



Wyoming Agriculture

VOL. 43, NO. 5

FEBRUARY 2026

Published by



Wyoming
Farm Bureau® Federation

Imagine, Grow, Lead: Wyoming delegation brings policy focus home from AFBF Convention

BY CALLIE HANSON

Wyoming Farm Bureau members joined thousands of farmers and ranchers from across the country at the American Farm Bureau Federation Convention, returning home with fresh ideas to bring back to their home counties.

"The 2026 convention was a fantastic opportunity for our members to gather with farmers and ranchers from across the nation," according to WyFB Executive Vice President Kerin Clark. "The impact of leading cannot be understated and that was emphasized at this convention. It is joyful to hear the ideas members are taking back to their ranches and county Farm Bureaus as they imagine, grow and lead for the future."

AFBF CONVENTION ... Page 5



Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation was well represented at the 2026 American Farm Bureau Conference in Anaheim, Calif. Members from six counties attended the conference, including two voting delegates. COURTESY PHOTO



WyFB at the Capitol

- Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
- Legislature convenes for the 2026 Budget Session | **Feb. 9**
 - Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Legislative Meeting | **Feb. 19-20**
 - See page 3 for agenda and more information
 - Northern Ag Network Legislative Radio Show | **Thursdays During Session**



State-led solutions at forefront of Wyoming Farm Bureau's Washington visit

BY CALLIE HANSON

While in D.C. for the annual American Farm Bureau Federation Resolutions Meeting, President Todd Fornstrom and Executive Vice President Kerin Clark and other western state Farm Bureau leaders took time to meet with officials from the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss western issues such as grazing regulations, endangered species management and the importance of private lands to conservation.

"Having the Western State Farm Bureaus meet together with the agency officials provided the opportunity to discuss perspectives from different areas of the west on pertinent and timely issues," Clark said.

Meetings with Interior Department officials focused largely on pending federal grazing regulations and how changes could affect permittees across the West. Fornstrom noted the discussion provided an opportunity for producers to explain how regulations function on the ground, where conditions vary widely.

"It was productive to meet with Department of Interior officials to discuss important issues to Wyoming and the West," Clark said. "As Wyomingites, both Director Nesvik and Associate Deputy Secretary Karen Budd-Falen know and understand the issues important to Wyoming agriculture."

With Nesvik, discussions centered on wildlife management and the role states play in balancing conservation with agricultural production. Clark said Farm Bureau leaders emphasized the need for flexibility in managing recovered species and for policies that recognize the contributions of private landowners.

"We discussed the importance of states having flexibility in managing species, supporting a durable delisting rule for endangered species, and the important role private landowners play in providing wildlife habitat," Clark said. "We also talked about addressing the impact of ravens preying on sheep."

WASHINGTON D.C. VISIT ... Page 9

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Agriculturally Speaking

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February
 5 WyFB Collegiate Discussion Meet-Cheyenne
 6-7 Wyoming/Colorado Farm Bureau Federation YF&R Conference-Cheyenne
 9 Wyoming Legislature Budget Session Convenes
 19-20 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Legislative Meeting-Cheyenne

March
 1 WyFB State Scholarship Deadline
 20 Ag Books for Kids County Deadline

April
 6 Ag Books for Kids District Deadline
November
 12-14 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting-Casper

Visit wyfb.org for event updates



Wyoming Agriculture

Volume 43, Issue No. 5
 February 2026

USPS 10331 ISSN 1071-0272

Official publication of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

307-721-7719
www.wyfb.org

Wyoming Agriculture is published monthly, except for combined July/August and December by the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, 931 Boulder Drive, Laramie, WY 82070. Periodicals postage paid at Laramie, WY and additional entry offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Wyoming Agriculture, PO Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

MISSION: Strengthening Wyoming agriculture, enhancing Wyoming communities.

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Farmers Set the Course for 2026 Policy

Zippy Duvall

American Farm Bureau Federation President



When farmers and ranchers come together, they don't just talk about challenges—they get to work finding solutions. That's exactly what happened at our 107th American Farm Bureau Convention in Anaheim, California, where farmers from across the country gathered to set Farm Bureau's policy for the year ahead. That policy was shaped by real conversations about tight margins, rising costs, labor shortages and the uncertainty many farm families are facing right now.

As a farmer myself, I don't have to imagine those challenges. I see them firsthand. And I hear the same concerns everywhere I go. That's why Farm Bureau's 2026 policy is focused on making sure farmers have the tools, certainty and support they need to keep going—today and for generations to come.

2026 Policy and the FARM 250 Vision

This year's policy discussions come at a significant moment as our nation approaches its 250th anniversary. This milestone also provides an opportunity to reflect on agriculture's role in building our country. Agriculture remains just as essential to America's strength today as it was at our founding.

Yet farmers continue to face mounting challenges that make long-term planning difficult. That's why Farm Bureau is launching FARM 250, an effort grounded in four pillars that reflect both our history and our future: Feeding families, Advancing innovation, Rural resilience, and Mindful stewardship. The policy adopted in Anaheim aligns with those pillars and reflects a commitment to long-term stability, not short-term fixes.

Farm Bureau's 2026 Policy, Set by Farmers

Right now, the farm economy is under real pressure. Low margins, high input costs, and lingering losses from weather and market disruptions have pushed many farm families to the edge. In Anaheim, farmers made it clear that short-term relief is still needed, especially for those whose losses haven't been fully addressed. That's why a top priority is working with Congress and the administration to deliver additional bridge support for farmers who are still struggling.

But we also know that stability doesn't come from temporary fixes alone. We need a new, multi-year farm bill to address outdated loan limits, invest in research and advance conservation and rural development programs, among many other critical priorities.

Labor remains one of the most pressing challenges facing agriculture. It's what I hear most often when I meet with farmers across the country. No matter the region or the crop, farmers are feeling the strain of an outdated system that doesn't reflect the realities of modern agriculture. Our 2026 policy calls for meaningful reforms that modernize agriculture labor programs.

Trade is just as essential to farm viability. Expanding market access and enforcing existing trade commitments are critical for long-term growth. Farmers depend on strong export markets, and Farm Bureau will continue urging the administration to finalize market-opening trade agreements, challenge unfair trade barriers and ensure American agriculture remains competitive on the global stage.

Farmers are also clear about what they need from Washington when it comes to regulation: clarity, consistency and policies grounded in science. Farmers care deeply about the land, water and resources they steward every day. Regulations should support both environmental stewardship and economic sustainability.

That same clarity matters when discussions turn to food and health policy. Farmers want a seat at the table to share how our food is grown, safely and sustainably. Our policy supports transparency, science-based standards and a food system that values both farmer livelihoods and consumer well-being.

Strong farms also depend on strong rural infrastructure. That includes expanded broadband access and continued investment in agricultural research through land-grant universities. Farmers also emphasized the importance of strengthening the supply chain—from processing capacity to market transparency—while promoting greater use of U.S.-grown biofuels, including year-round E15.

Conservation remains a core value for farmers, and it works best when it's voluntary, incentive-based and farmer-led. Farmers are already leaders in conservation, and our policy reinforces that environmental sustainability must go hand-in-hand with economic viability. Farm Bureau will continue advocating for conservation programs that are grounded in sound science, flexible enough to work across diverse operations and supportive of farmers who are committed to caring for their land.

SETTING POLICY ... Page 10

Looking forward to 2026

Kerin Clark

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Executive Vice President



Four times. That's the minimum number of times voting delegates have discussed Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation state policy. For national policy, it is a minimum of six times voting delegates have worked the policy.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President Todd Fornstrom relates the policy development season to harvest season. As a farmer and a leader in this organization, he knows what it takes to harvest crops and harvest agriculture policy. His harvest analogy puts into perspective the amount of work it takes to turn a policy recommendation into a policy.

Like harvest, the grassroots policy development process is a season. A process that begins with local member input at county meetings in the summer and fall and continues through the district, state and national levels. Voting delegates at all levels discuss

the merits of the policy recommendations and how they would impact agriculture. The final step in the grassroots policy development process was completed January 13 when voting delegates approved policy at the American Farm Bureau Convention.

Like harvest, the grassroots policy development process results in a product. A member-driven product that drives the work of the organization—the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Policy Book for state issues and the American Farm Bureau Federation Policy Book for national issues.

Policy implementation is key to our mission. We embed our policy priorities in the work we do each day on the legislative and regulatory fronts. We hit the ground running in 2026 including comments on the new WOTUS rule and preparing for the 2026 Wyoming Legislative Session which convenes on February 9.

Private property rights are the foundation upon which WyFB policy priorities are set. We believe in private property rights, upholding constitutional government and advancing a free market economy with a commitment to individual freedom. Private property rights, water, land use, wildfire management, fiscal responsibility, tax policy, labor reform, rural vitality and election integrity are the key policy areas identified in 2026 WyFB priorities. Read more about our 2026 policy priorities in this issue or visit our website and click the "Advocacy" tab.

Our capacity to impact agriculture begins anew each year with the rewards of your policy development harvest...the process that is the strength of our organization. We have much to do in 2026 to continue our work to strengthen Wyoming agriculture. ■

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation to host 2026 Legislative Meeting

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) will host its 2026 Legislative Meeting February 19–20 in Cheyenne, bringing together Farm Bureau members, state leaders and legislators to discuss key issues impacting Wyoming agriculture.

“Having our members at the Capitol during the Legislative session is invaluable. Sharing your voice in the halls of the Wyoming Capitol is what we do each and every day during the session,” said WyFB Executive Vice President Kerin Clark. “Having members join us for a couple of days amplifies that message with their direct contacts with their legislators during the session.”

The meeting will begin Thursday, Feb. 19, with a legislative kickoff at 2 p.m. at the Kiwanis Community House. The afternoon session will include legislative updates and featured guest speakers, including Doug Miyamoto, director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

The evening will conclude with a members dinner including membership award presentations.

