

Opinion

SD State Fair Is A Family Tradition

BY LUCAS LENTSCH
S.D. Secretary of Agriculture

This year marks the 130th annual South Dakota State Fair. Our theme is: "Sew it. Grow it. Show it." The theme highlights everything the fair has to offer, from exhibits and entertainment to food and shopping.



Lentsch

It's also intended to remind fair goers of the memories they are making. Sewing and growing memories and showing traditions.

For many families, taking part in the state fair—or at least attending the fair for a day or more—is a long-standing family tradition. For other families, it's a brand new adventure. Whether you've been coming for years, this will be your first state fair or you're somewhere in between, you'll find a lot to enjoy!

From the livestock shows to the "just like Grandma did it" entries in the Women's Building, fairgoers will be treated to the most exceptional exhibits on display. The entertainment is also exceptional! Often family and friends have an annual tradition of meeting and enjoying free entertainment on one of the many stages around the grounds. Take time to sit down, relax and make new memories. This year's grandstand entertainment features two nights of CBR Bull Riding, concerts by headliners Kenny Rogers, The Band Perry and Huey Lewis & the News and car races to finish off a busy week.

Who can resist state fair traditions like corn dogs, cotton candy, funnel cakes and fresh squeezed lemonade? Of course there will be new foods to try, like gourmet flavored cheese curds or bratwursts that come in flavors like rattlesnake or alligator! The State Fair attracts unique vendors, so be prepared to do a little (or a lot!) of shopping.

Taking in all of the things the South Dakota State Fair has to offer can easily take more than one day.

Families and friends have been camping at the State Fair for decades, coming back year after year to relive those traditions and make new memories. With over 1,700 campsites to choose from, many reserve the same place each year, adding to their state fair tradition.

I invite you to take a day or two, or better yet five, and join me at the South Dakota State Fair! Come

Sew it. Grow it. Show it at the South Dakota State Fair.

Opinion

General Aviation Supports SD Agriculture

BY SCOTT OLSON
Mission Hill

Agriculture is the lifeblood of South Dakota's economy. Our industry employs more than 120,000 people across the state, who together contribute more than \$21 billion to our state's economy. Yet, family farming operations can be a tough and volatile business. We're exposed to swings in both commodity prices and input costs, and a significant shift in any of these factors can easily mean the difference between a profitable year and an unprofitable one.

Over the decades, as mules and horses gave way to combines and crop dusters, many of us rely on an airplane to carry out crop protection, to survey our land, to carry tools and equipment, among many other uses. In fact, across our state, farms and businesses rely on these aircraft every day to reach far off markets, transport tools and employees, and to reach multiple locations in one day. All told, aviation accounts for \$791 mil-

lion, and many of South Dakota's 65 general use airports rely exclusively or increasingly on general aviation, including cities and towns like Pierre and Sioux Falls, which have seen reduced commercial service in recent years.

The truth is that across this country, general aviation is a literal lifeline to small and mid-sized towns, protecting our way of life, our livelihoods and our businesses. Yet many outside of our areas of the country still do not understand the critical importance of these aircraft and airports. For example, some inside "the beltway" have proposed a new privatized air traffic control system based on a user fee tax on our businesses and farms that depend on these aircraft.

This would be a death blow to not only many small businesses and farms that are already still struggling to recover from the economic downturn, but for the many medical and service providers that depend on these aircraft to deliver critical services to our communities across South Dakota and across the country. Whether its delivery of health care to underserved communities, helping veterans

to reunite with their families or get the health care they need, law enforcement, firefighting, or disaster relief, these aircraft help to connect communities in need.

Currently, we pay through a fuel tax, which is simple, efficient and easy-to-use. And, currently, Congress has the final say in ensuring that air service to and from communities of all sizes is protected in our air transportation system. This would not be the case in a privatized air traffic control system.

Rural America and our family farms are a backbone to our local and national economy. Let's keep it that way by protecting general aviation and access to airports and communities of all sizes.

Scott Olson is a farmer and musician in Mission Hill, SD, and Director of Band at Mount Marty College in Yankton, and a member of the Alliance for Aviation Across America. He frequently uses his Cherokee 180 to fly to performances, in addition to checking his crops by air.

Consider Nutritional Value When Buying Hay

BROOKINGS — Haying season is drawing to a close across South Dakota. With that comes a feed inventory analysis opportunity for each producer, explains Heather Gessner, SDSU Extension Livestock Business Management Field Specialist.

"Producers should look at the quality of the feed in storage to ensure they have enough bales to create a balanced ration which meets the nutritional requirements of their cow herd, through each gestational stage and post calving," Gessner said.

To determine feed quality, Gessner said samples must be taken and submitted for analysis. "The adage of needing to measure it, before you manage it is true here," she said.

