Wyoming Agriculture

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WyFB called for withdrawal of BLM’s Rock Springs RMP preferred alternative — BLM extended comment period, but did not grant withdrawal

BY KELLY CARPENTER

On August 18, 2023, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Rock Springs Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision. As with typical NEPA process, four management alternatives have been identified. Typically, the alternative doesn’t deviate much from current management or identified. The BLM prefers the option that impacts the least amount of the area. In the current case, the agency released the most prevalent preservation directed management.

Concerns of the plan range from surface disturbance of roads, subsurface restrictions and a reduction in the issuance of mineral leases. Specific to agriculture, there will be an approximately 2,000 AUM reduction in the southern part of Field Office management area and increased scrutiny of production practices regarding spatial-temporal constraints of mineral and grazing. Also, the range con of the field office mentioned riparian areas in grazing allotments are nearly the primary deciding factor to reduce AUMs by 20% per year until the resting protocol provides the results desired or closure of the entire allotment.

The dramatic reduction in land use from proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is also concerning. The restrictions with these designations could essentially allow for de facto wilderness areas that only allow for recreational walking and minimal resource use. Prescriptive management in the form of targeted management would be the most effective management that doesn’t severely impact large areas of land. For example, Steamboat Mountain ACEC should be managed for targeted areas of interest, not simply increasing the size of the ACEC acreage by ten-fold.

WyFB called for withdrawal of BLM’s Rock Springs RMP preferred alternative — BLM extended comment period, but did not grant withdrawal

BY KELLY CARPENTER

While national trends in the United States are heavily influenced by commodities, the majority of Wyoming farms are dominated by niche-type crops and contract pricing, which can cause lags in the realization of national trends at the state level.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a report on Aug. 31 predicting lower farm incomes than previously predicted. The February report estimated a 23% decline in farm income from $183 billion in 2022, to $141.3 billion. Adjusted for inflation, USDA estimated a 25% decrease in net farm income for 2023.

University of Wyoming Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics Community Development Specialist Roger Coupal notes while Wyoming does tend to follow national trends in some instances, for others the state’s unique combination of crops and livestock sets its own pace.

“Between the COVID-19 pandemic and challenging weather patterns, the last three years are not a good indication of the trends of the state. It would be more beneficial to look at the years prior to 2019 to get an idea of where farm income is going.”

Coupal cites upheaval in areas such as Ukraine and Africa as a supporting factor for U.S. and subsequently Wyoming wheat prices and indirectly on costs to livestock feed prices. On a per acre basis, sugar beets are the leading row crop in the state and Coupal is confident prices will stay strong.

“My expectation is that sugar beets will do pretty well. What drives this pricing is not so much the sugar, but the growing ethanol market and I do not see that changing.”

After a pretty wet and warm summer set many hay farmers up for success, we may see the price may go down, which isn’t all bad news. With more abundant hay, livestock producers won’t be forced out of state looking for the best deal to get their animals fed through the winter.”

FARM INCOME... Page 11
Exploring new frontiers at the 2024 AFBF Convention

Zippy DuVall
American Farm Bureau Federation President

Registration is now open for the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention, and I am excited for all of us to explore new frontiers in agriculture in Salt Lake City from January 19-24.

As farmers and ranchers, we are always looking toward the future, adapting to the demands of a changing and growing world, and embracing new technologies and innovations to be more productive and efficient each day. But we never lose sight of what matters most along the way: our commitment to grow the best products for our family and yours and to keep our air and water healthy for the next generation. The 2024 AFBF Convention will provide the tools and inspiration to continue to drive us forward together as we gather experts, leaders and businesses who are helping blaze the trail to new frontiers in agriculture.

Now, I know fall is a busy season across farm country and Farm Bureau. From harvest to the holidays, there’s barely a minute to catch your breath, let alone carve out time for much else. But I also know we can all attest to the importance of gathering in our counties and states and as a national organization to explore new opportunities, take on challenges and set our policy goals for the next year. That’s why our team at AFBF is always looking for ways to make each convention the best one yet—to help give you the tools you need to prepare your farm for the future as we keep reaching beyond our fencerows to strengthen agriculture and our great organization.

Our workshops will span four tracks—public policy, rural development, membership engagement and consumer engagement—and give you insights on the policies and perspectives affecting your farms, ranches, and agribusinesses for the next year and beyond. A few of the topics we’ll explore include a farm bill update, 2024 elections analysis, insights into livestock, crop and dairy markets, social media trends, and membership growth strategies. Attendees will also have opportunities to learn about local agriculture with plans for farm and food tour options. Just to preview a few... tours include a chocolate factory, a salt mine, an elk farm, an artisanal cheese plant, a brine shrimp cooperative, and the Utah State University Animal Science Farm.

