

Join Farmers And Ranchers By Celebrating Earth Day April 22

BROOKINGS — Earth Day, held April 22, is a day when economic growth and sustainability join hands.

"American farmers and ranchers have embraced the values of this annual environmental celebration for generations," explained Holly Swee, Director of Nutrition and Consumer Information for the South Dakota Beef Industry Council. "In fact, as long as cattle have been produced on land, American farm families have been working to protect and preserve natural resources."

Swee explained that because farm and ranch families depend on the environment for not only their sustenance, but also their livelihood, they are committed to protecting it for future generations.

"About two-thirds of cattle farms and ranches have been in the same family for two or more generations. A cattle producer's legacy includes stewardship of the Earth's resources. Cattle producers are continuing to improve beef production and sustainability practices," Swee said. "To cattlemen, sustainability means balancing environmental responsibility, social diligence and economic opportunity while meeting the growing demand for beef."

In addition to being a sustainable food source, Suzanne Stluka, SDSU Extension Food & Families Program Director pointed to beef's nutritional benefits.

"With over 29 cuts of beef to choose from that meet the government's definition of lean or extra lean meat, the beef industry has made it easy for families to eat healthy and add lean beef to their weekly menus," Stluka said.

HOW CATTLE PRODUCERS PROTECT THE EARTH

In honor of Earth Day, Swee shares a few of the many ways raising cattle contribute to environmental sustainability and provides a few facts on the important nutrients beef provides to help us sustain health and well-being.

One American farmer feeds about 155 people. Experts estimate global food production will need to increase 70 percent by 2050 to feed a growing world population.

Cattlemen are recyclers, raising their animals on the abundant source of grains available in this country and turning their manure into natural fertilizers.

The beef community has improved its sustainability by 5 percent in just six years and continues

to find ways to raise beef responsibly.

Beef is both environmentally and nutritionally efficient - cattle farming requires less land, water and energy than in the past and beef provides 10 essential nutrients, for about 150 calories per 3-ounce serving.

Beef is an excellent source of vitamin B12, an essential nutrient that is not naturally available in plant proteins.

Iron deficiency is the most common nutritional deficiency in the world. Beef provides the most readily available and easily absorbed dietary source of iron.

Swee encourages South Dakotans to celebrate Earth Day by creating these great-tasting Saucy Beef Wraps:

- 1 pound Ground Beef (93 percent lean or leaner)
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- 1/3 cup canned black beans, rinsed, drained
- 1/4 cup shredded carrots
- 4 medium flour tortillas (8 to 9-inch diameter), warmed

Brown Ground Beef with onion, bell pepper and garlic in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, breaking beef up into 1/2-inch crumbles. Pour off drippings, if necessary.

Stir in water, tomato paste, brown sugar, vinegar, chili powder and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes or until slightly thickened. Add spinach, beans and carrots; continue simmering 3 to 4 minutes or until heated through.

Spoon filling evenly in a row across center of each tortilla, leaving 1-1/2-inch border on right and left sides. Fold right and left sides of tortilla over filling. Fold bottom edge up over filling and roll up.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground Beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of Ground Beef doneness.

For more information on this topic, visit www.factsaboutbeef.org.

Agriculture Predictions Are Uncertain, So Careful Decisions Are Needed In 2015

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

Sponsored By L&C Behavioral Health

The 2015 crop year offers fewer certainties for farming outcomes than most—but not all—years in recent history. Is past history a reliable predictor of this year?

Drought in much of the Western U.S., an overabundance of corn and soybeans, and lower than usual production of beef for consumption are among the many factors affecting commodity prices and farmers' choices about how to proceed. Do we know what lies ahead?

Managing the stress that accompanies uncertainty is key. Inability to control the factors that impact farming outcome is the major cause of stress to agricultural producers.

