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Horse Soldiers commander speaks at KLA annual convention

By Donna Sullivan, Editor

Hard work, perseverance, tenacity – all were qualities Mark Nutsch learned on his family's Kansas farm. "You all get yourself up at 4 or 5 a.m. to milk those cows, feed that livestock, rain or shine," he told members of the Kansas Livestock Association as he addressed their annual convention in Wichita on December 1. "That heritage, that tradition, those lessons learned, are what helped me get through some of the toughest training that our special operations community puts on ourself."

Nutsch is the former commander of the first Green Beret unit to go into Afghanistan after the bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Before that fateful day when the world was forever changed, Nutsch had just completed two years as a special forces detachment commander, based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He had deployed a half dozen times to the Middle East and was moving into a staff position.

On September 14 he and his six-and-a-half-month pregnant wife Amy were in Babies R Us in Nashville, Tennessee. He received a phone call from the sergeant from the team he had just left telling him to return to the unit with all his gear; the unit where he had just cleaned all of his gear out of their workspace the day before. About thirty seconds later, another call came, this time from his unit commander, telling him to return immediately and report to the boss. "Like any good Green Beret, I let out a hoot and a holler right there in Babies R Us," Nutsch recalled. "My wife knew what that meant. We finished up our shopping and on that 45-minute drive from Nashville to Fort Campbell we picked out our daughter's name."

That day he was informed that their twelve-man team would be the very first deployed out of 54 teams in their unit. "We were incredibly honored and humbled to spearhead America's response," he said. "Something I learned early on as a young officer, is if you have one shot at something, you make it count."

Nutsch and his team did make it count, and their unusual story was told in the book *Horse Soldiers* and the film *12 Strong*, as well as a documentary, *Legion of Brothers*.

Nutsch grew up on a cattle ranch in the Flint Hills, rodeoing and showing Quarter Horses. He was in 4-H and FFA all the way through high school and showed hogs and beef at the county fair. He ro-



KLA members listened intently as Mark Nutsch detailed his experiences as commander of the Green Beret unit that was the first to go into Afghanistan after the bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

deoed at Kansas State University for two years as well.

"But who knew those lessons in perseverance, rolling out of bed early in the morning to go feed that livestock, the tenacity, things we learned in the farming and ranching community were going to pay off in so many ways?" he reflected.

"Back in 2001, none of our special operations community was riding horseback," Nutsch pointed out. "It was by pure fate that I ended up leading a team that was going to ride horseback into combat. I rodeoed in high school and for two years at K-State, but I've never been to a rodeo like I was about to encounter."

Nutsch and his team was deployed to an area loosely believed by intelligence analysts to be where friendly militias were already engaged in armed rebellion, fighting against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. They learned there were three different ethnic leaders in the north and his team was assigned an unconventional warfare mission to fly in and be the first, along with their CIA teammates, to meet those three leaders. "There were so many questions that were unanswered," Nutsch said. "And we let our command know, send us, we are the team that can do this mission. We realized the questions we had submitted to our chain of command, there were no answers coming back. We let our chain of command know somebody has to go in on the ground and get those answers. And we want the mission, we want the job. We were assured the weight of America's resources were behind us. They did not expect us to survive. They did not expect to see us for six months."

Five of the team members were already special forces combat veterans. Their average age was 32 and they averaged eight years in the service. Ten of the twelve were married and nine out of the ten couples had two or more children. "We were considered the old guys at 32," said Nutsch. "It was an incredible team, highly cross-trained. Not to just do the job you were assigned, but you had to understand the basics of the other jobs."

The team would meet with General Abdul

Rashid Dostum, known as a brutal warlord who had made and broken alliances with many factions. There was a burst of hoofbeats in the morning and about twenty horsemen came galloping up, armed to the teeth, looking pretty rough... heavy beards, typical Soviet Arms. About ten minutes behind them, another thirty horsemen arrive with the general. The Americans received a warm welcome and followed the horsemen to Dostum's headquarters, a four-hour ride deep into the mountains.

Only Nutsch was an experienced rider. "One of my young sergeants, eight years prior, had been in high school in South Dakota, ridden horses a little bit, rodeoed a little bit," Nutsch said. "The other guys on my team gave me a hard time that their training was Quarter Horse training – their mom and dad would take them as kids to Walmart and throw some quarters in the mechanical horses."

The team had only learned about 48 hours prior to getting on the helicopter that they would be riding horses. Nutsch found himself acting as trail boss, helping his men get mounted up and ready to move. "How do you carry a rifle, what gear do you carry on your back? Can I trust the guys next to me that I just met?" Nutsch said. The last time that the U.S. Army had ridden horses into combat was in 1942 during WWII, leaving Nutsch with no modern guidance for his current circumstance. "There's no doctrine, no manual, we're figuring it out literally at the trot, at the gallop on some half-wild stallions. They ride stallions culturally. Those of you who have been around horses know what happens when you get a couple of stallions together. They're going to kick and bite and fight. That was going on, so that became our 19th century force on horseback."

By the end of the day the original fifty or so horseman had become more than 300. "We had to pinch ourselves and remind ourselves, what century are we in? We had that force on horseback and they were armed with 20th century weapons, these Soviet rifles and rocket grenade launchers that you hear about. But our team brings in the 21st century technology. We've

got night vision goggles, laser devices on our weapons. We've got satellite capable radios that allow me to talk to my commander 150 miles away in another country; allows me to talk to the logistical planners in Ft. Campbell, Kentucky and the generals down in Tampa. That was our team. We discovered we were outgunned, outnumbered, going up against the Taliban and Al Quaida that had the modern motorized and mechanized Soviet equipment."

But those odds didn't faze Nutsch and his team. "Over the next 24 days and then some, our team is credited with destroying the Taliban army of the north, an estimated force of nearly 5000 extremist fighters that swarmed in to try to destroy the allies that we had been connected with," he said. "It was extremely chaotic, we were fighting to survive the next five minutes, the next hour, survive the day. But we recognized we could win. Our sergeants did an incredible job. They had some of the best training in the world, but none of it had to do with their

mobility and how to ride horses in combat. They're figuring it out, they're riding day and night. We're in snow, freezing cold, swimming across some rivers. It was like our version of *Lonesome Dove*, or all the western movies I watched growing up. It was incredible."

Nutsch went on to detail the battles and logistics of his time in Afghanistan, holding the audience in rapt attention. He told of receiving a phone call from his commander right before going into battle, telling him to use the satellite phone to call his wife. "No one wants to get that message, let alone in the middle of a combat zone just hours before a major operation is about to happen," he said. "But I called my wife from a cave in Afghanistan." Amy had gone in for her eighth month checkup and was told there were complications and she would be having the baby in two hours. Other special forces wives rallied around her in the delivery room as she delivered their baby. It would be three months before Nutsch would meet his daughter.

Nutsch has been back to Afghanistan several times in the years since he fought there, as a government contractor or to provide humanitarian relief. He showed a photograph of six of the interpreters that had worked with his team twenty years ago. "My phone and many others started blowing up in June," he said. "Calling, emailing, they need our help. These young men risked their lives on the battlefield when America needed their help twenty years ago. Their families were placed in incredible circumstances as the Taliban regime took over Afghanistan again. And I watched in horror and amazement as our government abandoned our allies. I was stunned." He recounted how groups of veterans self-organized and helped facilitate the evacuation, rescue and recovery of tens of thousands of allies and their families. "We were very fortunate to get these six young men and their families out of Afghanistan on some of the very last flights," he said.

His travels around the

world help solidify for Nutsch his understanding of the role agriculture plays in national security. "You folks are America's critical infrastructure," he said. "You feed not only our country, but the world. I hope you recognize what a powerful role that is. I know many of you work and lobby Congress for different things to help the industry. Remind them of that, because if we can't feed our own country, we're going to be just like the others."

Following his military career, Nutsch joined five other special forces veterans to start a craft bourbon distillery called American Freedom Distillery, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida. Their main product is their award-winning Horse Soldier bourbon. It's sold in fourteen states and is in 400 liquor stores in Kansas, as well as more than 80 bars and restaurants across the state. Molds for the bottles are made from steel from the World Trade Center. The bourbon is made by some of the men who were over on horseback in Afghanistan, and each bottle is a memorial to those who died in the September 11 attacks.

To end his presentation, Nutsch presented three limited-edition bottles of the Horse Soldier bourbon for auction to benefit the Kansas Livestock Foundation. Only 2000 were made and each comes with a copy of a raw intelligence report written by Nutsch, "Tired, cold and hungry on the side of a mountain one night after our political authorities were asking why we weren't making more progress," he said. "I used some colorful language that I was told to clean up the next day a little bit," he laughed.

The bottles raised \$2000.

"I had an incredible career," Nutsch said. "Try to make a lasting impact, make it count, seize the opportunity you have. I know you folks know that on your farms and ranches and with your business. Trying to make each day count, with strategic impact for your family, the future of the business, the future of that farm or ranch. You understand the impact that you make."

