

Activities

A WYOMING BUSINESS COUNCIL PUBLICATION WINTER 2013



A New HIDEOUT

BARBARA AND MERLIN HEINZE STARTED THEIR SUCCESSFUL HIDE TANNING BUSINESS IN A SMALL SPARE ROOM IN THEIR THERMOPOLIS, WYO., HOME. NOW, THIRTEEN YEARS LATER, THEY HAVE A BRAND NEW LOCATION TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND THRIVE.

PAGE 8



8 Cover Story

Merlin's Hide Out in Thermopolis, Wyo., had a Grand Opening on March 1 for their new location. They specialize in handcrafted tanned buffalo hides and other fur and leather products.

features

4 Diversification is Key to Success

The Lovercheck family knew early on it had to think big and diversify its ranch to create a sustainable operation.

6 Firsts for Wyoming First

The Wyoming Products Promotion Program moves under the Agribusiness Division and names a new manager.

7 Ukraine L.E.A.D. Trip

Wyoming L.E.A.D. Class 12 traveled to the country of Ukraine for their international travel seminar in November.

10 Guest Editorial

Grant funding now available to agricultural projects that strengthen Wyoming's agricultural industry as well as ag production.

12 Youth in AG

Sage Askin, 24-year-old University of Wyoming graduate, was one of the WAGON program's first participants.

On the Cover

Merlin Heinze, owner of Merlin's Hide Out, speaks with a customer at the Grand Opening of their new location in Thermopolis, Wyo.

Photos by Elijah Cobb

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BUSINESS COUNCIL

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Wyoming ranchers and farmers make significant contribution to state's economy

During the spring of each year, America celebrates National Ag Day to honor the great farmers and ranchers in this country. The value of the agricultural sector in Wyoming annually is around \$1 billion, making agriculture the third leading industry in the state. In addition to having a significant impact on the economy of Wyoming, agriculture contributes open spaces that enhance the scenic value of our landscape.

The 11,000 farms and ranches that were operating in Wyoming last year produced enough raw product to make an incredible amount of food and fiber. For example, in one year:

- Wyoming produces enough pinto beans to make 52 million gallons of chili
- Wyoming chickens produce enough eggs to make 4.8 million deviled eggs
- Wyoming dairy cows produce enough milk to make over 12 million pounds of cheese
- Wyoming bees produce 1.89 million pounds of honey
- Wyoming produces enough cattle each year to make more than 25 million quarter-pound hamburger patties
- Wyoming grows enough wheat to make 442 million loaves of bread
- Wyoming produces enough pork to bar-b-que 1.5 million slabs of baby back ribs
- Wyoming sheep produce enough wool to make 4 million 8-ounce skeins of worsted yarn

As we celebrate National Ag Day on March 19, take the time this year to thank your local farmer and rancher for their hard work and dedication to providing a healthy, safe and abundant food supply.



Cindy Garretson-Weibel

Director, Agribusiness
Wyoming Business Council



Recently, the Wyoming First Program and Wyoming product promotion activities were moved to the Agribusiness Division of the Wyoming Business Council. Congratulations to Terri Barr, who was hired to manage that program. Terri has worked for the Wyoming Business Council since 2005 and was most recently the Agribusiness Division Senior Marketing Specialist. Terri has some great ideas and we are excited to be further promoting Wyoming-made products. See page 6 for more information on the program and its future. In addition, we hired Cody Ann Bainter as an agricultural marketing specialist to replace Terri, as well as Joylyn Denna as an administrative assistant. We will have profiles on these newest hires in the next publication of *AGtivities*.



The irrigation flume was built by Otis Lovercheck on the lower Bear Creek area.

DIVERSIFICATION the key to SURVIVAL



A pheasant hunt at the Silver Wing Hunting Ranch, a ranch diversification business managed by Justin and Brenda Lovercheck.



The Loverchecks receive the Wyoming Centennial Farm and Ranch award during the 2012 Wyoming State Fair in Douglas. Photo by Richard Collier

“Reflecting on our history reminded us of how much our ancestors sacrificed in order to grow the ranch, to keep it a viable operation and to pass it on to the next generation.”

