



State ROW Haying Permits Needed

LINCOLN, Neb. — The state program allowing Nebraska landowners to obtain hay harvesting permits is now in effect. Nebraska landowners whose land abuts the state highway right-of-way have until July 30 to apply for and receive a \$40 haying permit. After July 30, anyone may apply. Proof of \$1 million liability insurance must accompany every application.

Hay harvesting permits are governed in accordance with Chapter 39, Article 13 of the Neb.Rev.Stat. §39-1359.01. Any hay harvested without a permit will become the property of the State and may be confiscated by the Department.

Applicants wishing to obtain a permit are reminded that if a permit for mowing and harvesting was issued last year, a permit for mowing and harvesting hay from that same area is not allowed this year. Interstate highways and freeways are excluded from the program.

Abutting landowners who have obtained permits may begin harvesting on July 15, but others are restricted to harvesting between Aug. 1 and Sept. 15.

The \$40 permits will be available at NDOR area maintenance offices located across Nebraska. Complete rules and regulations for hay harvesting can be found at <http://www.transportation.nebraska.gov/hay/> or by calling your local state highway maintenance or District office.

Singles In Ag Weekend Set For Aug. 9-11

MECKLING — The Nebraska Chapter of Singles in Agriculture will host a weekend of activities in Meckling Aug. 9-11. Singles in Agriculture (SIA) is a National organization that promotes social, educational and recreational activities for persons who are single and involved in farming or ranching activities or work with an agribusiness organization.

The group will begin to gather at 2 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 9, at the E Circle E lodge (45345 311th Street) Meckling. Participants will have the choice of trap shooting at the lodge or a tour of the W.H. Over Museum in Vermillion during the afternoon. Supper will be served at the lodge. The group will attend the Clay County fair and then return to the lodge for evening campfire activities.

Saturday the group will tour the Shrine to Music Museum and local attractions, raft the Missouri River and conduct Nebraska Annual Board meeting. Supper will be served at the E Circle E lodge with karaoke and dance following. Sunday activities include breakfast, devotions and a walk across the Meridian walking bridge.

Area singles are welcome to attend any or all of the scheduled event activities. Persons interested in attending all or part of the activities will be charged a nominal activity fee to cover lodging, meals and tour expenses. For more information regarding the Nebraska Singles in Agriculture activities or to pre-register for the above event call one of the following members, Gary or Shirley 605-267-2303 or Virginia 605-624-4689 or Cindy 308-920-0364 by Aug. 5.

Singles in Agriculture is a nonprofit organization that has been bringing people together since 1986. The Nebraska chapter sponsors local activities and joint events with the Northern Great Plains SIA chapter which included South Dakota, quarterly newsletters and a place for adults of all ages a chance to meet people with a common interest in agriculture.

Robotic Milkers Save Labor Struggle

BROOKINGS — Finding quality help for their 200-cow dairy forced Ethan dairy farmers, Gary and Amy Blase to make a decision — quit the dairy business or invest in robotic milkers.

Not ready to quit the industry they love, the couple turned to technology.

"Biggest reason was finding dependable hired help was becoming too difficult and 200 cows are too much for us to milk ourselves," Amy Blase said.

"Hired help have a tendency to do things they way they want to — not necessarily the way you need them to. The robots do the job right and exactly how you tell them to do it," said Gary Blase.

Although there was a learning curve, they both agree that they made the right decision. In addition to all the cows being milked correctly, the robots have monitors which automatically detect illness, mastitis and also changes in body weight — giving Gary and Amy more time to manage other aspects of their dairy operation.

"Some people are good people managers and enjoy managing people. We would rather manage our cows than people," Amy said.

She adds that robotic milkers have also given them more time to enjoy life. "We rarely set an alarm clock if that says anything," Amy said.

After years of getting up before dawn so they could be in the barn by 5 a.m., Gary says they wouldn't go back to traditional milking.

To watch a YouTube video interview with Gary and Amy Blase and see the robotic milkers in action, visit iGrow.org or <http://youtu.be/WDYkQyyP6w>.



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

Handle With Care II

Don't Wash Eggs If You Can Help It, But If You Can't, You Shouldn't Be Eating It Anyway

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series.

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

More and more backyard poultry owners are hanging signs by their mailboxes offering their extra eggs for sell under the farm-fresh label. But preventing food-borne illness is everyone's responsibility, whether commercial producers or hobby farmers.

The first rule of thumb is to only gather eggs from healthy birds and to never crack the eggs. But the guidelines for maintaining food safety for backyard egg businesses don't stop there, says Jacquie Jacob, poultry specialist at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Ky.

TO WASH OR NOT TO WASH

Once the eggs are inside, they need to be refrigerated right away, Jacob advises. She gets this question a lot, because eggs aren't refrigerated in Europe but it is common practice in the United States. But egg producers need to also check with state regulations as well as rules for any farmers markets they are selling at, as to other requirements to storing the eggs.

"The question I get a lot is to wash or not to wash your eggs," Jacob said. "Typically, what we say is if you don't have to wash them, don't. And if it's so dirty that you have to wash it, don't eat it."

Egg shells are porous, which allows the developing embryo access to oxygen as it forms, which means that a dirty egg could already have contamination through these pores, she says. But a clean egg has a natural antibiotic coating, called a bloom, that prevents bacterial contamination. When this bloom is washed off — or penetrated by manure or dirt — that's when the egg is at risk of infection. This means clean eggs are actually better off if

"dry washed," meaning any feathers or dust is wiped off with a clean, dry cloth, but not washed in water.