Photo by Donna Sullivan

Welcoming Christmas



Utility Park in Clay Center is a wonderland of lighted Christmas decorations that gets bigger and better by the year.

Photo by Donna Sullivan



Motorists on Hwy. 77 north of Randolph were treated to this truck decorated for the Christmas season.

Photo by Arlie Diedrich



Taking Measure

By Greg Doering,
Kansas Farm Bureau

Despite all the available metrics available for us to make sense of our world, measuring it is still largely defined by the parameters set forth by humans.

Everyone knows Mount Everest is the tallest mountain at just over 29,000 feet above mean sea level. Calculating the distance from base to peak gives the edge to Hawaii's Mauna Kea at 33,484 feet, with just less than 14,000 of those above sea level. If you move the

starting point to Earth's center and look for the highest point closest to the stars, you'll land on the top of Ecuador's Mount Chimborazo because of its proximity to the equator where the Earth's rotation makes the crust thicker.

Measuring the physical attributes around us is tricky enough given the ability to produce vastly different outcomes based on where an observer chooses to begin. Still the measurements of physical attributes are objective. When it comes to measur-

ing the lives of others, we have to resort to subjective opinions.

On occasion, however, a person's accomplishments are so impartially good and decent that society's instincts and emotions combine into tautological proof. They are mountains in their own right.

Bob Dole was a mountain of a man, and his contribution to Kansas and America are immense and immeasurable. After more than a week of reflection and mourning the loss of such a man, it's quite possible if any metric did exist to quantify the admiration and devotion he inspired, Dole would set records.

There are so many inflection points from which to choose to begin measuring. His birth in Russell;

the Dust Bowl years of his youth; war wounds suffered on an Italian mountain. You can't pick just one, they're all part of the fabric that made up who Dole became.

If pressed, however, I'd consider the barrage of enemy fire to be the most consequential for Kansas and the nation. Dole was studying to become a doctor when he enlisted and went off to war. The bullets that tore into his body didn't just take his right arm, it likely robbed central Kansas of one of its finest physicians.

Dole's arduous three-year recovery also likely factored into his willingness to accept incremental progress, knowing that small changes add up over the course of time. This also meant largely

avoiding the legislative spotlight, for as one of his many obituaries mentions, Dole's record has "no signature bill." Instead, he was content to leave fingerprints on decades of budget, tax and foreign policy discussions.

Though I knew some of the broad strokes about most of the events mentioned above prior to his death earlier this month, I never knew just how much support he garnered outside of Kansas. I was a freshman in high school when his political career ended just short of the presidency. I knew him better as a pharmaceutical pitchman than a legislative powerbroker, though it was the latter that eventually made the biggest impression on me.

I met Dole exactly once,

during his "farewell" tour in 2014. He wasn't running for anything, and he didn't have anything to offer other than some conversation and his wit. Yet his presence alone was enough to draw a crowd on a sunny weekday afternoon in May. Some came just to say hello. For some, it was a chance to say goodbye. Still others just wanted to be in the presence of greatness again.

Every one of us was better for the experience, even if we couldn't quantify that at the time.

"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.

U.S. Soy achieves key benchmark certifying sustainable, responsible production for customers across the European Union

Soy Export Sustainability, LLC, and the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) have announced that the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP) has passed stringent independent benchmarking to confirm its compliance with FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021. The FEFAC guidelines are designed to support transparency in soy sourcing for 27 European nations.

FEFAC, the European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation, finalized updated guidelines earlier this year to provide EU buyers with even stronger assurances regarding sources of sustainably produced soy products, including criteria to

confirm "conversion-free" soy, or crops that are produced without the need to convert forestland or natural habitats to farmland. U.S. soy's SSAP program was also recognized as compliant with previous 2015 FEFAC guidelines, and it remains the only nationwide program to achieve such certification.

The FEFAC compliance announcement is the latest in a series of key accomplishments and recognition for sustainable U.S. soy. SSAP was recognized for meeting the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee's sustainable sourcing code for agricultural products, the Global Seafood Alliance's Best Aquaculture Practices,

and the Consumer Goods Forum's Sustainable Soy Sourcing Guidelines.

Additionally, U.S. soy achieved a key milestone earlier this year, passing 100 million metric tons of soy shipped under the SSAP program since its inception in 2013. Currently, about 80% of U.S. soy exports to Europe are verified under SSAP.

"U.S. soy farmers understand the pivotal role they play in addressing key societal challenges: they deliver protein to help feed a growing population and renewable fuel to power it, but they must also produce more while using fewer resources and mitigating the impact of climate change," said Abby Rinne, director of

sustainability at USSEC. "SSAP helps us not only to advance these goals, but to verify them. It is one of the largest sustainability verification programs in the agriculture industry, outlining biodiversity, sustainable production practices, public and labor health and continuous improvement of farming practices."

FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 include a wide range of agricultural, environmental and social criteria to collectively represent the European feed industry's requirements for responsibly produced soy. Benchmarking for FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 is facilitated by the International Trade Centre (ITC), a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization aiming to foster inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade and international business development.

"The experience shows that FEFAC is fully de-

living on its ambition to provide market transparency on the availability of conversion-free soy, with numerous programs taking inspiration from the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 to amend or formulate new requirements in this aspect," said FEFAC president Asbjørn Børsting. "With a view to the announced European Commission proposal for deforestation-free supply chains and the COP26 pledge to end deforestation by 2030, we have demonstrated that the soy supply chain is ready to deliver a mainstream market supply of responsible and conversion-free soy to the European feed sector."

SSAP is a certified aggregate approach, audited by third parties, that verifies sustainable soybean production at a national scale for U.S. origin soybeans. Approximately 20,000 third-party audits are conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). At the same time, SSAP in-

cludes pledges to continually drive innovation and agricultural best practices to enhance sustainability over time. Since 1980, U.S. soy farmers have improved:

Land use efficiency by 40%

Water use efficiency by 32%

Energy use efficiency by 35%

Greenhouse gas emissions efficiency by 38%

Soil conservation by acre by 47%

By 2025, U.S. Soy has established goals for further improvements, including:

Reduce land use impact by 10% (acres per bushel)

Reduce soil erosion by 25% (tons per bushel)

Increase energy use efficiency by 10% (BTUs per bushel)

Reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 10% (pounds CO₂-equivalent gasses emitted per year)

U.S. soy farmers are realizing these gains by employing a range of sustainability best practices, including cover crops, crop rotation and conservation tillage, to maximize yields while also capturing carbon from the atmosphere and conserving soil, water and other precious natural resources. Advances in technology, such as precision farming equipment and drones, also support more sustainable farming.

These efforts advance United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. U.S. Soy initiatives support SDG Goal 2: Zero Hunger, and intersect with other goals such as Clean Water and Sanitation, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life on Land, and Partnership.



It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas. Well, I guess so, I have to admit that I have had trouble getting into the Christmas mood. It may be the weird warm temperatures we have been having. I am not complaining because I have gotten a lot done but it really does not feel much like the Christmas season. It could also be because I have been incredibly busy, and I have not had time to just sit and decompress. The latter is on me; I am the one who controls my schedule and I have not done a good job with that.

Normally Jennifer and I take a day and knock out most of our Christmas shopping. While I am not a huge fan of shopping in general, this is one time I make an exception. We usually plan our day out and have a list of most everything we need to get. The day is relaxed and one of my favorites each year. This year we tried to figure out when we could go, and I just could not make it work. Next year you can bet I will try to do a better job because that is surely a reason for my lack of Christmas spirit.

Honestly, I think the whole past two Christmas seasons are another contributing factor. We had our routines and traditions so altered by the pandemic and all of the measures that went with that. I know, personally, I got out of the habit and now it is hard to get back into it. Again, that is a shame on me, I am the one who controls what I do. It has been so nice to get back to having the Christmas parties and gatherings and to catch up with old friends that I have not seen in a couple of years. That is helping to snap me out of my funk.

I am also sure that the Christmas spirit will start to catch up with me this week as the kids come home. I have listened to Christmas music and watched the usual Christmas shows and movies, but it is not the same without the kids. I am looking forward to having them home for the holidays and not just because I have a lengthy list of things I want to get done while I have help. Having them home will help make it seem more like the holidays.

As I think about it, the biggest contributing factor is that I missed the first two Sundays of Advent. The lighting of the candles and singing of Christmas carols really help kick the Christmas and Advent season off. We were in church

last Sunday and the lighting of the candles, the sermon centered around the coming of baby Jesus and the Christmas carols started me to think about the Christmas season and what is really important.

