



Grazing Gazette

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This newsletter is a joint effort from the following organizations:



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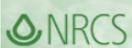


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ATTENTION!

Beginning 2019, the Gazette will no longer be printed. If you wish to continue receiving the Gazette, send an email to ruesi001@umn.edu

Ranching for Profit Workshops with Dave Pratt

The Sustainable Farming Association and multiple co-sponsors are hosting a workshop series with nationally known sustainable ag expert Dave Pratt.



Pratt's tool box full of simple but effective processes have earned him a reputation for getting to the heart of the problem and finding win-win solutions.

The Three Secrets for Increasing Profit

Dec. 11 - Redwood Falls, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., American Legion, 100 Industrial Dr

Dec. 13 - Thief River Falls, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Northland Community and Technical College, 1101 Hwy 1E

Dec. 14 - Floodwood, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Rich Event Center, 201 W. 7th Ave

- ⇒ See if your ranch is really a business or just a low-paying, physically-demanding job?
- ⇒ Learn the difference between economics and finance and why economics always comes first.
- ⇒ Discover three things any business can do to increase profit.
- ⇒ Use RFP benchmarks to find out which apply to your business.

Cattlemen vs. Grassmen: The In's and Out's of Cell Grazing

Dec. 12 - Staples, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Central Lakes College, 1830 Airport Rd

- ⇒ See why the most profitable cattlemen are grassmen first.
- ⇒ Find out if your ranch is structured to work with, or to fight, nature.
- ⇒ Learn the five essential principles of cell grazing.
- ⇒ Discover how you can increase productivity, reduce your workload and increase profit.

Register now at: sfa-mn.org/soil

Each workshop costs \$45/person and includes lunch.

Thanks to our co-sponsors:



Stress in our Farming and Rural Communities

By Michael Cruse, Local Extension Educator

Many of our local agricultural producers are facing difficult times right now. On top of typical farm stress factors – isolation, variability in weather, lack of access the health services – farmers have also had to deal with 3-4 consecutive years of low commodity prices. These conditions are leading to a rise in mental health issues – depression, anxiety – which sadly has led to all too familiar consequences like loss of interest in family, friends and community as well as farmer suicides. If you or someone you know needs help – be it financial counseling, spiritual guidance or just an open ear – please call or talk to someone.

Farmers often struggle to seek help for themselves. Many of us were taught to be independent and to grin and bear it when tough times come around. Please do not let your pride stand in the way of you getting the help that you need. And approaching someone – be it spouse, parent, relative or friend – who needs help can be just as challenging. What if they do not want help? How can I even tell for sure if they need help? Here are some common warning signs from Rob Holcomb, UMN Extension Educator, which may indicate that an agricultural producer needs a hand:

- ◆ They isolate themselves
- ◆ They abruptly sell land/livestock or their equipment/farmstead falls into disrepair
- ◆ Their substance use increases
- ◆ They lack motivation, become less productive, or their mood changes
- ◆ They use statements of hopelessness or giving up
- ◆ Their sleep patterns are altered
- ◆ They have unpaid bills
- ◆ Their spouse/significant other/children exhibit stress

The most important thing is that if you see something, say something. Along with this article is a comprehensive list of phone lines, websites and other resources that can be used by farmers and others in rural communities. And do not underestimate the power of a cup of coffee and a conversation. Taking 5 minutes out of your day to call someone may make the difference for a farmer and their family.

COPING WITH FARM AND RURAL STRESS IN MINNESOTA (compiled by MN Department of Agriculture)

Help for stress, anxiety, depression, anger, or feeling “stuck”

Minnesota Farm & Rural Helpline, 833-600-2670 x 1 (Free, confidential, 24/7)

Ted Matthews Rural Mental Health Counselor, 320-266-2390, www.centerofagriculture.org

(search for “mental health”) No cost; no paperwork.