We will also hear from entertaining and inspiring keynotes and enjoy our hallmark events and competitions that the Farm Bureau family looks forward to every year. We will celebrate the work of our Ag Foundation at the Flapjack Fundraiser, cultivate the next generation of leaders with YF&R competitions, and spur on the next generation of innovative business with the Ag Innovation Challenge. And of course, we’ll name a new Farm Dog of the Year. You can check out our convention website for more on these events and the latest updates, and secure your spot in Salt Lake City.

Exploring new frontiers is no small task: it takes perseverance and vision as we all work together. But modern agriculture is productive of what we can achieve as we safely and sustainably grow the food, fiber and fuel we all depend on. I hope you will join us at the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention as we look forward together and chart new frontiers in agriculture.

What makes America successful with these small numbers protecting our lifestyle and feeding our population is the adaptation of technology to do this better with less people.

Our military spends billions and billions of dollars training people, developing state of the art military equipment and educating their leadership cadre. Agriculture—no so much. Of course, we have programs to help educate ranchers and farmers like what the WyFB Foundation provides. Land grant institutions such as the University of Wyoming do research that provides information to make producers better and more efficient and large corporations also have significant research budgets that work to better understand our agricultural processes. Let’s face it though, a new tractor just doesn’t have the same allure as a hyper sonic aircraft.

Some of this helps contribute to the lack of knowledge most Americans have about how we grow food. Occasionally I’ll read an article about someone who is turning a building roof top into a garden. The article will gush about how amazing this is. While it’s great that vacant spaces are being used to grow food, the articles very seldom put the production on the new roof top garden into the proper perspective. The last article I read bragged about producing thousands of pounds of produce. These stories need to use context in order for Americans to fully appreciate the size of food production in our country.

I certainly hope that people don’t get the impression that we can eliminate food production from our farms and ranches and go to growing our food on roof tops. Even with every roof top producing food in America, it is unlikely there would be enough to sustain our 330 million people more than a few days without our fields and rangelands growing food for the other 350 or 360 days a year. At the very least, our policy makers should understand this, but when you look at some of the recent policies coming out of Washington, D.C. I’m not sure they do.
Agriculture, food system ‘at an inflection point’

By Charlie Arnot
FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE/FR.org

December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy.” This memorable quote from President Franklin Roosevelt memorialized the bombing of Pearl Harbor and marked the United States’ entry into World War II. Prior to the surprise attack in Hawaii on that Sunday morning some 82 years ago, the U.S. had avoided active participation in the conflict. We were happy to serve as the “arsenal to the allies,” but nationalistic sentiment was strong and the scars from World War I were still raw. Public sentiment was divided, and we lacked the political will to enter another global conflict — until Pearl Harbor was attacked. The bombing of a U.S. military base fueled the fire of patriotism and the United States responded with full force, ultimately prevailing with the surrender of Germany and Japan in 1945.

Dec. 7, 1941, also fundamentally changed the trajectory of agriculture in the United States. The moment Pearl Harbor was bombed, food security became national security. Victory gardens and ration books that limited the amount of sugar, meat, coffee, butter, canned goods and more became common as our national resources were redirected and targeted to winning the war.

Agriculture was called upon to increase productivity and output as never before. Farmers answered the call by increasing production of core commodities like corn, wheat and cotton by more than 400% in the last eight decades. In the 1950s the mechanization expertise that was used to defeat our military enemies was deployed in agriculture, dramatically reducing the demand for labor and once again increasing productivity and efficiency.

The focus on improving throughput year over year became the driving force for agriculture in the United States over the past 82 years and the results have been remarkable. Today, U.S. farmers produce food, fuel and fiber with remarkable efficiency, increasing output and limiting or reducing inputs year over year. There is no question that consumers in the U.S. and around the world benefited from the singular focus on productivity and throughput. What U.S. farmers accomplished over the last eight decades is truly impressive. But today, engaged consumers, investors, policy makers and other key stakeholders have new priorities. They want agriculture to place an equal focus on issues like animal welfare, climate change, health and nutrition, food safety, ethical business practices and the fair and equitable treatment of workers.

FOCUS ON AG... Page 16
Young Farmer & Rancher News

By Hannah Guild, WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee Member

My name is Hannah Guild, I live in southwest Wyoming with my husband and our son. I was raised in northern Utah on a ranch and showed steers at the county fair. This is where I learned of the importance of agriculture and saw the hard work that goes into it; therefore I developed a deep appreciation for agriculture and for all those involved.

My husband Zack and I have been involved with the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) for two years now and have really enjoyed meeting other advocates for agriculture across the state.