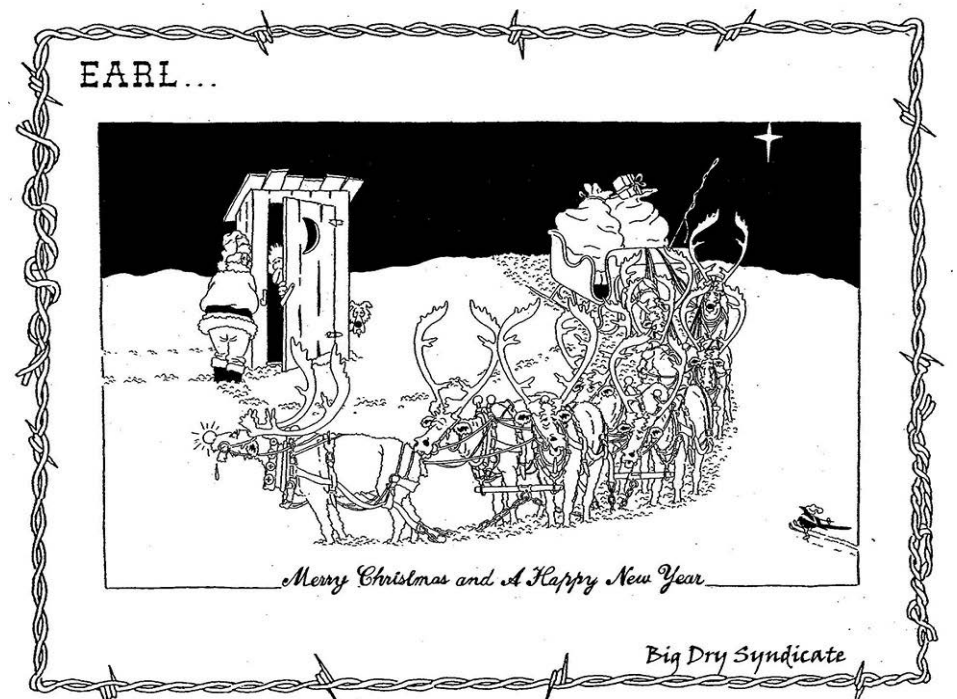
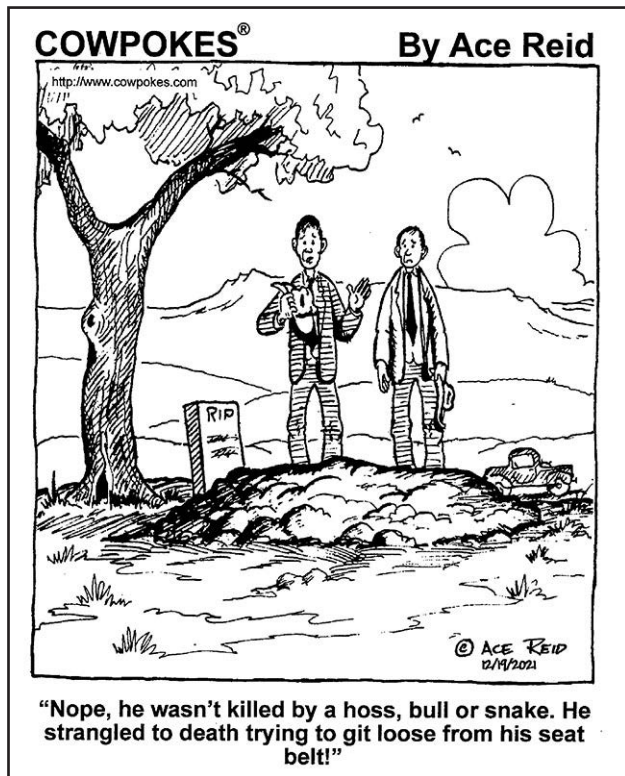
It's funny, the Christmas season has changed for me as I get older. I really do not care about presents; they are nice, and I appreciate the thought, but they do not drive the season for me. What I really anticipate and crave is the celebration of Jesus's birth and the Advent season. The old familiar songs and traditions are what put me in the Christmas spirit. The pinnacle of the season is singing Silent Night on Christmas Eve.

Gathering with friends and family also has increased importance for me. I think back to when I was a kid and our family gatherings, and I wish I could go back just once more. At the time I did not appreciate the time we spent with family like I do now. I can still think back to the holidays with my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, I enjoyed it back then, but I really wish I had enjoyed that time more.

I know I will get in the spirit more in the next few days. The weather is supposed to be more seasonal; the kids will be home and I hope I will take more time to reflect on the season. I have a long drive tomorrow and I fully intend to listen to Christmas music the whole time; it will also give me time to think about the week coming up.

I am sad that I have missed most of the first couple weeks of the Christmas season but there is nothing I can do to bring it back. All I can do is focus on the week coming and try to squeeze all I can into it and savor every moment. My Christmas wish for each of you is that you will have good health to spend with your family and friends. I also hope that the hustle and bustle will not take all of your time and you will be able to spend time soaking in the season.

Please remember why we celebrate Christmas and to remember the greatest gift of all. That is what the season is all about. After you do that take time to enjoy all that is around you and the people in your life. Count your blessings because there are many. Most of all I wish everyone a Merry Christmas.



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Members approve policy during KLA convention

Policy focused on interstate sales of state-inspected meat, packing capacity, property rights as they relate to wind energy, proposed Packers and Stockyards Act regulations, the lesser prairie chicken and other key issues was approved by KLA members during the group's annual business meeting December 3 in Wichita. Member input on policy issues started during roundtable discussions this fall, proceeded through committee and council meetings and concluded with approval by the general membership at the KLA Convention.

Due to increased demand from U.S. consumers to purchase meat directly from the producer and the fact that current laws prohibit meat from entering interstate commerce unless processed at a USDA-inspected facility, KLA members ap-

proved a new resolution supporting legislation to allow interstate sales of state-inspected meat. The policy does stipulate the meat must be part of a state meat and poultry inspection (MPI) program that operates under a cooperative agreement with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service to meet or exceed the "at least equal to" inspection standards under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Kansas has adopted a robust and annually audited MPI program. The new resolution also supports USDA maintaining recall authority over meat processed at state-inspected facilities.

Members approved a new resolution regarding growth in the meat processing sector. Policy supports initiatives that contribute to new construction or expansion of meatpacking facilities to achieve and maintain nec-

essary packing capacity levels.

Existing policy focused on the lesser prairie chicken (LPC) was amended by the membership. While KLA continues to support voluntary, incentive-based conservation efforts as a means to preserve and enhance the population of the birds in Kansas, KLA members took the step of disapproving of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' management of the LPC Range-Wide Conservation Plan and called on the agency to resign as the plan's administrator. Members also formalized their support for grazing lands being included in the incidental take protection that has been granted to cultivated agricultural practices in the proposed 4(d) rule that was published this summer by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. KLA members con-

tinue to oppose listing the LPC as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

Members voted in favor of an amendment to policy addressing proposed Packers and Stockyards Act regulations. The policy opposes any regulation that would remove the requirement that a party prove competitive harm to the marketplace.

In addition, members approved amendments to the property rights and wind energy resolution. The revisions support legislation to protect the property rights of landowners adjoining, but not participating in, wind farm developments and the requirement that wind developments have financially sufficient decommissioning plans that protect the property owner at the end of the life of the infrastructure. Members

also support legislation to require wind power facilities to immediately pay local property taxes. Current law exempts such facilities from paying property taxes for the first ten years.

Policy focused on immigration was reaffirmed by the membership. It supports federal immigration policy that allows for an efficient and adequate guest worker program and provides opportunities for current employees found to be unauthorized to complete the immigration pro-

cess legally.

KLA members retained policy supporting their ability to conduct their operations as they see fit. Members oppose attempts by the government to narrow the business options or limit the individual freedom of livestock producers to innovate in the management and marketing of what they produce.

Other issues addressed in KLA policy range from trade to animal health to noxious weeds. In total, 66 resolutions were approved for 2022.

North American Meat Institute: White House Economic Council not very economic

The North American Meat Institute (Meat Institute) dismissed another desperate attempt by the White House Economic Council to shift blame for record food inflation to the meat and poultry industry.

"The White House Economic Council is again demonstrating its ignorance of agricultural economics and the fundamentals of supply and demand," said Meat Institute president and CEO Julie Anna Potts. "This argument is simply a rinse and repeat of their September attempts to blame meat and poultry companies for inflation that is not limited to food, but is being felt across the economy."

"Beef, pork and poultry all have their own supply and demand market fundamentals. The calculations used by the Economic Counsel awkwardly and misleadingly combine these sectors and the Council's analysis conveniently excludes data on rising input costs, rising fuel costs, supply chain difficulties and labor

shortages that impact the price of meat on the retail shelf. Plus, recent economic data indicates packer (wholesale) margins have fallen by 30-60 percent depending on the species as the industry works through the historic supply chain disruptions of the last 18 months.

"This cherry picking of data is obvious to all. It is no coincidence this blog post appears on the same

day as the Consumer Price Index is released showing gas and energy prices are up nearly 60 percent over the past 12 months which is nearly ten times the rate of inflation for food.

"The Economic Council continues to insist market structure is the reason for higher consumer prices of meat and poultry. In beef production for example, the same four firm concentration ratio has been

operating in the market for nearly 30 years. Why the sudden inflation?"

"The answer is consumer demand for meat and poultry products has never been higher. Members of the Meat Institute are producing more meat than ever before under extraordinary circumstances to keep our farm economy moving and to put food on American's tables."