- Sharon Lovercheck

BY KIM KITTEL | kim.kittel@wyo.gov

In 1904

, Otis Lovercheck came to the Goshen County area to work the Martin Place for his brother-in-law William Edmiston, and for more than 100 years since, the Lovercheck's have been going strong.

The family knew early on it had to think big to create a sustainable operation, so they expanded the ranch by purchasing homesteads along Bear Creek, being mindful of the importance of ranch diversification. Five years later, Otis purchased the CP brand and since 1909, the outfit has been known as the CP Ranch. Otis and his wife Nancy believed ranch diversification was key to ranch survival. They raised Hereford cattle, wheat, barley, alfalfa, chickens and pigs. Otis had a significant business raising mammoth Jacks and Jennys for the U.S. military. He also built an irrigation flume with the idea that artichokes would be a productive crop on the lower Bear Creek area. Unfortunately, the project resulted in crop failure due to water freezing in the flume, but it was a testament to Otis' belief in trying new ideas.

The CP Ranch today is a cattle ranch with an emphasis on pasture rotation to assure vegetation. The creek bottoms are managed to assure heavy growth of grasses and shrubs to create a healthy riparian environment, which is used for the Silver Wing Hunting Ranch, a private bird farm that is a ranch diversification project owned by Justin and Brenda Lovercheck. Justin and Brenda also operate a large game hunting business that includes a sporting clay range, and implemented a Riding Ranch project to draw guests to the property for horseback riding.

Four generations of Loverchecks live on the CP today. Ron Lovercheck is president and manager of Lovercheck Land and Cattle Company and his wife Sharon is treasurer. Other family members include Dean, who is vice president, and his wife Donna, and Justin and Brenda Lovercheck and their two children Chase and Kelci.

The family attributes the ranch's longevity to conservative fiscal policies, diversification, and outside sources of income. The last two generations have lived on the ranch but made their pri-

mary income from other sources. Ron owned a rural real estate company and Sharon's career as a nurse/manager of health programs enabled the couple to live and work on the ranch without depending upon it for income.

A goal of the last three generations has been to operate the ranch debt free. The family has achieved this goal through sound and conservative ranch management principles and a transitional management philosophy. The Loverchecks' goals for their family ranch include: stocking the ranch with their own cattle and improving the barns and corals as part of their ranch infrastructure improvement project; managing the grasslands as good stewards of the land and to continue farming reclamation projects by planting additional shelter belts and food plots; passing the ranch on to the next generation debt free; and generating sufficient income so the generation working and managing the ranch can have sufficient income to experience a high quality of life.

The Loverchecks acknowledge that reaching the last goal requires sound estate planning, something that isn't always easy.

“Ranch and farm families have a tremendous challenge when it comes to estate planning. How do they protect the assets of the ranch or farm while being fair to their children who are not engaged in the operation of the ranch? Ranch families usually want the non-ranching family members to enjoy the ranch and come home to re-fuel. But in order to protect the future of the ranch, ranch families must deal with this critical issue,” said Sharon.

Receiving the Centennial Farm and Ranch award was, “a lovely honor,” said Sharon.

“Reflecting on our history reminded us of how much our ancestors sacrificed in order to grow the ranch, to keep it a viable operation and to pass it on to the next generation,” Sharon said. “The hard work of Otis and Nancy, Charles and Norma, Dean and Donna is no small contribution and we are deeply appreciative of their labors and example.”

Firsts for Wyoming First

Products Promotion Program moves under Agribusiness, names new manager

BY BREE ANDERSON | bree.anderson@wyo.gov

Big things are happening for the Wyoming First program this year. First, and most important, is the realignment of the program, now administered by the Business Council's Agribusiness Division.

Until late 2012, the program fell under the leadership of the Business & Industry Division at the Business Council, but a staff change in the program triggered a change in thinking, and the Agribusiness Division relished the opportunity to take over a program it feels gels perfectly with its other services and overall mission.

"With all the work we do to promote producers across Wyoming, and considering how many Wyoming First member companies offer food-related products, the fit seemed natural," said Agribusiness Director Cindy Garretson-Weibel. "We're very excited to take this successful, popular program and see how we can make it even more valuable for our members."

In addition to the divisional change, a new program manager has taken the helm.

Terri Barr, who formerly served as Agricultural Marketing Specialist for the Agribusiness Division, has moved into the position of Wyoming Products Program Manager. Barr was acting as the interim program manager, filling in and taking care of the program until the move became official.