Legislative Meeting events will continue Friday, Feb. 20, at the Wy-

oming Capitol Building. Attendees will have the opportunity to observe legislative committee meetings, tour the Capitol and watch floor proceedings. A Legislative Lunch for lawmakers and WyFB meeting participants will be held at noon.

A hotel room block has been secured at Comfort Suites Cheyenne, located at 5401 Walker Road. Rooms are available for Thursday night, Feb. 19, at a group rate of \$99 per night, plus tax. Reservations must be made by Feb. 2 to guarantee the discounted rate, and guests should reference “Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation” when booking by phone. Availability after the deadline is not guaranteed.

County registration forms and a tentative agenda are available at wyfb.org, with completed registration forms due by Feb. 6. Forms should be emailed to Brooke Settelmeyer at bsettelmeyer@wyfb.org.

For additional information or questions regarding the 2026 Legislative Meeting, contact Brooke Settelmeyer by email at bsettelmeyer@wyfb.org or by phone at 307-721-7723. ■



2026 Legislative Meeting February 19-20, 2026 | Cheyenne, Wyoming

TENTATIVE AGENDA

THURSDAY | February 19 (Kiwanis Community House)

- 1:30 pm Registration
- 2:00 pm Legislative Meeting Kickoff
 - Welcome from WyFB
 - Legislative Update from WyFB Policy Advocacy Team
 - Special Guest Speaker: Doug Miyamoto, Wyoming Department of Agriculture Director
- 5:45 pm Dinner
 - Welcome from WyFB President Todd Fornstrom
 - Membership awards following dinner

FRIDAY | February 20 (Wyoming Capitol)

- 7:30 am Wyoming Legislature at the Capitol
 - Legislative Committee Meetings at the Capitol (Start time TBA)
 - Wyoming Capitol Tours
 - Wyoming Legislature Session Gallery Viewing
 - Office of State Lands & Investments
 - Stacia Berry, Office of State Lands & Investments Director
- 12:00 pm Legislative Luncheon (Capitol Ext. Conf. Room- W053/054)
 - Meet & Greet Wyoming Legislators at the Capitol
 - Remarks
 - Sen. Bob Ide, Senate Ag Committee Chairman (Invited)
 - Rep. John Winter, House Ag Committee Chairman (Invited)
- 2:00 pm Governor Mark Gordon (Invited)
- 3:00 pm Adjourn

Strengthening Wyoming agriculture, enhancing Wyoming communities.

National News

BY KELLY CARPENTER, WYFB POLICY ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Sage Grouse Record of Decision – What it means for Wyoming

The Bureau of Land Management released a record of decision on December 22, 2025, completing updates to its Greater Sage Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment. This decision came after years of environmental assessments, stakeholder engagement, and interagency collaboration.

The updated plan affects 77 resource management plans spanning roughly 65 million acres of sagebrush landscape across ten western states: Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nevada, California, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Oregon. According to BLM, these habitats support more than 350 different wildlife species.

BLM’s announcement highlighted the decision’s alignment with Executive Order 14154, “Unleashing American Energy,” issued by President Donald Trump. The agency emphasized its goal of protecting sage grouse populations while maintaining traditional public land activities such as livestock operations and energy exploration.

The plan was crafted through partnerships with governors from western states, state-level wildlife departments, federal grazing lessees, and community representatives. BLM noted the final decision incorporates the latest scientific findings and respects individual state conservation strategies.

Additionally, for Wyoming, the ROD strikes a good balance between energy, livestock grazing, and commitment to sage grouse population survival.

WOTUS Proposed Rule Comments

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) submitted comments to the Federal Register in support of the proposed Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule that aligns with the Supreme Court’s 2023 Sackett v. EPA decision. This landmark Supreme Court decision eliminated the “significant nexus” standard in favor of a “relatively permanent” test with a focus on continuous surface connection for jurisdictional purposes. WyFB emphasized that decades of changing WOTUS definitions have created regulatory uncertainty for farmers and ranchers, who often work on lands with features that are only wet after rain and lack clear connections to navigable waters. This proposed rule is a durable, clear rule that distinguishes between federal and state jurisdiction.

WyFB specifically supported several key provisions: the proposed ditch exclusion that exempts non-navigable ditches constructed entirely in dry land, even with relatively permanent flow; the explicit exclusion of groundwater from WOTUS definitions; and the placement of burden of proof on agencies to determine historic conditions of ditches. We also suggested one modification—revising the groundwater exclusion language to explicitly include “diffuse or shallow subsurface flow” alongside subsurface drainage systems. Overall, WyFB is pleased with the proposed rule and its alignment with member-driven policy. The proposed rule will be a legally lasting rule that provides clarity for landowners while respecting Supreme Court precedents. ■



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Seven years of Farm Bureau

BY QUADE PALM, CENTRAL DISTRICT DIRECTOR/YF&R COMMITTEE MEMBER

It's hard to believe that my first involvement with Farm Bureau was in the Spring Semester of 2018 in a classroom in the Animal Science Building at the University of Wyoming. A good friend, Jessica Lampert, approached me and said she wanted to start a Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter at UW. Upon explaining that I had no real idea what that was, her response was "It doesn't matter. You know everybody, so just get people here and we'll have a meeting."

I always say it's not what you know, it's who you know, and roughly a week later we had around 20 students in the room, with then Albany County Farm Bureau member, Kyle Berger explaining the role and function of the Farm Bureau Federation. I graduated that May, moved to Colorado for a job, and promptly forgot about all the Farm Bureau stuff I'd heard about. Occasionally I'd wonder if the chapter had gotten off the ground, but never did much follow up.

Fast forward to the summer of 2019. I moved back home after my farm/feedlot experience in Colorado and was back on the family ranch. I received a phone call from Kyle, now with the Carbon County Farm Bureau, asking if I wanted to get involved with the Young Farmer and Rancher Committee at the district meeting that summer. I was interested but still knew no more than I had a year prior but wanted to learn. Unfortunately, I was unable to make the district meeting, and though I had submitted my name, I wasn't elected. I later received the call to attend Annual Meeting, so in November I was Laramie bound.

Unsure of what to expect at my first statewide meeting, I was cautious, but was quickly welcomed by many members, some of whom I'm still close to and thankful for. Even then, seldom one to shy away from an opportunity to open my mouth, I was sharing my experience regarding resolutions at my first Annual Meeting before I was even eligible to be a voting member, as the topic of harassing livestock with drones was brought up, passed. I believe that policy even made it through the American Farm Bureau Convention and into the National Policy Book in early 2020. I was elected by the assembly to be the YF&R Committee Member at Large, and with that experience under my belt, it felt a bit like I was caught in a whirlwind, but I never looked back.

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is always one of my favorite events of the year. Maybe I've hit my head one too many times, but committee work and debate in the general sessions to set resolutions and policy for the upcoming year is my absolute favorite. When pitching Farm Bureau to someone, I always focus on the debate and discussion, understanding that decisions made in those rooms have the potential to influence our Legislature and have lasting impact on every single citizen of our state.

As my Farm Bureau involvement has continued, I've learned to appreciate the connections and the lessons, I've grown far more comfortable in my roles, and am still learning just how little I know. I feel awed by new members coming in and having the opportunity to learn from



Quade Palm is a rancher in Carbon County and was recently elected to serve as the Central District Director on the WyFB Board of Directors. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY*



Quade's time in Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has given him opportunities to speak with legislators and learn more about the policy process. *COURTESY PHOTO*



Quade packaging food during YF&R's annual Harvest For All community service project. *COURTESY PHOTO*



Quade served as the vice chair of the general issues committee in 2025. *KADRA MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY*



In his time in YF&R Quade has had the opportunity to serve Wyoming farmers and ranchers and develop his leadership skills. *COURTESY PHOTO*

their experiences, just the same as I hope someone may have learned from an experience of mine. I've had the opportunity to serve as Carbon County Ranch and Farm Bureau Vice President and serve various roles on the YF&R Committee. Last summer, I made the decision to throw my hat in the ring for Central District Director and was elected. Ironically, I've explained to so many people that Farm Bureau isn't just insurance. Now as director I've been drinking through a firehose, trying to understand the workings of Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance, as well as the working of Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation and the relationship between the two, so it's more insurance than I thought it would be.

Seven years ago, joining Farm Bureau, I never thought I'd be where I am today, nor did I think the organization and the people would be as meaningful as they have become. Learning to have some confidence in myself and understanding that words of encouragement aren't just empty words, there's belief and meaning behind them. Learning that everyone in every meeting has family at home left to carry their responsibilities, and that in our own way, we all want the same thing. We all want Wyoming's Agriculture to be as strong as it possibly can be, to make America and its Agriculture as strong as it can be. Navigated by ideas, passions, and voices of each individual member from their own dinner tables all the way

to committee rooms in the Capitol in Cheyenne, and beyond, all the way to Washington DC. When I take a moment to reflect, I'm blown away at how far I've come, and humbled to be able to do what I can, along with so many incredible hard-working people. I don't know what the future holds for any of us, but I know that the future of our State and Nation depend on the success of our ag industry, and I just hope I can stay on for the ride as long as I can, wherever it may lead. ■

Quade Palm is a rancher in Carbon County and has been involved with Wyoming Farm Bureau since 2019. He currently serves on the YF&R Committee and on the board of directors as the Central District Director.

AFBF CONVENTION... From Page 1

National labor policy dominated the conversation as Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Brooke Rollins addressed attendees and media during the multi-day convention. Both emphasized that fixing agricultural labor challenges remains essential to maintaining a secure food system.

Speaking to Farm Bureau media partners, Duvall said labor was a central topic in his discussions with President Trump.