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- Spring Full of Bullz - Wed., Jan. 5th, before Noon
- Crop Prod. & Prot. - Wed., Feb. 9th, before Noon
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2021 Grass & Grain Holiday Recipe Contest

Final Holiday Contest Winner Is Linda Whiteman, Mayetta

Linda Whiteman, Mayetta:
BLACK RASPBERRY DESSERT
 2 dozen large marshmallows
 1 large container Cool Whip
 1 can black raspberries, boysenberries or blackberries
 Graham crackers (for crust & topping)
 6 tablespoons oleo, melted
 2 tablespoons sugar
 Pour juice from berries into a saucepan along with marshmallows; heat until melted. Cool. Mix marshmallow mixture with Cool Whip then fold in berries. Line a 9-by-13-inch pan with graham cracker crumbs that have been mixed with butter and sugar. Reserve 3/4 cup crumbs (press remaining crumbs into pan). Top with berry mixture. Sprinkle remaining crumbs on top. Refrigerate for several hours. Cut like a cake when cold.

Millie Conger, Tecumseh:
SLOW COOKER SNOW WHITE CHOCOLATE COCOA
 2 cups heavy whipping cream
 6 cups milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 12-ounce package white chocolate
 Crushed peppermint candy
 Stir all together except peppermints. In a crock-pot cook for 2 to 2 1/2 hours on low. Stir occasionally until all chips melt. If not serving for a while stir to keep chips melted. Pour into mugs and garnish with crushed peppermints.

Lucille Wohler, Clay Center:
DUMP CAKE
 21-ounce can crushed pineapple & juice
 1/4 cup brown sugar
 1 can cherry pie filling
 1 box yellow cake mix (dry)
 1 1/4 sticks butter, sliced
 1 cup chopped pecans, optional
 Layer ingredients in order into a 9-by-13-inch ungreased pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Donna Wiley, Lawrence:
TWO INGREDIENT EASY FUDGE
 16 ounces (2 cups) chunky peanut butter
 1 container chocolate cake frosting

Soften each ingredient in container in microwave (enough to mix together). Spread into a 9-by-9-inch pan lined with foil for easy removal. Let set until firm. Cut into about 1-inch squares. Enjoy!

Linda Kepka, Dorrance:
BLUEBERRY BARS
Crust:
 1 1/2 cups flour
 1/2 cup sugar
 Pinch of salt
 3/4 cup butter (cut into cubes)
Topping:
 2 eggs
 3/4 cup sugar
 1/2 cup sour cream
 1/3 cup flour
 1/8 teaspoon salt
 3 cups blueberries

Mix the crust ingredients in a bowl until crumbly. Save 3/4 cup and set aside. Press the remaining crumbly mixture into a 9-by-12-inch pan and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Whisk eggs in a bowl. Add sugar, sour cream, flour and salt; mix together. Gently fold in blueberries. Pour filling onto baked crust. Sprinkle remaining 3/4 cup of reserved crust mixture over filling. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-55 minutes.

Kathy Harder, Council Grove: "This has turned into a family favorite for young and old. You will need to make extra batches once your family and friends try it. The first question is always, 'What is this?'"
ANGEL FOOD CANDY
 1 cup sugar
 1 cup dark corn syrup
 1 tablespoon vinegar
 1 tablespoon soda
 Almond bark, melted

In a heavy saucepan (I use my pressure pot) combine sugar, syrup and vinegar. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until sugar dissolves. Cook without stirring until temperature reaches 300 degrees on candy thermometer. While syrup is cooking, butter two non-stick cookie sheets. Remove syrup from heat and stir in soda. Pour quickly, WHILE STILL FROTHY, onto the buttered cookie sheets. Pour as thin as possible, but do not spread after it is poured. When cool,

break into bite-sized pieces. Dip into melted almond bark. Place on waxed paper to cool.

Susan Schrick, Hiawatha:
COOL WHIP COOKIES
 1 box cake mix (any flavor ... chocolate, red velvet, lemon, etc.)
 8-ounce tub Cool Whip
 1 egg
 Powdered sugar
 Mix all ingredients together (except powdered sugar) in a bowl and drop by teaspoonfuls into powdered sugar. Place on cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool before removing from cookie sheet.

Janice Goehring, Westmoreland:
CHERRY MASHES
 1 can cherry frosting
 1/2 can Eagle Brand milk (sweetened)
 2 cups powdered sugar
 1 pound chocolate almond bark
 1 cup finely ground peanuts
 Mix the cherry frosting, sweetened milk and powdered sugar and make into balls. Place on cookie sheet and cover with waxed paper. Place in freezer. When frozen, dip in melted chocolate almond bark with finely ground peanuts mixed in.

Rose Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma:
CRANBERRY COOKIES
 1 cup butter
 3/4 cup sugar
 1 teaspoon almond extract
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 2 cups flour
 1 cup dried cranberries, finely chopped
 6 ounces white chocolate
 With mixer, mix butter 30 seconds. Add sugar, almond extract and salt; continue beating until combined. Slowly add flour, 1/2 cup at a time. Mix until dough is crumbly. Add the cranberries then increase mixer speed until dough comes together. Roll into ball. Place dough onto parchment paper and make 2 logs, about 1 1/2-inch thick and 6-7 inches long. Tightly wrap and chill 2 hours. Set oven to 375 degrees. Cut dough 1/4-inch thick slices. Place 1 inch apart on parchment

paper-lined cookie sheet. Bake 9-11 minutes until edges start to brown. Cool 5 minutes. Remove to wire rack. Melt chocolate and dip edge of cookie in it.

Claire Martin, Salina:
HOLIDAY CHILI
 1 pound bulk pork sausage
 1 pound ground beef
 2 cans chili beans
 16 ounces salsa
 2 cans pinto beans
 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
 1 can cream of mushroom soup
 8 ounces tomato sauce
 8 ounces Velveeta cheese, cubed
 1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne (optional)
 Brown pork sausage & ground beef & drain. Stir in remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat & simmer for 30 minutes or until heated through. Serves 14.

Kellee George, Shawnee:
BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE
 1 egg
 2/3 cup brown sugar
 1/3 cup light corn syrup
 1/4 cup water
 1/4 cup butter
 Combine brown sugar, syrup, water and butter. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until butter melts and sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat. Pour hot mixture into egg in steady stream. Whisk constantly. Return to saucepan. Cook over low heat stirring constantly until mixture has thickened. Do not boil. Good over ice cream, cake, etc.

Jackie Doud, Topeka:
SPICY PRETZELS
 16-ounce bag stick pretzels
 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 2 teaspoons lemon pepper
 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
 1 package Hidden Valley Ranch dry mix
 3/4 cup oil
 Put pretzels in a gallon zip-lock bag. Pour everything over pretzels in bag. Let set overnight and bake next morning or fix in morning and bake at night. Turn the bag over a few times for ingredients to mix. Spread on large baking sheet. Bake at 200 degrees for 40 minutes. Let cool and store in closed bags.

Ireta Schwant, Blaine:
HOLIDAY DATE RING
 1 stick butter
 1 cup sugar
 1 1/2 cups chopped dates
 2 well-beaten eggs
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup flour
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
 3 1/2 cups Rice Krispies
 Nuts, if desired
 Melt the butter in a heavy pan. Add the sugar and dates. Add eggs and salt. Add flour slowly as you heat the mixture. Cook for 7 to 10 minutes, stirring then add vanilla. Cool slightly and then add Rice Krispies and nuts if desired. Place in

ring mold (which has been sprayed). Chill and turn out onto a serving plate.

Kimberly Edwards, Stillwater, Oklahoma:
CHERRY DELIGHT
 1 angel food cake, prepared
 3.4-ounce package instant cheesecake pudding mix
 1 1/2 cups milk
 1 cup sour cream
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 can cherry pie filling
 8 ounces Cool Whip
 Cut angel food cake into cubes. In a bowl combine pudding mix, vanilla and milk. Add sour cream. In a 9-by-13-inch pan put half of the angel food cake cubes. Top with half of pudding mixture then half of cherry pie filling, dropping with little spoonfuls. Repeat layers then top with Cool Whip. Spoon spoonfuls of pie filling over top. Refrigerate at least 4 hours.

Marcile Shippy, Woodbine:
MARBLE SQUARES
 1 stick butter
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 6 tablespoons brown sugar
 6 tablespoons granulated sugar
 1 egg
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 cup + 2 tablespoons flour
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips (use semisweet chips, not chocolate "flavor" chips)
 Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Beat butter, vanilla, brown sugar and granulated sugar with mixer until creamy. Add egg and beat well then add baking soda, salt and flour. Mix well then with a spatula stir in walnuts. Spray a 9-by-13-inch pan with cooking spray. Spread dough in pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top of dough. Bake for about 2 minutes, remove pan from oven and run a knife through dough to marbleize dough and chips. Bake 12-14 minutes longer.

