



Training For Youth Summer Ag Help Offered

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension will be hosting several Hazardous Occupation Safety Training in Agriculture (HOSTA) certification courses throughout the state for all youth between the ages of 14 and 16 who plan to work on farms this summer.

"The agricultural industry is unique in the fact that it allows youth under the age of 16 to be a legal farm employee, where as many other industries require 16 as the minimum age," said Nicholas Uilk, Ag Systems Technology Instructor at South Dakota State University. "Combine that with the fact that farms/ranches are on the top-10 list of most dangerous jobs and it is evident that the farm site can be a very dangerous workplace for youth who are not familiar with existing dangers."

HOSTA certification is required for all youth who are 14 or 15 and wish to work on a farm other than their own family farm. The HOSTA certificate allows these youth to legally work as a farm employee. Uilk says according to federal law, youth under the age of 14 are not allowed to be employed by a farm that is not their own family farm.

Farm operators who employ youth who do not have the HOSTA training can face up to a \$10,000 fine.

Uilk also encourages youth who will be working on their family's farm to also take the HOSTA course.

"I also strongly encourage all youth 14 and 15 years of age to attend the safety training as education is the number one best way to prevent accidents," Uilk said. Youth younger than 14 and interested in taking the course will also be welcome.

Prior to attending the HOSTA certification course, students are expected to study the 48 core task sheets, which can be found at: <http://www.sdstate.edu/abe/extension/hosta/task-sheets/index.cfm/>.

During the training a classroom session will be held to review some of the main points of the task sheets. The students will then be given a written exam. Students must obtain a 75 percent or greater in order to pass the exam and receive certification. If the student passes the written exam, they will then take a driving test in which we set up a course which they must drive a tractor and two wheeled trailer through.

HOSTA training dates and locations include:

- May 28 Brookings — Training begins at 10 a.m. in the Ag Engineering building, room 125, 1400 N. Campus Drive, Brookings, 57006.
- May 29 Aberdeen — Training begins at 10:30 a.m. at the SDSU Extension Regional Center; 13 Second Ave. SE, Aberdeen, 57401.
- May 30 Winner — Training begins at 10 a.m. at the SDSU Extension Regional Center; 325 S. Monroe St., P.O. Box 270, Winner, 57580.
- June 3 Gettysburg — Training begins at 10 a.m. at C operations -Potter County Implement; 30965 US Highway 212, Gettysburg, 57442.

To register, contact Nic Uilk at 605-688-5675 or Nicholas.uilk@sd-state.edu. Interested parties may also contact the SDSU Ag Engineering department at 605-688-5141. A minimum of six students must be pre-registered for each location by May 24 at 4 p.m. or the session will be cancelled for that location.

Use Livestock Risk Protection For Calves

BROOKINGS — Cattle producers can use Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) to guard against lower calf prices this fall, says Matthew Diersen, SDSU Extension Risk/Business Management Specialist.

"LRP for calves works well for cattle producers because a specific number of head can be insured," Diersen said. "In addition, there is a fixed basis adjustment for calves that offers better protection than when using futures or options contracts."

Given the risk in the market and it's relatively low cost to manage has Diersen encouraging livestock producers to consider the coverage.

"The cost to transfer the volatility is less than at any time in the past five years," he said. "The trend is for volatility to increase in the coming months before declining in late summer. Ideally, producers would time the purchase of LRP to when cattle prices are seasonally high and before volatility increases."

In mid-April LRP was available with end dates that stretched into January 2014. Although the floor prices available right now are not as good as in recent years, Diersen explains that LRP leaves the upside open.

"Thus, a producer can still benefit if calf prices are higher this fall than currently expected," he said. "The risk covered by LRP has been significant in recent years. Even with deductibles, LRP had a loss ratio above 1.0 in 2008, 2009 and 2012. Thus, producers received back more in indemnity payments than the cost of the premiums."

As of mid-April, South Dakota producers had insured 31,821 head of feeder cattle through the fiscal year that ends in June. That compares to the nationwide total of 106,370-head insured. "South Dakota has more insured than any other state — a position held on feeder cattle annually since fiscal year 2008," Diersen said.

To learn more, read "Insuring Calves Using Livestock Risk Protection," a document written by Diersen and published online at <http://igrow.org/up/resources/02-2006-2013.pdf>.

Fire Destroys Barn At North Dakota Bull Ranch

MANDAN, N.D. (AP) — No people or animals were hurt in a barn fire at a North Dakota ranch with a reputation for producing some of the best rodeo bucking bulls in the world.

Mandan Rural Fire Chief Lynn Gustin says the blaze Thursday afternoon destroyed the barn belonging to Chad Berger. Gustin says there were some saddles, tack and hay bales inside the barn.

The cause of the fire was not immediately determined. The Berger family declined comment.

www.yankton.net

Getting Your Goat

Starting A Goat Dairy Means Dealing Directly With Consumers

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

The first consideration when starting a goat dairy shouldn't be what type of goat to buy, the feed, or even the equipment set-up to extract and store the milk, says Carol Delaney, a long-time goat and sheep dairy specialist at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Va., who now consults internationally, with recent trips to Mali and El Salvador. Rather, it's the image the producer wants to project to his customers.

