



Certification Reimbursement Date Near

PIERRE — The South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA) reminds the state's organic producers that funds are available to reimburse them for their certification cost. The application deadline is Nov. 15, 2015, for fees incurred before the end of September of this year.

The program includes multiple scopes within each operation. National Organic Program certification is required. Reimbursement can be for up to 75 percent of the cost, not to exceed \$750, per scope. Diverse operations may receive funds for up to four different scopes.

According to the National Ag Statistics Service, nearly 80,000 acres qualified for the organic distinction in South Dakota in 2014. Of the 80 organic farms, half report sales between \$100,000 and \$500,000 annually. Most all the operations have a crop focus, while a handful also include certification for livestock.

Grant information and an application are available on SDDA's website. For more information, call Ag Development representative Bob Weyrich at 605-431-8002.

Show's Purebred Livestock Entries Due

SIOUX FALLS — Purebred cattle entries for the 2016 Sioux Empire Farm Show must be postmarked by Nov. 15. The 62nd annual Sioux Empire Farm Show, sponsored by the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, will be held Tuesday, Jan. 26, through Saturday, Jan. 30, 2016.

Six breeds will be shown at the 2016 show. The Angus and Simmental breeds will show and sell Wednesday; Hereford, Limousin, Red Angus and Charolais breeds will show and sell Thursday. The champion bull and female from each of the breeds will stand on Supreme Row until Friday, Jan. 29 when they will be judged. The winners will be presented to the general public attending the Mayor's Round-Up & Sale of Champions later that evening at the Best Western PLUS Ramkota Exhibit Hall. The \$12,000 Supreme Row purse is sponsored by the Tri-State Neighbor as the gold sponsor, Wells Fargo Bank South Dakota, N.A. as the silver sponsor and Campbell Supply Co. as the bronze sponsor. The purse is divided between the sellers and buyers of the Supreme Champion bull and female over all breeds.

The 63rd annual Sioux Empire Farm Show will be held at the W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls Arena, Sioux Falls Convention Center and the Denny Sanford PREMIER Center. The Sioux Empire Farm Show features livestock shows and sales and commercial exhibits. Admission is free. All livestock events will be held at the W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds.

The Agri-Business Division of the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce sponsors the show. For livestock entry information contact Cindy Christensen at (605) 373-2016 or email cchristensen@siouxfalls.com. For more information about the show, visit www.siouxempirefarmshow.org.

Swine Industry Audit Workshops Slated

BROOKINGS — United States pork producers are committed to producing the highest quality and safest pork in the world. In 2014, the National Pork board and various industry leaders created the new Common Swine Industry Audit to avoid duplication of packer audits.

"Like PQA PLUS, the Common Swine Industry Audit emphasizes food safety and animal well-being, but it goes much more in-depth on many of the criteria," explained Bob Thaler, Professor & SDSU Extension Swine Specialist.

While the Common Swine Industry Audit is a voluntary program, most packers are requiring producers to take part in the Common Swine Industry Audit program.

COMMON SWINE INDUSTRY AUDIT 101

A third party trained auditor will come to a producer's farm and evaluate their records, Standard Operating Procedures or SOPs, safety documents, etc. Also, the auditor and producer will walk through the entire operation and assess animal welfare, animal handling, worker training and the environment that the pigs live in.

The entire audit is based on a point system with a potential for a total of 457 points. Individual packers set the minimum points they want their producers to achieve.

Are you ready for the audit? To help producers prepare for the Common Swine Industry Audit, SDSU Extension created a two hour training program that covers everything a producer will need to successfully complete the audit.

Participants will receive a 3-ring binder with the templates and examples of all the records, SOP's, etc. that they will have to provide to the auditor. Producers will also learn what things the auditor will be evaluating on the walk-through and what is acceptable and unacceptable.

DATES & LOCATIONS

Three training sessions are scheduled for this fall, and will run from 2-4 p.m.

- Aberdeen, Nov. 18 — The training will be held at the SDSU Extension Regional Center in Aberdeen
- Huron, Dec. 7 — The training will be held at the Cross-roads Convention Center
- Freeman, Dec. 17 — The training will be held at the Prairie House restaurant.

Registration for the event will cover the cost of the binders and material. Enrollment is limited to the first 30 people per site.

To enroll or for more information, contact Heidi Carroll, SDSU Extension Livestock Stewardship Associate, Heidi.Carroll@sdstate.edu; 605-688-6623 or Bob Thaler, Robert.Thaler@sdstate.edu; 605-688-5435 and let them know which site you'd like to attend.



SUSAN JACOBSON/ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS
David Strawn, 79, is a retired Brevard-Seminole circuit judge and president of Deep Creek Farm in DeLeon Springs, Fla. He raises grassfed cattle and sells the meat directly to consumers.

Grass-Fed Beef Fills A Market Niche

BY SUSAN JACOBSON

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DELEON SPRINGS, Fla. — Cow No. 150, her pregnant belly bulging, nosed around rancher David Strawn's pickup hoping to find something good to eat in the bed of the truck.

For decades, Strawn's family raised cows, lambs and pigs on this lakeside spread about 40 miles north of Orlando.

But when his father died in 2002, Strawn shifted the family business to grass-fed cattle, eventually eliminating the other animals. Strawn loves a good steak, but he insists on knowing that the creature it came from led the best life possible.

That means no antibiotics. No hormones. No grain. No confinement.