"Labor was one of the things I talked to him about," Duvall said. "Out of all the subjects I talked to him about, he had the most knowledge about that one."

Duvall stressed that agriculture's labor crisis is not theoretical but a daily reality for producers.

"If our country doesn't want to see COVID-type results on the grocery shelf, we've got to find an answer," he said. "We just have to find an answer."

Duvall understands the urgency of agricultural labor first hand, noting crops and livestock require care regardless of time or conditions.

"When I had dairy cows, I was moving 300 cows at 2:30 in the morning when that backing pump didn't come on," Duvall said. "I didn't care who showed up. A cow has to be milked. Crops have to be harvested. Animals have to be taken care of."

Duvall added that Americans have repeatedly shown they are unwilling to take on those jobs, regardless of wages, leaving agriculture dependent on a workforce that must be available year-round.

"We have to have a workforce that's willing to come to work," he said. "It has to be fair to the employee and fair to the employer so they can continue to provide those jobs."

Rollins echoed that urgency during her address to convention attendees, highlighting recent regulatory changes to the H-2A guestworker program.

"Our Department of Labor last month issued their interim final rule to change the methodology to establish the adverse effect wage rate for the H-2A program," Rollins said. "This change will save our farmers over \$2 billion in labor costs alone every single year."

She also pointed to efforts to streamline the application process by allowing producers to file H-2A applications with both the Department of Labor and the Department of Homeland Security at the same time.

"Now we are shortening the time, making it more efficient, hopefully making it much less expensive," Rollins said. "Understanding that there is still so much work to do on labor, my commitment to you is we remain hyper-focused on that."

Rollins tied agricultural labor directly to national priorities.

"If we don't have an affordable and secure food supply, then we do not have national security," she said.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation President Todd Fornstrom emphasized the importance of presenting a unified message on agriculture, particularly when communicating with the public.

"The idea that we can get issues on the national stage and they understand where we are with issues is important," Fornstrom said in an interview with Western Ag Network. "We need to have a united front when talking to the general public. They don't understand agriculture already — they don't need mixed messages."

For Wyoming members, the convention offered both policy insight and practical takeaways they can apply back home.

Weston County Farm Bureau member Matt Stroh said the value of Farm Bureau lies in meeting members where they are.

"It's about meeting the membership where they're at and seeing where we can fit into their operation and how we can support their operation," Stroh said. "And in turn, how they can support Farm Bureau."



Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins addressed the conference to discuss several key issues affecting farmers and ranchers across the country. *AFBF PHOTO*



American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall addressed the delegation, reminding members of the importance of their grassroots efforts at all levels. *AFBF PHOTO*



Wyoming Farm Bureau President Todd Fornstrom walked the stage along with other state presidents on stage as each state Farm Bureau was recognized. *AFBF PHOTO*



President Fornstrom and his wife Laura, the president of Laramie County Farm Bureau Federation, met keynote speaker and former NFL Quarterback Tim Tebow. *AFBF PHOTO*



WyFB President Todd Fornstrom on delegate floor. *CALLIE HANSON PHOTO*



Vice President Cole Coxbill and Northeast District Director Matt Stroh participated in voting during the business session, with Stroh serving as an alternate delegate. *CALLIE HANSON PHOTO*

That connection between agriculture and community was also emphasized by Lincoln County Farm Bureau member Randy Humphrey.

"How we can incorporate Farm Bureau to help communities strive to be better examples of people from around the country and how we can help them," Humphrey said.

Networking and leadership development stood out as key takeaways for Uinta County Farm Bureau member Kristi Ellis, who said the convention reinforced the organization's role at both the local and national levels.

Ellis said the convention's theme, Imagine, Grow and Lead, challenged members to think strategically about their role within agriculture.

"It gave me the inspiration to imagine what our county Farm Bureau can do to improve," she said. "It gave me the opportunity to set a goal of how we can grow, and it gave me the opportunity to reflect on how we can lead and be the leader in the discussion about agriculture."

She added that Farm Bureau's leadership role is critical as agriculture faces increased scrutiny.

"We can help others understand the importance of agriculture and how we are there to help them," Ellis said.

As the convention wrapped up, voting delegates from across the country gathered to discuss policy and finalize AFBF's official 2026 policies. Wyoming's two delegates were President Todd Fornstrom and Vice President Cole Coxbill with Northeast District Director Matt Stroh serving as an alternate delegate.

"This is the real business and the real reason we come together — to vote on policy brought forward by individual members and states," Coxbill said. "That's the power of the grassroots process. What we pass or oppose becomes the policy the federation supports in Washington, D.C.. It's a privilege to represent Wyoming Farm Bureau members."

As Wyoming members returned home, the convention reinforced the importance of advocacy, unity and continued engagement at every level of the organization. From labor policy to leadership development, the message was clear: agriculture's challenges require coordinated effort, clear communication and strong grassroots involvement. ■

American Farm Bureau establishes 2026 policies

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Farmer and rancher delegates to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 107th Convention today adopted policies to guide the organization's work in 2026. Key topics ranged from labor to animal health to risk management.

For the fourth year, delegates were polled during the voting session regarding their farms. The results show almost 99% of those who cast votes operate family farms and more than two-thirds represent small- to mid-size farms as defined by USDA. Today's discussion highlighted the fact that farmers across the spectrum and across the country are struggling.

"America's farmers and ranchers are facing unprecedented challenges in agriculture, including high supply costs, trade imbalances, and low commodity prices. Today, our members gave us clear guidance on how we should address those challenges in the coming year," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Farm Bureau's strength was on display today, as our

grassroots set the policy for this organization. We look forward to taking their stories to leaders in Washington, as we work to ensure farmers and ranchers can continue to fill pantries for families across the country."

Delegates adopted policy to improve labor programs to meet the needs of America's farmers and ranchers, including formalizing support for the new Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology, and further revisions to avoid unpredictable rate swings in the future.

They voted to support federal funding for research and biosecurity facilities to better identify and combat illnesses and pests that threaten the health of crops and animals. New policy also includes committing more resources specifically to eradicate the New World screwworm, and keeping the U.S.-Mexico border closed to cattle trade until the screwworm is controlled.

Delegates revised national farm policy to provide more protection for dairy farm-

ers who may suffer losses due to market challenges.

Delegates also formalized support for prioritizing locally grown fruits, vegetables, bread, and proteins in institutional purchases such as schools and government facilities.

Voting members also requested that the board of directors analyze several agricultural issues, including the impact of tariffs and the lack of affordable insurance options for poultry farmers.

Farm Bureau Leadership Elections

Beyond policy changes, AFBF President Zippy Duvall and Vice President Scott VanderWal were unanimously re-elected for another two-year term.

Delegates also elected members to serve on the AFBF board of directors and national program committees. Stacy Simunek, Oklahoma (Southern Region), was elected to fill a one-year term on the AFBF board of directors. Joyce Brady, New

Hampshire (Northeast Region), and Val-Jay Rigby, Utah (Western Region), were elected to two-year terms.

Eleven other state Farm Bureau presidents were re-elected to two-year terms to represent their regions on the board. From the Midwest Region—Garrett Hawkins, Missouri; and Mark McHargue, Nebraska. From the Northeast Region—Chris Hoffman, Pennsylvania. From the Western Region—Carlyle Currier, Colorado; and Rosella Mosby, Washington. From the Southern Region—Eddie Melton, Kentucky; Harry Ott, South Carolina; Jimmy Parnell, Alabama; Scott Sink, Virginia; Jeb Smith, Florida; and Dan Wright, Arkansas.

AFBF appreciates the 110 speakers and 4,500 registered attendees who helped make the 2026 Convention such a success.

Planning for the American Farm Bureau's 2027 Convention has already begun. Mark your calendar to join us Jan. 8-13, 2027, in Charlotte, North Carolina. ■

2026 WyFB Policy Priorities

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation works year-round to implement our member-driven policies to strengthen Wyoming agriculture. Policy implementation is key to our mission. WyFB advocates on behalf of its members on many issues throughout the year, setting priority issues helps focus and identify specific items to guide the organization.

Private Property Rights

Farm Bureau will advocate for private property rights, upholding constitutional government, and advancing a free market economy with a commitment to individual freedom. Private property rights are the cornerstone of our nation.

Water

Farm Bureau views Wyoming's water as one of our state's most valuable resources. We will work to protect Wyoming agricultural water rights and private property rights along with securing appropriate funding for infrastructure, and support water quality regulations that protect agriculture operations and limit the reach of Waters of the United States (WOTUS).

Land Use & Environmental Regulation

Farm Bureau will advocate for removing excessive regulatory burdens that impede land management and use. Farmers and ranchers are stewards of natural resources.

Federal lands

Farm Bureau will support policies that uphold the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service mandate directing for multiple use and sustained yield.

State Lands

Farm Bureau will advocate for the vital role agricultural leases play in managing state lands.

Wildfires

Farm Bureau will support efforts to improve wildland fire management communications and coordination between stakeholders, in addition to improving coordinated response efforts to extinguish fires as soon as possible. We support the state of Wyoming adding resources for fire suppression while coordinating with local resources.

Wildlife

Farm Bureau will advocate for support of agriculture/landowners and the critical role working lands play in providing wildlife habitat. Farm Bureau will advocate for Endangered Species Act reform

that protects private property rights, continuation of traditional agricultural practices, funded landowner incentives, and credible scientific delisting data. Farm Bureau will advocate for state management of wildlife and advocate for recovered species to be removed from the Endangered Species list.

Fiscal Responsibility

Farm Bureau will work to ensure agencies affecting agriculture are adequately funded through the Wyoming Legislature. WyFB supports funding an efficiency study of the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WyDOT) before any increased state funding or increased taxes are considered.