"I'm very excited to continue the success of the Wyoming First program," Barr said. "We have so many terrific companies making great products, and I am looking forward to helping them use our program to their full advantage."

Barr says the diversity of businesses in the Wyoming First program will help grow the scope of customers the Agribusiness Division works with.

The Wyoming First program assists companies located in the state with the identification and promotion of their Wyoming-made or substantially enhanced products and services. With

membership costs at \$35 for two years, it is an inexpensive way for Wyoming businesses to market their products. Membership in the program gives participants the ability to use the Wyoming First Bucking Horse and Rider stickers and tags, notification of marketing opportunities, a listing on the Wyoming Business Council website, one free roll of stickers with the option to purchase additional rolls, eligibility for Trade Show Incentive Grants, and more. Members will also have their company listed in the Wyoming Made Catalog which is distributed around the state and country during tradeshow.

The current issue of the Wyoming-made catalog was printed last July, but an electronic version of the catalog is being developed.

Barr said they are looking into expanding the electronic version by adding it to the Wyoming Business Council website and taking it to tradeshow.

"Some of the technology we're using with another division will help us get information back to the Business Council a lot easier," Barr said. "We will be able to assist a person at a tradeshow who might be interested in getting a copy of the Wyoming First catalog or someone moving their business to Wyoming, for example."

There are currently around 200 companies that claim membership in the program. Barr has plans to grow that number and help more Wyoming-made companies with their marketing needs. Barr said she welcomes feedback and suggestions.

"I am very, very passionate about this program and I think we can do a lot with it. I would love to have ideas from the members or other companies on how they think we could improve the program," Barr said.



For more information or to submit a suggestion contact Barr at 307.777.2807 or terri.barr@wyo.gov. To learn more about the Wyoming First program visit: www.wyomingfirst.org.



EUROPE'S BREADBASKET

In November, Wyoming L.E.A.D. Class 12 traveled to the Ukraine for their international travel seminar.



Wyoming L.E.A.D. Class 12 traveled to the country of Ukraine for their international travel seminar in November. Since Ukraine became an independent nation in 1991, agriculture has continued to grow. The dark, rich topsoil has given Ukraine the designation as, “the Breadbasket of Europe.”

The group toured a variety of agricultural operations, including Agricor Holding, a beef farm with over 3,200 head of beef cattle (Simmental, Angus, Charolais and Limousin). This is one of the largest beef cattle operations in all of Ukraine and one of the most progressive. Dairy is a prominent industry in the country and the participants toured several dairies, which included red and white Holsteins, as well as the traditional black and white Holsteins, with which Americans are most familiar.

The grain elevator tour of Kiev-Atlantic exposed the class to the grain and feed industry. The facility was founded by an American farmer and they have developed an extensive distribution network for their products.

A tour of a 25,000 head poultry operation was a new experience for most of L.E.A.D. Class 12, as was Ukrlandfarming, Ltd., which is a diversified operation that raises quail, hogs and milk cows.

During the final tour stop at Milkline Dairy Corporation, the group toured the processing facility then sampled a variety of value-added milk products.

Recruitment for L.E.A.D. Class 13, which begins in the fall, is currently underway. For further information contact: Cindy Garetson-Weibel, cindy.weibel@wyo.gov or call 307-777-6589.



A New HIDEOUT

BARBARA AND MERLIN HEINZE STARTED THEIR SUCCESSFUL HIDE TANNING BUSINESS IN A SMALL SPARE ROOM IN THEIR THERMOPOLIS, WYO., HOME. NOW, THIRTEEN YEARS LATER, THEY HAVE A BRAND NEW LOCATION TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND THRIVE.

BY MATT COX | matt.cox@wyo.gov



PICTURED: (TOP) BARB HEINZE WITH SOME OF MERLIN'S HIDE OUT'S POPULAR BUFFALO HIDES. (ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT) CUSTOMERS ARRIVE AT THE NEW MERLIN'S HIDE OUT LOCATION FOR THE GRAND OPENING; HIDES OF ALL TYPES HANG ON DISPLAY ON ONE OF THE WALLS OF THE NEW BUILDING; MERLIN'S SISTER, GAIL WILLIAMS, AND NIECE, LEANN CLOUSE, HELP AT THE STORE'S OPEN HOUSE.

