



### Social Media Webinar Targeted To Producers

BROOKINGS — It seems as though you cannot get away from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other means of social media, so why not try too? Today, more than ever, those in the agricultural industry have the opportunity to take advantage of social media to promote their operations, says Kalyn Waters, SDSU Extension Cow/Calif Field Specialist. “In the fast-paced social media world we live in, there are tremendous opportunities for cattle producers, farmers, and others involved in agriculture to promote their products and operations through the use of social media,” Waters said.

Waters will be hosting a social media training webinar on May 1 from 2-3 p.m. CST. Co-sponsored by SDSU Extension and Zoetis, the social media training is designed as an effort to help the agricultural industry embrace social media and take advantage of its benefits. The webinar is free and open to the public.

The featured speaker is Anna-Lisa Giannini. Giannini is the owner/operator of A-L Outreach, a social media consulting firm located in California. Giannini uses her creative brain, social media background and drive to connect with others to develop social media strategy and management plans for clients ranging from non-profit organizations to small businesses and even county fairs.

“Growing up on a ranch not only taught me to work hard, but also the need to learn continuously. Social media has the potential to change your business for the better as you expand your network and learn from the experiences of others,” Giannini said.

Agricultural producers are continuously looking for means to promote their products in the agricultural industry, Water says.

“The increasing popularity of social media outlets provides a unique opportunity and wide platform for producers to reach their customers and consumers. Whether producing farm-fresh vegetables or a purebred seedstock cattle, social media can have a positive impact on your operations overall productivity and profits if successfully managed,” she said.

This webinar is designed to develop and hone producers’ skills and help them utilize social media to promote their agricultural operation. Everyone involved in South Dakota’s agricultural industry is invited to attend.

To register for the webinar or for more information, contact Waters at kalyn.waters@sdstate.edu or feel free to call at 605-842-1267. This webinar will be recorded so if registered participants are unable to attend during live webinar they will be given access to the recorded version at iGrow.org.

### Noms Sought For Beef’s Prime Promoters

PIERRE — Do you know an individual, business or organization that represents commitment, passion and service to South Dakota’s beef industry and/or its product? The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) is taking nominations for its 2013 Prime Promoter Award, an honor that recognizes those who contribute an outstanding service to the beef industry, whether through special support of the industry or promotion of beef.

For more than 20 years the SDBIC has presented its Prime Promoter awards to worthy recipients. Award-winners include a wide range of restaurants that do a tremendous job serving delicious beef —and lots of it, as well as organizations and individuals that go the extra mile to promote or be of service to the state’s important beef industry.

“This is an important award because it gives recognition to the people who are really going out there and doing a good job of promoting beef for us,” says Bob Fortune, Belvidere rancher and chairman of SDBIC’s Prime Promoter Committee. Fortune encourages people to nominate a business, organization or individual they feel does an especially good job promoting beef and is worthy of being recognized. “It might be a large retail store or a small Mom and Pop restaurant, but we’d like to see more nominations of places and people in the state that go the extra mile to get beef out to the public.”

Anyone can nominate a business, individual or organization. Nominators fill out an application plus detailed information about the nominee and letters of support from others. The deadline to submit nominations is May 15. Nomination forms and additional details for making nominations are available by contacting the SDBIC office at 605-224-4722, or e-mailing Tracey (Orsburn) Walsh at twalsh@sdbic.org.



Fran Wallace of Hastings, Neb., keeps a flock of guineas on the family farm for bug control.

PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

# Birds On The Job

## Guineas Can Serve As A Great Source Of Pest Control

BY RITA BRHEL  
P&D Correspondent

For many years, in addition to free-range laying hens, Fran Wallace kept ducks for bug control on the family farm near Hastings, Neb. While waterfowl make for an interesting addition to the backyard poultry flock, and do keep pest insect numbers like grasshoppers well below tolerable limits, they can be as messy and smelly as pigs, turning water sources into mud holes, she says. And unlike chickens which hunt for insects in between the flowers in her gardens, ducks walk right through the plants, splashing leaves and scattering blossoms in their wake.

After a neighbor’s dog decimated her group of ducks 10 years ago, Wallace bought a handful of guineas to try out as an alternative pest control — and fell in love. Today, she has about 60 guineas on her farmstead.

“They are great tick control,” Wallace said, as well as good at controlling all insect pests on the entire property. They roam farther than ducks and chickens, and have more voracious appetites.

As a surprise, guineas are not as loud as Wallace feared they would be, except when a new car drives up the lane or a stray dog comes by, she says, which is why many poultry owners deem them as good as watch dogs.

“One day, the guineas were just clucking up a storm and I went out there to see what was wrong. They were in a big bunch around something, backing up and getting closer to it, over and over,” Wallace said. “Turns out, it was a big bull

snake. They eventually killed it. We haven’t had snakes here since getting the guineas.”

