center stage, and I promise you won't want to miss it. As you explore the Trade Show floor, you'll have the chance to chat with many of our sponsors, see what's new in agricultural technology and meet our 2024 County of Activities of Excellence Award winners. There really is so much to see and experience on our Trade Show floor and Cultivation Center Stage, so make sure to plan plenty of time to check it all out.

**Join us in San Antonio**

I've only scratched the surface of what's in store for us at the 2025 American Farm Bureau Convention. From the general sessions to the workshops and programs, this event is going to be packed with great ways to help us step up and drive forward in 2025. You also can stay in the know by looking out for updates on our convention website ([annualconvention.fb.org](http://annualconvention.fb.org)) or even signing up directly for our event updates. So, what are you waiting for? Reach out to your state Farm Bureau or register at AFBF, today! I can't wait to see you in San Antonio. ■



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**we honor all  
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