

Environmental Training Session For CAFOs Set

BROOKINGS — An environmental training session for operators of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO), is set for Feb. 19 in Huron. Specialists from South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are offering the training.

This training fulfills the environmental and manure-management training requirement to obtain a livestock permit for CAFOs from the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Producers and any other interested individuals who are not currently applying for a permit also can benefit from the information and are encouraged to attend. Current federal (EPA, USDA) and state water pollution control programs encourage livestock producers, even those who do not need permits, to voluntarily adopt livestock production and manure management practices that protect air and water quality.

Certified Crop Advisor credits are also available for attending this program.

During the morning session, Erin Cortus, SDSU Extension Environmental Quality Engineer will discuss water quality. John Lentz, Resource Conservationist with the NRCS, will talk about implementing conservation practices to improve sustainability. Jason Roggow, a natural resources engineer with the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, will give an overview of the South Dakota DENR Livestock Permit program.

In the afternoon, Jeff Hemenway, Soil Quality Specialist with NRCS will discuss managing nitrogen and phosphorus in land applications of manure. Lentz and Hemenway will also go through nutrient management planning worksheets. Bob Thaler, SDSU Extension Swine Specialist will lead a session on livestock nutrition options for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus content of manure. Cortus will conclude the day's training with a session on air quality and odor.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. at the Crossroads Convention Center, 100 Fourth St. S.W. in Huron. The cost includes lunch, breaks, and training materials. The program begins at 8:50 a.m. and concludes at approximately 4:45 p.m.

To register for the training, call Candy Willms at (605) 688-5141. The next training program will be held in July.

Drought Risk Webinar Series Continues

BROOKINGS — As producers across the state make plans for the spring, one thing that remains in the back of their mind is the need for moisture to improve the drought conditions that have tightened their grip over the winter months, says Kalyn Waters SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist.

"Spring is right around the corner, and it does not seem as though the winter has helped lessen the hold the drought has on the Great Plains. While everyone remains optimistic, we must also be proactive," Waters said.

In an effort to be proactive, the SDSU Extension Livestock staff have partnered with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension to host a five-part webinar series with the focus of helping ranchers across the state prepare for the possibility of the drought continuing in 2013. This series of meetings is titled "Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch."

"UNL Extension and the Drought Mitigation Center have done an outstanding job putting together this program. They have slated some of the best speakers available to provide critical information to producers. The first meeting proved that these are quality, applicable meetings that producers will gain greatly from," Waters said.

These meetings are also intended to educate professionals and consultants who work with ranchers as a professional development series.

The webinars will be presented the last Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be Feb. 27 and they will conclude in May. One-hour webinars will begin at 9 a.m. MST or 10 a.m. CST at the SDSU Extension Regional Centers. Each session will include current drought updates and forecasts and presentations about specific information or tools. Following each webinar, the regional centers will join together via video conference for a question and answer session, with SDSU Extension Specialists presenting additional information relevant to South Dakota producers.

Topics each month will consider drought planning information and tools available to producers.

In addition to university and Extension presenters, a number of ranchers will also be featured, describing development and execution of their drought plans.

The second meeting of this series will be held on Feb. 27. This meeting will focus on critical dates in more detail. Dwayne Rice, Rangeland Management Specialist for NRCS in Lincoln, Kans., has worked with Ted Alexander, a Barber County rancher, to develop procedures to identify and describe critical dates and suggest how appropriate action steps are planned.

Rice will explain how relationships between historical records and forage growth are used to delineate critical dates. Alexander will discuss his experience in implementing his drought plan through several previous drought cycles.

These meetings are sponsored by the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The series was developed with support from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA).

For more information please visit [www.igrow.org](http://www.igrow.org) contact your nearest SDSU Extension Regional Center or call Waters at 605-842-1267 or Pete Bauman, SDSU Extension Range Field Specialist at 605-882-5140.

Dry Times, Hard Choices

Tough Drought Outlook May Have Impact Livestock Decisions

BY RITA BRHEL  
P&D Correspondent

The 2013 drought outlook: more of the same, which doesn't bode well for livestock producers.

Mark Svoboda, climatologist with the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Neb., says that more than half of the Lower 48 is still affected by some form of drought, with the worst drought running down the center of the nation from South Dakota through northern Texas, seeping into western Wyoming and Colorado.

The Yankton area — which is about three inches short on annual precipitation — is included in this exceptional drought, a dark red stain on the U.S. Drought Monitor Map.

"Spring is, unfortunately, where we're putting our hope," Svoboda said.