One of the things that the WyFB YF&R has done that is really neat is the annual Collegiate Discussion Meet where college students from across the state compete against one another discussing modern issues that we face in agriculture along with other agriculture related topics.

The discussion meet is meant to simulate a committee meeting where Farm Bureau policy is discussed and reviewed. Topics are given out beforehand so that the participants can prepare and educate themselves for the discussion. They are judged on their knowledge of the topic along with their ability to work respectfully with others to come to a solution. Participants learn many valuable lessons and meet many other like-minded individuals from across the state and possibly even the nation, where the winner has the opportunity to compete at the national level at the American Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Convention.

The competition has been held at the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in recent years but has recently been changed and will be held at the WyFB Young Farmer and Rancher Conference held in February in Laramie. I see the value in this for every college student whether they are studying agriculture and involved in it or not. Being in a setting where the main point is to collaborate with everyone's individual efforts in becoming informed of the policies and the topics, can carry over many times in life when you are expected to work with others to improve policy and resolve issues.

The WyFB YF&R Committee at large position will be voted on by state voting delegates. The 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 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. Application forms are also available at wyfb.org (Click on “Get Involved/YF&R/Committee.”) Forms submitted will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee at annual meeting.

Another great value in the Collegiate Discussion Meet is it is a great start and practice for a future of advocating for agriculture and the farming and ranching communities. Along with this, you will have opportunities to connect and build relationships with others from other colleges around the state. These relationships can benefit you for many years if you continue to collaborate and get new ideas from each other on how to best run your operations and support agriculture throughout communities and the state of Wyoming.

Zack and Hannah Guild represent the Southwest District on the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer & Rancher Committee. COURTESY PHOTO.

On Nov. 11 at the WyFB Annual Meeting, an at large position for the WyFB YF&R Committee will be voted on by state voting delegates. The at large position is a one-year term.

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Zack and Hannah Guild represent the Southwest District on the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer & Rancher Committee. COURTESY PHOTO.
Registration open for 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention

The 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention will be held Jan. 19-24, 2024, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“New Frontiers” is the theme of AFBF’s 105th consecutive convention, a “can’t miss” event that offers attendees unique insights on the policies and perspectives that will affect farms, ranches and agribusinesses in 2024 and beyond.

“This is your opportunity to join the Farm Bureau family as we explore new frontiers in agriculture, develop professional skills and help set the agenda in Washington,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “I look forward to seeing you in January in Salt Lake City as we gather together with a common purpose to kick off another year of feeding, clothing and fueling our great nation.”

A broad array of educational and inspiring workshops will be available to attendees interested in honing their leadership skills, expanding business proficiency and gaining insights from industry visionaries with expertise in food production-related policies and trends. 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.

Workshops will be offered in four tracks – public policy, rural development, member engagement and consumer engagement. Workshop topics include Farm Bill Update; Who’s Up Next? A 2024 Elections Analysis; Livestock Markets; Crop Markets; Dairy Market Issues; As Seen on Social Media: Farm to Fork in Action; and The Next Big Thing in Growing Farm Bureau Membership.

Numerous optional ag and food-related day tours are available for attendees who wish to explore the great state of Utah. Attendees can also sign up to visit a chocolate factory, see where the 2002 Olympic Games took place, visit a salt mine or learn about lavender farming. Details about additional tours will be posted when available.

Members may register for the Convention and tours at annualconvention.fb.org. A room block for the convention has been reserved at the DoubleTree Suites by the state Farm Bureau Office. Please reach out to Brooke at broes@wyfb.org or 307-721-7723 by December 1, 2023 to secure a room.

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The people of the Farm Bureau Federation

Meet the volunteer leaders Kyle and Stacy Berger

**County:** Carbon

**Farm Bureau Federation Leadership Position(s):**
- Carbon County Ranch & Farm Bureau Federation President (Kyle) and Treasurer (Stacy).
- Kyle also serves as the Central District Vice-President.
- In the past, we have also served on the Albany County board as well as Chairs of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Committee.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Describe ranch and family background.
**Berger:** I grew up on a ranch in Saratoga and Stacy grew up on a ranch outside of Laramie. Stacy and I are both 5th generation Wyoming Ranchers.