Successful businesses are rarely born from the cells of a spreadsheet or the bullet points of a business plan. They are conceived in empty garages and spare bedrooms, from the hands of the craftsman and the mind of the hobbyist.

Merlin and Barb Heinze, owners of Merlin's Hide Out, know this path well as they started their now very successful hide tanning business in a spare room in their Thermopolis, Wyo., home nearly 13 years ago.

Merlin, an avid hunter, has had a passion for sewing leather since he was a youth in 4-H and FFA. In 1997, he began learning how to tan hair on hides and embarked on his first project: a pair of gators he made for himself from some beaver hides.

"As it often happens, 'a couple' of beaver hides turned into 'many,'" Barb said. "The following winter, when a good friend asked him to tan a buffalo hide, I put my foot down and said, 'Not in the spare bedroom!'"

Merlin took his project outside to a 9' x 15' log shed that he could work in during the cold Wyoming winters. Barb, who was never able to locate him for dinner, called the tannery Merlin's Hide Out and the name stuck.

Merlin discovered his life's passion when he began tanning buffalo hides. In 2005, the couple opened their business at its current location and within three months was turning work away.

Merlin's Hide Out specializes in handcrafted tanned buffalo hides and other fur and leather products. They also offer full tanning services for all North American hides and skins. Merlin's Hide Out has become a leading provider of these products and services in the United States and credits their involvement in various Wyoming Business Council programs in helping them get where they are today.

The couple has been involved with the Wyoming Business Council's Wyoming First program since 2009. The program assists companies located in the state with the identification and promotion of their Wyoming-made or substantially enhanced products and services.

Barb said connecting with other Wyoming First members and the Trade Show Incentive grant program, which they have used

to attend Denver Mart and another Christmas retail show in Denver, have been some of their favorite parts of being involved with Wyoming First.

"I believe one of the greatest benefits of being a member of Wyoming First are the avenues that it has opened up with the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) and other such programs," Barb said. "We have participated in several of the programs and seminars. We have also used the Market Research Center and Manufacturing-Works. We have taken advantage of several of the individual webinars. Because of these programs, we have seen a substantial increase in our business."

Merlin and Barb attended the five-part program, "Get Your Business Fit for the New Year." The series included sessions on successful business habits, website optimization, marketing plans, financial record keeping, and Facebook for business. Last year, the Heinzes also participated in the ExporTech seminar, a customized export training program that provides small businesses with a process for expanding into global markets.

"It was a great learning experience and a huge insight into the world of exporting," Barb said. "It made us take a long hard look at our business to see if exporting was really something we wanted to pursue. I would

recommend this series to others that have a product that might be easier to export than ours."

The couple did decide to continue to pursue exporting their buffalo hides and have made contacts in Great Britain and Germany that are helping them with finding a possible wholesale account.

The Heinzes turned the log shed into a retail location shortly after opening the tannery due to the many requests for hats, mittens, pillows and other goods. This spring, they expanded to a new, larger facility for tanning with a retail store in the front of the building.

"Our buffalo hides are regarded as the best in the industry. We tan all types of North American hides for taxidermists, manufacturers, craftsmen and fur buyers," Barb said. "We feel lucky to be in Wyoming and to have these programs available. With this type of support and information and help, it has made being a successful small business attainable."

**"OUR BUFFALO HIDES
ARE REGARDED AS THE
BEST IN THE INDUSTRY."
- BARB HEINZE**

Grant funding available for agricultural projects

Agricultural Research Funding Program projects must strengthen Wyoming's agricultural industry as well as agricultural production.

BY CHRIS WICHMANN | Division Manager

National Resources and Policy Division, Wyoming Department of Agriculture



Photo by Valerie Giese

Last year's Wyoming Legislative Budget Session provided a new program for the Wyoming Department of Agriculture to manage. The Agricultural Research Funding Program directs the department to develop rules and regulations, coordinate with the state's agricultural industry and develop a grant funding application process. The legislature provided the department with \$200,000 to apply toward agricultural research projects from educational institutions or other qualified entities. These projects must identify how it may strengthen Wyoming's agricultural industry and agricultural production.

