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The vital resource of the Ag Industry

Montana • winter/spring edition 2003-2004



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History of, Calendar of Events and More...

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*Produced by: Ag Bureau of the
Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce*

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On The Cover

Photo courtesy of Michael and Kathleen Gear of Red Canyon Ranch, Thermopolis, Wyoming. For more, see page 7.

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“Think Big!”

Spokane Ag Expo January 13, 14 & 15

This year's Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum are BIGGER and better than ever! January 13, 14 and 15, in Spokane, Wash., over 8,000 farmers and ranchers are expected to attend this three-day event. Highlights of the 2004 Expo include:

The Inland Northwest's Largest Farm Equipment Show - Over 250 exhibitors fill the Veteran's Memorial Arena, Ag Trade and Convention Centers in beautiful downtown Spokane.

50th Annual Pacific Northwest Farm Forum - The 2004 show is the 50th Golden Anniversary for the Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, which produces all the seminars and main speaker events at Ag Expo. Celebration plans are in the works for the golden anniversary!

Over 80 Pacific Northwest Farm Forum Seminars - Including seminars on marketing, crop production, transition planning, and farm management. Pesticide re-certification credits can be earned at selected seminars. This is the region's most comprehensive workshop forum.

Health, Safety and Security Section - Spokane Ag Expo is devoting an entire section to farm health, safety and security. For the past several years, the show has featured a variety of farm safety programs but the 2004 show will devote a full section pertaining to health, safety and security. Located at the east end of the Spokane Ag Trade Center, it will feature a wide variety of farm family health-related exhibits that will have value to virtually everyone who comes to the show.

Ag Technology Showcase by SIRTI - Featuring the latest in cutting edge technologies, 5:00 p.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel ballroom. The intention of SIRTI (Spokane Intercollegiate Research & Technology Institute) is to provide a good overview of paradigm-changing research in the Inland Northwest. On a quarterly basis SIRTI presents these breakthrough technologies to the public.

Bioenergy Pavilion - Ag Expo for 2004 includes the "Bioenergy Pavilion at Ag Expo". Bioenergy is renewable energy produced from organic material. Organic matter is either used directly as a fuel or processed into liquids and gases. An area within the Ag Expo show will be dedicated for agencies, associations, and private entities to present information to show attendees. The goal is to provide the latest information to attendees. Areas covered include biodiesel, dedicated crops, anaerobic digestion, ethanol, co-generation, and gasification. Other renewable energy topics include solar, fuel cells, geothermal, water, and wind.

Idaho Gem, U of I's Cloned Mule - Tuesday Only - The first cloned equine was born on May 5, 2003 at the University of Idaho. The mule, which is named Idaho Gem, will appear at Ag Expo on Tuesday, January 13. A team from University of Idaho and Utah State University produced three mule clones that were born in 2003. Dr. Dirk Vanderwall, a member of the research team, will also make a seminar presentation in the Les Schwab room on Tuesday.

Beef Cattle Demonstrations & Seminars - Back by popular demand, the Expo features live beef cattle equipment demonstrations and numerous seminars. Demonstrations of livestock equipment

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History of the Potato

The potato crop belongs to a number of American crops like maize and bean that have been introduced to Europe and other continents in the last 5 centuries.

There are more than 160 wild potato species, and most of them contain high levels of alkaloids. The first edible potatoes are considered to have been cultivated 4000 years ago in Peru. The South American Indians were in fact able to select alkaloid-free potato varieties, the results of which is still seen today.

The first cultivated potato species were diploid (some of them are still cultivated in South America). The development of the modern varieties was related to the spontaneous occurrence of tetraploid species that were superior in yield. Almost all current varieties are autotetraploid.

The introduction of potatoes to Europe happened at two independent instances: around 1570 in Spain, and around 1590 in England. However, the large-scale cultivation of the crop began only in the beginning of the 19th century. Initially, the crop was used as a medicinal plant and grown by pharmacists, in Spain in particular. It was later introduced to other parts of Europe by merchants and kings, who encouraged the cultivation of this efficient plant to increase local agricultural production. The successful introduction of this new crop did not only require changes in the dietary habits of the people, but also a biological adaptation of the crop to a new climate. In fact, the potato plant being originally adapted to short day conditions of the tropical highlands, it would yield very little

under the long summer days in Europe. Breeding over more than 150 years led to plants tolerating long day conditions. The modern breeding of potatoes began approximately in 1780, where crossings were performed between local varieties. At the beginning of the 19th century, the introduction of new potato germplasm, especially from Chile, contributed highly to the breeding of modern varieties. Towards the end of the last century, there was already a large array of breeding varieties available to the breeders. However, because of the need for new resistance genes against pests and diseases, the 20th century brought about the use of a large population of wild- and cultivated potato species from South America for backcrossings into European varieties. The potatoes of today in Europe are largely the result of the intensive breeding programs of the 19th century, but have benefitted greatly from the improvements in breeding techniques of the 20th century to improve traits like disease resistance, tolerance to environmental factors, etc.



