

USDA Urges Producers To Enroll In DCP/ACRE

HURON — USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Craig Schaunaman encourages farmers and ranchers to enroll in the 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) or the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) before the June 3 deadline.

“We understand that producers are busy planting this spring, but they can’t forget to visit their county office and sign up for DCP or ACRE,” said Schaunaman. “Just as farmers and ranchers plan their spring plantings, producers should plan to schedule an appointment to visit their USDA Service Center at the earliest possible time. It’s best to set up an appointment now rather than wait until the day before the deadline,” advised Schaunaman.

The sign-up for both programs began Feb. 19, 2013. The deadline to sign up for ACRE is June 3, 2013. The DCP sign up period ends Aug. 2, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013, or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013 (and vice versa).

For more information about the programs and loans administered by FSA, visit any FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Seedstock Symposium June 27-28 In S.F.

BROOKINGS — Each year about 1.5 million calves are born in South Dakota. SDSU Extension is hosting a Seedstock Symposium June 27-28 in Sioux Falls at the SDSU Extension Regional Center to provide producers with research-based information on the use of the tools and technologies to improve the feeding and reproductive efficiency of those calves.

“Producers have been utilizing ratios EPD’s, to make changes to their herds for more than 30 years. There are new tools available due to the mapping of the bovine genome. These tools can help producers make more accurate mating decisions thus making changes to their operations at a much faster rate,” said Heather Gessner, SDSU Extension Livestock Business Management Field Specialist. “Feed costs represent the single largest production cost to the cow/calf or feedlot operation. Enhancing efficiency has benefits to the industry as a whole.”

Symposium Speakers Topics: The following speakers and topics will be covered during the two-day symposium held at the SDSU Extension Regional Center located in Sioux Falls at 2001 E 8th Street: Michael Gonda, South Dakota State University; Bob Weaver, Kansas State University; Matt Spangler, University of Nebraska; Mark Allan, Trans Ova Genetics; Larry Kuehn, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center; Bob Cushman, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center; Jim Reecy, Iowa State University; “Genetics of Disease Susceptibility”; Joe Casady, South Dakota State University; “My Vision of the Future of Animal Breeding”; and Robbi Pritchard, South Dakota State University; “My Vision of the Future of Animal Breeding.”

“The Symposium is designed to move all producers to a higher level of understanding about DNA genetic testing. We will start at the ground floor and move up through the two days,” Gessner said. “There will be something for everyone.”

“Tremendous progress has been made from the early and mid 20th century when all evaluation was done visually, to the 1970’s when the first national sire evaluations were published, to today’s use of genomic evaluation.

It is this most recent change that is especially exciting for commercial and purebred producers,” said Tyler Melroe, Past-President and Board Member of the S.D. Beef Breeds Council.

“The ability to select unproven seedstock with increasingly higher levels of reliability marks significant progress. Learning how to utilize this data will increase our rate of genetic improvement in both the purebred and commercial sectors.”

In addition to industry and university speakers there will be a Product Showcase Panel to highlight some of the products available to producers as well as a trade show where producers can visit with the symposium sponsors and industry representatives. An additional Producer Panel will explain how they implemented DNA information into their operations.

To register visit iGrow.org by June 15 or mail check to SDSU Extension Attn. Seedstock, 2001 E. 8th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57103. Registration fee is \$75 per person and \$100 after deadline. Rooms reserved at Country Inn Suites by Carlson, 200 E 8th Street, reserved until June 6 by calling 605-373-0153.

