



2015 Agriculture Land Values Are In

BROOKINGS — The results of the 2015 SDSU South Dakota Farm Real Estate Survey have been released and are available on iGrow.org. This 2015 SDSU S.D. Farm Real Estate Survey report contains information on current agricultural land values and cash rental rates by land use in different regions of South Dakota. The survey includes comparisons of values from past years.

“The land values are a tale of two different agriculture economies ie. crops and beef cattle,” explains Jack Davis, SDSU Extension Crops Business Management Field Specialist. “Agricultural land value changes this past year reflect the sharp decline in crop prices and returns compared to record prices and returns for beef cattle.”

The survey showed cropland values declined 4.8 percent during the 2014 to 2015 year compared to an increase of 5.4 percent during the 2013 to 2014 timeline. Over the prior three years, land values increased an average of 17.7 to 37.8 percent.

Rangeland and pasture values increased at double-digit rates in 2015, increasing at a greater rate than 2013 at 7.9 percent and 2014 at 4.0 percent. “The 2015 increases are similar to the double-digit rates occurring in the years 2010, 2011, and 2012,” Davis said.

The survey provides land value information on a regional level, along with cash rental rates by region and type of land use. View the complete report with the electronic version of this release at iGrow.

Grants For Housing Units Offered

WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that USDA's Rural Housing Service (RHS) is soliciting pre-applications for Farm Labor Housing loans and grants to construct off-farm units and related facilities for domestic farm laborers, or to purchase and substantially rehabilitate non-farm labor housing properties.

This year, RHS will assign additional points to pre-applications for projects based in or serving census tracts with poverty rates greater than or equal to 20 percent over the last 30 years. RHS will publish on its website the amount of funding available in FY 2015.

Pre-applications will be due June 23, 2015. For additional details, see Page 15743 of the March 25 Federal Register.

Chamber To Host 10th Annual Ag Gala

The Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee is holding the 10th annual Ag Gala on June 30 at the Pine Acres Kiwanis/4H Ice Arena at 709 Whiting Drive.

The Farm Family of the Year Award will be announced along with the eight P.A.Y. Scholarship recipients for 2015 from Crofton, Gayville-Volin, Hartington, Irene/Wakonda, Menno and Yankton.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels is the master of ceremonies and South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Lucas Lentsch is a speaker.

The Ag Gala begins at 5 p.m. and features a social hour, a Prime Rib dinner catered by Rollin' Smoke BBQ, a raffle, and a musical program by Vern Kaul, the East River Cowboy.

Sponsorships for this event are still available. To register for tickets and/or tables of eight or if you are interested in a sponsorship, contact Carmen Bodden at Chamber@yanktonsd.com or 665-3636.

Grants To Develop New Products Offered

WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that USDA is making \$30 million available to farmers, ranchers and food entrepreneurs to develop new product lines. Funding will be made available through USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program.

“Farmers and ranchers are creative people who, with a little help, can put that creativity to work and improve the bottom line for their operations,” Vilsack said. “Value-Added Producer Grants enable them to develop new product lines to grow their businesses and expand their contributions to our nation's economy. This support is especially important for beginning farmers, military veterans engaging in farming and smaller farm operations participating in the local and regional food system.”

More information on how to apply is on page 26528 of the May 8 Federal Register. The deadline to submit paper applications is July 7. Electronic applications submitted through grants.gov are due July 2.

VAPG grants can be used to develop new product lines from raw agricultural products or additional uses for already developed product lines. Military veterans, socially disadvantaged, and beginning farmers and ranchers; operators of small- and medium-sized family farms and ranches; farmer and rancher cooperatives; and applicants that propose mid-tier value chain projects are given special priority in applying for VAPGs. Additional priority is given to group applicants who seek funding for projects that “best contribute” to creating or increasing marketing opportunities for these type of operators.

Produce, Sell And Cook It Safe – Small And Backyard Poultry Flocks

BROOKINGS — “Even though they don't affect human health or food safety, events such as the ongoing avian influenza outbreak help raise awareness of safe food production and handling from the farm to the table,” explained Joan Hegerfeld-Baker, SDSU Extension Food Safety Specialist & SDSU Assistant Professor.

“Everyone along the chain — from producers and processors, to retail outlets to consumers — shares responsibility for providing families safe, wholesome food,” said Hegerfeld-Baker. “The production, processing and preparing of poultry products are great illustrations of this shared responsibility.”

FOOD SAFETY BEGINS ON THE FARM

Food safety concerns are real for all types and sizes of poultry farms, Hegerfeld-Baker said. “From small farm and backyard flocks to large poultry houses; bacteria that are potentially harmful to people are commonly associated with all types of poultry production and processing environments.”

She references a study conducted by Pennsylvania State University researchers which investigated the prevalence of Campylobacter spp. and Salmonella spp. in whole chickens from farmers' markets and supermarkets in Pennsylvania.

This research demonstrated that 28 percent and 90 percent of chicken from farmers' markets, 20 percent and 28 percent of conventionally produced organic, and 8 percent and 52 percent of non-organic chicken were positive for Campylobacter spp. and Salmonella spp. respectively. “These human pathogens are of special concern because they can be found in healthy flocks with no apparent effects on the bird,” said Hegerfeld-Baker. “For all the attention avian influenza is currently attracting in the poultry industry, this avian influenza virus is not associated with any human health problems.”