Uncertainty instigates searches for greater income security by farmers. While past history is often a good predictor, 2015 is much different than the Farm Crisis of the 1980s and the occasional but less drastic farm economic downturns since then.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 offers more guarantees of economic security to most US crop and livestock producers than any previous Farm Bill.

Most producers of crops and/or livestock have already undertaken careful planning—or should have—to figure out the level of crop insurance, federal Farm Program method of guaranteeing income and livestock indemnity options best suited for them. There is still time to make some of these choices but deadlines are creeping up.

Perhaps the biggest danger is a false sense of security. We should make decisions carefully. Financially secure producers and lenders will have to resist temptations to capitalize on marginalized producers.

Resisting temptations for "even more" is especially difficult for agricultural producers. Almost every farmer has a strong drive to acquire more land and agricultural resources, sometimes accompanied by weaker controls over



Mike ROSMANN

"risk-taking" behaviors.

Last week a seasoned cattleman told me an aspiring cow/calf producer with mostly rented pastures purchased 100 bred heifers at \$3,200 per animal to start a cow herd. The cattleman and I wondered who loaned the money and who cosigned

the note for this ambitious beginner. Recognizing and sometimes curtailing risk-taking tendencies can make life less stressful and more appreciated. There is something to be said about the maxim: Take it slow and steady.

About a year ago a semi-retired farmer/friend whom I greatly respect said to me, "After chasing the dollar for 50 years, I asked what is more important—building an empire or service to my fellow man? I have concluded the latter will be ultimately judged."

He added that the things that really matter in life can't be bought, like one's reputation and integrity.

Who is at most risk? Producers who specialize only in one or two crops and who have high debt loads and barely enough liquid assets to remain solvent could experience significant stress in the near term.

Some of these operators may have to sell off a portion of their assets or augment their income from alternative sources. They should be considering their options.

For the few who have to sell possessions, the good news is that markets for farm assets like agricultural equipment and land remain substantial. It's not like the 1980s when almost all farmers were stretched thin, interest rates on borrowed money were very high and a general recession was occurring worldwide.

The beginning cow/calf operator mentioned above might have a tough

time shortly. As the nation's cattle herd increases as expected over the next several years, and as alternative choices for dinner like pork, lamb and seafood continue to expand, beef prices will drop just when he has to "sell off."

Alternative income sources, such as off-farm jobs or conversion of portions of the farm into other income-generating sources like leased hunting rights or growing alternative crops can save off having to sell assets. One California farmer I know is raising prickly pear cactus on ground where water is restricted because of drought. He has already sold all the prickly pear syrup he can produce for margarita mix.

Another option is reducing the cost of cropping inputs, such as planting non-GMO soybeans. Two farmers I know plant non-GMO soybeans and earn a bonus of up to two dollars per bushel from European purchasers, but the beans must be completely free of stray GMO beans that find ways of "hiding" in combines, trucks and storage bins.

They use some of the older non-GMO herbicides and/or mechanically cultivate their fields and hire local "bean-walkers" to control weeds. Their input costs were lower, and their non-GMO bean yields and market prices were higher the past two years than their neighbors' GMO soybean yields and prices.

What is the risk of "everything going south?" Could the Mid-East interdecade conflicts turn into a major war that dramatically raises the cost of oil and involves the commitment of far more U.S. resources than currently?

What would be the implications of such warfare on the export of U.S. farm products? Could global warming significantly change agricultural production and trade?

Any of these, and other unexpected other events could happen. Generally though, farming appears in a holding pattern.

Readers can contact Dr. Rosmann at: www.agbehavioralhealth.com.

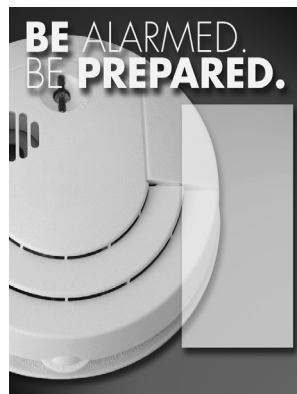
Red Cross Canvasses 280 Homes In Yankton To Install Smoke Alarms

The American Red Cross in Eastern South Dakota visited 280 homes in Yankton recently as part of its Home Fire Preparedness Campaign to grow resilient communities and teach people how to be prepared for home fires and install smoke alarms. As a result, 63 smoke alarms were installed.