Tax Policy

Farm Bureau will advocate for sound tax policies that protect the livelihood of agriculture.

Rural Vitality

Farm Bureau will advocate for opportunities and resources to strengthen Wyoming agriculture and support rural communities.

Labor

Farm Bureau will advocate for effective labor reforms tailored to Wyoming's agricultural needs.

Election Integrity

Farm Bureau will advocate for election integrity. ■

WyFB advances fire, land policy

A series of Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) wildland fire and agricultural equity policies passed at the recent American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) in sunny Anaheim, California. A total of five policies passed at the meeting propelling WyFB grassroots voices into national policy that will guide our united voice in agriculture in Washington, DC and across the country. Four of the policies pertained to wildland fires and the fifth policy related to equity in land ownership as determined by government entities based on race and other Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI)-related criteria.

The four wildland fire policies broadly call for reforms for enhanced coordination and accountability. The policy will aim to strengthen coordination between government agencies, local responders, and landowners with a strong emphasis on watershed restoration, all while increasing federal accountability for fire management and damage mitigation. Specifically, the policy calls for inclusion of federal land livestock grazing permittees in the fire management coordination, federal responsibility for coal seam fires on federal lands, development of strong post-fire watershed restoration programs, and federal agencies being held financially responsible for fires suppression activities on private lands.

In addition to the wildland fire policies passed by the voting delegates at the AFBF meeting in January, WyFB's opposition to the redistribution of land for the purpose of agricultural equity by government agencies became national policy. This policy will ensure that land sales will be based on capitalistic, market-based principles and not arbitrary.

These five policies are just a few examples of WyFB's voice at the national level and our effective process of taking grassroots action all the way to DC. ■

2026 County Farm Bureau Federation Scholarships

Below is general (UNOFFICIAL) information on county Farm Bureau Federation scholarships. Please refer to the scholarship applications for complete rules and details. For more information on scholarships, visit wyfb.org/Get-Involved/Education/Scholarships.

ALBANY

Deadline: TBA
Albany County will award scholarships to graduating seniors and continuing education students at any post-secondary facility in the state of Wyoming. Must be an Albany County High School or Home School graduate. Contact a.c.farmbureau@federation@gmail.com for application and more information.

BIG HORN

Deadline: April 2, 2026
Big Horn County Farm Bureau Federation is awarding three (3) to four (4) Big Horn County High School Seniors or undergraduate college students a scholarship to attend a technical or trade school, two-year community college, or accredited four-year college or university. The scholarship will be awarded upon proof of enrollment in the fall of 2026.

CAMPBELL

Deadline: Variable
Three scholarships available: graduating high school student, continuing education, general agriculture scholarship. One \$2,500 scholarship to a graduating high school senior (Deadline 2/13/2026). One \$2,500 scholarship to a continuing education college student (Deadline 2/13/2026). One variable amount scholarship awarded to any member continuing education in the agriculture industry (Rolling applications). Contact Lex Geer at 307-660-2002 for questions.

CARBON

Deadline: April 15, 2026
Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation will award at least two scholarships of \$750 or more to members, and at least two \$500 cash scholarships to

both members and non-members. If more than \$2,500 is raised, additional scholarships may be awarded, and scholarship values may increase.

CONVERSE

Deadline: March 1, 2026
\$1,000 scholarship - \$500 each semester awarded to the children of Converse County Farm Bureau members. For application, email Roni Vollman at ronivollman@gmail.com.

CROOK

Deadline: March 30, 2026
The Crook County Farm Bureau Federation Scholarship Committee will award up to three scholarships annually, with a combined total of up to \$4,500. The number of scholarships and individual award amounts may vary based on the quality and quantity of applications received. For more information contact Cassie Pickrel or JW Moore with the Crook County Farm Bureau Federation at 307-283-3582 or at cpickrel@mwfbi.com.

FREMONT

Deadline: May 15, 2026
Awarded to children of regular/ current members of Fremont County Farm Bureau Federation. Preference will be given to those going into an Agricultural field. Contact Andrea Dockery at adockery@hotmail.com for more information.

GOSHEN

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Application is for a \$500.00 cash scholarship granted to students attending any accredited college, trade school, or university in the U.S. and is not limited solely to beginning freshmen. Goshen County Farm Bureau is committed to the preservation and promotion of excellence in agriculture as an industry and a way of life through

education and support of those who are also dedicated to these principles. To this end, we may give preference to those applicants pursuing Ag-related degrees.

HOT SPRINGS

Deadline: April 9, 2026
One \$1,500 scholarship; may be divided into multiple scholarships at discretion of board. Available to students pursuing an ag-related course and not previously received a Farm Bureau scholarship with a preference to Farm Bureau families. Application available at Hot Springs County Farm Bureau Office, at the HSCHS Counselors' Office and from the HSCHS Ag Instructor. Contact Paul Ward at 307-864-3836 or paulw@tctwest.net.

JOHNSON

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Two scholarships available — \$500.00 to graduating high school student and \$750.00 for continuing education students. Parent must be a current paying member of JC FB federation 45 days before application is received. If applicant is 24 years old or older they must have their own membership. Applications are available at Johnson county Farm Bureau office or school counselor office.

LARAMIE

Deadline: April 30, 2026
Offering 3 scholarships in the amounts of \$500-\$1,500. Open to all Laramie County Farm Bureau Federation members. For more information, contact Laura Fornstrom at widetwo22@gmail.com.

LINCOLN

Deadline: March 1, 2026
One \$500 scholarship available to children of current/paid Lincoln County Farm Bureau Federation members. Having an insurance policy with Mountain West Farm Bureau does not qualify as a Wyoming Farm Bureau Membership. Students must write a letter outlining accomplishments and college goals educational plans.

NATRONA

Deadline: May 15, 2026
Up to four scholarships, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500, to eligible applicants. These scholarships are open to high school seniors and current college students who demonstrate an interest in agriculture, ranching, or related fields and who are committed to continuing their education. For questions contact n.c.farmandranchbureau@gmail.com.

NIOBARA

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Two \$1000 scholarships available to children of Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation members. Both graduating high school seniors and current college students are eligible. Applications can be picked up at the Lusk Farm Bureau Insurance Office, or reach out to NiobraraCountyFB@yahoo.com.

PARK

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Two \$750 scholarships and two \$1000 scholarships available to students attending Wyoming colleges, with preference to those attending Northwest College. Open to any Park County Farm Bureau Federation Member or children of members. Application can be picked up at all Park County high schools and the Cody and Powell Farm Bureau offices.

PLATTE

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Variable number of \$500 scholarships available to graduating high school seniors and current college students. For questions, please contact Sherri Cullen at 307-331-1180.

SHERIDAN

Deadline: March 31, 2026
Three non-renewable scholarships of \$2000.00 each will be offered to children of current Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation members. Having an insurance policy with Mountain West Farm Bureau does not qualify as a Wyoming Farm Bureau Membership. Applicants

must have either graduated from a Sheridan County high school or home school (or equivalent)

OR be in the graduation class of a Wyoming high school or home school when application is submitted. Applicants must be enrolled full time or in the process of enrolling full time at any Wyoming community college, the University of Wyoming, or a Wyoming Trade school when the application is submitted. College undergraduates are eligible to apply. Application forms will be available at Sheridan College, all county high schools and the Farm Bureau Insurance offices in Sheridan.

SUBLETTE

Deadline: March 1, 2026
Two \$500 scholarships for seniors; one for each high school (Big Piney and Pinedale). Given to children of Sublette County Farm Bureau Federation Members; preference is given to those seeking agriculture major. Applications are available at the high schools. Direct any questions to mvillalba@mwfbi.com.

SWEETWATER

Deadline: March 15, 2026
T.S. Taliaferro Scholarship is available to the children of regular members of Sweetwater County

Farm Bureau Federation planning to pursue further education with an accredited Wyoming institution or program. Application forms will be made available to Sweetwater County High Schools and the Farm Bureau Insurance offices.

UINTA

Deadline: April 15, 2026
One \$1,000 scholarship available to students in Uinta County pursuing trade school, university, or two-year college, preference to those staying in Wyoming and in the agriculture field, but open to others. Applications can be picked up from County Farm Bureau Insurance office, county president or at schools. Contact Kristi Ellis at 307-782-7659 for questions.

WASHAKIE

Deadline: April 1, 2026
Variable amount given, with preference to agriculture majors and children of Farm Bureau members. Applications available at the high school and the County Farm Bureau office.

WESTON

Deadline: May 1, 2026
Three \$750 scholarships available to children or current members of Weston County Farm Bureau Federation. ■



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Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Scholarships Available

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Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Scholarships | \$500 each (5 awarded)
Scholarships awarded to graduating high school seniors

WyFB Continuing Education Scholarships | \$500 each (3 awarded)
The continuing education scholarship recipients must submit at least two semesters of college transcripts.

Due March 1, 2026 | Visit wyfb.org for applications and more information

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You may also utilize the Farm Bureau Member Benefits app on your phone to access your benefits.

Questions: email bsettelmeyer@wyfb.org or call 307-721-7723.

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.

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Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation



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Uinta County Farm Bureau at Southwest Ag Days

Uinta County Farm Bureau Federation participated in the recent Southwest Ag Days event held in Kemmerer. This event, hosted by University of Wyoming Extension, is designed for those interested in agriculture, ranching and range management.

WyFB Member Engagement Coordinator Alexis Lake and Uinta County President Kristi Ellis spoke with attendees promoting Farm Bureau and answering common questions associated with membership. ■

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Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation Scholarship Fundraiser

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WASHINGTON D.C. VISIT.. From Page 1

Those conversations, Clark added, reinforced Farm Bureau policy supporting state-led wildlife management.

"With Associate Deputy Secretary Karen Budd-Falen, we discussed the pending grazing regulations and were able to share input from each state on how grazing regulations impact individual permittees," Clark said.