Gessner added that many factors can affect the quality of grass hay and alfalfa harvested during the summer. "Knowing if you have high or low total digestible nutrients (TDN) and/or protein available allows the producer to plan for additional hay, cornstalk and alfalfa or other forage purchases, as well as non-forage supplements needed to meet the nutritional needs of mid-late gestation and post-partum cows."

In a beef cow enterprise, feed costs account for 50 to 75 percent of the total cow costs for the year. "Controlling costs is a critical profit component for the producer," Gessner said.

ANALYSIS ENSURES QUALITY

Forages vary in price, dry matter and quality, thus creating a balanced, low cost ration can likely be done, if time is taken to run the numbers and



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

work through the options available, Gessner said. "Before purchasing hay or alfalfa, a forage analysis and a comparison between forages should be done to ensure the product's quality and cost meets the needs of the producer."

Gessner said that at first glance the \$10/ton savings for the grass hay

compared to alfalfa appears to be a solid economic decision. "However, if protein is needed to supplement, then the alfalfa is a better option."

She added that comparing other forages, like corn silage, can also be done to create a balanced, least cost ration. "By inventorying the feed on hand and analyzing the feed needed

producers will be able to determine what, if any additional feedstuffs are needed," Gessner said.

To learn more, visit iGrow.org or for assistance balancing rations, contact an SDSU Extension Cow Calf Field Specialist. A complete listing can be found at iGrow.org under Field Staff.

Conservation Incentives Offered By USDA

WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that beginning Sept. 1, farmers and ranchers can apply for financial assistance to help conserve working grasslands, rangeland and pastureland while maintaining the areas as livestock grazing lands.

The initiative is part of the voluntary Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded program that for 30 years has assisted agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. In return, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP has helped farmers and ranchers prevent more than 8 billion tons of soil from eroding, reduce nitrogen and

phosphorous runoff relative to cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively, and even sequester 43 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, equal to taking 8 million cars off the road.

"A record 400 million acres and 600,000 producers and landowners are currently enrolled in USDA's conservation programs. The Conservation Reserve Program has been one of the most successful conservation programs in the history of the country, and we are pleased to begin these grasslands incentives as we celebrate the program's 30th year," said Vilsack. "This is another great example of how agricultural production can work hand in hand with efforts to improve the environment and increase wildlife habitat."

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving

covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the covers and other practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife. Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation and construct firebreaks and fences.

With the publication of the CRP regulation, the Farm Service Agency will accept applications on an ongoing basis beginning Sept. 1, 2015, with those applications scored against published ranking criteria, and approved based on the competitiveness of the offer. The ranking period will occur at least once per year and be announced at least 30 days

prior to its start. The end of the first ranking period will be Nov. 20, 2015.

Later this week, USDA will also announce state-by-state allotments for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). Through SAFE, also a CRP initiative, up to 400,000 acres of additional agricultural land across 37 states will be eligible for wildlife habitat restoration funding. The additional acres are part of an earlier CRP wildlife habitat announcement made by Secretary Vilsack. Currently, more than 1 million acres, representing 98 projects, are enrolled in SAFE.

To learn more about participating in CRP-Grasslands or SAFE, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or consult with the local Farm Service Agency county office. To locate a nearby Farm Service Agency office, visit http://offices.usda.gov. To learn more about the 30th anniversary

of CRP, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow on Twitter using #CRPis30.

Programs For Financing Agriculture in SD Offered

PIERRE — The South Dakota Department of Agriculture has financial programs available for agricultural producers and agricultural related businesses.

The Department of Agriculture's financial programs partner with lenders across the state to provide borrowers with lower interest rates. Programs are available for beginning farmers, livestock purchases, facility expansion, grain storage, manure management projects and value added businesses.

"We have seen a lot of interest across the state in livestock development lately and our financial programs are a perfect fit for these projects. What a great way to diversify your farming operation or allow for a son or daughter to come back to the farm," says Paul Kostboth, Director of Ag Development for the SD Department of Agriculture.

Tax-Exempt bond programs at the department can assist beginning farmers, agricultural processing businesses and livestock facilities, such as dairies or hog confinements, in obtaining lower interest rates on loans obtained through their local lenders.

Participation loans are also available for farmers and ranchers in South Dakota. The department partners with local lenders to finance livestock purchases and facility expansion projects.

For additional information on any of the financial programs offered through the SD Department of Agriculture, contact Terri LaBrie, Finance Administrator at 605-773-5436. All program summaries and application forms are available on the web at http://sdda.sd.gov/.

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photographer ever

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mission

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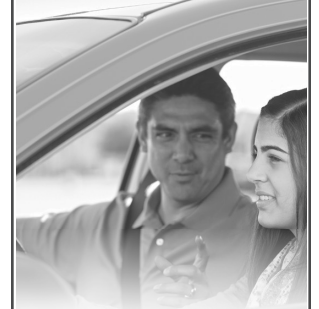
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