We live on my family’s ranch in Saratoga. We have six children. Our oldest son, Kaden, is in college at the University of Wyoming. Bayla (12) is our oldest daughter. She enjoys playing her violin, writing poetry and training horses. Bryndal (10) is our youngest daughter. She is learning to play the keyboard and mandolin and is a skilled writer and rider. Bexton (7) is a compassionate person who cares deeply about others. He likes to play the drums, ride horses and rope. Braycen (5) has a lot of energy, is super creative and loves to tease his brothers and sisters. Bastian (1) has just mastered walking, he has some strong opinions and it will be fun to see what kind of person God has created him to be as he grows.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** How did you get involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?
**Berger:** Soon after we got married, the Albany County Farm Bureau Federation sent us to Scottsdale to a National American Farm Bureau YF&R conference. That conference really helped us to see the importance of the Federation and we were ready to be active and involved. We were also given a chair position on the county board along with resources to develop programs for educating other young people about Farm Bureau, YF&R and policy.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** Why do you make the time to be involved in Farm Bureau Federation leadership?
**Berger:** Each of us who have spent a life as a rancher or farmer understands that the knowledge gained comes through years of experience. It is difficult to trust someone else to do what we have learned. It takes years to even trust children who have apprenticed on our ranches. So to think that a government “expert” could do it better is, at best, laughable!

Don’t get me wrong, we know that everything around us is constantly changing so we must adapt, we must find new technologies and strategies to meet this ever changing environment. We do need help. There are many companies and some agencies that are helpful and we work together to become more efficient and more productive.

One of the things that we must fight continually is over-regulation by the government. Some regulation is necessary for food safety but much regulation that affects Agriculture is not. In the heart of man is the idea “If I just had enough power, I would have the power to do good.” Politicians are trained to speak and persuade. When many of them come together and have this mindset it becomes dangerous. That isn’t the design for the government in America but it is what we are continuing to see.

As agricultural producers, we work hard. We work long hours. We volunteer and we help people. We are often tired. We work to raise food for people because it is an absolute necessity. Like Nehemiah in the Bible, we often feel like we are working with one hand and fighting with the other. We are involved in Farm Bureau because it gives us a platform to fight for what we believe is sound policy. It allows us to be heard. It gives us a voice.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** How important is each member of the Federation?
**Berger:** We value our members because they help us to keep fighting for sound policy. Memberships ensure the organization will continue to operate. Members help us to know that we have support and a reason to keep working hard, a reason to keep fighting.

**Wyoming Agriculture:** What advice do you have on how individuals can make a difference for Wyoming agriculture through the Farm Bureau Federation?
**Berger:** To those who seek to make a difference in Wyoming Agriculture through Farm Bureau, I would say, find one need in your community that has not been met and figure out a way to meet it. This may be agriculture support, something social for people living in rural areas, a way to help get producers’ stories out there to connect with consumers or simply seeing something at county fair that would help out the youth. Don’t try to do something big, just fill one need and do it well.
Chicken Gnocchi Soup

Recipe by Connie Werner
Source: www.lecremedelacrumb.com

INGREDIENTS:
- 3-4 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- 1/2 white onion, diced
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cups chicken broth or Watkins chicken soup base
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 6 ounces potato gnocchi
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup fresh roughly chopped spinach

DIRECTIONS:
- In a soup pot heat olive oil. Add celery, onions, garlic, and carrots. Saute for 2-3 minutes until onions are translucent.
- Add chicken, broth, salt, pepper, and thyme. Bring to a boil, then gently stir in gnocchi and boil for 3-4 minutes. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for an additional 10 minutes.
- Stir in heavy cream and spinach. Cook for 1-2 minutes until spinach is tender. Adjust salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy!
Little America Hotel & Resort
Cheyenne, Wyoming
Agenda (Tentative)

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8**
11:15 am YF&R Committee Meeting
12:15 pm YF&R Committee Lunch
5:00 pm Board of Directors’ Executive Session– Fairfield Inn and Suites (1820 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne WY)

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9**
7:00 am Standing Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs Breakfast
Breakfast buffet is provided.
8:00 am Board of Directors’ Meeting
8:00 am WyFB Foundation “Water in Wyoming” Seminar
– “How Interstate Compacts & Court Decrees Affect Wyoming Law” – Chris Brown, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming Attorney General’s Office
– “Water Development” – Wyoming Water Development Commission Staff
11:00 am Registration
12:00 pm Noon Luncheon for registered attendees
– Presentation of Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance Agent and VP awards
1:30 pm Standing Committee Meetings
– #1 General Issues – Matt Stroh, Chair
– #2 State Government Affairs – James Ramsay, Chair
– #3 Agricultural Tax – Andrea Dockery, Chair
– #4 Natural/Environmental Resources – Tim Beck, Chair
– Credentials and Nominating Committee meetings held after completion of Standing Committee meetings
4:15 pm WyFB County Presidents, Vice Presidents, Century Club Members, Gold Club Members, Silver Club Members and Lifetime Members are invited to meet guest speakers
4:15 pm WyFB County Presidents, Vice Presidents, Century Club Members, Gold Club Members, Silver Club Members and Lifetime Members are invited to meet guest speakers
7:00 pm Taproom Trivia Night– Westby Edge Brewing Company (714 W 20TH ST, Cheyenne WY)
– Presented by: WyFB Staff
– Open to the public