The damage has been profound and not just to the federal deficit — 2012 ranked second only to 1998 as the most extreme weather year on record, with 11 natural disasters costing at least \$1 billion each, Svoboda said. The record books were also reset in Nebraska, which shared the driest year ever with Wyoming and the warmest year ever with South Dakota. Nationally, 2012 was the warmest year on record for the U.S. and the driest year since 1988.

Livestock owners have been culling animals left and right since last summer, even dispersing whole herds, as they ran out of feed. Pastures are sparse, hay is scarce, and grain is sky high in price.

"Destocking is a difficult decision," said Lynn Myers, owner of Tippets-Myers Ranch in Lewellen, Neb. "It's like losing a member of the family. It takes a lifetime to put a herd together that's the best fit for your operation."

The nation's cattle inventory is in trouble, Svoboda says. Approximately 70 percent of the U.S. cow herd is situated in an area affected by drought, 14 percent in extreme drought. Additionally, approximately 60 percent of domestic hay acreage is located in a drought area.

What this comes down to is that there is little wiggle room for the weather this year not to repeat, or even exceed, 2012's extreme conditions.

"Spring rains are critical," Svoboda said. "We do not have that insurance — that security blanket — we had going into 2012," follow-



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

ing the wetter-than-normal year in 2011.

Svoboda is not optimistic. This is not a drought that can be recovered from after just a year of normal precipitation, or even several years, he says. And so far, this winter has been warmer and drier than usual, not just here but through the Rockies, too, making the snowmelt forecast iffy. Long-range spring forecasts are typically hard to pinpoint, as the weather becomes unsettled through the change of seasons, but so far, the predictions through April are a drier pattern, Svoboda says. All of these factors add up to a persistent drought.

"The grazing going on during the last half of the summer really didn't impact those grasses at all because they were in drought dormancy, yet production will be 15-20 percent down in 2013 even with average rainfall," said Jerry Volesky, range and forage system specialist with the University of Nebraska's West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, Neb.

The question is what producers can do about it.

Volesky has created a drought planning process available free of charge at

<http://drought.unl.edu/ranchplan>. The Drought Management Plan consists of eight steps:

1. Identifying partners in planning, whether family members or business partners or financial advisors, and establishing lines of communication.
2. Writing a vision for the ranch and setting objectives in line with that vision.
3. Understanding the ranch's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats during drought.
4. Making an inventory of ranch resources, from precipitation averages and pasture acreage to livestock numbers and water sources.
5. Setting critical dates based on forage growth for making decisions regarding drought management.
6. Monitoring the schedule of critical dates.
7. Creating management strategies before, during, and after drought.
8. Periodically reviewing and adjusting the drought plan.

The Drought Management Plan requires producers to form a holistic plan of action regarding their ranch, covering everything from financial and human resources to natural resources. It

means producers need to get to know what is normal for their ranch and what is the best course of action if the ranch's inventory is not up to par on certain calendar dates, Volesky says.

There is more to a drought than a lack of soil moisture, he adds. Producers also have to realize that the previous year's conditions, temperature extremes, carryover grass, longer term weather forecast models, and more play a part in their drought management decisions, and Volesky's Drought Management Plan ensures that producers take all of these factors into consideration.

Myers is one of the producers Volesky took into consideration in making the Drought Management Plan, which is based off producers who have successfully survived multiple long-term droughts.

"What I really think producers need to do is try to keep your plans as flexible as you can but be proactive," Myers said.

He recommends developing the livestock operation with drought in mind. Myers has been managing his operation based off a drought management plan for years, which can be used as a template for other difficult management situations, as well, such as winter storms or bottom-dollar market prices.

Myers explains that he has a Plan A, B, and C for every year, whether in drought or not. For this year, Myers is running one cow for every 20 acres of rangeland. In his best-case scenario, he will be able to maintain 300 cows and 200 yearlings at this stocking rate. At various critical dates throughout the year — April 1 in time for spring growth, June 1 for the switch from cool-season to warm-season grasses — after continuously monitoring the conditions on the ranch, Myers references his written drought management plan as to what strategy to put in place when certain thresholds have been met. Strategies can include reducing stocking rates, weaning early, culling cows, moving cows to rented rangeland elsewhere, holding calves at a nearby feedlot, and so on and would need to be put into action by the previously decided dates of May 1 and Sept. 1 to keep on top of the situation.

Some producers will be turned off from the level of planning that the Drought Management Plan requires, and Myers recognizes that, saying that it doesn't have to be a formula as much as an approach to management.

"If you take care of the land, the land will take care of your cattle, and your cattle will take care of you," Myers said.