Mary Hedberg, Clifton:
BUTTER PECAN CAKE
 1/2 cup mashed bananas
 1 package yellow cake mix
 4 eggs
 1 cup water
 1/2 cup chopped pecans
 1/4 cup oil
 1 package instant butter pecan pudding mix
Topping:
 Your favorite powdered sugar glaze
 Banana slices
 Pecans, chopped
 Combine all cake ingredients in a large bowl. Blend well then beat on medium speed for 4 minutes. Pour into greased and floured 10-inch tube pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes or until cake begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. Cool in pan for 15 minutes then remove and cool on racks. Top with powdered sugar glaze and banana slices and pecans.

More Recipes on Next Page

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"Our Daily Bread" Holiday Bonus Drawing Winners

All G&G Area Cooks who sent recipes for the holiday contests were entered in a special drawing. The four cooks whose names were drawn will each receive \$40. They are:

Marcile Shippy Woodbine, KS	Gin Fox Holton, KS
Janice Goehring Westmoreland, KS	Claire Martin Salina, KS

A big THANK YOU to all who shared their favorite recipes with G&G Cooks during this holiday season!

G&G Annual Holiday Recipe Contest

Nov. 23 through Dec. 21

In observance of the holiday season, Grass & Grain will award the weekly winners \$40 in addition to the gift. **CONTEST IS NOW CLOSED!**

BONUS DRAWING
 Second chance to win! The names of all contestants will be entered in a drawing from which four names will be chosen. Each of these four contestants will receive \$40. **WINNERS announced in THIS ISSUE!**

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Katrina Morgan, Americus: PUMPKIN CRUNCH

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 15-ounce can solid packed pumpkin
- 12-oz. can evaporated milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup margarine

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan. Combine pumpkin, evaporated milk, eggs, sugar, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix evenly over pumpkin mixture. Top with pecans. Drizzle melted margarine over top. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes or until golden brown. Cool and serve chilled. Serve with whipped topping if desired.

Millie Conger, Tecumseh: BUTTERNUTS

- 3/4 cup + 1 tablespoon butter
 - 1/2 cup powdered sugar
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1 3/4 cups flour
 - 6-ounce package butter-scotch chips
 - 1 cup finely chopped pecans
 - Rum Glaze:
3 cups powdered sugar
3-4 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon rum extract
 - Topping:
1/2 cup pecans, chopped
- Cream butter, powdered sugar and salt until light and fluffy. Blend in flour and mix well. Add butterscotch chips and 1 cup finely chopped pecans; mix well. Shape dough into scant teaspoonfuls at a time into balls. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until firm and light brown. Let cool on rack. Mix glaze ingredients and drizzle over top of cookies then sprinkle with pecans.

Linda Whiteman, Mayetta, share the remain three: ANGEL SWEETS

- 6-ounce package chocolate chips
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut
- 2 tablespoons butter or oleo
- 1 cup sifted powdered sugar
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- Melt chocolate chips and butter. Remove from heat and blend in egg. Stir in sugar, nuts and marshmallows. Blend well. Shape into balls and roll in coconut. Refrigerate. Makes 3 1/2 dozen.

MOM'S WHITE MOUNTAIN FUDGE

- 1 can evaporated milk
 - 3 cups sugar
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 1/4 cup white corn syrup
 - 1/4 cup chopped pecans
 - 1/4 cup chopped black walnuts
 - 2 tablespoons oleo
- Place milk, corn syrup, sugar and salt in a deep saucepan. Cook mixture to soft ball stage. Stir constantly. Add oleo and vanilla. Set pan in a large bowl of ice water and stir until mixture starts to thicken. Add nuts and beat until mixture thickens. Pour into buttered 9-by-13-inch pan. Cool and then cut into small squares.

SHIRLEY'S PEANUT CANDY

- 1 jar dry-roasted peanuts
 - 1 can Eagle Brand milk
 - 2 cups mini marshmallows
 - 12-ounce package peanut butter chips
 - 1 stick oleo
- Line a buttered 9-by-13-inch pan with half of the peanuts. Melt oleo then add milk, peanut butter chips and marshmallows over low heat until blended. Pour over peanuts. Sprinkle with the remaining peanuts. Cool and cut into small squares.



Baking With Sugarbuns

By Michele Carlyon
Another Goodbye

The evening of December 13, I was sitting with Mike and his girls when the phone rang; the phone call we all knew was coming, but the phone call I was nowhere near ready to get; it was that call. The call that my dad's mom, my grandma had passed away.

Approximately fifteen months after her husband and entirely too close to my mom's mom, my final remaining grandparent was gone. I managed to hold it together while at Mike's house, but the tears began to flow the moment I walked out his front door. Growing up everyone knew that Nanny or my mom's mom was who I was closest too, but as I got older, I developed quite the bond with Little Grandma (dad's mom).

I have so many great memories of her. Memories of telling her on my parents because they were feeding us "bones," which were actually pork chops. Or telling her that our television must be broken because my parents wouldn't let us watch it and her offering to help them to get a new one. I was pretty sure my mom was going to kill me for that one; the television was fully functioning, they just did not want us watching it.

Memories of so many holidays at her house. Christmas in her living room and a kitchen full of people as we would all gather to eat. Her coveted decorated sugar cookies that no one will ever make quite as good as her. Giving her my beloved buff tabby cat because Andy and I got into a physical altercation and mom was not about to stand for that. Our shared loved of cats and countless conversations about how awful Bubbles, her Jack Russell terrier is, but how she just loved her to pieces anyways.

So many talks about stories from her past. Stories about my dad, my aunt, my grandpa, us kids and everyone in between. Things I probably was never supposed to know, she would tell me anyways. The memory of when I desperately needed and wanted the opportunity to say goodbye

to grandpa, she made that happen.

She was my favorite Tuesday night date. I would turn down any and all other offers to maintain our Tuesdays. We saw, or maybe I should say, I saw so many movies with her. She tended to doze off somewhere in the middle, but was always eager for the following Tuesday. When Covid shut down our movie dates I think we were both equally disappointed.

I loved our Sunday night family dinners where Mike and Marissa tried to convince her that she was not allowed to feed their dog people food and she would do it anyways. She was a woman of few words, but she was filled with so much love. She hated having pictures taken of her, but had no issue covering her fridge and walls with pictures of those she loved. She was a family woman and an amazing grandma.

Not only am I hit with the harsh reality that all of my grandparents are no longer physically here but I am also realizing that I will never have any of them at my wedding or will never be able to introduce them to a baby when that time comes. The realization that although the pain will eventually subside, at each big milestone that is hopefully still to come, a part of me will have to face the loss of each grandparent again at each big moment where their physical presence will be so very missed.

Grandma, I will love and miss you forever and always but I will try to find comfort in knowing that I have yet another set of eyes looking out for me. Give everyone a big hug for me.

Michele grew up in Junction City and graduated from Kansas State University. She worked in the restaurant management field for six years before deciding to switch careers and now works as an office manager for a company that manufactures oilfield products. Her passion for blogging and food can be followed on Instagram: boobbrainsandbaking.

If you would like to contact Michele with comments please email mcarlyon88@gmail.com



Home and Away

Give A Little To Those Who Need A Lot

By Lou Ann Thomas

If ever we needed to celebrate the season of light, love and giving, this is it! If anyone can look, hear or read about the devastation from the tornadoes that ripped through Kentucky and neighboring states without feeling as though their heart is weeping, then I believe you should be checked out immediately for a professional determination as to whether or not you actually have a heart.

Seeing complete towns that are no more and all of the people standing in front of heaps of debris that hours before were comfortable homes filled with laughter and life makes my newly fixed heart bleed love. If ever there was a time to sink into love and giving, this is it.

Having been through a flood in 2005, I know how it feels to stand in front of what was once your home, only to realize it has been reduced to rubble. I know some of what is going through the hearts and minds of those who stand understandably dazed in front of what was once their life, now permanently altered, and are asked by reporters, "So what will you do now?" Their

response of "I have no idea," is the truth. In this moment the future is only a big blank that numbs you when it's not scaring the beejesus out of you.

But, once again, the worst things that happen to humanity can also bring out the best in us. Help is showing up. This is what we do. We respond. We help. We donate. We show up and we love.

If you feel drawn to help those affected by these devastating storms, here are some valid ways you can donate:

Brother's Brother Foundation is a Pittsburgh-based non-profit providing disaster relief. It is collecting do-

nations for food banks in Arkansas and Kentucky, and is also sending volunteer crews to the affected areas. (Brothers-brother.org)

Feeding America in Kentucky is raising funds to provide ready-to-eat food bags for those affected. Ready to eat food is so necessary since power is iffy at best and who still has kitchen appliances? (Feedingamericakyo.org)

And if the thought of all the children having an extra sad holiday season because their Christmas presents were destroyed, Toys 4 Tots in Kentucky is organizing a special donor effort to get as many gifts as possible collected and distributed for those kids. (Toysfortots.org)

In a few days when we gather around our tables laden with goodies in our warm and secure homes, may we not forget that there are many who have lost not just their homes - and tables - but everything else. And may we also take the time to tell those we love that we appreciate and value them.

Not only is this the season of love and light, but we never know when the winds of catastrophic change may blow our way.