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10**
Breakfast on own
– Complimentary breakfast is provided for attendees staying at TownePlace Suites.
– Guests staying at Little America are welcome to eat onsite at Hathaway’s Restaurant.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11**
Breakfast on own
8:00 am General Session Reconvenes
– Veterans Day Recognition
– 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 Resolution
– Presentation of Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance Agent and VP awards

**ATTENTION:** County Farm Bureau Federation voting delegates to State Annual Meeting

Proposed resolutions from the districts 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.
WATER IN WYOMING

Thursday, November 9
8:00 - 11:00 AM
Little America, Cheyenne

Free & Open to the Public

Guest Speakers Include:

8:00 AM: Chris Brown, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Wyoming Attorney General’s Office, discussing how interstate compacts and court decrees affect Wyoming law

9:00 AM: Brandon Gebhart, Wyoming State Engineer, discussing Wyoming water law fundamentals and structure

10:00 AM: Wyoming Water Development Commission Staff, discussing water development

CALL THE Wyoming Agriculture & Natural Resources Mediation Program
FOR MORE INFORMATION
888-996-9278
AGRICULTURE.WY.GOV/DIVISIONS/NRP/MEDIATIONPROGRAM

The Wyoming Beef Council uses multiple marketing outlets to promote and educate including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and others.

We educate the public about beef as part of a nutritional and healthy diet!

We Promote beef recipes from Beef. It’s What’s for Dinner to help consumers use beef in their daily meals.

We educate the public about the commitment that ranchers have to their animals, their land and their legacy.

We explain how BQA Certification means that beef producers follow ethical and scientific management practices that ensure the highest quality of beef!
**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 kclark@wyfb.org or mail to WyFB, ATTN: Classifieds, P.O. Box 1348, Laramie, WY 82073.

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**NEW MEMBERS**

**ALBANY**

Lee Killian, Laramie; Tammy Mack, Laramie; Robert Needham, Laramie; Jacque Lahr, Laramie; Matthew Shelby, Laramie; Debra Matthew, Laramie; Kay Dershaw/ Dershaw Land & Cattle LLC (REG), Pine Bluffs

**BIG HORN**

Christopher Green, Greybull; Harry Herren (REG), Greybull; Robert Peterson, Greybull; Rik Mettes Living Trust (Reg), Cowley; Susan Kraus (REG), Lovell

**CAMPELL**

Kristin & Calvin Wolf (REG), Hulett; Monica & William Hunt, Pine Dale; Steve Conzelman, Gillette; Eila Marie Coleman, Gillette; Marcus Murschel, Gillette; Arthur Oliver, Gillette; Sheila Larsen, Gillette; Jairine Tarver/ Tarver Ranch LLC (REG), Gillette; Tarver Hart X Ranch Partnership (REG), Gillette; Bob Tarver/ Trail Creek Grazing (Reg), Gillette; Robert Tarver (REG), Gillette; Miranda & Mike Leisy (REG), Gillette; James Sherman, Gillette; Rachel & Steve Dutton, Gillette; Laura & Simon LeBlanc, Gillette

**CARBON**

Jessica & Hank Morris, Saratoga; Julie & William Kaewert (REG), Longmont; CO; Tanya & Clay Evans (REG), Baggs; James Forrest, Rawlins

**CONVERSE**

Brooke Roes & Jeremy Settleymeyer (REG), Douglas; Joyce Willifong, Glenrock; Donna & John Flynn, Glenrock; Robert Comnick, Douglas; Maddie Tillard, Sheridan; James Schell, Glenrock; Terry & Ron Burton, Douglas; Evelyn Holbrook, Glenrock; Cally Martinez, Casper

**CROOK**

Karen Bennett, Sundance; DeSarae Rosenlund, Moorcroft; Natasha & James Gilbert (REG), Sundance; Randy Cordella, Sundance; Kitty Yelland, Moorcroft; Brian Park (REG), Alzada; MT. Laurel & Donald Zimmochich, Moorcroft (REG), Moorcroft; Kurt Wolch, Moorcroft

**FREMONT**

Justin Schneir (REG), Lander; Shawa Prather, Riverton; Jay Rodewald (REG), Mitchell/Clair (REG), Shoshoni; Perry Lane, Riverton; Deonna Bouska, Dubois; Kenneth Shimke, Riverton; Christine Gilbertson, Lander; Cully Goehring, Lander; Donald Pedlar, Lander; Therese & James Woodruff, Lander; Chera & Jock Campbell (REG), Shoshoni, Nicholas Gallinger (REG), Lander

