

The Press & Dakotan

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OPINION

Farming Outlook Takes A Turn

Farming can be a maddening business. And it's certainly not easy — even when it has seemed at times to be that to outsiders who know precious little about the industry beyond what ends up on their kitchen table.

Crop producers in the Dakotas are facing such prospects again these days. They operate in what this year is a sea of bountiful crops, with record or near-record yields looming for both corn and soybeans. And they stand to lose money in the process. Low crop prices — tied, of course, to bumper harvests and markets awash with the yield — are expected to dramatically cut into income this year, while expenses are still quite high.

The Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) reported late last week that corn crops in the Dakota will probably see per-acre losses, and small grains such as soybeans may possibly break even this year, but the gap between revenue and expenses will grow in the future.

"The math doesn't work out very well," admitted Jared Hofer, director of MTI's South Dakota Center for Farm/Ranch Management. In fact, this is nothing new. It's a trend farmers have seen before — well most farmers, anyway.

For some younger producers, this might be a shock to the system, just as the 2012 drought stunned those producers who had never really endured a dry year before. This time, it's worth noting in the wake of what the farming industry has seen in recent years.

Between 2010-2012, farmers saw record net profits thanks to soaring net profits and skyrocketing land prices. It could be argued — rather successfully, to boot — that such a performance kept South Dakota's economy treading water amid the turbulence of the great recession that hit in late 2008. To be sure, the ag sector was once of the few industries that performed well during those uncertain times, and that helped keep budgetary matters, which were at times painful, from sinking into even more serious territory.

Now, the pendulum is changing again. Corn prices in South Dakota have tumbled 50 percent since those days, and soybean prices have slipped 25 percent. Meanwhile, although the price of fuel has dropped, costs for such items as fertilizer, seed and, of course, land has remained high. Now, as Hofer said, the math works against them.

He added that two keys to this current situation are for non-farmers who make money from the ag industry — such as crop insurers, landlords and seed dealers — to work with farmers for the benefit of all involved, and for the farmers themselves to become even more diversified in order to better absorb such fiscal roller coasters.

The latter point is particularly important. There have been reports suggesting that some producers have stuck with staple crops and have even eschewed rotation practices in order to cash in on the formerly high prices. Some have also been putting more land into production, or taking it out of CRP programs, to generate even more revenue.

But as the old saying goes, what goes around comes around. And even in the midst of some of the best-looking crops we've seen in the Yankton area in recent memory, another kind of price is paid.

Farming is a maddening business, indeed. But each year is a learning experience. The lessons that will come from this could prove valuable.

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ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the PRESS & DAKOTAN. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, September 22, the 265th day of 2015. There are 100 days left in the year. The Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, begins at sunset.

Today's Highlight in History: On September 22, 1975, Sara Jane Moore attempted to shoot President Gerald R. Ford outside a San Francisco hotel, but missed. (Moore served 32 years in prison before being paroled on December 31, 2007)

On this date: In 1515, Anne of Cleves, who became the fourth wife of England's King Henry VIII, was born in Dusseldorf.

In 1776, during the Revolutionary War, Capt. Nathan Hale, 21, was hanged as a spy by the British in New York.

In 1792, the first French Republic was proclaimed.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, declaring all slaves in rebel states should be free as of January 1, 1863.

In 1911, pitcher Cy Young, 44, gained his 511th and final career victory as he hurled a 1-0 shutout for the Boston Red Sox against the Pittsburgh Pirates at Forbes Field.

In 1927, Gene Tunney successfully defended his heavyweight boxing title against Jack Dempsey in the famous "long-count" fight in Chicago.

In 1938, the musical comedy revue "Hellzapoppin'" starring Ole (OH'-lee) Olsen and Chic Johnson, began a three-year run on Broadway.

In 1950, Omar N. Bradley was promoted to the rank of five-star general, joining an elite group that included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall and Henry H. "Hap" Arnold.

In 1964, the musical "Fiddler on the Roof," starring Zero Mostel, opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 3,242 performances. The secret agent series "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," starring Robert Vaughn and David McCallum, premiered on NBC-TV.

In 1985, rock and country music artists participated in "Farm Aid," a concert staged in Champaign, Illinois, to help the nation's farmers.

In 1995, an AWACS plane carrying U.S. and Canadian military personnel crashed on takeoff from Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage, Alaska, killing all 24 people aboard.

Ten years ago: Hurricane Rita, weak-

ened to Category 4 status, closed in on the Texas coast, sending hundreds of thousands of people fleeing on a frustratingly slow, bumper-to-bumper exodus. John Roberts' nomination as U.S. chief justice cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan vote of 13-5.

Five years ago: Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge into the Hudson River after an intimate gay encounter in his dormitory room was allegedly captured by a webcam and streamed online by his roommate without his knowledge. (Dharun Ravi was convicted of invasion of privacy, bias intimidation and other counts and served less than a month in jail.)

South African Ernie Els was elected to the World Golf Hall of Fame; Doug Ford and two-time major winner Jock Hutchison from Scotland were elected through the Veteran's Category, "American Idol" announced that Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler would join Randy Jackson as judges the next season. Pop singer Eddie Fisher, 82, died in Berkeley, California.