President Fornstrom noted federal public lands policies are often developed using a one-size-fits-all approach, which fails to account for the distinct needs and conditions of individual states.

"When the federal government gets involved, a lot of time their solutions are cookie cutter," Fornstrom said. "Everybody does the same thing, and that doesn't always work. Each state and each ecosystem is unique, so a state-led approach is way better than a federally mandated program with no flexibility."

"They really wanted some input from all areas that deal with Interior," he continued. "It's not one-size-fits-all. They're trying to make grazing regulations more user-friendly, more uniform, and more workable for all the different areas."

Additionally, Clark and Fornstrom were able to meet with Wyoming's congressional delegation on their trip to DC. These meetings with Wyoming's congressional delegation provided another opportunity to share producer perspectives directly with lawmakers.

Fornstrom applauds the Wyoming delegation for remaining accessible and engaged with Farm Bureau members, both in Wyoming and in Washington. "Our representatives are always so refreshing to talk to," Fornstrom said.

"They're very good at listening. I know so many other states that can't get into the office, much less actually talk to the senator or the representative themselves," he said. "Our representatives want input from us," Fornstrom said. "They want to hear from producers, and that matters."

Fornstrom noted their meeting with Rep. Harriet Hageman was productive, noting her familiarity with regulatory processes and timelines.

"She really understands how the government is supposed to run, how regulations are supposed to be made, and how they're not supposed to be made," he said. "Having someone who understands the rules of engagement is critical."

While meetings with Sen. John Barrasso were brief due to scheduling constraints, Fornstrom said the visit served as a valuable check-in. Discussions with Sen. Cynthia Lummis' office included conversations about conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

While acknowledging that CRP has benefits, Fornstrom said its unintended consequences have been particularly challenging in the West.

"For every good program that people like, it sometimes has negative consequences that we don't really think of," he said. "CRP has been really hard on the West. It retires the ground, nobody's out there working it, and small towns really have not benefited."

Clark said congressional visits are a critical part of Farm Bureau's advocacy work, allowing leaders to connect policy discussions in Washington to the experiences of producers back home.



WyFB Executive Vice President Kerin Clark and President Todd Fornstrom met with Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Brian Nesvik to discuss issues directly affecting Wyoming farmers and ranchers. COURTESY PHOTO



U.S. Department of Interior Associate Deputy Secretary Karen Budd-Falen met with western leaders to discuss pending grazing regulations and seek input from ranchers. COURTESY PHOTO



President Fornstrom joined fellow western state Farm Bureau presidents to meet with officials in D.C. to discuss the unique issues affecting the unique landscapes of the West. KERIN CLARK PHOTO



Grassroots engagement remains key as farmers and ranchers' voices are brought to Washington to advocate for policies that work on the ground. KERIN CLARK PHOTO

"In Wyoming, we are fortunate to see our congressional delegation around the state at meetings and events throughout the year," Clark said. "It's also invaluable to visit with them when we're in Washington, D.C. These one-on-one meetings give us the opportunity to talk about specific legislation and share insights directly from our members."

Clark noted those conversations are most effective when Farm Bureau members are involved at every level.

"These meetings reinforce why grassroots engagement is so important," she said. "When we bring the voices of Wyoming farmers and ranchers to Washington, it strengthens our ability to advocate for policies developed at the ground level."

"We've got good representatives," Fornstrom said. "And it's our job to keep showing up, sharing our perspective and making sure Wyoming agriculture is part of the conversation." ■



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ANGUS BULLS -- 48th Annual Northwest Wyoming Angus Association Bull Sale. Tuesday March 24, 2026 at the Riverton Livestock Auction. Offering yearling bulls and 18-month-old bulls. BBD, TAP and semen tested. Call Fred Thomas 307-868-2595 FMI.

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.

TO SUBMIT ADS, send your ad along with your name, phone number and member number or member county to chanson@wyfb.org or mail to WyFB, ATTN: Classifieds, P.O. Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

SETTING POLICY... From Page 2

Grassroots Voices Driving Farm Bureau's 2026 Advocacy

At the end of the day, our policy reflects the voices of farmers and ranchers who understand what's at stake. It is shaped by grassroots delegates who step up, speak out and help chart the course for the year ahead.

That grassroots foundation will guide our advocacy in 2026 as we work to ensure America's farmers can continue producing the food, fiber and renewable fuel our country depends on. I'm proud to stand with farmers and ranchers who are shaping the policies that will define the future of agriculture. ■



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BIG HORN

Anthony Preator, Burlington; Pamela Shultz, Lovell; Martha & Paul Rasmussen (REG), Burlington; Sherie & David Monk (REG), Cowley; Darrell Bullinger, Basin; Joyce & Lee Cronley, Cody; Nicholas Provost (REG), Burlington; John Bullinger/John Bullinger & Sons Inc, Basin; Darrell Cooper (REG), Greybull; Jason Wilson, Basin; Susan Lafollette, Greybull; Ruth & Jason Zeller, Lovell; C/O Dale & Ernie Cook (REG), Burlington; Robert Peterson, Greybull

CAMPBELL

Lucas Kaufman/Moorcroft family Dentistry (REG), Rozet; Destyn Walker, Belle Fourche, SD; Aladdin High-Lands Ranch LLC (REG), Wayzata, MN; Kyle Innes (REG), Gillette; Jennie & George Delong, Gillette; Laura & Mike Castellanos, Gillette; Jennifer Liston (REG), Gillette; Phillip Brewer, Moorcroft; Jared Bryan, Moorcroft; Nancy & David Hauber, Gillette; James Allen /Whiskey Alpha Ranch (REG), Gillette; Chelsea Jenner, Gillette; Jessica & Beau Miller, Gillette; Keith Graves, Gillette; Rod Addison, Gillette; Julie & Larry McCann, Gillette; Kayleigh & Justin Cody, Gillette; Kristina & Corby Shields, Gillette; Frank Fisher (REG), Arvada; William Deegan (REG), Gillette

CARBON

Kristen & Brad Dirck, Rawlins; Karen & Nicholas Taylor, Encampment; Leah Ketner, Rawlins; Shirley & Tom Thorn, Saratoga; Deborah Engstrom, Rawlins; Deborah & Dave Walker, Rawlins; Ashley & Cole McKinney, Encampment; Ian & Nikki Thorn, Saratoga; Nila & Dick Hiser (REG), Torrington; Floyd Archuleta, Rawlins; Damian Gomez, Rawlins; Cynthia Walton, Saratoga; Lee Hawkins, Baggs; Lakin Funk, Rawlins; Debra Salisbury, Encampment; Cesar Perea, Rawlins

CONVERSE

Tona & Jim Morrison, Evansville; Ryan Dockter, Douglas; Mackekt Trust (REG), Douglas; Devon Hendrickson, Glenrock; Katherine & Jonathan Shiver, Moorcroft; Konnor Ross, Douglas; Robert Siebken, Douglas; Taylor Lisco (REG), Douglas; Nila & Luke Thar, Douglas; Robert Langston, Douglas; Janice & Donald Steckley, Douglas;

Terry & Ron Burton, Douglas; Sherri & John Kyle, DOUGLAS; Kimberly Fox, Douglas; Hardy Musselman (REG), Douglas; Boot Ranch (REG), Douglas; Dianna Zempel, Rolling Hills; Donald Duran, Glenrock

CROOK

Casey Vansickle, Beulah; Suranne Disney, Sundance; James Halverson (REG), Sundance; Elizabeth & Jeff Kreuter, Moorcroft; Darrell Groth (REG), Aladdin; Doug Watson/21 Ranch inc (REG), Sundance; Jaclyn & Warren Dailey, Sundance

FREMONT

Yvonne & Joe Facinelli, Lander; Candis Dickinson, Dubois; Louisa & Nick Hunkerstorm, Lander; Stanley Hovendick (REG), Lander; Christa & Jared Nettles, Riverton; Brittany & Justin Howell, Riverton; Charlotte & Michael Donelson, Riverton; Andy Blackmun/Ring Lake Ranch (REG), Denver, CO; Vernon Black (REG), Riverton; Deborah & Carl Olson, Lander; Linda & Larry Parkins, Riverton; John Edwards, Riverton; Mary Ellen Christensen, Riverton; Katy Gray, Shoshoni; Kayla Freese, Lander; Jackie & Donald Stone, Riverton; Beverly Bancroft (REG), Lander; Cathy Purves (REG), Lander; Esther Jarvis (REG), Kinney; Kelly Wocicki (REG), Shoshoni; Emmi & Ubaldo Tarango (REG), Crowheart; Barbette Hernandez, Riverton; James Steinhoff (REG), Riverton; April & M Russ Locker, Riverton; Brenda & Victor Matz, Kinney; Jeff Greenwell, Lander; Erin Martin (REG), Lander; Jeff Bates (REG), Crowheart; John Aschenbrenner (REG), Riverton; Maureen Howell (REG), Lander; Shawna Harris-Mitchel (REG), Kinney; Andrew McWilliams (REG), Lander; Richard Bestul, Lander; Jeremy Norton (REG), Lander

GOSHEN

Katie Martin (REG), Torrington; Christina Roth/Interra LLC (REG), Hartville; Charles Nearing (REG), Torrington; Kelsea & Hansen Vaughan (REG), Lingle; Monte Stokes (REG), Torrington; Tj Haeffelin, Torrington; Dempsey Hansen (REG), Yoder; Fred Webb (REG), Torrington; Renee Baros, Torrington; Johnna & John Carey (REG), Guernsey; Vicki & M Eugene Stiles, Torrington; Angela & Jeremy Ochsner, Lingle; Delwin Watson, Lingle; Mary Montgomery, Torrington

