



Checking Weed Control At Harvest

BROOKINGS — With harvest now in full swing Paul O. Johnson, SDSU Extension Weed Science Coordinator reminds farmers not to forget their fall weed control. "What are the weeds that are left in your crop? Do you know which weeds they are? Is there a weed that you do not know and how large is it? Does it look like the weed was not controlled at spraying time? Did you have an herbicide failure or is it a weed that your product does not control," Johnson asked. "As you move away from glyphosate products it is important to read labels closely to insure they control the weeds in your field." Johnson said harvest is the time to identify these problems so next year they are not a problem again. "This year again there was a lot of late weed emergence after normal spraying was done. When there is moisture in August, it is likely that certain weeds like common waterhemp and velvetleaf will emerge late and still put on seed be-

fore harvest," he said. Johnson explained that this only can be controlled if the herbicide products used have enough residual to keep these seeds from being able to emerge and grow. "Back in the 1980s and early '90s late emerging weeds like waterhemp and velvetleaf were very common in all fields but for sure in soybeans." The 2014 growing season has seen isolated cases of black nightshade. "Glyphosate has been very deadly to nightshade and still is, but where glyphosate was not used, that is where the problems showed up," Johnson said. If there is an unknown weed, while reviewing weed issues in fields this harvest, contact SDSU Extension. There are two ways to get this done, send a high quality digital picture to PaulO.johnson@sdstate.edu or take the sample into an SDSU Extension Regional Center. For more information, contact Paul O. Johnson at 605-688-4591 or PaulO.Johnson@sdstate.edu.

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

As land values continue to climb and production agriculture gets more and more difficult for aspiring farmers and ranchers to break into, the number of small homesteaders has exploded. And on these small acreages, landowners have been looking into unconventional means to make part or most of their living in agriculture. One of the popular production trends in the last several years has been raising market animals on pasture and then selling the meat products with a grass-fed label. To help standardize quality to ensure consumer satisfaction, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has created a Grass Fed Program for Small and Very Small Producers with a cost of just \$108 for a two-year certification. "For their communities, small farmers are anything but small," said Craig Morris, livestock, poultry and seed program deputy administrator for the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service in Washington, D.C. "Their contributions are quite large. Not only do they provide food for local residents, they also create jobs and economic opportunities. However, retailer requirements and the cost of marketing can make it difficult for small producers to scale up and reach larger markets." The new USDA Grass Fed program was designed for producers that market 49 or fewer cattle each year and/or lambs from 99 or fewer ewes, a rule based off the smallest groups identified by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. As of 2012, 11.5 percent of the nation's cow-calf operations fell in this size category, along with 29.5 percent of all ewe flocks. "Sometimes big things come in small packages," Morris said. Since the program's start this summer, there have been no South Dakota or Nebraska farms taking part. The grass-fed marketing claim standard requires that animals be fed only grass and forage, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. Animals certified as grass-fed cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts, though routine mineral and vitamin supplementation is allowed, and must have



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL

continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Producers may be interested in this or another USDA certification program, because the food labeling assures consumers that animals were raised with certain standards, Morris said. USDA certification is provided through audit-based verification that specific production practices or processing points are clearly defined, accurate and transparent. For consumers, this translates into confidence in the food they're purchasing. For producers, certification programs means added value and market share of their products. Producers can also buy from or sell to another USDA Grass Fed operation if they are involved in backgrounding or finishing grass-fed animals. The new Grass Fed Program for small producers was based off the already existing USDA Certified Grass-Fed program for much larger producers. As with other certification programs, like the National Organic Program, the cost to producers for the original Certified Grass-Fed program is significant and was quoted as one of the main barriers for smaller producers, Morris said. The certification cost through the Grass Fed Program for Small and Very Small Producers is much more attractive to farmers and ranchers interested in certification. Not everyone is happy, though. Ted Slanker of Powderly, Texas, has

been a small grass-fed producer of beef, lamb, goat and poultry since 1999. While new USDA Grass Fed program is helpful to producers new to the business, the program negates the hard work and investment existing producers had already put in to establish the grass-fed market, he said. In addition, USDA programs like this one unfairly creates competition and thus hurts the value-added potential of grass-fed beef and lamb in the long term, he added. According to the American Farmers Network, which offers cooperative marketing to its farmer-members under the Meadow Organics brand, the USDA Grass Fed criteria are not strict enough and that the American Grassfed Association (AGA) certification label be the industry standard. A key difference is that the AGA additionally requires that animals be raised without antibiotics or growth hormones and have year-round pasture access. But Morris said the USDA Grass Fed Program for Small and Very Small Producers is doing what it set out to do: remove financial barriers preventing the smallest farmers and ranchers from becoming certified if so desired. "Unfortunately many small-scale producers have not had the opportunity to benefit from these programs due to the user fee involved," he said. "But we're working to change that."