But there are challenges to keeping guineas. They don’t tame down like chickens or ducks, and are nearly impossible to catch without a net. They don’t go into a shelter at night like chickens and ducks do, opting instead to roost in the trees or in the barn rafters, and this can make for an easy midnight snack for owls. They also nest out in the pasture, up to 20 eggs at a time, further attracting troublesome wildlife like opossums. And they aren’t the best mothers, which is probably why nature designed them to have such large clutches, as it’s not uncommon for none of a summer’s worth of nests to yield one chick able to live to adulthood, Wallace says. When she is able to, Wallace catches newly hatched chicks and their mother and locks them in her brooder shed until the chicks have grown enough to be able to escape from predators.

Wallace has earned a reputation for keeping quality guineas, and if the birds don’t readily reveal themselves when someone drives up the lane, her “guinea crossing” sign says it all.

While Wallace keeps her guineas for barnyard bug control, guineas have a wide variety of uses, says Samuel Nahashon, a poultry scientist at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tenn., from hobby and ornamental to game birds to meat and eggs.

Wallace says that she can’t stand the thought of eating her guineas’ eggs or butchering them for meat, but Nahashon maintained, “Especially in France and Belgium, we have commercialization

of guinea fowl as a meat bird.”

He says that the guinea meat is higher in protein, leaner, and has fewer calories per pound than either chicken or turkey. While there is no major marketing outlet for guinea meat in the United States, it does offer a unique niche market.

“It would be a considerable opportunity for small-scale farmers who cannot compete with the large corporations engaged in traditional poultry production,” Nahashon said.

Guineas also offer a significant value as ornamental poultry, in that there are six different breeds of domestic guinea and then at least eight different varieties within each of these species. The most popular guinea kept on farmsteads is the pearl grey helmeted guinea, a white-spotted gray bird with naked necks and heads and long, bare legs. Other breeds include the black, white-breasted, plumed, vulture, and crested guinea.

While most guinea owners let their flocks free-range, guineas raised as a market opportunity need to be kept in confinement, Nahashon says. Each bird requires approximately a square yard in floor space. Other than being fed a commercial game bird feed, guineas keep similarly to other poultry types in confinement, except that their roosts need to be tall and steep, with the lowest rung at least four feet off the floor.

“The guinea fowl love to roost,” Nahashon added.

More information on keeping guineas can be found at www.gfba.org or www.guineafowl.com.

# New Alfalfa Varieties Are Saline, Grazing Tolerant

BROOKINGS — South Dakota alfalfa producers have two new varieties to consider this growing season. SalinityMax Alfalfa is a salt-tolerant variety developed to thrive in saline soils and PasturePlus Alfalfa is a grazing tolerant variety, developed to thrive in pasture mixes, says Justin Fruechte, Millborn Seeds forage and cover crop specialist.

“These varieties were developed in the Dakotas to solve two common challenges South Dakota alfalfa producers face,” Fruechte said. “They both carry disease, nematode and insect resistant packages as good as any conventional variety of alfalfa.”

Due to last summer’s drought, many low-lying areas in fields which may have experienced standing water in the past have

now become saline and need to be reclaimed. An effective reclamation tool South Dakota farmers now have available to them is SalinityMax Alfalfa. SalinityMax Alfalfa was developed to tolerate saline soils and serves as a good forage option, explains Fruechte.

“SalinityMax will actually draw the salt out of the soil over time. Growers can use it to correct a soil. Once the soil is healthy, they can go in and plant the acres back to cash crops,” he said, adding that the variety also succeeds in high moisture soils that do not have salinity issues.

Adapted to poorly drained soils, PasturePlus Alfalfa has some unique structural features which make it a good choice to add to a pasture mix. Unlike conventional alfalfa, which has a tap root, this

variety was developed with a branch root system. This branch root system holds the plant securely during freeze and thaw cycles, making it more grazing resistant and winter hardy.

Its root system isn’t its only structural difference. PasturePlus

Alfalfa is also a more palatable plant, explains Fruechte.

“This alfalfa variety is very compatible with grass because it doesn’t have as much lignin and structural carbohydrates, lending to higher nutritional quality,” Fruechte said.

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Sunday night, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. will be the final concert of this season for the Yankton Area Concert Association at the YHS Summit Theatre.

Appearing will be the “HOME FREE VOCAL BAND” - five young men from Minnesota with five microphones and no instruments. This group has appeared all over the world.

New members may see this bonus concert free when purchasing a 2013-14 season membership at the door.

“So if you have never belonged to the concert association before, Sunday night is the time to join,” stated Vi Ranney, President.

The concert association has added a sixth concert for 2013-14 season, but the price remains the same, \$50.00 per adult.

**Those concerts are:**

- **THE BROTHERS FOUR** (Song like *Try to Remember*, *Across the Wild Missouri*, *The Green Leaves of Summer* & more)
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Make your check payable to: Yankton Area Concert Association • Mail to: YACA Box 673 • Yankton, SD 57078

**Any questions call:** Betts Pulkrabek, Membership Chair, 463-2206 • Vi Ranney, President, 665-3596 • Zita Hans, Exec. Sec. 660-5004

**Spring Vendor Fair**

**Saturday, April 27**  
**9:00am to 2:00pm**

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