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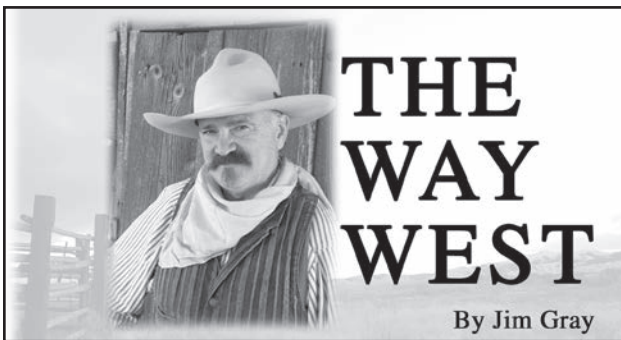
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The Long Search

The movie *The Searchers* is my all-time favorite film. Based on a novel that, in turn, is loosely based on the true story of the capture of nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker by Comanches in 1836. In the raid Cynthia's mother was stabbed, shot with several arrows, scalped, and left for dead. Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) spent five years searching for Debbie (Natalie Wood). All of Texas looked for her, but she seemed to have been swallowed up and lost forever. In the dramatic conclusion Debbie is found and happily returned to her family.

Happy reunions are written into movie scripts. In life, happy reunions were not always possible, or even expected. In Cynthia Parker's case the little girl grew into a woman while among the Comanches for twenty-four years. By the time she was "rescued" there was a husband and children of her own.

In 1872 a story hit the newspapers of another true-to-life five-year search that led from Texas to Kansas. In the Legion Valley of present-day Llano County, Texas, about twenty-five miles north of Fredericksburg, a large group of neighbors had gathered at the cabin of John S. and Matilda Friend. The men had gone to Fredericksburg while the women and children held "something akin to a slumber party or a girls' night out."

In the early evening hours of February 5, 1868, the Comanches struck "hard, quick, and unmercifully." The Comanches killed the young women and their children, taking eight-year-old Lee Temple Friend and Malinda Ann Caudle, seven-year-old

step-sister of one of the neighbors.

Matilda Friend, who was expecting a baby within the month, did not die even though she had been shot with three arrows and partially scalped. She crawled one and a half miles to a neighboring cabin where she hovered near death for days before she slowly began to recover. Miraculously her baby was saved. Jennie Isabelle Friend was born February 29, 1868. Matilda's fragile condition kept John Friend from personally continuing the search for his son. John turned to the newspapers, publishing descriptions of his son and the Caudle girl.

"Lee Temple Friend Eight years, black eyes, light hair and fair complexion A neighbor's daughter,

Malinda (Minnie) Caudle seven years old, blue eyes, fair complexion and light hair." *Daily Austin Republican* June 2, 1868.

Indian agent Major Edward W. Wynkoop found Malinda Caudle in a Comanche camp near Fort Larned, Kansas. He forced the Comanches to give her up without ransom on July 27, 1868. Wynkoop and his wife kept Malinda in the quarters at the post. A doll given to her by Mrs. Wynkoop became her constant companion. From Fort Larned Malinda was taken to Fort Harker, Fort Leavenworth, and south to Fort Cobb before her return to family in Legion Valley.

Lee Temple Friend was yet to be found when John packed a wagon and moved his family to Kansas following nine hundred head of steers up the Chisholm Trail. John's father, a Methodist minister, Reverend Leonard S. Friend dealt extensively in Texas cattle. By September of 1868 John and Matilda had settled on a farm east of El Dorado, Kansas.

Rev. Friend had taken up the search in place of his son. His persistence led Texas Governor E. M. Pease to appoint the reverend to the position of recovery agent seeking the

release of captives taken within the state. Twenty-five hundred dollars was appropriated for use in finding captives and obtaining their release. By that time John Friend joined his father sparing no effort to find his lost son. Every dollar that could be raised was spent in the search. The Reverend tirelessly traveled to the Kiowa-Comanche agency in Indian Territory and the Apache reservations in New Mexico and Arizona, chocking up over fifteen thousand miles. Several times they came close to finding Temple, but the Comanches would separate into small groups and disappear into the seemingly endless plains.

Meantime, Reverend Friend had also moved to Kansas and was elected to the Kansas Legislature. Using his political connections to every advantage, he traveled twice to Washington D. C. By December, 1872, both the grandfather and father had mortgaged everything they owned and exhausted "every available recourse at their

command." In that desperate moment notification was received that a boy fitting the description of Lee Temple Friend had been brought into Fort Sill, Indian Territory, just north of the Red River border with Texas.

The original notice in the *Wellington Banner* no longer exists, but the December 26, 1872, *Wichita Weekly Eagle* carried the piece, apparently published by the *Banner* the week before, "This morning L. S. Friend, of Eldorado, Butler county, passed through here with his grand-child, a boy of thir-

teen years, who has been for five years a captive with the Comanche Indians."

There is no record of the reunion with his parents, but surely that Christmas must have been filled with cheerful celebration and humble thanksgiving after their long search on The Way West.

"The Cowboy," Jim Gray is author of the book *Desperate Seed: Ellsworth Kansas on the Violent Frontier*, Ellsworth, KS. Contact *Kansas Cowboy*, 220 21st RD Geneseo, KS Phone 785-531-2058 or kansascowboy@kans.com.

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When I was nine years old, our house burned down. We were at church, then at the zoo, then visiting friends. We did not see the flames devour our brand-new winter coats that Mama just got out of layaway or our baby dolls. We did not see the great column of black smoke or the neighbors' cars in the driveway after the word had spread. We did not see Cousin Nellie open a bedroom door to save things only to be met with flames and smoke. We did not see the men, coughing and hacking, dragging a chest freezer into the yard or the kitchen table and chairs being flung outside before clear heads said it was too dangerous to do more.

We did not see these things but they are seared into our memories as sure as the image that met us when we topped the last hilltop where our home came into view: a cinderblock chimney standing in the midst of a smoking hole. The stove, refrigerator, furnace, bedsprings – all charred and distorted but identifiable in piles of ash and rubble.

We left our home that morning and when we returned we had none.

But Granny's home was

as it had always been – a refuge. We lived there through the summer, the fall, the winter, and most of the spring while Daddy worked two jobs and rebuilt. There was family, there was church family, there was our community – we were never alone.

Like so many of you, my heart has been broken by the devastation left by the Quad-State tornadoes. I know that area of Kentucky very well. Life will never be the same.

My own experience is but a taste of the bitter pill. When your family and neighbors are in the same devastated circumstance, where do you turn?

We become the family, we become the neighbors, the community. Whether we can go in person or can donate in some small way, our duty is to care and comfort.

In this holiday season where bounty and plenty surround us, the contrast becomes more stark, more painful. For those who have lost loved ones, the pain is immeasurable.

This time of year comforts me. The lights, the music, the meteor showers, the crisp night sky. In the quiet of Christmas, there is a profound and sacred

mystery.

One of my favorite songs is *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. Based on the poem written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863, the lyrics rail at the message of hope in a time of darkness and despair. Longfellow was writing as America was in the deepest moments of its great civil war, having lost his wife in an horrific accident, his son having joined the army against his wishes and having been wounded in action, with reports of nothing but loss and grief all about him. Yet, the song does not end there. Somehow, in the midst of his own anguish, Longfellow found hope: "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep." Amen!

No matter what the circumstance, God is not dead nor doth he sleep.

Have a blessed Christmas. Be a blessing. You certainly are to me.

Deb Goodrich is the co-host (with Michelle Martin) of the Around Kansas TV show and the Garvey Texas Historian in Residence at the Fort Wallace Museum. She chairs the Santa Fe Trail 200. Contact her at author.debgoodrich@gmail.com.

Windbreaks in decline; state forester says program will help Kansas farmers, ranchers

A state forest official said an initiative to support windbreaks and other green infrastructure on Kansas farms is much-needed in light of recent data indicating that more than half of windbreaks in the state are in fair to poor condition.

Bob Atchison, coordinator of the Kansas Forest Service's rural forestry program, said the Great Plains Initiative 2 is a continuation of an inventory of windbreaks in Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas that first began in 2008 and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

The most recent inventory of windbreaks in the Great Plains – completed in 2019 – indicates windbreaks throughout the

Soil Health Academy receives Wells Fargo grant to provide on-farm school scholarships, develop economic case studies

The non-profit Soil Health Academy (SHA) recently announced it has received a \$200,000 grant from financial services company Wells Fargo to further advance the adoption of soil health-focused regenerative agricultural principles and practices throughout the nation.

The grant will fund 100 scholarships for women, veteran, new and beginning, and historically under-represented farmers and ranchers to attend SHA's upcoming, on-farm regenerative agriculture schools.

Featuring instruction from a cadre of world-renowned regenerative farming and ranching experts, these three-day events feature foundational and practical regenerative agriculture education, including access to the online Regen Ag 101 course and post-school follow up and support, from the instructor cadre.

In addition, a portion of the grant funding will be

used to collect farm financial, production and soil health data that will be used to develop relevant case studies examining the correlation between soil health and farm financial health.