"You are the platform," Delaney said. "Starting a commercial farm means opening your life to the public. Think of what you want to convey."

Goat dairies differ from many cow dairies in that they sell directly to the consumer. Goat dairies are both the production unit and the retail store. They need to be clean and well run, and the producer must be someone the consumer likes as a person.

Delaney recalls one producer who influenced her own initial interest in goat dairying: The producer remembered the consumer's names, was always smiling, gave out samples, but never made consumers feel bad for not buying a product, and would send a business card home with consumers as a reminder.

It's also vital for owners of goat dairies to write a business plan. Like any other business, the finances need to balance and a business plan provides the guidance toward profitability.

"You want to have this clear picture about why you're doing what you're doing and who you're selling to," Delaney said.

A business plan allows for exploration of all facets of a goat dairy, because producers will be producing more than milk and milk products: also does, bucks, market kids, manure, and possibly weed control. And a goat dairy needs more than a barn and a milking parlor: also parasite control and veterinary care, land for pasture, and a winter feed source.

Most goat dairies are nothing more than hobbies, Delaney says. The difference is, businesses have set goals and are working toward them, and are holding themselves accountable in making decisions through detailed production and financial records — for example, determining whether to buy feed packaged or in bulk, which milk replacement formula to be using, and what forage works best depending on not only price but animal performance. This means crunching numbers and sometimes making tough decisions to sell goats that are no longer producing well.

"It's no longer a hobby once income exceeds expenses," Delaney added.

Charuth Loth of Lincoln, Neb., worked for a decade on making her goat dairy profitable before it was. Her cheese is now sought after from as far away as Chicago, but it took a lot of hard work, she says.

One of the critical decisions in starting a goat dairy is which breed to select. Each breed has different composition to its milk, and which breed will work for a particular operation depends on the milk's end use. Nig-



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

A goat dairy operation is an option for those producers looking to expand their operations. These operators generally deal directly with their consumers, thus demanding more of a retail business attitude.

ian Dwarf is a good all-around breed, but it is a smaller breed and doesn't have as much production as other dairy breeds, such as Nubian or Alpine. However, depending on the type of operation, the smaller breed may be the best option.

"When you look at total production, that's not enough," Delaney said. "You got to look at the fat and protein. That's what pays."

Some breeds' milk has high or low fat content, or high or low protein content. Producers wanting to sell fluid milk want a breed whose milk contains both high fat and high protein, and Nigerian Dwarf is best known for this. Producers who want to make cheese want milk with a high fat and low protein content, and the best cheese breeds are Nigerian Dwarf and Nubian. But efficiency also pays, and Nubian and Oberhasli are the best breeds for cost effectiveness.

"So my mantra is, be sure to get a healthy animal," Delaney said.

Veterinary concerns to watch for are the HIV-like Caprine Arthritis-Encephalitis Virus; Caseous Lymphadenitis, which produces infectious abscesses; and internal parasites, which are most likely to affect young kids, does at kidding and early lactation, and during times of chronic stress. Individual goats can be more susceptible than others to these health issues, just as some are better milk producers, more feed efficient, have easier kidding, better udder formation, better longevity, or more favorable somatic cell counts —

meaning that record keeping is a must, as is selling sub-par animals.

"If you can't measure it, you can't change it," so record everything, says Delaney.

One management choice that is changing in the goat dairy industry is kidding dates. Tatiana Stanton, goat and sheep specialist at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., has been studying the effect of kidding dates on the efficiency of goat dairies. What she has found is that there is four times as much labor in winter kidding as in spring kidding, but that more labor didn't reduce mortality. However, fertility is higher for winter kidding than spring kidding.

"Being at the birth does not change the outcome," Delaney said. "Skill does."

Keeping barns relatively clean and bedded down, having healthy animals, and building experience through a mentor is important to making an operation successful. Commercial goat dairies also benefit from automatic feeding and milking, an ergonomic milking platform, and barn designs with room for expansion.

Finally, Delaney says that as with any business, a goat dairy is constantly a work in progress. If the producer isn't consciously moving his operation forward, it moves backward. It's never static, so she recommended to always "work most on the weakest link."

Goat dairies, like all livestock operations, require daily care of the animals but more so, because milking needs to be done twice a day. It can be intense, says Suzy Hassler, a producer from Sutton, Neb., but for someone who likes goats, owning a dairy can be living the dream.

April Snows Brought Needed Relief From Drought

BROOKINGS — As the saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers." But what does April snow bring? In the case of spring 2013 in South Dakota, much needed moisture and some relief from drought, says Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist.

"I have a glass half-full perspective and think that the unending winter has really helped to improve soil moisture for the growing season," Edwards said. "Snow and cool temperatures in April can reduce moisture lost to runoff, and more of the snowmelt went into replenishing the dry soils from the fall. Flooding is very limited and localized, which tells me that most of the snowmelt was able to infiltrate the soils."