Mobile Crisis Teams, www.mn.gov/dhs (search for “adult mental health phone numbers”)

University of Minnesota “Dealing With Stress” Website, www.z.umn.edu/stressresources

Financial Counseling

Farmer-Lender Mediation, 218-935-5785,

[www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/farmerlender- mediation](http://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/farmerlender-mediation)

Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG), 877-860-4349, www.flaginc.org

Minnesota Farm Advocates, 218-346-4866, www.mda.state.mn.us/farmadvocates

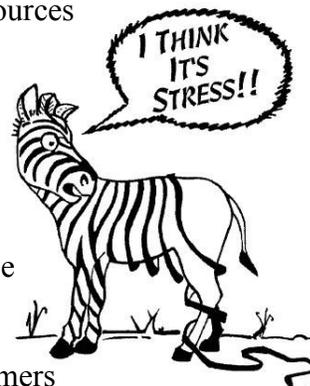
Minnesota Rural Finance Authority, 651-201-6556, www.mda.state.mn.us/agfinance

Minnesota State Farm Business Management Education, 218-894-5163 or

507-389-7263, <https://agcentric.org/farm-business-management>

University of Minnesota Extension Free, Confidential Financial Counseling for Farmers

800-232-9077, z.umn.edu/financehelp



Grazing Sheep and Cattle for Prosperity

By: Travis Hoffman, Ph.D., North Dakota State University/University of Minnesota

While we battle the winter weather of Minnesota and surrounding areas, it is with great optimism that we envision green grass in the spring. Ruminants are the answer for many agriculturalists to efficiently convert those forages to lean meat and profitability. Commonly, beef producers limit their ventures to cattle. However, opportunities exist through diversification with either sheep or goats. Dr. Kris Ringwall has been a staunch proponent of adding sheep to cattle operations for efficient use of range and increased revenue of livestock operations. He conducted research at the NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center that showed the complementarity of sheep grazing forbs and short grasses while cattle prefer the available taller grasses.

In fact, the discussion shouldn't be if, but how, we can positively co-graze multiple species. Fencing is a priority, and small ruminants require greater attention to detail around the perimeters of pastures. The common accepted philosophy is that producers can run one sheep for each cow with no reduction in stocking rates. However, adding sheep to an operation may result in more work and a plan for lambing if you choose breeding ewes instead of feeder/grower lambs.

Data from the University of Minnesota in 2015 recorded an average net return of \$65.68 per ewe, compared to \$181.29 per cow. Based on cow market weight, nine ewes make up one cow, which means an equivalent sheep net return would be \$591.12 per comparable animal unit.

Dr. Ringwall quantified that complementary grazing of cattle and sheep can be a practical incentive for producers. "If I can take a 300-head cow herd that has a projected net return of \$30,000 and add 300 ewes and increase the net return ($\$65.68/\text{ewe} \times 300 = \$19,704$) to \$49,704, maybe I should ask some questions. I significantly increase net return per production unit by more than 65 percent," stated Ringwall.



With an emphasis on economics it benefits area producers to question the norm and determine opportunities to add either sheep or goats to their production model. For years, producers have utilized cattle as natural grazers, but we can also find several reasons to add sheep or goats for forage management and a bonus for annual income. Charge on!

Have you had your water tested recently?

It is recommended that homeowners test their water annually. The Fillmore SWCD has a certified, in-house lab that can test for two types of bacteria—E.coli and total coliform. Kits are available at the SWCD office for \$25 with instructions for taking your own sample.

We also offer free nitrate testing!

Lab hours-Monday-Wednesday 8 am—3:30 pm

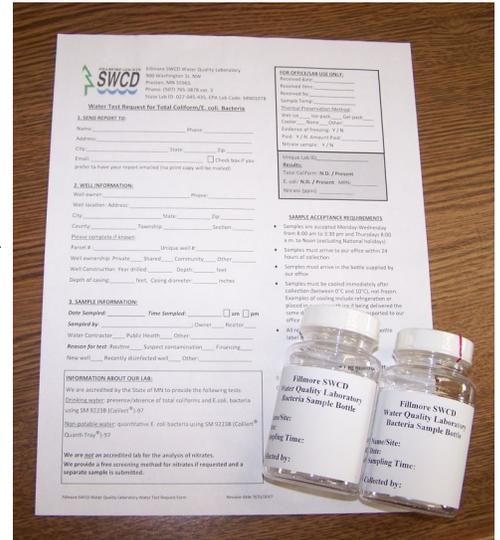
Thursday 8 am– Noon.

The Fillmore SWCD also offers....

- ~ State Cost Share Dollars for Conservation Practices ~ Grazing Management Plans ~
- ~ Soil Health Technical Assistance ~ Nutrient Management Plans ~
- ~ Manure Spreader Calibration ~ Survey Flag Sales ~ Tree Sales ~



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