Livestock Production Forum Series Slated For Area

BROOKINGS — A series of forums which began in mid-January across the state hosted by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) and SDSU Extension will continue through March 21. The remaining 18 sessions will be held at area livestock markets statewide to discuss South Dakota's vision for livestock production.

"Agriculture is South Dakota's No. 1 industry, with the total economic impact of the ag sector of \$21 Billion in 2010. Livestock is a major contributor to the agricultural economy with the total value of livestock alone being \$3 billion. Revenue generated from livestock and jobs that are created in processing and manufac-

turing of the livestock industry impact the overall infrastructure and the economic health of the state," said B. Lynn Gordon, Cow/Calf Extension Field Specialist.

Gordon adds that South Dakota is fortunate to have access to the resources needed for livestock production, such as access to land, water and feed resources as well as progressive, entrepreneurial people interested in raising and developing livestock.

"By combining these resources along with relevant research from the land grant

University of SDSU, South Dakota has the ability to produce food for demands of the domestic and international markets," Gordon said.

Agricultural producers are invited to attend these forums to join SDDA and SDSU Extension in a conversation about the opportunities and challenges in livestock production and the impact of agriculture to rural communities and statewide revenues and infrastructure. These meetings will allow a dialogue about the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

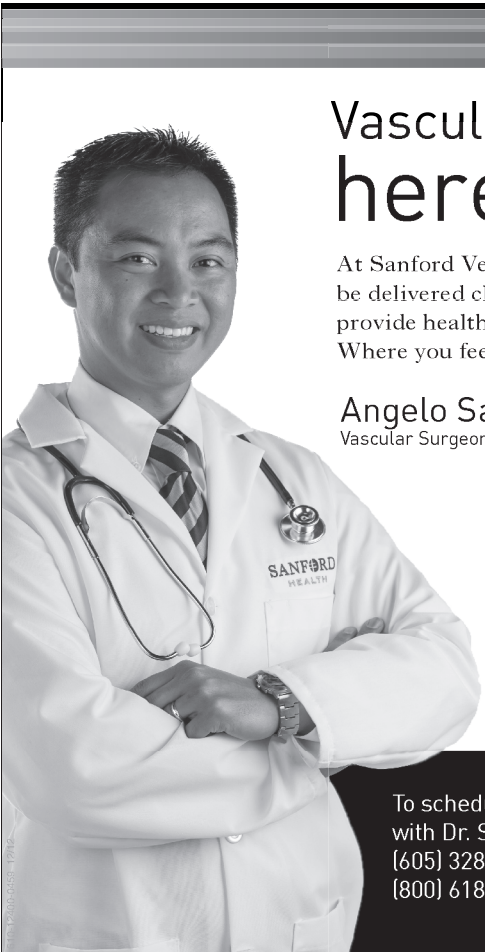
Remaining area sessions and

their locations are:

- Feb. 25 — Platte Livestock
- March 6 — Yankton Livestock

All sessions will take place at 6:30 p.m. local time except for the Feb. 8 Watertown forum which will be held in conjunction with the Watertown Winter Show at 10:30 a.m.

For more information contact Sarah Caslin, SDDA Livestock Development Specialist at 605-773-3549; [sarah.caslin@state.sd.us](mailto:sarah.caslin@state.sd.us) or B. Lynn Gordon, Cow/Calf Extension Field Specialist at 605-782-3290, [lynn.gordon@sdstate.edu](mailto:lynn.gordon@sdstate.edu).



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**2013 Beautiful Baby Contest**

Chance To Win Prizes!

We will be featuring our annual "Beautiful Baby Contest" in print and online on **Wednesday, February 27, 2013.** If you or someone you know has a child we would love to include them in our feature!

To enter, simply submit your photo and entry form with a \$10 submission fee by **Monday, February 18.**

First place winners in the following categories will receive a framed winners print and prizes from the following sponsors: Photography by Jerry, LilyCrest and JCPenney.

<b>Beautiful Baby Contest 2013</b>			<b>Submit Entry To:</b> Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan 319 Walnut Street Yankton, SD 57078
Category # _____	Age: _____	Date of Birth _____	
Child's Name _____			
Parents Name _____			
Address _____ Phone _____			

Winners will be selected by the staff of Yankton Media Inc. Employees and family members of Yankton Media Inc. are ineligible to win. \*Submission of this form authorizes the publication of child's photo in this contest in print and online at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net). Submission fee (\$10) must accompany entry form to be valid.

**Entry Deadline:**  
**Mon., Feb. 18, 2013**

1) 0-12 Months
2) 13-24 Months
3) 25 Months-3 Years
4) 4-7 Years
5) Multiple Births