**GOSHEN**

Diane & Steven Foster (REG), Fort Laramie

**HOT SPRINGS**

Reginald Reid/ Reid Dragon Family Trust, Thermopolis; Ruth Wallfing, Casper; Elizabeth & Lucas Whitt, Thermopolis

**JACKSON**

Stephen Garcia, Buffalo; Troy Nygren, Buffalo

**LARAMIE**

Bo Stipe, Cheyenne; Carolyn & David Odei, Cheyenne; Kenneth Nelson, Cheyenne; Dora & John Hart, Aberdeen, MS; Elizabeth & Alexander Bowler, Cheyenne; Jackie Thatcher, Cheyenne; Trisha & Tyler Kimzey (REG), Horse Creek; Chris & David Hall, Cheyenne; Steven Austin; Cheyenne; Lois & Marvin Powell, Cheyenne; John Stephens, Cheyenne; Glen Williams, Cheyenne; Jerra Davis, Cheyenne; Tammy Bourne, Cheyenne; Keelee & Asecy Abyetta, Cheyenne; Katie & William Weber (REG), Cheyenne; Stacy Nichols, Cheyenne; Jody Callahan, Cheyenne; Michelle & Ronald Martinez, Cheyenne; Maria & Robert Cowley, Cheyenne; Sheri & Mike Olson (REG), Cheyenne

**LINCOLN**

Geoff Kuzmich, Bedford; Melissa Franklin, Thayne; Heather Clements, Cokelville; Matthew Booth, Afton; Ramona & Alan Rae (REG), Afton; Alice & David Palkow, Cabot, AR; Stephen Judge, Alpine; Lou Ann Blitsch, Thayne; Calvin Rawe, Alpine; Mary Stupi, Alpine, Julie Amos, La Barge; Crystal Frederickson, Thayne; Steven Carter (REG), Bedford, Mark Summers, Alpine, James Shondel, Belleville, NJ

**NATRONA**

Perry Gilbert, Casper; David Arnold, Casper; Chelsey & Dustin Rhoades, Casper

**PARK**

Reese Karst (REG), Powell; Joseph Higgs (REG), Cody; Maryann & John Magee, Cody; Carol Helzer, Cody; Gary Cabe, Cody; Kenny & Todd Frost, Cody; Joan & James Hoffman, Cody; Margaret & Lloyd Snyder, Powell; Marni & Gary Ventling, Cody

**PLATTE**

Kim & Jason Goertz (REG), Wheatland; Kenneth Pasley, Wheatland

**SHERIDAN**

Cory Reeves, Sheridan; Kendi Coffey, Sheridan; Bruce Gerber, Sheridan; Dennis Hanson (REG), Sheridan; Justin Hoef, Sheridan; David Wang, Sheridan; Shirley Kadrmas, Sheridan; Ronald Destefano, Sheridan; Bobbie & Ronald Spahn, Big Horn; Gerald Aust, Sheridan; Leah Roush, Sheridan; Rebecca Adit, Sheridan; Kathryn Hier, Sheridan; Michelle & Jason Miller, Sheridan; Elaina Winters, Story; Deborah Paterakis, Sheridan; Casey Owings, Ranchester; Jenna Parrott, Sheridan; Max Mcilan, Sheridan; Lily Bliss, Big Horn; Lynn & John Masters (REG), Dayton

**SUBLETT**

Lance McMillen (REG), Pinedale; Sena Watson, Pinedale; Chelsie Martin, Pinedale

**SWEETWATER**

Matthew McFadden, Green River; Ross Slagowski (REG), Rock Springs; Mary Ann & Steve Mines (REG), Farson; Beas Ramsay (REG), Rock Springs; Brian Roberts, Rock Springs; Moses Urruta, Rock Springs; Laura Frampton, Green River; Ralynne & Joseph Tomich (REG), Farson; Shawnee & Michael Tomich (REG), Rock Springs; Donna Thurmon, Rock Springs

**TETON**

Sheryn Garlin, Casper; NSC Holdings (REG), Jackson; Sonia Diaz, Jackson; Melissa Robinson, Jackson; Mark McCallum, Bryn Mawr, PA

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On the cattle side, Coupal predicts upswings will continue as droughts plague different parts of the country. Though southwest Wyoming is considered to be a part of the greater western states drought. Longtime Wyoming Farm Bureau member, producer, and market professional Garrett Horton explained that due to the nature of the majority of Wyoming’s crops, local producers may not see the impact as strongly in 2023 as they will going into 2024 and following years.