"We're increasingly seeing anecdotal evidence linking soil health, farm resiliency and improved profitability," said SHA president Dawn Breitenkreutz. "Along with providing in-person education, this grant will allow SHA to collect, analyze and share on-farm data via case studies that will further quantify the economic resiliency generated through the application of regenerative agricultural principles and practices. We're excited and grateful to partner with Wells Fargo in this important endeavor."

According to Jennivine Kwan, strategist with Wells Fargo's Institute for Sustainable Finance, the grant to SHA represents an opportunity for Wells Fargo

to help improve the financial health and quality of life of farmers and their communities, empower diverse entrepreneurs and small business, and promote greater adoption of regenerative farming practices that can also bring about significant positive environmental outcomes.

"We are proud to support the Soil Health Academy in their efforts to bring the environmental, social and economic promise of regenerative agriculture practices to women, veteran, new and beginning, and historically under-represented farmers and ranchers across the country," Kwan said. "This exciting initiative aligns well with Wells Fargo's commitment to advance community resiliency and adaptation efforts, empower diverse entrepreneurs and small businesses, and accelerate a just transition to a low-carbon future."

region are deteriorating. The report is available online from the Kansas Forest Service.

"In the 1930s, at the height of the Dust Bowl, the federal government invested \$13.8 million to establish more than 200 million trees and shrubs in windbreaks throughout the Great Plains," Atchison said. "Today, this green infrastructure exceeds 80 years of age and is in a state of age- and climate-related decline."

Atchison said there are more than 118,000 windbreaks in Kansas, comprising 261,000 acres and stretching 31,348 miles – enough to cross the state east to west more than 76 times.

"However, an average windbreak in Kansas only takes up a little more than two acres and is generally around 1,500 feet in length," Atchison said. "So, they don't take up a lot of ground."

"But the great benefit of windbreaks is the extended protection they provide beyond their footprint, which is a distance and area at least ten times their height on the leeward side and two times the height on the windward side. In Kansas, that adds up to almost a million acres for which windbreaks provide protection to livestock, cropland and farmsteads."

The 2019 data from the Great Plains Initiative reported that 45% of Kansas' windbreaks are in good condition, 37% in fair condition and 18% in poor

condition. The report also outlined the types of windbreaks located in Kansas:

61% are farmstead windbreaks planted around homes and outbuildings.

26% are field windbreaks to reduce soil erosion, which aids crop yields.

11% are windbreaks to provide protection for livestock.

"Since 55% of our windbreaks are in fair to poor condition, it suggests that there is a real need to encourage our farmers and ranchers to renovate and manage windbreaks before they lose their ability to provide protection," Atchison said. "Fortunately, we have USDA conservation programs like (the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP) that can help with the cost of renovating and establishing windbreaks."

To illustrate the importance of windbreaks, Atchison pointed to the fact that Kansas has 2.5 million acres of cropland where the soils are particularly susceptible to erosion, many of these in southwest and south-central Kansas. An inventory kept by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service indicates that Kansas croplands experience 70.6 million tons of wind erosion annually – or about 2.68 tons per acre each year.

"Clearly there is still a need for field windbreaks," Atchison said, "and the Great Plains Initiative 2 provides the in-

formation we need to sustain and manage them."

Atchison said farmers and ranchers interested in renovating windbreaks should first contact a district forester, who can provide on-site advice for renovating the windbreaks, and connect producers with EQIP assistance to help get the work done.

There are seven forest districts in Kansas. The contact information for each is available on the website for the Kansas Forest Service, or interested persons can call the state office in Manhattan at 785-532-3300.

House passes two bills on market transparency

Recently the U.S. House voted to pass two pieces of legislation relating to transparency in the cattle markets. The House voted 418-9 to advance H.R. 5290, introduced by House Agriculture Committee chairman David Scott (D-Georgia), which would extend authorization for livestock mandatory reporting (LMR) through September 30, 2022. The authorization for LMR is currently set to expire along with federal funding on February 18, 2022. The House also voted 411-13 to approve the Cattle Contract Library Act of 2021, which was introduced by Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) and Henry Cuellar (D-Texas).



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9:15 A.M. KANSAS SOYBEAN COMMISSION
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U.S. SOYBEAN EXPORT COUNCIL
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10:15 A.M. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Larry Weaver, comedian

11:30 A.M. LUNCHEON

Greg Akagi, WIBW Radio, master of ceremonies

FEATURED SPEAKER

Gov. Laura Kelly

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

AMERICAN SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION REPORT

Charles Atkinson, Great Bend

KSA ANNUAL MEETING

1:30 P.M. KANSAS SOYBEAN YIELD AND VALUE
CONTEST RESULTS

2:00 P.M. SOYBEAN RESEARCH

Ed Anderson, Ph.D., North Central Soybean Research Program

3:00 P.M. MARKET UPDATE

Darrell Holaday, AMC/Country Futures

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CoBank releases 2022 Year Ahead report – forces that will shape the U.S. rural economy

The U.S. economy is poised to slow in 2022 relative to 2021, but economic growth will continue at a pace that is well above average. Consumers have powered the economic recovery since mid-2020 and that will continue in the coming year. Consumer spending is expected to rise another 4% to 5% in 2022 and GDP is expected to grow by roughly 4.5%, according to a comprehensive year-ahead outlook report from CoBank's Knowledge Exchange.

"The COVID-19 omicron variant is shaping up to be the wild card of early 2022 and it could delay the rebalancing of the U.S. economy," said Dan Kowalski, vice president of CoBank's Knowledge Exchange. "If omicron disrupts the services industry, the majority of consumer spending will again revert to goods, compounding supply chain and inflation problems. However, at this early stage, we expect omicron to have only a modest impact on the economy."

The CoBank 2022 outlook report examines several key factors that will shape agriculture and market sectors that serve rural communities throughout the U.S.

Global Economy: Fragile Growth

If the global economy is to perform well in 2022, it will do so despite three significant headwinds: a persistent pandemic, monetary tightening in the U.S. and slowing growth in China. As we enter the third year of the pandemic, the COVID-19 virus is still in control of the world economy, and it will likely remain so through much of the first half of the year. The ongoing threat of virus mutations that could evade vaccines will keep economic uncertainty unusually high. Nevertheless, strong consumer demand throughout much of the developed world will keep the economy humming.

U.S. Economy: Labor and Supply Chains to Improve,

Inflation Might Not

The pandemic has significantly altered how our economy functions, with the greatest impact coming from what we consume. Through October, in 2021 Americans spent 18% more on goods and about 1% less on services than they did in 2019. Compounded by a labor shortage, it is easy to see why supply chains have become one of the biggest economic challenges of the pandemic—demand has significantly exceeded the capacity of our existing system. Fortunately, we have likely experienced the worst of the bottlenecks, which should diminish in the coming year. For most consumers and businesses, a key focus in 2022 will be tackling the effects of inflation. Operating and input costs will remain high for businesses in early 2022, and they will continue to look for ways to pass on those costs to consumers.

Monetary Policy: Tough Fed Decisions Approaching

The coming year will hold perhaps some of the most challenging monetary decisions that the Federal Reserve has faced in over a decade. Chair Powell has acknowledged that inflation could remain elevated well into 2022, and the Fed is now expected to accelerate the tapering of its monthly securities purchases. The Fed will want to extend the economic recovery as long as possible before raising interest rates. But it will also be cognizant that the longer inflation remains elevated the higher the likelihood that it leads to a perpetuating cycle of higher prices and higher wages. Both Chair Powell and President Biden will want to prevent that from happening.

U.S. Government: Spending, Partisan Control Will Dominate 2022

As the nation looks ahead to a new year, the federal policy machinery is very focused on a

few key factors that will impact the ability of the administration to lead and Congress to legislate. COVID-19 has lingered far longer than everyone hoped and continues to cast a long shadow on Capitol Hill. While the House has passed the Build Back Better bill, the Senate has not moved the bill, a key piece of the President's agenda. Both the House and Senate agriculture committees plan oversight hearings in 2022 to begin the farm bill planning for 2023. While that is important and timely work, the widely expected change in partisan control of Congress following the 2022 elections may render much of that work perfunctory. Legislative expectations should be modest for 2022.

U.S. Farm Economy: Increased Costs, Trade Battle with China to Tighten Farm Margins

The U.S. farm economy will continue to struggle with the ongoing supply chain dysfunction and cost inflation issues that emerged in the summer of 2021. Historically strong prices will be more than offset by increases in cost structure for nearly all crop production including row crops, fruits and vegetables, and hay. CoBank economists do not anticipate any significant pullback in farm-level costs until Q3, at the earliest. The expected decline in direct government payments in 2022 will further squeeze farm income statements. The single biggest wild card for U.S. agriculture is export sales to China, currently the largest export market for U.S. farm products.