HOT SPRINGS

Jim Barrett, Casper; Tom Smith (REG), Thermopolis; Theresa Mead (REG), Thermopolis; Clay & Susan Little, Thermopolis; Sherri Pebbles, Thermopolis; Jean & Ronnie Barkley, Thermopolis; Jean & Sheldon Skelton (REG), Thermopolis; Kristopher & Kathryn Urbanek, Cheyenne

JOHNSON

Deborah Simmons, Buffalo; Jon Markovsky, Buffalo; Gary Godley (REG), Kaycee; Walter Elm (REG), Kaycee; Sandy Weaver, Buffalo; Donna & Harry Weeden, Banner; Heather & Randolph Moses, Buffalo; Norman Sanford, Buffalo; Kayla & Brian Strouf,

Buffalo; Michelle & Ken Burton, Buffalo; Lukas Perth, Buffalo; Robert Cartier, Buffalo; Robert Nelson, Linch; Thomas Berry, Buffalo; Brenda & Earl Nimick, Buffalo; Kirk Strom, Buffalo; Colter Mouw, Sheridan

LARAMIE

Andrew & Susan Kelly, Cheyenne; Patricia Hamil, Cheyenne; Ted Bourret (REG), Pine Bluffs; Tammy Bourne, Cheyenne; Leslie Ramirez, Cheyenne; Jillian Balow, Cheyenne; Gloria & Kerry Merrill, Cheyenne; Laura Phipps, Cheyenne; Laura Kietell, Carpenter; Brook Weibel (REG), Cheyenne; Leticia & William Sejkora, Cheyenne; Jacqueline & William Pappas, Cheyenne; Levi Pafford, Cheyenne; Andrea & Sean McHenry, Cheyenne; Bonham Ranch LLC Bonham Ranch LLC/Bonham Ranch LLC, Cheyenne; Blanca & James Delzeit, Cheyenne; Kelly Colarusso, Cheyenne; Tom Northcutt, Cheyenne; John Partin, Cheyenne; Joe Cox /Cox Ranches LLC (REG), Cheyenne; Merideth & Adam Kinney, Cheyenne; Ronald Feldmann, Cheyenne; John Stephens, Cheyenne; Jennifer & Gregory Handelman, Cheyenne; Tammy Rogers, Cheyenne; Charles Olivas, Cheyenne; Sue & Terry Garey, Cheyenne; Susan & Matthew Huffman, Cheyenne

LINCOLN

Cammy Partridge, Freedom; Alysen Johnson, Afton; Matthew & Adrienne Thomson, Evanston; Cal Walker, Kemmerer; Jessica Adams, Cokeville; Leon Smith, Star Valley Ranch; Rowdy Nelson, Wheatland; Catherine & Stephen Grandy, Kemmerer; Daniel Boncella, Longmont, CO; Debbie Larson/FD Cattle Ranch LLC (REG), Kemmerer; Donna Dallmann, Afton; Gordon Smith (REG), Alpine; Kathy & Peter Dugan, Opal; Logan Erickson, Afton; Katrina & Archie Eldridge, Lyman; Christy Killian, Kemmerer; Garrett Eggener, Afton; Jedediah Petersen, Cokeville; Kym Sheets, Kemmerer; McKay Daniel, Afton; Michael Bryson, Kemmerer; Elaina & Orlen Zempel, Glenrock; Ron Dillree, Kemmerer; Brynn & Zach Robinson, Kemmerer; Sandra & Kim Hawkes, Kemmerer; Nancy & Scott Ellis, Diamondville; Austin & Alanna McKenzie, Star Valley Ranch; Scott Hacking, Kemmerer; Scott Averill, Bedford; Shelly & Steve Smith, Kemmerer; James Willis (REG), Cokeville; Justin Gardner (REG), Afton

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Casper; Kandice & Chad Fagot, Casper; Lori & Keith Stetson, Casper; Keith & Dee Burgess (REG), Alcova; Gary Crandall/Artists Choice Inc (REG), Casper; David Harmon, Casper; Jeffery Woodard, Rolling Hills; Tanya Gehres, Evansville; Angela Juarez, Casper; Jennifer & Michael Wolfe, Casper; Juan Saldivar, Mills; James Dean, Casper; Linda & Charles Gehres, Casper; Jean & Michael Cardenas, Casper; Tate Chamberlain/T-C Cattle (REG), Casper; Steve & Linda Bacot, Casper; Gale & Edward Selby, Casper; Mary & Matt Swanson, Casper; Mark Park/M & D Livestock (REG), Lingle; Jami & Grant Rogers, Casper; Bonnie Wamsley, Casper; Nathan & Cassandra Brewer, Casper; Keshia & Ethan Brinkerhoff, Casper; David Sedar, Evansville; Bradley & Vivian Johnson, Casper; Gene Rohrbeck, Casper; Angie Lariviere, Casper; Joan Hanneman, Bar Nunn; Kerry & Corey Fischer (REG), Evansville; Jennifer Doyle, Casper; Ronald Pasco, Casper; Ronald Holmes, Casper; Kellie Zerbe-Alme (REG), Evansville; Adam Wayte/Ridgeback Hardwood Floors, Casper; Ericka Vrooman (REG), Casper; Linda & Dale Olson, Glenrock; Marica Zerbe, Evansville; Dale Killingbeck, Casper; Tamara Farnham, Casper; Steven Wetzel, Evansville; John & Janet Rudd, Casper; Ray Spearman, Casper; William Keith/Rb Keith Ranch Llc, Casper; Mavis Greer, Casper; Janice & Nat Belsler, Casper; Dawn Alexander, Casper; Amanda Good, Casper; Judy & Tim Schenk, Casper; Douglas & Liane Franklin, Casper; Margo Spurrier, Casper; Dusin Allen, Casper; Shanese Compton, Mills

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Alfalfa in the red: Rising costs, falling returns

BY DANNY MUNCH, AFBF ECONOMIST

Alfalfa is a core input into U.S. dairy and beef production and one of the country's most economically significant crops. In 2024, it ranked as the fourth most valuable field crop, generating an estimated \$8.1 billion in farm-gate sales, behind only corn, soybeans and wheat.

In recent years, alfalfa producers have faced a sustained deterioration in margins, driven by a combination of weather-related production volatility, persistently high input costs, shifting international livestock feed demand and heightened export uncertainty. Unlike many other major crops, alfalfa has limited options to offset losses when prices fall, as available risk management tools are narrowly focused and do not address broader margin pressures.

Those pressures are now reflected clearly in returns. Prices spiked during the drought-driven supply tightening of 2021–2022, but that rally reversed as weather conditions improved and export demand weakened. With prices now below full economic cost in many regions, losses have widened – and alfalfa is not eligible to receive payments from the recently announced \$11 billion Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, leaving the sector's current shortfall unaddressed.

Production Dynamics Shape Risk

Unlike annual crops that are terminated every year, alfalfa is a perennial legume grown in multi-year "stands," where a single planting supports repeated harvests over multiple seasons. Fields are typically harvested repeatedly for five to seven years or longer, depending on management, weather and water availability. In rain-fed regions such as the Midwest and upper Plains, growers commonly take three to four cuttings per year, while irrigated systems in portions of the West and Southwest can support seven or more cuttings annually.

This long stand life limits how quickly production can respond to market signals. When prices rise, new seedings represent only a small share of total acreage, and newly planted stands often take one to two years to reach full productivity. Conversely, when prices fall, growers may remain locked into production even as margins deteriorate. The result is a supply base that adjusts far more slowly than most annual crops.

Geographically, alfalfa production is widespread but concentrated in regions with strong dairy and cattle sectors and more favorable growing conditions. California, Idaho, Montana, the Dakotas and Arizona consistently rank among the top producing states, achieving high yields due to longer growing seasons and irrigation.

Nationally, alfalfa acreage has declined for decades. From 2000 to 2025, harvested acres fell by nearly 40%, dropping from roughly 23 million acres to about 14 million. Part of this decline reflects land competition from crops with more favorable economic returns, especially crops eligible for commodity safety net programs such as Price Loss Coverage (PLC), Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and marketing loans, as well as those benefiting from biofuel-driven demand that has periodically lifted prices over the past two decades.

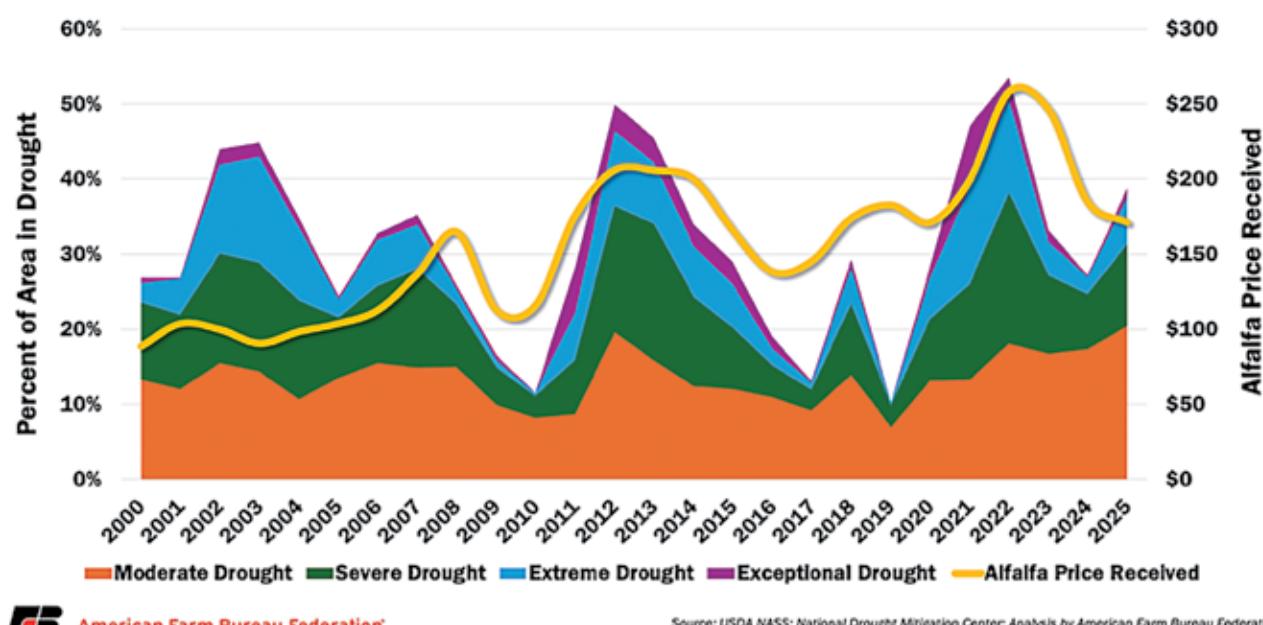
Drought and Weather Volatility

Weather has been one of the most persistent headwinds alfalfa growers face. From 2020 through 2022, the U.S. experienced one of the most geographically widespread drought periods on record. According to the drought monitor, by early 2023, growers had endured 119 consecutive weeks with at least 40% of the contiguous U.S. in drought, and in October 2022, over 60% of the country was classified as abnormally dry or worse.