“I wouldn’t call Wyoming crops niche, but a lot of our producers are growing non-commodity crops that are priced out pretty far in advance with contracts,” Horton explains. “So a dip in prices may take a couple of years to catch up to these contracts.”

“A lot of crop prices are locked in before we even plant so as far as income being down on the farming side this year on the income side it should be pretty close to last year except for commodities like corn and alfalfa.”

Horton notes contract crops are likely to come down next year as these contracts will lag behind the broader agriculture economy in the nation.

“In my opinion, the biggest impact on Wyoming right now is input cost. Fertilizer and fuel were down at the beginning of the year, but now we have seen fuel skyrocket back up. Labor continues to be tight. In a lot of cases you can find help and when you do it is almost unaffordable. Outside the primary inputs, supplies, parts, all the odds and ends it takes to operate a farm/ranch continue to eat more and more of the bottom line. For example, I recently had to buy a couple of cattle waterers and they were over $2,000 a piece.”

On the livestock side, especially with cattle, Horton predicts cattle will do very well as calves have trended $500-600 more per head than last year. On the livestock side, especially with cattle, Horton described the market as “topsy-turvy” since COVID.

“Sheep saw virtually no market, followed by record high prices and back to lows all in the time since. Currently, prices have gotten better, but they are still struggling with the market with just so few players left.”

For sheep producers, input costs can be even more complex as many of these operations rely on H2A labor.

“Sheep margins are getting killed by inputs because a lot of them rely on H2A labor and the rules surrounding this program continue to get more complicated and more expensive. Not to mention, the paperwork is just insane.”

Another major hurdle for farm income is increasing interest rates.

“One piece of the puzzle that is affecting everyone is interest rates. For most of my career in agriculture, interest rates have been historically low and they have jumped nearly three percent,” he explains. “Interest plays a huge role in the decisions people make now more than ever. With rates this high, producers have to figure out how they will cover that cost on a per head or per acre basis.”

Coupal regretfully notes he and many of his colleagues predict interest rates will go up before they come down again.

“We get a sense that interest rates will have to go up some because of recent government borrowing and still even COVID-19. International stability can also affect interest rates and we are seeing a lot of that right now.”

As producers stare down the barrel of continued uncertain times, one thing Horton notes they can do is lean on working capital.

“This is your first line of defense financially in a downturn. Fortunately, a lot of producers have built some cash reserves coming off good years. Unfortunately, rather than re-investing that into their operations in the form of expansion, improvements, or upgrading that worn out piece of equipment they need to keep it set aside. That rainy day fund they can tap when revenue falls below break-evens. Without this financial cushion continued operations will become less and less financially feasible in the downturns.”

The WyFB requested a complete withdrawal of the preferred alternative and will continue to be involved in the commenting process. Although the BLM did not grant a withdrawal of the preferred alternative, on October 19, the agency extended the comment period by 60 days, resulting in the comment deadline of January 17, 2024. To comment, please visit the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation website Action Alert page for information. (https://www.wyfb.org/Article/Draft-Resources-Management-Plans-and-Environmental-Impact-Statement-for-Rock-Springs-RMP-Revision)
It’s your future. Let’s protect it.
Together we’ll create a plan to protect what matters most to you.
The resolutions process starts with one member bringing a resolution to the local county meeting and the next step is the district meeting. Resolutions discussion at the Southeast District Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting. From left to right: James Krouse, Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation President; Kevin Baars, Southeast District Director; and Patt Cullen, Platte County Farm Bureau Federation President.

The Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation presented their 2023 “VIP Award” to Shelly and Dwight Krein. Board member Kevin Baars (left) is shown with the Kreins at the county annual meeting held in September. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

Chelsea (Baars) Hunter was recognized for her years of service as the county president at the Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in September. She served as county president from 2019-2023. The board presented a custom cutting board made by the local Skills USA Chapter. Front row (l to r): Lexie Painter, Chelsea Hunter, and Denise Baars. Back row (l to r): Travis Krein, John Sampers, Kevin Baars, and Tom Marshik. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

Wyoming FFA’s National Officer Candidate Bree Coxbill visited with WyFB YF&R Committee Members Seth Allen and Cody Alps at the Southeast District Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in October. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher Committee Members Brent & Jennifer Horton and Shawn & Kelli Chouinard at the Park County Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in September.

The resolutions process starts with one member bringing a resolution to the local county meeting and the next step is the district meeting. Resolutions discussion at the Southeast District Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting. From left to right: James Krouse, Niobrara County Farm Bureau Federation President; Kevin Baars, Southeast District Director; and Patt Cullen, Platte County Farm Bureau Federation President. KERIN CLARK PHOTO.