Specialty Crops – Squeezed by Labor, Drought, Transportation

Rising labor and transportation costs, compounded by ongoing drought and water restrictions in the Western U.S., will dominate the specialty crops sector in 2022. Agricultural labor has not been immune to the "Great Res-

ignation" resulting from the pandemic. U.S. fruit and vegetable acreage will continue to shift toward mechanically harvested crops that require less manual labor. Prices of fruits, nuts and vegetables will be driven higher by smaller harvests caused by ongoing drought conditions in the western U.S. Processors and distributors of fruit and vegetable produce, meanwhile, will be incentivized to expand supply networks outside of the U.S., particularly to countries like Mexico and Chile.

Grain, Farm Supply and Biofuels – Inflation, Volatility Create Mixed Outlook

The grain, farm supply and biofuels sectors enter 2022 facing a mixture of inflationary headwinds, supply chain bottlenecks and high-energy prices that present challenges but also a few opportunities. CoBank economists view the short-term outlook as mixed for grain, challenging for farm supply and positive for biofuels. Biofuels enter 2022 with considerable momentum as the fuel ethanol complex is revving on all cylinders driven by strong consumer demand and higher gasoline and fuel ethanol prices. Beyond ethanol, 2022 should see the continued build-out of soybean crushing and soy oil refining capacity to support the expected growth in renewable diesel.

Animal Protein – Lean Supplies, Strong Demand Bolster Prices Despite Export Unknowns

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics' Consumer Price Index for all meats, poultry, fish, and eggs hit an all-time high in October, up 12% year-over-year. As restaurant and grocery prices adjust, consumer-level meat inflation is likely to continue well into the new year. While higher retail prices could limit consumption growth, tighter cattle supplies, ongoing broiler breeder issues and sow herd reductions should support

favorable processor margins through at least the first half of 2022. Although beef exports have been robust during the second half of 2021, the collective U.S. protein opportunity to China may have already peaked.

Dairy – Producer Margins to Improve, but Logistics Hinder Exports

Milk supplies in the U.S. and around the world will tighten in 2022 as dairy farmers reduce herd sizes in response to cost inflation pressures. The cross current of resilient domestic and global demand for dairy products with the slowing growth in milk supplies will give an upward lift to milk prices in 2022. Combined with softer feed costs following big corn and soybean harvests, producer margins will finally improve. However, high costs for labor, construction, and freight will limit upside margin potential and dampen milk production growth. For dairy processors, tighter availability of milk will mean some processors get squeezed.

Rural Electricity – Managing on the Grid-Edge

As electricity consumers' requirements rapidly change and redefine the relationship between buyers and sellers, all eyes will be on grid-edge tech-

nologies. These consumer-accessible resources have already been disrupting the century-old, one-way flow of power from suppliers. The challenge with grid-edge technologies is they create a two-way flow between suppliers and consumers and disrupt the predictable amount of demand that consumers might require. Electric cooperatives have a proven track record of agility and are possibly better positioned to work with consumers to beneficially manage the proliferation of grid-edge technology.

Rural Communications – As Government Money Flows, Cable Market Competition Heats Up

With bipartisan support to bridge the digital divide, the government funding flood gates are expected to open in 2022. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes \$65 billion in broadband funding, of which \$42.5 billion will be allocated to the states to build networks in unserved and underserved areas. Cable operators have enjoyed robust broadband subscriber growth over the last several years due to consumer trends and limited competition from the telecommunication companies. But competition should start to heat up in 2022.



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“You Inherited the Farm – Now What?” series to be offered as virtual conference beginning Jan. 11

A Knowledge @ Noon series titled, “You Inherited the Farm – Now What?” will be offered as a virtual conference, starting January 11, 2022. Sessions will be presented via Zoom at 12:00 noon on five Tuesdays, from January 11 through February 8. Greg McClure,

Riley County Extension agriculture agent will be the conference host and presenter.

The first session will be an introduction to farm ownership, covering some of the decisions new landowners might face, including whether to keep the land with multiple

owners, sell it, or divide it among multiple heirs.

Series dates and topics are:

- January 11 – Intro to Farm Ownership – Where do you begin now that you are a farm owner?

- January 18 – Lease Law and Common Leasing Practices

- January 25 – Kansas Fence Law – Who is responsible for fence maintenance?

- February 1 – Soil Fertility Basics – Understanding soil fertility, fertilizers, and crop nutrient needs.

- February 8 – “Stump the County Agent” – An-

swers to any questions that arise during the first four sessions... and some from last year's class.

Landowners can sign up for the entire series, or for individual sessions, but registration is required by noon the day before each session. Zoom connection instructions

will be sent to participants via email.

Register online at www.riley.ksu.edu. For more information, contact Greg McClure at the Riley County Extension office by phone at 785-537-6350 or by email to gmcclure@ksu.edu.

Corn yield contest reflects resilience of corn and the farmers who grow it

Corn growers showed the amazing possibilities open to agriculture with the use of modern seed varieties, advanced production techniques and innovative growing practices this year as David Hula topped the 600 bushel-per-acre mark again this year in NCGA's National Corn Yield Contest. Hula, of Charles City, Virginia, repeated his accomplishment and produced the highest yield in the contest with 602,1694 bushels per acre. These great yields, which have been achieved nationwide despite many challenges, reflect farmers' resilience and deep dedication to continuous improvement.

The National Corn Yield Contest is now in its 57th year and remains NCGA's most popular program for members.

“This contest offers farmers a chance to come together both for good-natured competition and to help

innovate the future of our industry,” said Lowell Neitzel, chair of NCGA's Member and Consumer Engagement Action Team. “These contestants grow to be leaders in many other ways as well. For many, the contest may be their first interaction with NCGA. As they learn more, the true value of the work that we do to build a better tomorrow inspires greater achievement. Whether getting involved in advocacy, leadership or sustainability efforts, the contest breeds champions for corn farmers in many arenas.”

The 27 national winners in nine production categories had verified yields averaging more than 376,7593 bushels per acre, compared to the projected national average of 177 bushels per acre nationwide. While there is no overall contest winner, yields from first, second and third place farmers overall production categories aver-

aged 285,5971 bushels per acre.

For more than half a century, NCGA's National Corn Yield Contest has provided corn growers with the opportunity to compete with their colleagues to grow the most corn per acre, helping feed and fuel the world. This has given participants not only the recognition they deserved but the opportunity to learn from their peers.

Winners receive national recognition in publications such as the NCYC Corn Yield Guide, as well as trips or other awards from participating sponsoring seed, chemical and crop protection companies. Winners will be honored in March of 2022 during Commodity Classic in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Please visit the National Corn Growers Association NCYC for the complete list of 2021 national and state winners, including the list of all 2021 NCYC entrants.

High price of fertilizer calls for close look at nutrient needs

By David G. Hallauer, Meadowlark District Extension Agent, crops and soils/horticulture

With fertilizer dollars at a premium in 2022 corn budgets, now is a great time to take a second look at where those dollars are going – and why. Since ni-

trogen is synonymous with corn yield, it's a great nutrient to start with.

There are a number of different ways to determine the optimum N rate. K-State Soil Testing Lab recommendations are based on yield response curves gleaned from in-

field nitrogen evaluations. They are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary based on changes in nitrogen use efficiency and other research findings.

The foundation is a yield goal times a factor of 1.6. For example, that

means a 150 bushel per acre yield goal would require a base nitrogen rate of 240 pounds per acre – much higher than the nine-tenths to one and a quarter pounds per bushel we usually estimate. The reason is likely found in the other ‘adjustments’ that factor into most recommendations.

We account for organic matter based on the expectation of mineralization during the growing season accounting for 20 pound

of available N per acre for each one percent soil organic matter in the surface six inches. The average soil organic matter in Kansas is two percent. In the absence of an organic matter test, we therefore credit for 40 pounds of N.

That leaves the N recommendation at 200 pounds per acre – and more adjustments to come. A profile nitrogen test is a great idea, but in the absence of the two-foot deep samples recommended to

get an accurate number, we estimate (conservatively) a minimum of 30 pounds per acre of N available in the profile. That drops the number to 170 pounds of N per acre.

If manure is applied, we'll give credit for values provided, as well as other credits for irrigation water, etc... Another credit comes from the previous crop. In corn/soybean rotations, the previous crop soybean crop gets credit for 40 pounds of N from rapid residue decomposition. The final recommendation: 130 pounds of N required to attain a 150 bushel per acre yield goal – or just under nine tenths of a pound of nitrogen per bushel of yield.

How/when N is applied can effect nitrogen use efficiency, too, with practices like delayed/split applications potentially increasing efficiency even more than ‘average.’ That means no one nitrogen recommendation fits every operation – and why a periodic review is a good idea for optimum use of your fertilizer dollars. Contact me if you want to take a closer look.


Replacement Heifers For Sale:

450 Red Angus
70 Red Angus x Hereford F-1 (RWF-BRK)
40 Angus x Hereford F-1 (BWF-BRK)
18 Char x Red Angus F-1 (BUCKSKINS)

- Heifers all originated off western SD ranches
- Weaned in October
- Springtime shots were given
- All processing completed this fall
- Heifers are gentle and easy to work with
- Medium framed - highly maternal
- Heifers are running out

This has been a long running program of ours. This year due to the extremely dry conditions in SD, few heifers were held back with these heifers being top end genetics.

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