PQA Plus Advisor Training Set For June 19

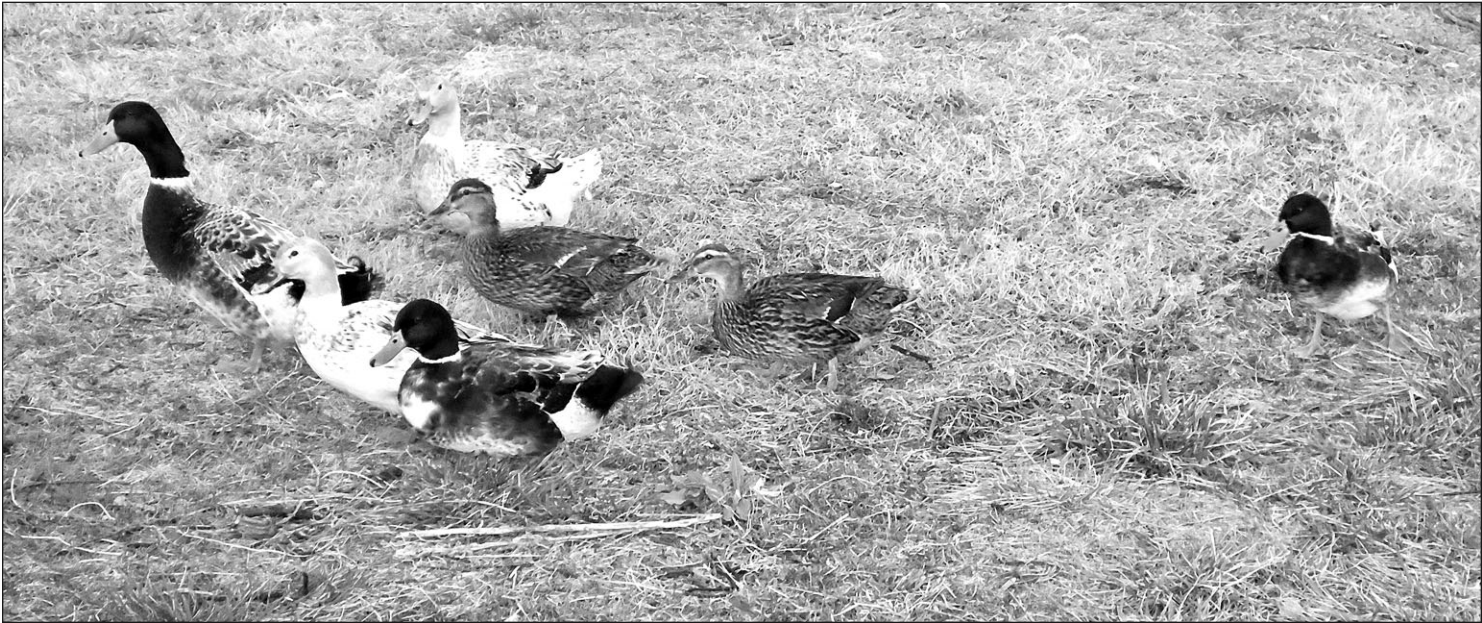
BROOKINGS — With the launch of the new Pork Quality Assurance Plus 2.0 (PQA Plus) at the 2013 World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa, all PQA Plus advisors will need to be recertified by August to maintain their advisor status. PQA Plus advisors will have the opportunity to renew or certify as an advisor on June 19 at 9 a.m. at the Veterinary and Biomedical Science building on the campus of South Dakota State University.

The qualifications for attending the training session to become a Certified PQA Plus Advisor include:

- Being a veterinarian, being an Extension Specialist, or being an Ag Educator (for the purposes of PQA Plus, the definition of an ag educator is a person who spends full time in adult education or at least 50 percent time in production training) and
- Having a D.V. M., or B.S. in Animal Science (or equivalent) and
- Having two years of recent documentable swine production experience.

New or recertifying advisors must pre-register by June 10 to make sure that all in attendance will receive the new PQA Plus 2.0 materials.

To pre-register, contact Ashley Gelderman, SDSU Extension Swine Field Specialist, at ashley.gelderman@sdstate.edu or at 605-782-3290.



Whether chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, or another type of poultry, there's more to picking a 4-H show champion than the prettiest bird in the barnyard. This group of ducks consists of purple, blue, and red ribbon winners but you might be surprised which ones they are.

PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

Birds Of A Feather

Tips On How To Breed And Select Poultry For Show

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

As school lets out for the summer, 4-H members all over the Yankton area are turning their attention toward their upcoming county fairs. One of the most popular projects in this youth program is showing poultry. But there’s a lot more to picking a winning bird than choosing the prettiest one in the coop.