She points to the U.S. Drought Monitor, which has shown gradual improvements in nearly every corner of the state, with the exception of north central counties from Perkins to Campbell and Walworth Counties.

"These areas have held steady with some degradations in conditions last month. Things have been looking up for most of the cropping areas, and the water supply in the Black Hills in April," Edwards said. "The U.S. Drought Monitor

map has shown at least one category improvement, reflecting the moisture and cool temperatures that helped keep the moisture in the ground."

The National Weather Service offices in South Dakota have reported that in April numerous record cold temperatures were set — in addition to snowfall and precipitation records.

"Fifteen climate sites in western South Dakota ranked in the top 10 coldest Aprils on record," she said. "Interior tied its coldest April ever with an average temperature of 42.3 degrees F."

Edwards adds that the combined months of March and April 2013 were among the coldest on record.

"Several locations in the eastern side of the state went from the warmest spring on record in 2012 to the coldest in 2013," she said.

According to data, Huron went from its warmest March and April on record in 2012, to the fifth coldest in 2013. Last year, Sioux Falls was second warmest on record, and this year tied for fifth coldest March and April. In the northeast, Aberdeen, Watertown, Sisseton and Wheaton all recorded their coldest March and April combination on record.

"Watertown even edged out a

record set back in 1899 with an average temperature of 26.8 degrees F over the two-month period," Edwards said.

Eighteen climate sites in western South Dakota ranked in the top 10 snowiest Aprils. Rapid City set a new April total snowfall record with 43.1 inches, while establishing several daily records along the way.

Interior also set a new April snowfall record with 32.5 inches. "They also recorded the highest monthly snowfall for any month at these two locations," she said.

Edwards adds that South Dakotans can still expect May flow-ers after April snow. "Signs of spring are starting to appear as bulbs and some tree buds are already emerging in backyard gardens following the brief warm weekend on April 27-28," Edwards said.

She adds that the cooler than average conditions will carry into early May, but should turn to a warmer weather pattern by mid-month. In the early part of May, increased chances of wetter than average conditions are projected for the southeastern corner of the state, but then a drier pattern will settle in after a week or so.

"The forecast for the first week of the month is certainly more win-

ter-like, as snow fell on May 1 in the southeast, but now that it has melted the soils can warm up quickly as soon as the air temperatures increase," she said.

Data from the state climate office weather network shows soil temperatures in the mid to upper-40s degrees F at 4-inch depth across the southern half of South Dakota. In the north, 4-inch deep soil temperatures range from 40 to 50 degrees F. At 2-inches deep, soil temperatures are hovering around 45 to 50 degrees F in most areas. Edwards says soil temperatures have fallen a bit the last few days, but can quickly turn around this time of year, so corn and soybean planting is on the verge of moving full speed ahead.

South Dakota soil temperatures can be found here: <http://climate.sdstate.edu/awdn/maps/soilmaps.asp?parameter=s010/>.

To read more articles about South Dakota's climate, visit www.iGrow.org/.

SPECIAL THANK YOU

How does one begin to thank so great a community, so many compassionate and generous friends and neighbors for their many prayers, donations, acts of kindness, cards, food, visits, the benefit on Sunday in our behalf and the ongoing fund at the bank? Surely God has been in our midst to cause so many to help us at such a crucial time.

With all that I am, I will be a good steward to this "lifeline" towards continued health treatments. Sincere thanks to each of you and I would plea Psalms 125:4, *"Do Good, O Lord, unto those that be good and to them that are upright in their hearts."* May you receive a special blessing.

We give special thanks to Diane Sudbeck, Pat Lammers, Betty Ketleson, to Help Your Neighbor Club, Scott and Melia Kinkaid, Troy and Julie Fuelbreth, Eddy and Michelle Lammers, Gary and Elaine Woodckman, Warren and Carolyn Wilbeck, and Pastor Elder Mark Hatcher. We are forever in your debt.

I don't know God's will concerning this "hopeless" cancer, but I look to Him knowing, *"I can do anything thru Christ who strengtheneth me."* We are thankful for each day and to God be all the Glory. Thank you again.

Ivan and Linda Abbott
(PV Welding & Repair/Saxton Fruit)



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Thank you

The family of **Marvin Merchen** would like to extend our deepest thanks and appreciation for the kindness shown during the time of our loss. We give special thanks to the staff at Sister James Care Center for their wonderful care. Thank you to Wintz & Ray Funeral Home and Pastor Amanda Jertson for the beautiful service and burial. Special thanks to all of our family, friends, neighbors and coworkers for the kind words of sympathy, prayers, food, flowers and memorials. We are truly blessed to have everyone's love and support.

Deb & Robert Oleson Family
Yvonne Moody Family
Paulette & Chuck Schmidt Family
Rod & Jean Merchen Family
Rhonda Merchen and Beth Hanson
Stacy and Pat Chedester Family