For alfalfa, drought reduces both yield and quality, while water shortages in irrigated regions can force acreage out of production entirely. In California and Arizona, curtailed surface-water deliveries and tightening groundwater regulations led some growers to fallow alfalfa acres during 2021–2022, contributing to the lowest U.S. hay inventories recorded since 1954, tightening supplies and placing upward pressure on hay prices.

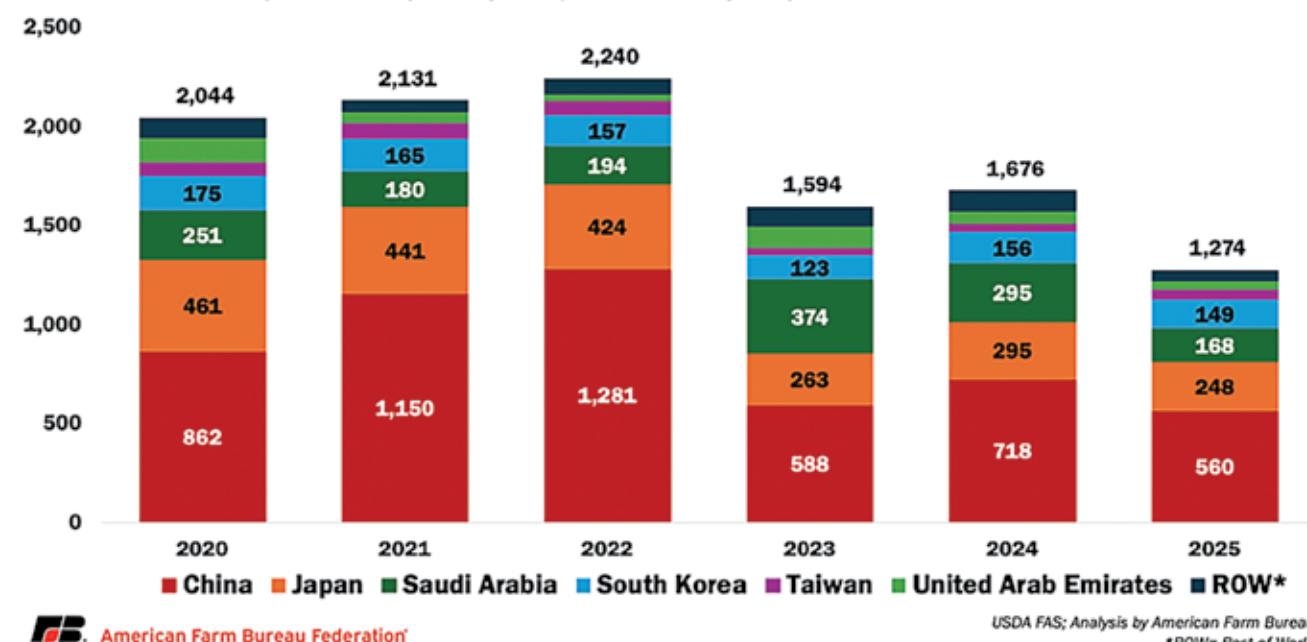
PERCENT OF U.S. AREA IN DROUGHT AND ALFALFA PRICE

2000 – 2025 | Moderate drought or worse | Average dollars per ton



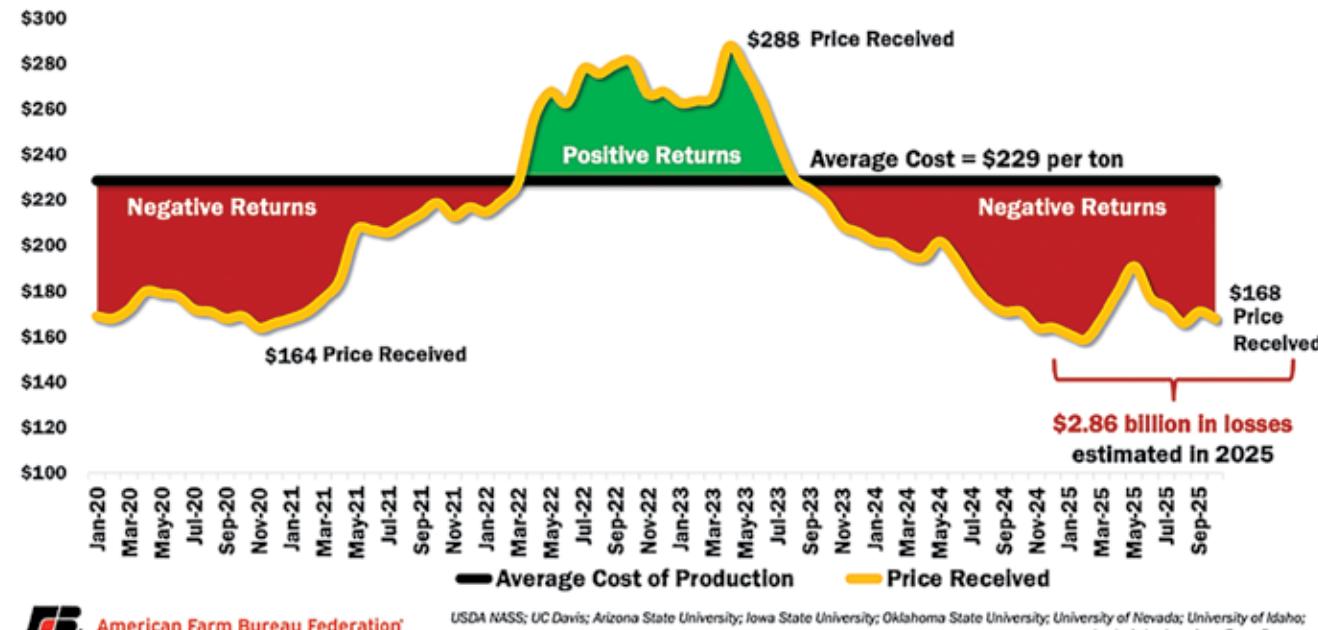
U.S. ALFALFA EXPORTS DOWN 43% SINCE 2022 (JAN–SEP)

Thousand metric tons | 2020-2025 (January – September for all years)



AVERAGE ALFALFA RETURNS IN THE RED SINCE AUGUST 2023

Price received - dollars per ton | Monthly | Average cost of production based on land-grant universities



ALFALFA... From Page 12

Drought also intensified demand in the hay market. According to our surveys of drought-impacted farmers and ranchers in 2021 and 2022, 70% to 80% of respondents reported removing animals from rangeland due to insufficient forage, increasing reliance on hay. Nearly 90% reported higher local feed and forage costs, and more than 70% traveled long distances to secure feed. For many cattle operations, these conditions translated into emotional structural adjustments: 66% of respondents reported herd liquidations, decisions that continue to influence the U.S. cattle herd's ability to recover. As a result, weather-driven supply shocks tend to produce sharper and more persistent price movements, with pronounced price spikes during drought years, followed by softening as weather improves and inventories gradually rebuild.

Trade Volatility

Exports have become a critical, and increasingly volatile, outlet for U.S. alfalfa, particularly for Western producers. Roughly 31% of West Coast alfalfa and other hay production is exported, compared to about 3% of total U.S. hay output nationally, leaving Western growers especially exposed to shifts in global demand.

Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Taiwan have long served as key destinations for U.S. alfalfa, particularly for premium dairy-quality hay. Since 2012, however, China has consistently ranked as the largest foreign buyer by volume, driven by rapid expansion of its dairy herd and efforts to improve milk yields through higher-quality feed. In 2022, China purchased approximately 1.66 million metric tons, accounting for 57% of total U.S. alfalfa hay exports and playing an outsized role in supporting Western hay prices.

That export channel has weakened sharply. After reaching a record 2.88 million metric tons in 2022, total U.S. alfalfa hay exports fell to about 2.18 million metric tons in 2023, a 23% year-over-year decline and the lowest level in a decade. The contraction was driven overwhelmingly by China, where imports of U.S. alfalfa fell 47%, dropping to 870,000 metric tons. Softer Chinese milk prices combined with an oversupplied domestic dairy sector and broader economic slowdown, reduced feed demand and curtailed purchases.

This pullback continued into 2024 and 2025. Between January and September, China imported 1.28 million metric tons of U.S. alfalfa in 2022, compared to 718,000 metric tons in 2024 and just 560,000 metric tons in 2025, the lowest level since 2020. Ongoing U.S.-China trade tensions and inspection-related frictions have added further uncertainty to what was once the most reliable export market.