Only half of the homes entered had a disaster escape plan and less than 20 percent of the homes had a disaster preparedness kit.

Thirty-one individuals also participated in blood pressure screenings. Of those screened, half were high or at risk, above the national of average of 33 percent. One individual's pressure was high, was not aware and was referred to a physician to seek medical attention.

The campaign was done in partnership with the Yankton Fire Department, Yankton Police Department,



METRO GRAPHICS

Yankton County Emergency Management, Mount Marty College, RSVP, Yankton High School Honor Society,

Yankton County CERT Team, Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce, United Way & Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton, Team Rubicon, Avera Health and students from the University of South Dakota.

Seven times a day someone in this country dies in a home fire. Countless others suffer injuries. To combat these tragic statistics, the Red Cross has launched a campaign to reduce the number of deaths and injuries due to home fires by 25 percent over the next five years.

The Home Fire Preparedness Campaign is happening all over the country and

involves Red Cross workers joining with local fire departments and community groups to visit neighborhoods at high risk for fires. Those visits include educating people about fire safety through door-to-door visits and installation of smoke alarms in some of these neighborhoods.

"Installing smoke alarms cuts the risk of someone dying from a home fire in half," said Tony Burke, Red Cross Executive Director in Eastern South Dakota. "Thanks to all our partners in Yankton that played a critical role in making this event as success."

'Small Business is Everybody's Business' Virtual Conference Set

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension will host the "Small Business is Everybody's Business" Virtual Conference April 24, at eight locations across the state.

"Rural communities have real advantages when it comes to attracting new entrepreneurs and retaining small businesses," said Peggy Schlechter, SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist. "This virtual conference will provide communities an opportunity to hear nationally-known speakers share information about how rural places can support small businesses."

Site locations for this virtual conference include: DeSmet, Faith, Gregory, Irene, Newell, Sisseton, Tri-Valley School and Wall. For registration and location details, visit <http://igrow.org> store. Seating is limited.

Dell Gines, Senior Community Development Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is the keynote speaker. Gines has spoken to audiences across the nation on entrepreneurship based economic development, entrepreneurship ecosystems and developing local rural and urban economies

through developing entrepreneurship growth strategies. He is the author of the "Grow Your Own Guide to Entrepreneurship Based Economic Development."

Craig Schroeder is the afternoon keynote speaker. Schroeder is with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship in Lincoln, Neb. Schroeder has committed his career to helping rural communities create more prosperous futures. Schroeder's work extends across 47 states involving well over 40,000 youth.

Closer to home, Schroeder created the Youth Attraction Formula© to help rural communities in the Great Plains set attainable goals for addressing chronic youth out-migration and population loss.

In addition to keynote speakers, each site will host a panel of local leaders and businesspeople sharing information on local outlook and support for entrepreneurs. Participants from the same community and region will also have time to strategize about ways they can promote small business growth and retention.

Who should attend? Community leaders, business

owners, prospective business owners, young people, school board members, economic development board members, city council, county commissioners and anyone who is interested in the vitality of his/her community.

This conference is sponsored by SDSU Extension, USDA Rural Development, West River Electric and the REED (Rural Electric Economic Development, Inc.) Fund.

For more information, contact Schlechter at 605-394-1722 or peggy.schlechter@sdsu.edu.

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Just fill out the entry form and drop it at either Kopetsky's Ace Hardware. Locations are 2404 Broadway or 103 W. 3rd St. by Tuesday, April 15, 2015.

A winner will be drawn from each location and announced on the Severe Weather Awareness page running in the April 20 Press & Dakotan in conjunction with Severe Weather Awareness Week in South Dakota.

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