"These guys enjoy our pastures, the lakes," Strawn, 79, said recently as he gave a tour of his Deep Creek Ranch. "They get gentle treatment. Their bad moments are very short — at the end."

Advocates of grass-fed meat say it is leaner and contains a higher percentage of healthful fats, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants and fewer calories. It also is better for the environment, provides jobs in rural communities and is kinder to the cattle, goats, sheep and bison destined to wind up on a dinner plate, according to the American Grassfed Association, which was formed in 2003.

"Those animals that are raised in a pen are the cow equivalent of a couch potato," said Strawn, a retired circuit judge.

Not everyone agrees. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which represents beef producers, defends the use of feedlots, where cattle are fattened on grain in their final months after an initial diet of grass.

The animals receive individual attention from veterinarians and nutritionists and are protected from predators, spokesman Daren Williams said.

The association and a meat scientist at the University of Florida also say the purportedly superior nutritional benefits

of grass-fed beef are overblown.

"There's little definitive data to suggest grass-fed beef is healthier for you," said Chad Carr, an associate professor in the university's department of animal sciences. "Both are an excellent source of dietary protein."

One thing is clear: Grass-fed meat usually is more expensive — sometimes twice as much per pound. That's because small producers need more

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CHAD CARR

pasture land and have higher operating costs than large commercial farms. Grass-fed cattle also grow to slaughter weight more slowly and yield less meat, requiring higher prices to make a profit, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

It takes at least two and sometimes more than three years for grass-fed cattle to fatten as opposed to 15 to 18 months for commercial cattle, said Marilyn Noble, a spokeswoman for the American Grassfed Association.

At Strawn's 700-acre ranch, each of the 150 or so animals eats about 25 pounds a day of pesticide-free grass, sorghum, millet and clover, and, in the winter, hay and alfalfa.

No one is sure what percentage of the market grass-fed has captured, partly because it has no universally accepted definition. Estimates range from less than 2 percent to 5 percent.

Not all brands are certified by the American Grassfed Association, which has strict requirements. Deep Creek Ranch is not. In past years, before the grass-fed certification was available, the ranch was Certified Humane, Strawn said. The operation would qualify for both certifications, he said, but in semi-retirement he wants to avoid the complications of paperwork.

To qualify, animals must be fed only

grass and forage from the time they are weaned until they are slaughtered. They must never be confined to feedlots, given antibiotics or growth hormones and must be born and raised on U.S. family farms, which are audited annually. The USDA's definition is less stringent.

Grass-fed meat has grown more popular in the past few years among consumers concerned about health, animal welfare and farm-to-table eating, said Emily Rankin, owner of Local Roots farm store in Orlando.

Elementary-school teacher Erika Maier has been buying grass-fed beef from Deep Creek Ranch for several years and said it's worth the long trip from her home. This month she split a 935-pound cow with several other families who shared the \$2,571 cost, plus \$300 for processing.

Maier freezes her portion and makes dog food out of the tongue, liver and heart for her German shepherd mix, Buddy. She picks up her meat, already packaged, at a small slaughterhouse.

Strawn used to sell to restaurants in South Florida, but he decided to scale back and deal directly with private parties only, getting to know his customers and advising them on cuts of meat. Strawn's love of the business extends to preserving the pine, oak and palmetto trees and deer, wild turkey and fox squirrels that share the land with the cows, steers and bulls.

"I really like growing things," said Strawn, whose boyhood jobs on the ranch were to drive mules and wagons and shoot cattle in the head. "I like caring for things."

It takes some people a while to get used to the firmer bite and reduced marbling grass-fed beef often has, but Maier said it is delicious and she feels healthier since she and her family have been eating it.

"We need to keep our money in the community," said Maier, a mother of a 10-year-old and a 12-year-old. "We need to help the local farmer and we need to do what's right for the animals."

Advocacy

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lawmakers.

"Don't call about broad issues. Call about specific legislation," she said, adding that as few as 10 calls on a certain angle of an issue can change a lawmaker's stance.

It's not unusual for farmers to be intimidated by making a phone call, but hearing a voice gives more meaning to a story than reading it in an email, Lipstreu said.

To give an overview of a typical phone call to a lawmaker's office, Lipstreu introduced Jazz Glastra, a college intern who worked

with Lipstreu over the summer. Glastra said that one of the lawmaker's aides typically answer the phone. The person calling in needs to remember to give the aide his or her name, residence, any relevant association affiliations and the reason for the call, citing a specific piece of legislation, before giving a personal story and a statement as to why that lawmaker should care about your story.

"This doesn't have to be an intimidating experience," Glastra said, though she did admit that the first couple of phone calls do feel awkward.

The aide who takes the phone call is generally able to help the caller through

the process. The aide will take notes as the caller talks, before thanking the caller and hanging up the phone.

Other tips from Glastra included writing down talking points and being prepared to give an introduction in a voicemail, with the caller's name and phone number, so that his or her story can be told when the aide calls back.

"The more you make those calls, the more you interact, the easier," Lipstreu said.



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Melody Hohn
Advisor, Investments & Planning

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Ross practices law in Yankton, SD

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David's topic will be
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David is a Financial Planner located in Yankton, SD

You are cordially invited to attend a **FREE Seminar** in Yankton on **Saturday, November 7, 2015** from 10am to Noon.

Please call **665-0494 or 689-2222** to reserve seating which is limited.

Complimentary refreshments and pastries available.



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