“Excellent care of a chicken does not necessarily make it an exhibition poultry,” said Jesse Lyons, poultry specialist at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Mo.

Nor does the tamest duck or turkey make it a solid contender at a poultry show.

“There is a difference between poultry — a farm animal, an economic unit — and a pet,” Lyons said. “Exhibition poultry are poultry.”

But show birds, unlike layers or broilers have not been bred for egg output or dinner plate potential, have not been selected based on utility but on how well they match the standard of perfection for their breed.

Some poultry exhibitors purchase chicks from a commercial hatchery every year, but many enjoy breeding their own birds. Lyons suggests those new to rearing poultry to start slowly: to visit with other breeders first, study the breed standard, and then to start with a small flock of birds that are known to be easy to raise. This way, exhibitors won’t waste a lot of money as they make the inevitable first-timer’s mistakes in learning how to raise show-quality birds.

“Find a breed that you’re comfortable with and enjoy, and they’ll reward you with producing good birds,” Lyons said.

When learning the breed standard, the bible to get is the American Standard of Perfection, available through the American Poultry Association, www.amer-poultryassn.com. It lists in detail, with illustrations, the perfect specimen in each of the breeds and the color varieties within the breeds, as well as features that are classified as defects or even lead to disqualification of birds from competition.

Because the purebred fowl no longer exists, because all of the present poultry breeds have been crossbred at some point either to create the breed or to strengthen the breed, the breed standard is especially important to follow in selecting poultry for show, Lyons explains.

“Shape defines breed, and breed defines shape,” he said. “You need to know the ideal bird and breed to the ideal.”

It’s important to have good timing when breeding birds for show. Hatching in the late winter or early spring usually yields the best selection of birds for exhibition in the summer and fall, Lyons says. Young birds often have the best condition for exhibition, but it’s important that

show birds are also mature and out of their juvenile stage. This depends on the type of poultry. For example, heavy layers don’t typically mature until seven to eight months, but Mediterranean breed males don’t mature until 11 months while females mature by six to seven months.

Even from an experienced breeder’s pool of show-quality birds, there are often only a few of the condition and breed-standard quality for exhibition, Lyons adds.

BREEDING BASICS

When breeding show poultry, Lyons recommends pairing one female to one male, rather than breeding in a flock situation, and to keep records to know which birds are passing down superior genetics and which are passing down defects.

“It takes three to four years of selection to show significant results,” he said.

There are three recognized breeding methods:

1. Outcrossing — when the parents come from unrelated genetic lines. While the passing of bad traits is unlikely, the passing of specific good traits is also not dependable. This method is used to correct a deficiency line and is considered a last resort by many breeders, only to be used rarely before returning to one of the other two breeding methods.
2. Line breeding — when the parents come from related genetic lines equivalent to cousins. This method intensifies the good genes but can do the same for the bad traits. This method is the best way to isolate the best genes.
3. Inbreeding — when the parents come from closely related genetic lines, such as parent to offspring or siblings. This breeding method boosts all genes like line breeding does, whether good or bad.

Genetics are not an exact science, but more of an art, Lyons says.

“Most of the shape and color traits are controlled by multiple genes, which can also be affected by the environment to varying degrees,” he said. “Any single gene has only about a 3 percent chance of existing in a great-great-great-grandchild.”

Another reason why genetics is hard to determine is because of certain breeding anomalies, Lyons explains. For one, the female parent will always pass her genes to both the male and female offspring, but the male parent will only pass his genes on to the female. For another, there is a type of breeding outcome called nicking in which the offspring of a certain pair of birds will always be superior to that of their parents. Nicking is not common, and it only happens with the two specific birds, not if one of those parents was paired with another bird. Still another, in chickens, there is only one pigment that determines any feature color —

melanin, which takes two forms, either black or reddish-brown — and various gene combinations determine how melanin is expressed in terms of color shades and patterns. Finally, all breeds have detrimental genes that can cause grave defects in the offspring that can cause lethal health problems or gross deformities. An example is the Japanese breed of chicken that is susceptible to a detrimental gene that causes up to 25 percent of chicks in each hatch to die.