The Natural Resource and Policy Division (NRPD) is very excited about this new program and the benefits it may produce. NRPD will be responsible for the management of this program and is coordinating with interested entities and promulgating rules.

Additional information developed about the program includes:

- The request for proposal (RFP) will be available later this spring after rules have been fully developed and accepted.
- Applications will consist of up to \$20,000 with no match required.
- The applications will be ranked by a panel consisting of folks from various major industries (cattle, sheep, dry land farming, irrigated farming and academic).
- The intent is to apply projects on the ground and not make it a major academic effort.
- A requirement of the program is an educational component to share information on the project. Once the project is complete, applicants must deliver findings to the public. These projects are only good if they can be shared readily.

For more information about the grant program, contact Chris Wichmann, division manager of the Natural Resources and Policy Division at the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at 307.777.6576 or chris.wichmann@wyo.gov.

Celebrate



Wyoming
**AG
FACTS
LAST YEAR...**

ABOUT 32,454
SCOOPS OF ICE
CREAM COULD HAVE
BEEN MADE FROM THE
MILK PRODUCED IN
WYOMING.



WYOMING SHEEP
PRODUCED ALMOST
ENOUGH WOOL TO
MAKE 4 MILLION
8-OUNCE SKEINS OF
WORSTED YARN.

NATIONAL AG DAY

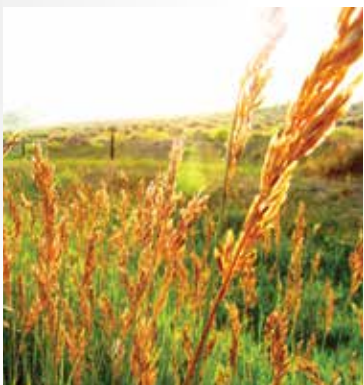
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WYOMING BUSINESS COUCL PROGRAMS AND
WYOMING AGRICULTURE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.WYOMINGBUSINES.ORG

WYOMING CATTLE
PRODUCES ENOUGH
BEEF TO MAKE
ALMOST 25 MILLION
HAMBURGER PATTIES
(1/4 POUND EACH)



THE HIDES OF CATTLE PRODUCED
IN WYOMING COULD MAKE:

88 MILLION BASEBALLS
12 MILLION FOOTBALLS
7 MILLION BASKETBALLS
11 MILLION VOLLEYBALLS
7 MILLION BASEBALL GLOVES
11 MILLION SOCCER BALLS
AND 612,000 SADDLES



March 19



GENERATIONS OF *Learning* IN ONE PROGRAM

WYOMING AGRICULTURE OWNERSHIP NETWORK MATCHES ESTABLISHED RANCHERS WITH NEW RANCHERS

BY MATT COX | matt.cox@wyo.gov

As with many younger folks who grow up in agriculture, creating a path of their own is as important as remembering the path they've already travelled.

For **Sage Askin**, leaving his own tracks in Wyoming agriculture beyond his family's footprints is something he's already pursuing through the Wyoming AG Ownership Network program.

The program, known by the appropriate acronym WAGON, links veteran farmers and ranchers with young people looking to get a start in production agriculture, and just as every Wyoming farm and ranch is unique, so is the training for each WAGON participant.

Askin, a 24-year-old University of Wyoming graduate with a degree in rangeland ecology and watershed management, not to mention a lifetime degree in the family ag business, was one of the first participants in this unique program aimed at sustaining Wyoming's rich agricultural heritage.

"I grew up involved in the rural life and believing in the culture and business of ranching," Askin said. "I consider this the freest lifestyle and the best place to raise a family in modern America and I hope to continue to promote successful ranching and agriculture practices throughout my life."

In its third year, the WAGON program aggregates resources from several cooperating agriculture and lending agencies to provide

Sage Askin, 24-year-old University of Wyoming graduate, was one of the WAGON programs first participants.



beginning farmers and ranchers with financial assistance, mentorship and educational opportunities to become successful operators on their own one day – and this is exactly the opportunity Askin was looking for.

“My family now ranches north of Douglas but my mother and father have worked on many ranches as I was growing up,” he said. “Now, I’m excited to move into my own career in ranching, and the WAGON program is helping me get there.”