Even though these potentially harmful pathogens can be common in flocks, Russ Daly, Professor, SDSU Extension Veterinarian & State Public Health Veterinarian, said poultry raisers can reduce their chances of flock infection and potentially the level of bacterial contamination, by carrying out basic flock health measures:

- **Biosecurity:** Limit the number of visitors, vehicles and outside equipment that have contact with your birds.
- **Wild bird and rodent control:** Reduce the likelihood that wild migratory or resident birds will have contact with your poultry, and control rodent pests.
- **Nutrition and water:** Ensure birds are receiving clean water and a nutritious ration for their stage of production.
- **Parasite and disease control:** Control coccidiosis and internal parasites. Use vaccines when warranted to prevent other infectious diseases that may increase the birds' likelihood of shedding bacteria.

HAND WASHING & OTHER TIPS

Poultry raisers themselves are at risk for illness from these bacteria through contact with their birds. Salmonella or Campylobacter can find their way onto the birds' feathers, feet and beaks and into the birds' environment such as housing, bedding, equipment and soil.

Therefore, follow the safe practices when handling birds:

- Wash your hands after touching



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

poultry or equipment in their surroundings, using proper hand-washing techniques.

- If you do not have access to a hand-washing facility, use hand sanitizer until you are able to wash your hands.
- Children are especially vulnerable to illness due to these bacteria. Ensure that a child handling chicks keeps his or her hands away from the face, especially the mouth and eyes. They should not snuggle or kiss chicks.
- Do not let poultry inside the house or in outdoor-living spaces, especially in areas where food and drink are prepared, served or stored.
- Do not clean poultry equipment in areas where food and drink are prepared, such as a kitchen sink. It is better to wash such equipment outside the house.

SLAUGHTER AND PROCESSING

It's essential that all sizes and types of poultry operations take care during slaughter and processing. “Small-flock producers processing their own birds are exempt from inspection by federal or state inspection, it's especially important that they understand the precautions necessary to produce a safe product,” Hegerfeld-Baker said. “For these operations, processing often takes place in a barn or farm yard. These types of environments pose a risk for increased levels of bacterial contamination.”

Hegerfeld-Baker said it is critical to slaughter and process poultry under sanitary conditions using practices and procedures that produce poultry products that are sound, clean and fit for human food.

- **Clean & Sanitize:** Food and non-food contact surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized as necessary to prevent the conditions which can lead to an adulterated product.
- **Proper Waste Disposal:** Rodents, other animals and insects must be excluded from areas where poultry is slaughtered, processed and stored. Sewage and waste disposal systems must properly remove feces, feathers, trash, garbage and paper from the facility. Sewage must be disposed through a separate drainage system to prevent backup into other lines that could contaminate the slaughter, processing and handling areas.
- **Water:** Water supply and water, ice and solution rinse must comply with

South Dakota drinking water regulations. If using a private well, it should be tested and meet the S.D. drinking water regulations. To contact S.D. Department of Environment and Natural Resources for drinking water regulations, call 605.773.3754.

“It's critical that the people handling poultry are healthy and stay clean throughout the entire process. Do not handle poultry at any step of slaughter and processing if suffering from diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat or fever” Hegerfeld-Baker said.

She added that clothes should be clean, hands washed and hair restrained. “People handling and slaughtering live birds should be kept separate from processing, unless they have changed clothing and thoroughly washed hands and forearms,” she said.

Carcasses should be frozen quickly for the best quality and safety. If using a home freezing unit, chill the carcass to 40 degree Fahrenheit in an ice slush bath, package and spread out in the freezer allowing for air circulation. Do not overstock the freezer.

On-farm Poultry Slaughter and Processing Guidelines publications can be found at the Northeast Beginning Farmers Project website.

CONSUMER'S ROLE

Poultry may be purchased fresh or frozen. If chicken is fresh it must maintain a constant temperature at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. When purchasing a frozen chicken at a farmers' market, consumers need to ensure the chicken has been maintained in a frozen state.

“If it is not completely frozen, do not purchase the bird — this is an indication that temperature has been improperly controlled,” Hegerfeld-Baker said. “As the consumer, you are responsible for keeping the bird frozen until you are home. If not going directly home, have a cooler with ice available.”

Thaw frozen poultry in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave (or a combination of the three).

Washing raw poultry before preparing is not recommended.

All poultry should be cooked to a minimum of 165 degrees F (ground, whole or parts).

For more information on safe handling and cooking or poultry refer to AnswerLine by calling 1.800.393.6636 (if calling from South Dakota).

said require that slaughter facilities follow the American Meat Industry guidelines and be inspected by their own or a third-party inspector to verify compliance and traceability of the labeled products.

AUDITING OF WELFARE LABELS

The majority of certified welfare labels are audited by the program or a third-party at least once annually. Additional reviews, Carroll explained, may be conducted to observe specific husbandry practices being performed or the care given to animals at various life stages. The complete animal care standards are easily accessible on each organization's website.

For more information, visit iGrow.org.

Labeling

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for loading densities.

— Additional space must be provided during hot weather to avoid thermal stress, likewise during cold.

— Trailer ventilation must be set appropriately to maintain a fresh environment during transport.

— Records documenting the plan for transport must be maintained and an emergency plan documented.

— Cleanliness of the trailer and proper, well-maintained loading facilities are also important.

— All animals must be healthy and fit for transport, unless being transported for veterinary treatment.

• SALE OF ANIMALS/SLAUGHTER:

The sale of animals through auction barns, stockyards and video auctions may be limited by some of the labels. “The preferred method is direct sale to farms that also comply with the label standards when raising the animal on the farm of birth is not possible,” Carroll said.

However, she added that some exceptions do exist to sell animals through other outlets and require approval by the program. “Some labels may even assist with finding suitable outlets for animals or to market meat products while a farm transitions into the program,” she said.

Some label programs require slaughter facilities to be inspected by their own inspectors or utilize approved on-farm slaughter. Other labels, Carroll

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