Other markets have provided only partial and uneven offsets. Saudi Arabia's imports surged in 2023, rising roughly 42% to about 431,000 metric tons, as domestic water-conservation policies sharply curtailed local forage production. However, shipments to Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern buyers softened through 2024 and into 2025, as procurement strategies shifted and buyers adjusted inventories following the 2023 surge. The UAE followed a similar pattern, with imports jumping more

than 250% in 2023 from a low base but failing to sustain that pace in subsequent years. Japan's imports of U.S. alfalfa declined sharply in 2023 and remained subdued in 2024–2025, as a strong U.S. dollar reduced price competitiveness and buyers increasingly sourced from alternative suppliers or relied more heavily on domestic forage. Together, these trends underscore that gains in select markets have not been sufficient or durable enough to offset the contraction in Chinese demand.

Prices Fall as Costs Stay Elevated

The financial impact of these combined pressures is now evident in returns. Alfalfa prices peaked during 2021–2022 amid drought-driven shortages, but the rally proved short-lived. From April 2023 to November 2024, national average prices fell from about \$288 per ton to \$164 per ton, a 43% decline. By 2025, prices averaged roughly \$171 per ton, well below recent break-even levels.

At the same time, production costs have remained stubbornly high. University cost-of-production studies across the Plains and Western states show full economic costs ranging from \$165 to more than \$300 per ton, depending on irrigation intensity, yield and region. Input expenses, particularly water, fertilizer, labor, fuel and machinery, have climbed 20% to 35% since 2020, while yields have stagnated near 3.5 tons per acre.

Estimated 2025 Economic Losses

Cost-of-production studies from the University of California (2020), University of Arizona (2023), Iowa State University (2025), Oklahoma State University (2024), University of Nevada (2008-indexed) and the University of Idaho (2020) show that alfalfa production carries an average full economic cost of about \$229 per ton, a figure that reflects operating expenses, cash overhead, and the annualized non-cash costs of land, equipment and field establishment.

Together, the states represented by these university budgets account for about one-third of U.S. alfalfa production. While some higher-yield operations may cover a portion of variable operating costs, recent prices frequently fail to recover full economic costs, leaving producers unable to fully cover capital recovery and land charges. Using USDA's estimate of 14.12 million harvested alfalfa acres in 2025 and an average yield of 3.51 tons per acre, total production reached roughly 49.8 million tons, placing the sector's annual economic production costs near \$11.4 billion.

USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service price data show 2025 year-to-date average prices near \$171 per ton, generating approximately \$8.5 billion in farm-level revenue. The result is an estimated \$2.9 billion economic shortfall in 2025, or a loss of about \$203 per acre.

Limited Safety Nets and Exclusion from Recent Aid

Despite its economic scale, alfalfa has never been a covered commodity under core farm bill commodity programs such as PLC and ARC. As a result, alfalfa producers do not have access to price- or revenue-based support when markets weaken, unlike many other major crops.

Some risk management tools are available through the federal crop insurance program, but coverage re-

mains limited and uneven. In certain states, producers can insure alfalfa hay or seed under yield-based policies, though these products are not widely available and do not protect against price-driven revenue losses. A key constraint is the absence of a standardized price discovery mechanism for alfalfa, which limits the feasibility of revenue-based insurance. The most commonly used tool for forage producers is the Pasture, Rangeland and Forage (PRF) rainfall index program, which provides indemnities when precipitation in a selected grid falls below historical averages. PRF is primarily structured to help livestock producers manage forage availability risk rather than to insure market-oriented hay production, and it is not crop-specific or tied to actual yield, quality or market sales. As a result, many alfalfa growers, particularly those producing hay for commercial sale, may view PRF as an imperfect substitute for traditional yield or revenue insurance.

Disaster assistance during recent droughts has also been uneven. Programs such as the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) provided payments to livestock producers experiencing grazing losses or elevated feed costs during 2021–2022. For cattle operators who both own livestock and grow alfalfa, these payments may have supported forage use or purchases. However, standalone alfalfa growers without livestock generally did not qualify, highlighting a structural gap between livestock-focused disaster aid and forage producers whose losses stemmed from reduced yields, quality degradation or market disruptions.

Ad hoc assistance tied to trade and pandemic disruptions has provided only modest relief. During the U.S.-China trade dispute, alfalfa was initially excluded from the 2018 Market Facilitation Program (MFP) and later added in 2019 following industry advocacy. While payment rates varied by county, alfalfa payments were typically under \$30 dollars per acre, substantially lower than payments received by many row crop producers.

Pandemic-era assistance did increase support but only marginally. Under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), alfalfa growers were eligible for multiple payments up to \$35 per acre each. At typical yields of 4–5 tons per acre, that support translated to roughly \$7–\$9 per ton, a limited offset against production costs that often exceeded \$200 per ton during the same period.

Looking Ahead

Alfalfa's role in U.S. agriculture is foundational, supporting livestock production, rural economies and export markets across more than 218,000 farms nationwide, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Yet in 2026, growers face a familiar but intensifying challenge: high costs, volatile weather, uncertain trade access and limited policy support. Without more responsive risk management tools and timely assistance, prolonged negative margins risk accelerating acreage loss and undermining long-term supply resilience.

Recognizing alfalfa's economic importance, alongside other crops facing similar pressures, will be essential as policymakers consider how best to ensure the stability of the broader agricultural system. ■

Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week is February 23–28, 2026

BY CALLIE HANSON

The importance of reading and agriculture are highlighted each year during Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week. Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon has issued an official proclamation declaring Feb. 23–28, 2026 as "Wyoming Agricultural Literacy Week." While this designated week provides an opportunity to spotlight the value of reading and agriculture, both are essential every day of the year.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is no stranger to promoting the value of agricultural education and literacy across the state of Wyoming. For 18 years, we have celebrated ag literacy, with the first Agricultural Literacy Week proclamation being signed in 2008. Just three years prior in 2005, Wyoming Farm Bureau Feder-

ation (WyFB) Young Farmer and Rancher (YF&R) Committee launched the Ag Books for Kids project with the goal of building a collection of accurate agriculture-focused reading materials in Wyoming elementary schools.

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

The Ag Books for Kids program magnifies the grassroots strength of the Wy-

oming Farm Bureau Federation. Each year features a book of the year, with the 2026 book being *The Kindergarten Cowman* by Rachel Gabel. County Farm Bureaus from across the state annually purchase and donate books to local elementary schools to ensure students have access to accurate, agriculture-based books.

Additionally, contests are held in association with the book of the year to encourage students to learn even more about agriculture. The contests include a coloring contest for kindergarten and first grade; a poster contest for second and third grades; and a short story contest for fourth and fifth grades.

Young Farmer and Rancher State Chair Hannah Guild noted the importance of the program and how it helps the youth of the state learn more about

agriculture. "I believe that teaching the youth directly strengthens agriculture through knowledge and understanding," she said.

"Ag books for kids is an important program because of how it helps to educate the youth of our state on agriculture," Guild said. "So many people grow up never understanding where their food comes from or what a large role agriculture plays in their lives. When people don't understand things they can have misconceptions and misunderstandings when they get older."

Wyoming students and teachers are encouraged to visit their elementary school libraries to check out the featured Ag Books for Kids selection and enter the associated contests. For more information and contest rules, visit wyfb.org. ■

Cooking with the Modern Ranch Wife Lamb Gyros

Recipe by Connie Werner

Ingredient

- lamb roast cooked and sliced into small slices
- salt and pepper
- oregano
- garlic powder
- Kalamata olives
- olive oil
- Pita or Naan Bread
- tomatoes
- Purple onion
- Lettuce
- Tzatziki Sauce -
 - ½ cup cucumber shredded and water drained
 - 2 cups Greek Yogurt
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - ½ tsp salt
 - 1 tbsp olive oil

**Instructions**

1. For the Tzatziki
 - a. In a large bowl combine cucumber, yogurt, garlic, salt, and olive oil. Stir to combine. Cover and store in the fridge for a few hours or overnight before use.
2. Cut your lamb roast into small 2-3 inches slices.
3. In a pan or griddle, add the olive oil. Sauté the meat with garlic powder, salt and pepper, and sprinkle with oregano.
4. Sauté until heated through and edges turn slightly crispy.
5. Heat up your pita or naan bread.
6. Combine your Gyro
 - a. spread the tzatziki sauce down the middle, add the lamb, tomatoes, olives, purple onion, and lettuce.
7. Enjoy!

For more recipes visit
www.modernranchwife.com**NEW MEMBERS... From Page 11****PLATTE**

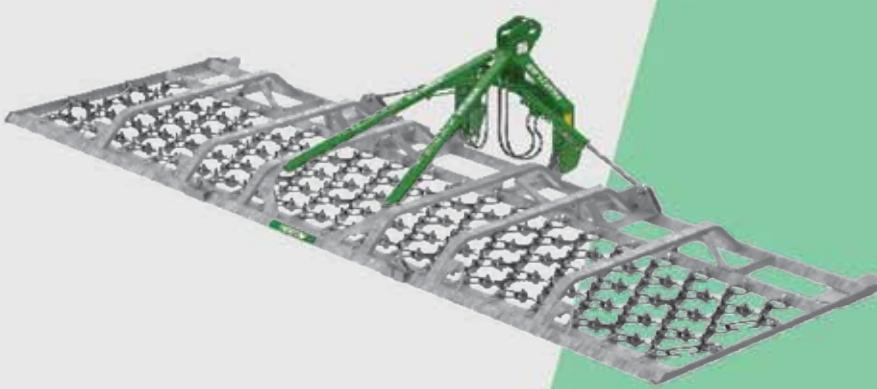
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