All of these breeding factors have to be taken into consideration and the negative traits need to be selected against, Lyons says: “It’s a challenge to maintain a good line of exhibition poultry.”

GOOD FLOCK CARE

The best care for the backyard flock is just as good for the show-quality flock, Lyons said. Show birds, as well as all flocks, should receive regular veterinary care to prevent and treat illnesses and parasites. Lyons recommends using nipple waterers to reduce water contamination. He also advises keeping young birds that have potential to be selected for show separate from the older, breeding birds. And he suggests keeping the number of visitors to facilities at a minimum, especially in the weeks leading up to show, to keep selected birds healthy.

There is no special feed for show poultry, Lyons says. Depending on the age of the bird, a commercial layer feed or a chick starter/grower feed is as appropriate for the show bird as it is for the rest of the flock. A show-quality flock can also enjoy foraging in the yard or pasture, although this cannot be their entire diet, Lyons explains.

As far as the logistics of hatching eggs for show poultry, there is no special handling of eggs, Lyons says. The eggs can be hatched out by the hen or in the incubator, and eggs in the incubator should be candled — which means shining a flashlight into the egg — to check for fertilization and common defects like double yolks. Eggs that are otherwise not good candidates for

hatching are misshaped, too small, or dirty.

“Handle hatching eggs very carefully,” Lyons said. “That’s the next generation.”

THE LAST WEEKS BEFORE FAIR

Once an exhibitor has a group of birds that have been bred with good genetics and are of the appropriate age — fully feathered out with fully grown combs and other features within the first year of hatching — selecting the appropriate birds is based off of comparing the bird with the show standard, Lyons says.

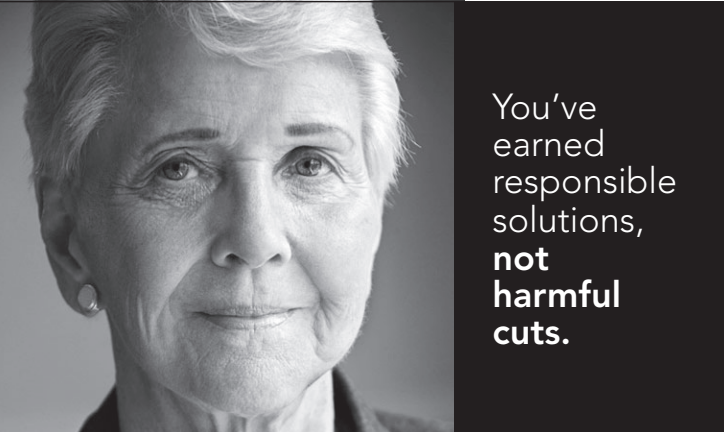
The number of birds selected depends on the number of entries the exhibitor has reserved for the show. The birds need to be prepared for judging several weeks before the show. First, the bird needs to be separated from the flock and placed in a clean, wire cage similar to what will be used at the show. This not only gets the bird used to this new environment, but it also gets the bird more accessible for frequent handling by the exhibitor.

The bird needs to be dusted for lice, mites, and other parasites. It should be washed by carefully putting it in a bucket of lukewarm soapy water and kept clean. Some breeds need to have special procedures; game birds need to be dubbed, which means trimming off their comb, wattles, and earlobes. The ideal bird will be clean, healthy, with shiny plumage and bright eyes. It’s very important that birds not be in molt, which should be eliminated by proper hatch timing. And show birds should be kept out of direct sunlight, which will fade feather colors.

HAVE FUN

Finally, it’s important to remember the reason for showing poultry. Most exhibitors love competition and the challenge of selecting the better bird, but Lyons reminds exhibitors that the most important part of showing poultry is first enjoying keeping the birds.

“It’s not all about showroom success,” Lyons said.



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