Eggs with manure or dirt stuck on the shell should be disposed of. If someone doesn't want to waste them, they can be boiled and fed back to the chickens in a ground-up or crumbled form.

That said, some regulations require that eggs are washed with water. If washing, this should be done before refrigeration. Eggs should be allowed to cool to room temperature and washed in clean, drinking water at a higher temperature than the egg.

"If you wouldn't drink the water, don't wash your eggs in it," Jacob said, referring to the shell's porous nature.

Eggs should be washed under running water, never left to soak in a tub of water, she adds. Running water allows any contaminant to run off the egg right away. Soaking eggs in water marinates the porous egg in the dirty water.

Some regulations mandate a disinfectant that is made specifically for eggs to be used as a rinse after washing the eggs, Jacob says. A half-and-half vinegar-water solution can also safely disinfect eggs.

The eggs should then be left to dry naturally before putting in a carton, Jacob says. Eggs are then stored in the refrigerator until use or purchase. It's important to not store them in the door of the refrigerator, as it's the temperature change — up and down — that risks bacterial infection.

State regulations vary in packaging, but whether able to re-use old cartons or if new cartons are required, all states require some sort of disclaimer for farm-fresh eggs as well as safe-handling directions, pack date, and expiration date one month after the pack date.

"You can't make any health claims without being able to prove it, so if you're saying that your free-range eggs are higher in omega-3's,

you need a way to prove this with testing or you can't claim it," Jacob said.

Producers also need a recall plan, even if a backyard egg business.

"It only hits the news with the big guys, but I know of at least one organic backyard producer who had to recall," Jacob said. "Know who your customers are and how to contact them. If there's a problem, you're liable for it."

WHAT NOT TO WORRY ABOUT

There are several variables in the way that eggs appear that may or may indicate a food safety concern. One of these is fertility.

Candling eggs are important to determine egg quality. Candling means shining a light onto an egg in a dark room to see the inside of the egg. High quality eggs have a small air sac — clear area — at the big end of the shell. The rest of the egg is darker but without any other identifiable features. Developing eggs would show a developing embryo. However, candling cannot identify whether an egg is fertile or not. This can only be determined by breaking the egg open: An infertile egg has a light spot on the yolk, while a fertile egg's light spot would have a clear area in the middle of that light spot.

"Some people won't eat fertile eggs. Some people will go out of their way and pay \$5 a dozen to eat fertile eggs," Jacob said. "There is no difference in nutritional quality or food safety."

What can be determined with candling is an egg's freshness, which is indicated by the air sac size and place-

ment. An older, candled egg will have a larger air sac. When broken, the white will spread out further and the yolk will be flatter and darker than a fresh egg.

"A fresh versus old egg look different, and the older will spread out more and not fry up as nicely, but nutritionally, they're the same and food safety-wise, they're the same," Jacob said.

Free-range chickens tend to have orange yolks, while chickens kept in a coop have yellow eggs. As with egg age, the quality and food safety are the same.

And some eggs have blood spots or smaller meat spots. Brown egg layers tend to have more problems with these.

"There is nothing wrong with any of these eggs, but no one wants to eat an egg with blood in it," Jacob said. "A blood spot is not a food safety concern. They're more of a cosmetic concern."

WHAT TO WORRY ABOUT

Another common concern is the green ring around the yolk of a hard-cooked egg, Jacob says. This is the result of overcooking and poses no concern, but it can look odd.

However, off-color eggs in other ways do indicate infection. Egg whites that are pink, greenish, or iridescent, as well as black or green spots in the egg, mean spoilage and the egg is dangerous to consume, Jacob says. But these problems can be found during candling.

"Spoilage is also not a problem when collecting eggs daily," Jacob said.

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Preorder 2014 IRM Redbooks

BROOKINGS — Producers have the opportunity to preorder the 2014 Integrated Resource Management (IRM) redbooks through SDSU Extension iGrow.org.

Some of the highlights for 2014 IRM redbooks include: calving records, updated Quality Assurance summary sheet, calf health records, cow health records, pasture usage, Standardized performance Analysis (SPA) performance measures, cattle sales, AI breeding record, and analysis of calving activity.

This is the first year that individuals have the option to preorder a 2014 IRM redbooks.

Preordering can be completed at SDSU iGrow store, <http://igrow.org/catalog/book> s/. Orders must be placed by Aug. 19 at 5 p.m. The cost is \$5.75 plus tax and shipping. The 2014 IRM redbooks will be shipped out at the end of October.

Vice President of Finance/CFO

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GOT NEWS?

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Diabetes Update "the Basics"

Update your diabetes Knowledge!

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital is getting back to the diabetes basics.

Our expert panel will answer your diabetes, diabetes prevention and healthy living questions.

Friday, August 2nd
2- 4 p.m.

Professional Office Pavilion
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Please make reservations by calling 605-668-8080 as space is limited.



Jamie Miller, FNP
Avera Medical Group

Topic - Diabetes Overview, Preventing Complications



Susan Barnes, RN, CDE,
Dakota Diabetes Center
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Topic - Diabetes Medications



Angie O'Connor, Community
Wellness Coordinator,
Advanced Health and Fitness
Specialist
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Topic - Fitness



Sara German, RD, LN
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Topic - Nutrition, "The Diabetic Plate"

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