Growing up in Douglas, Wyo., Askin was active in the FFA and he always believed his future was in Wyoming agriculture, he just wasn’t sure about how he was going to get there, but he’d soon get directions.

It was during the 2011 Wyoming Stock Growers Association convention when he first learned about the WAGON program through the Wyoming Business Council Agribusiness Division’s Livestock Genetics Program Manager Scott Keith.

“Scott and Dallas Mount encouraged me to apply to the WAGON program because they knew I was interested in pursuing ranching on my own,” Askin said. “So, I applied and was accepted and was matched up with the wonderful

Isakson family in eastern Wyoming where I have worked since joining the WAGON program.”

The program is built on the foundation of transferring generational knowledge from established ranchers to beginning ranchers. The mentor ranchers provide information to a WAGON program advisory team describing their operation and opportunities they envision for the right beginning rancher. The advisory team works with the mentor and beginning rancher during the process.

Beginning ranchers interested in the program begin by going through a thorough application process, and if accepted, the advisory committee plays match maker between mentor rancher and new rancher. From there, the two connect and the beginning rancher drafts and submits a business plan and financial package to the WAGON advisory team for review. The candidate and mentor then negotiate a blueprint for moving ahead and working together with the final goal being to enhance financing opportunities for the beginning producers through FSA or another lender.

The program has three levels for beginning ranchers: intern, transitional and career

building; Askin is currently in the intern phase of the program.

“Being at the intern level is allowing me to build on my work experience,” Askin said. “I’m learning new skills, especially in business management and marketing, both of which I did not have before this program.”

Askin has been working with Dennis and Linda Isakson since he graduated from UW in May 2012 and he will complete his intern level training with them in April 2013.

“The Isakson’s are great,” he said. “We work the normal daily routine in the mornings and in the afternoons we work on projects related to the program. I am taking this opportunity to learn all I can from Dennis and Linda to help me succeed in my personal endeavor to ranch.”

As for advice to other young folks looking to get into the WAGON program, Askin keeps it simple: “Make sure you are well matched with a mentor rancher, and the WAGON advisory team is a great asset in this,” he said. “Come willing to work together and coming willing to learn. It takes patience and time.”

And for the WAGON program mentors, he added: “There are some very successful and accomplished young people in this program,” he said. “Take your time with the selection process and keep an open mind as these people are our future producers.”

Askin’s mentor Dennis Isakson said he finds the WAGON concept worthwhile, and he hopes it helps young people continue Wyoming’s rich agricultural heritage, using Askin as an example. “Sage is an up-and-coming young man,” Isakson said. “He has a real passion for this and he really wants to run his own operation.”



Interested in becoming a rancher? Visit www.wyowagon.com

Ag leadership program graduates 12th class

Fourteen Wyoming producers and agribusiness men and women from around the state graduated from the Wyoming Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D.) program's Class 12 at a ceremony in Saratoga, Wyo., in January.

The 14-month training program, sponsored by the Wyoming Business Council's Agribusiness Division and the Wyoming Agricultural Leadership Council, began in November 2011.

Throughout the program, fellows participate in educational seminars in an effort to enhance their leadership skills and understanding of all aspects of agriculture and policy making.

Class 12 graduates include:

Ashlea Bassett, of Buffalo, is a service specialist with Sheridan College in Johnson County and a sales associate for Chase Brothers Properties. Bassett has been involved in production agriculture her entire life.

Barry "Slim" Cook, of Cody, owns Cook Land and Livestock Brokerage in Park County. In addition to being self-employed, Cook is an active member of the Cody Volunteer Fire Department.

Deanna Crofts, of Riverton, is a case manager for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. She and her husband also operate a cow/calf operation in Fremont County. Crofts was named Fremont County Ag Woman of the Year in 2011.

Juliet Daniels, of Cheyenne, is a community development educator with the University of Wyoming Extension, where she works with local governments and nonprofits to increase their capacity to address community issues.

Sherri Foust, of Worland, is the county executive director for the United States



The Wyoming Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D.) program's Class 12 graduated at a ceremony in Saratoga, Wyo., in January.

Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. Foust grew up on her family's farm in Oklahoma raising grass hay, oats and beef cattle; she continued this tradition for the next 20 years raising cattle of her own.