One year ago: The United States and five Arab nations launched airstrikes against the Islamic State group in Syria, sending waves of planes and Tomahawk cruise missiles against an array of targets.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda is 88. Former NBA Commissioner David Stern is 73. Actor Paul Le Mat is 70. Musician King Sunny Ade is 69. Capt. Mark Phillips is 67. Rock singer David Coverdale (Deep Purple, Whitesnake) is 64. Actress Shari Belafonte is 61. Singer Debby Boone is 59. Country singer June Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 59. Singer Nick Cave is 58. Rock singer Johnette Napolitano is 58. Actress Lynn Herring is 58. Classical crossover singer Andrea Bocelli is 57. Singer-musician Joan Jett is 57. Actor Scott Baio is 55. Actress Catherine Oxenberg is 54. Actress Bonnie Hunt is 54. Actor Rob Stone is 53. Musician Matt Sharp is 46. Rock musician Dave Hernandez is 45. Rhythm-and-blues singer Big Rube (Society of Soul) is 44. Actress Mireille Enos is 40. Actress Daniella Alonso is 37. Actor Michael Graziadei is 36. Actress Ashley Drane (Eckstein) is 34. Actress Katie Lowes is 33. Rock musician Will Farquarson (Bastille) is 32. Actor Tom Felton is 28. Actress Juliette Goglia is 20.

Thought for Today: "Life resembles a novel more often than novels resemble life." — George Sand, French author (1804-1876).

FROM THE BIBLE

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Rez Of The Story

Native Justice And 'O'Connellism'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), Brandon Ecoffey, who is the current editor of *Lakota Country Times*, recently wrote in *LCT's* Sept. 3 issue:

"To no one's surprise, Trace O'Connell was found not guilty of disorderly conduct for his role in an incident that resulted in beer splashing off a group of Lakota children and their chaperones. The justice system that is applied to the Native population is one in which you are assumed guilty upon any accusation, one where guilt or innocence is not weighed until after a night or two in jail and a bond issued, and one in which prosecutors charge Native defendants with the most serious of charges, not to seek justice, but to guarantee the fear of years in jail will guarantee a plea bargain deal that the press office of the State's attorney will gladly use to slander a Native offender."

I am just one other Native voice fortunate enough to have the opportunity to express and create thoughts in others about current state of affairs here in South Dakota, on the Rez, and where ever those thoughts might be relevant throughout the country if not the planet. Having said that, a loyal reader of my column has asked me to weigh in on the "Trace O'Connell" affair.

I feel a little reluctant to "weigh in" because as always in this kind of situation there are three sides to the story, obviously. There's the side that says Trace O'Connell is guilty of racially motivated behavior that left Native children and the attending staff members in a state of shock and as such affects the whole community of South Dakotans one way or the other. There's the side that says (because O'Connell was acquitted) "no foul, no harm" — that in fact O'Connell did nothing wrong and that a court of law says so by the not guilty verdict handed down.

Then, there is a third side to the story that tries desperately to portray neutrality in an effort to understand the whole picture. What really happened? Are the students and attend-



Vince
TWO EAGLES

ing staff who were victimized by the whole incident telling the truth? If not, why would they lie about such a thing?

If the Native folks involved are telling the truth, then a serious miscarriage of justice has been perpetrated in this situation and that leaves more than ample room for speculation that South Dakota has a serious problem of judicial corruption motivated by god knows what and carried out by god knows who. Of course the perspective of said speculators will be through perhaps bias colored lenses giving the benefit of the doubt to the side they already occupy of the issues involved here.

Thus, if you are or support the Native view the assumptions will be made that "the truth" of the matter is indisputable — and why are we even questioning the fact that the court system is racist here in South Dakota?

If one supports the view that the "not guilty" verdict handed down by the court vindicates O'Connell all together, then the issue of who is telling the truth and who is not seems academic. This, despite the fact that South Dakota's have a sordid history of mistreating the indigenous population, and it's not like the U.S. court systems have been totally and indisputably nonpartisan and one-sided in its decisions from day one.

So, from one perspective, the court system here in South Dakota is exposed (once again) for the racist "tainting" of its decision. On the other hand, there's is this proverbial collective sigh of relief from another perspective that says, "Ah, justice has been served and the accused stands innocent of his crimes before the public." Shall we call the third perspective an "O'Connellism," which marks the state of affairs here in South Dakota? A state of affairs that leaves one to choose sides of racially charged issues according to perspectives colored by experience, and perspective bias will always be open to criticism and never settled in a zero-sum equation?

And the beat goes on. Where is the compromise here? You tell me. And now you know the rez of the story.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Great Concert!

Ken and Melanie Horrell, Kansas City, Mo.

Jan, just a quick note to extend our thanks to Jan and Greg Schiferl for a terrific weekend! The concert was outstanding, and we especially loved the music of Teena Goans. It was a bit of a trip coming up from Kansas City, but well worth it. In addition to the concert, we stayed at the Best Western Kelly Inn for two nights, spent Saturday shopping in downtown Yankton and doing some sightseeing ... before church, dinner and a movie.

We definitely enjoyed our time there and appreciate the hospitality of all the folks we met. The downtown shops were fun and we came back with some nice home additions. We also loved the walking bridge across the river ... great exercise and a very beautiful setting.

Thanks again for setting everything up for us and please pass on our appreciation to all the folks involved.

Poll Results

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you think Kristi Noem will run for governor in 2018?
No.....45%
Not sure/don't care.....34%
Yes.....21%

TOTAL VOTES CAST.....226
The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Would you consider voting for a Muslim for president?
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

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