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“Vitalix Kickstart Weaning boosts immunity and health when we’re starting calves. It’s worked tremendously. We achieve our goals for health every time.”

- Tyson Narjes, Narjes Cattle Company, Sidney, Nebraska
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.

Water in Wyoming Foundation Seminar

The WyFB Foundation is hosting a “Water in Wyoming” seminar the morning of Nov. 9 from 8-11 a.m. The first speaker will be Chris Brown, Senior Assistant Attorney General with the Wyoming Attorney General’s Office. Brown will discuss how interstate compacts and court decrees affect Wyoming law. The second speaker will be Wyoming State Engineer Brandon Gehhart. He will discuss Wyoming water law fundamentals and structure. The third speaker will be a staff member from the Wyoming Water Development Commission to discuss water development in Wyoming.

The seminar is free and open to the public. Attendees are requested to register by emailing broes@wyfb.org.

Century, Silver & Gold Club Social

County Presidents, County Vice Presidents, Gold Club Members, Silver Club Members, Century Club Members and Life Members are invited to visit one-on-one with guest speakers at a social on Thursday, Nov. 9 at 4:15 p.m. Light hors d’oeuvres will be served. This is an invitation only event with tickets provided at registration.

Taproom Trivia Night

A fun trivia event for members and the general public will be presented by WyFB Staff on Nov. 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Westby Edge Brewing Company.

Speakers

Members will hear reports from WyFB President Todd Fornstrom, WyFB Executive Vice President Ken Hamilton, and Mountain West Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company CEO Jim Geesey to start the general session on Friday, Nov. 10.

Jessica Cabrera, AFBF Senior Director of Government Affairs, will discuss environmental policy at 1:30 p.m. on Nov. 10. Briggs will discuss environmental policy issues such as Waters of the United States, emerging PFAS regulations, and conservation issues.

Entertainment, Reports and Elections

Friday evening’s banquet is a time to celebrate our farmers and ranchers and present awards. To conclude the banquet, the Southeast District Farm Bureau Federation Counties (Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara and Platte) are excited to present to members music entertainment by BJ Jamison.

With appreciation and thanks to America’s Veterans, Saturday Nov. 11 will include resolutions consideration, elections, and a WyFB YF&R report.

Foundation Auction

The WyFB Foundation will hold the second annual silent and live auction at the awards banquet on Friday, Nov. 10. All proceeds from the auction will go to the Foundation.

‘Harvest for All’ Fundraiser

The WyFB Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) 20th annual “Harvest for All” fund drive will take place at annual meeting. Monetary donations (we are unable to accept food 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.

Agenda

The agenda is on page 8 and available at www.wyfb.org. Pre-registration has closed. Contact Brooke Roes at broes@wyfb.org or 307-721-7723.

“It Starts With You” so plan to join your fellow Farm Bureau Federation members to chart the course to keep agriculture strong at the 104th Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation.

Thinking about your finances shouldn’t weigh you down.

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When you work with us, you receive not only individualized planning and guidance, but also peace of mind knowing you’re making progress toward your future goals. Connect with your Farm Bureau agent or advisor to get started.
FOCUS ON AG… From Page 3

Historically consumers were focused on three drivers for purchase — taste, price, and convenience. Many of today’s shoppers are considering multiple drivers for purchase, including impact on the environment, treatment of animals, the relationship between food and health and much more.

And the pressure to focus on more than productivity is not limited to shoppers. Capital providers, policymakers and NGOs are weighing in on a variety of issues that impact how food is grown. Larry Fink is chairman and CEO of Blackrock, one of the largest private equity firms in the world. His focus on climate has increased in his annual letter to shareholders and business leaders over the past three years.

2020: “Climate risk is investment risk.”
2022: “The transition to a net-zero world is the shared responsibility of every citizen, corporation and government.”

Agriculture and the food system are at an inflection point. Stakeholders who buy commodities, capital providers who make financing available and engaged consumers who purchase food are demanding more from agriculture.

As with any change, these new priorities create opportunity and risk. America’s farmers are resilient and innovative, and they will find creative ways to address these emerging priorities. The progress to date is impressive!

To ensure a truly sustainable food system, we need a broader conversation, with stakeholders across the food system about how to equitably distribute the cost and value of addressing climate change, animal welfare and other relevant priorities. Given the resources to find and implement solutions, America’s farmers will respond, just as they did after Dec. 7, 1941.

Charlie Arnot is CEO of The Center for Food Integrity, a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to building consumer trust and confidence in today’s food system. This column was originally published by FarmWeek Now as an opinion piece.

HAPPY VETERANS DAY

With respect, honor, and gratitude we honor all who served.

THANK YOU VETERANS!