Brendon Grant, of Glenrock, is a ranch hand and working partner on his family's ranch, Grant Ranch, in Converse County. As a lifelong rancher, Grant has worked in agriculture in a variety of capacities.

J.W. Hendry, of Lysite, along with his family owns and operates Clear Creek Cattle Company in Natrona County. The ranch consists of 2,700 head of Black Angus cattle and more than 500 acres of grass hay. He serves on the board of directors for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

Alex Malcolm, of Kinnear, is a 4-H educator with the University of Wyoming Extension providing programming for livestock producers and 4-H youth. Malcolm is a member of the Wyoming and National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

Mary McAleenan, of Kinnear, is an ag producer operating a 275-acre farm and ranch in Fremont County for hay and alfalfa, as well as a 10-lamb herd for wool production. The wool from her operation is woven into rugs and throws which she markets at craft shows.

Eámon O'Toole, of Savery, is a fifth generation owner/manager on his family's ranch, the Ladder Livestock Company in

southcentral Carbon County. O'Toole is developing an AI program to improve his family's cow/calf operation by changing the herd into a Black Baldy program.

Scott Priebe, of Riverton, along with his wife is the owner and operator of Wyoming Ag Marketing, LLC. He grew up farming and ranching on his family's operation in Indiana and purchased his own farm in the late 2000s.

Cheri Steinmetz, of Lingle, is a self-employed insurance agent, farmer and livestock producer for Rawhide Quarter Horses and Cattle and Ameritas Financial Services. She is involved in her family's farm near Lingle.

Jenny Walker, of Lusk, is a ranch hand for DeGering Livestock Inc., in Niobrara County where she is working with her uncle and grandfather on their cow/calf operation. She's also involved with her parents' operation in South Dakota.

Brenda Younkin, of Jackson, is the director of the Conservation Research Center for the Teton Science Schools, Inc. Her position includes consulting on public lands grazing and monitoring, as well as coordination of research programs.

Recruitment for Class 13, which will start in the fall, is underway. For more information on the program, contact Cindy Garretson-Weibel at cindy.weibel@wyo.gov.

Special sales for bred, replacement heifers successful

The Wyoming Premium Heifer Program successfully closed its first year of sales yielding positive results for livestock producers who participated in the initiative.

Two combined internet video and live sales were conducted for 772 bred heifers and 774 replacement heifer calves at the Torrington Livestock Market and the Buffalo Livestock Auction in November 2012 and January 2013.

Certified bred heifers at the Torrington sale brought \$22 more per head than the market average for commodity Wyoming bred heifers during that same time totaling a premium of \$7,216. Certified bred heifers at the Buffalo sale brought \$81 more per head, or \$35,964 total, over the market average at the time of that sale for a total premium of \$43,180 for both sales.

The Wyoming Premium Heifer Program is a joint venture with the University of Wyoming's Animal Science Department and the Wyoming Business Council's Agribusiness Division. It is designed to develop and market bred and replacement heifer calves that are certified under a standard set of guidelines and that would ideally demand a higher price per head at market.

John Henn, Livestock and Meat Marketing Program manager in the Business Council's Agribusiness Division, said the beef cattle industry is experiencing the lowest cow numbers since the early 1950s. The low calf and cow numbers have created an alternative market opportunity for cow-calf producers for replacement and bred heifers.

"Over the next few years we will see a very high demand on heifers from several segments of the industry creating a great marketing opportunity for cow-calf producers in the state," Henn said. "The Wyoming Premium Heifer Program is providing the ability for producers to create and capture that added value sought by buyers across the country. As the program grows over the next several years and is promoted in and out of state its reputation and recognition will be realized in the industry by sellers and buyers."



For more information on the program, contact John Henn at 307.777.2847 or john.henn@wyo.gov.

calendar of EVENTS

March						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

April						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24	25	26	27	28	29

July						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

MARCH

March 14-17

Natural Products Expo West
Anaheim, Calif.

March 14-17

International Sportsmen's Expo
Salt Lake City, UT

March 19

National AG Day

APRIL

April 13-16

Western Grocery Showcase
Vancouver, BC

JUNE

June - Date TBD

Ag Diversification Tour
Thermopolis, Wyo.

JULY

July 18-28

Cheyenne Frontier Days
Cheyenne, Wyo.

July 27

National Day of the Cowboy



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