Commentary

'Barnraisers': Unconventional Means Of Financing

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent



Rita BRHEL

Back in the day — and I'm thinking when I was growing up in the 1980s, though I feel the older generations could vouch for this also — a farmer's only means of financing a new purchase, whether land, equipment or buildings, would be either through a bank or USDA loan or by his own often-modest means. Today, I think this still holds true for most producers, at least those raising commodity crops and livestock — that they need to borrow money against their farm for their capital purchases and annual operating expenses. It's a given, at least in my corner of the world in Nebraska, that this is the case. Asking others for money would be, well, let's just say it's not something many conventional producers would do publicly. So, I have to admit, that the first time I heard of a "barn-raiser," my kneejerk reaction wasn't positive. A barnraiser is a fundraiser, held by a private farmer, to expand his farm services. Typically, barnraisers are used — from what I've seen — for farm projects that would be beneficial to others off the farm, providing a community service like a USDA-grade kitchen for rent or an educational center, though the primary use of these facilities would be the private farmer him- or herself. And the primary way of raising funds through a barnraiser is the Internet, through social media. Friends of mine, William and Crystal Powers, owners of Darby Springs Farm near Ceresco, Neb., are doing a barn-

raiser right now. They have a website at Barn-raiser.us where they explain their plans, about their family and what various levels of funding would allow them to do. As I mentioned before, I wasn't superly supportive when I was invited to my first barn-raiser a few years ago for a dairy barn and creamery near Omaha, Neb. People do what they feel they need to do, is pretty much the response I gave. Not real supportive, but also trying not to judge, yet giving me the room in my brain to figure out what I thought of all this asking others for money for your farm. The first thoughts that rolled around my brain were along the lines of, "How dare they ask for money to build their profit center? Like I even have extra money to hand out! Wish I had the guts to ask money to fund my lifestyle." Yeah, they're really judging thoughts. A lot of people would stop at that point. They may say these judging thoughts are OK, that they help guide us to what is right or wrong in our life, and if our knee-jerk reaction is judgment as opposed to exploring compassion and understanding, that that's how we should perceive the situation. They would say if their first reaction was that a barnraiser is a poor, even shameful decision, that is what it is. I don't make decisions like that. Judgment isn't my thing. I want to understand the other person's point of view, even if I find I ultimately don't agree with it. So after being flooded with lots of judging thoughts, I began to let other ideas float into my head. For example, these barnraisers are for farm ideas that would be really beneficial in their local areas. Even if a farm's grade kitchen wasn't available for completely free use — let's face it, a small rental fee would go to securing responsible kitchen users and toward maintenance costs — it's really difficult to find one of these facilities just anywhere. Putting one in at your own house costs thousands of dollars, as the USDA certifiers are very particular. So if a grade kitchen was available in your community for a small use fee, and you had a muffin recipe that people just loved and a farmers market where you could try selling it at, that'd be way easier than if you had that same muffin recipe that could be making you a little cash on the side but nowhere to bake it. You probably wouldn't even try selling it except at the occasional church bake sale, which is OK but perhaps not the opportunity you may have liked. Many farms that use barnraisers do plan on using part of their fundraising for community and educational events. They may hold classes to bring continuing education to other unconventional farmers looking or working to expand their profit

makers, or festivals where families can gather to learn about agriculture. There is one of these "non-profit" farms near Hastings, Neb., called Prairie Loft. It is a working farm and there is a farm family living on the property, but all of the farm's profits go toward funding the farm, the main goal of which is to provide community education. They have a community garden and weekly classes during the summer. They have a twice-a-year agricultural festival that attracts families to learn about agriculture and harvest, with kids' activities and demonstrations like sheep-shearing. And they have other tangential events that continue to raise money for farm efforts, like an annual bluegrass music festival and an artists' retreat. Many farmers that use barn-raiser are unable to get conven-

tional loans for capital purchases. These farms are small in comparison, just an acreage in many conventional farmers' eyes. The farm owners may have the desire to work on the farm full-time but can't plan to at the moment that they need financing. And they question the status quo that only the big farmers raising commodity crops and livestock should be able to enjoy the farming livestock. These barnraising farmers are innovative, finding new ways to reach their goals and not willing to sit on the sidelines of life, following social rules that don't necessarily take into account the alternative thinking that is the very backbone of this country. Without innovative thinking, the United States would not be the country it is today. We would be part of Britain. I appreciate what my friends are doing to find their own way in life. Does that mean that I agree with them? The idea was to get past my first reaction of judging thoughts to be able to see their point of view. The ultimate decision is up to me, but now the path to that decision is clear. Exploring alternative ideas doesn't mean negating your own. It means broadening your horizons, so you can make a better decision.

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Along the road of Suffering You found a little lane That took you up to Heaven, and ended all your pain. You may be out of sight, We may be worlds apart; But you are always in our prayers; And forever in our hearts.

The family of **Michael Hochstein** would like to express our gratitude for the overwhelming love and support with the loss of our son, Michael.

To Father Eric Olsen, Father Tim Lange and Deacon Syban Thoenes for your words of wisdom and help with funeral services.

Thanks to the Immaculate Conception Choir, Mary Klug, lectors, servers, and pallbearers, and rosary leaders. To Division 3 of the CCW for serving the lunch and food brought to the funeral. We appreciate the food brought to our home, plants, angels, flowers, phone calls, visits, cards, masses and spiritual bouquets.

Our gratitude to the doctors and nurses and Avera Sacred Heart Hospital ICU and Hospice group. Thank you to the teachers and staff of Wayne Tower School and Coleridge Level 3 program for your dedication and love to Michael. A special thanks to our families and children for being there for us. To Jim and Jerry Wintz, we appreciate your care and compassion. God bless you all for your kindness on Michael's journey home to Heaven.

**Joe and Linda Hochstein • Tim Hochstein • Brian Hochstein
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Jay Williams
District 18 House

South Dakota Native
Born and raised on a farm in central South Dakota
Raised three children in Yankton with wife, Carol

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Naval Officer with duty in Vietnam
Naval Aviator with duty in Europe

Proven Leadership
Yankton School Board
Lewis and Clark Behavior Health Services Board
Founded and still operate a high tech business

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