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From Cowboy To Buffalero • Wyoming Ranchers Compare Buffalo And Beef

By: W. Michael Gear & Kathleen O'Neal Gear

As we look out our window at the buffalo serenely grazing on native pasture, we often think about how we got here. We both come from ranching families. For over three hundred years, and across most of the continent, our ancestors raised cattle and alfalfa. So why did we decide to switch from beef to buffalo? The simple answer is that being a buffalero pays better than being a cowboy.

But before you decide to jump in with both feet, let us tell you buffalo are not for everyone. The first thing we learned was that the more you know about cattle, the greater your disadvantage when you first face buffalo. Bison and cattle require vastly different handling skills. You can gather a herd of cattle in the morning and cowboy them through the chute that afternoon. Bison require advance planning, enticement, and trapping. The faster you work them, the wilder they become, the scarier the wrecks they'll have. Successful buffaleros work slowly and quietly.

Bison require a larger initial capital investment but you will make it up on lower labor and veterinary costs. You will have to upgrade equipment—and oversized cattle systems aren't always the way to go. Talk to longtime buffalo producers before you cut the check. A Berlinic or Hard Rock bison system can save lots of time, tears, frustration, and anguish.

A whole mythology exists about bison and fences. The fact is you can hold bison with an ordinary three wire fence if they are acclimated to home, have food, water, mineral and friends closeby; but people who transplant ten-year-old buffalo into an unfamiliar pasture are headed for disaster. How would you feel if someone dropped you in downtown Philadelphia? You'd head

out at a high run, too, wouldn't you? Introduced animals have to be kept corralled until they are accustomed to their new home.

Another myth is that buffalo are mean. Granted, any animal can develop a cussed streak, but under normal conditions a buffalo isn't going to hunt you down, stomp, and gore you just for the fun of it. People usually get hurt when buffalo feel threatened or have panicked in containment.

And the vet bills? Bison are an amazingly healthy animal. Native to North America they have a built-in immunity to most things but are vulnerable to the diseases and parasites introduced over the past five hundred years. We tag and 8-way calves at six weeks, OCV the heifer calves at six months, and Ivomec the whole herd once a year. We don't castrate, brand, use growth hormones, or feed antibiotics. Bison don't take well to AI so you can scratch that from the "to do" list. In ten years of operation, we have pulled one calf. It's fun to go to the feedstore, sip coffee, and complain, "It's calving season! I don't have anything to do!"

Cattle are easier to handle, more forgiving, take minimal equipment, and can be sold at the local sale barn. Bison take less labor, more initial capital, and are better adapted to our grasses and weather. Bison meat is also worth about three times as much as beef—but you have to do the sales and marketing.

Honestly, neither animal is inherently "better." Bison made sense for our operation because we have native pasture and through hard work have developed a high-demand meat market. But be you cowboy or buffalero, the market for lower cholesterol, reduced fat, hormone-free meat is going to continue to grow. For those willing to embrace that market, bison can be a profitable alternative.

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Forty percent of the Red Canyon Ranch bison herd consists of trophy winning animals from the Gold Trophy Show and Sale, the Black Hills Buffalo Classic and the Canadian national bison show in Regina. Our animals include Raven, the 1999 Canadian national Grand Champion, and Bailey, the famous Gold trophy daughter of Reserve Grand Champion, Dakota Bill. In addition, we have Bailey's award winning sisters, Godiva and Serendipity, the only Dakota Bill daughters outside of the Rock Creek ranch herd, and several more award winners from Trails End River Ranch. At Red Canyon Ranch, we are investing in the future of the bison industry. We will continue to purchase champion animals and strive to produce absolutely glorious bison.

Michael and Kathleen Gear • Red Canyon Ranch • Box 1329 • Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443 • (307)864-5212

calendar of events

Upcoming Calendar of Potato Events

Jan. 6-10, 2004

National Potato Council Annual Meeting, Moon Palace Resort, Cancun, Mexico.
Contact John Keeling at 202-682-9456 or johnkeeling52@aol.com or visit
www.npc-spud.com

Jan. 11-13, 2004

Potato Marketing Association of North America Winter Meeting, Gran Melia Beach & Spa Resort, Cancun, Mexico.
Hosted by Potatoes New Brunswick. Contact: Kyla at 506-276-1820.

Jan. 21-22, 2004

The 36th Annual Idaho State University Potato Conference, Student Union Building, Pocatello, ID. Contact Jim Hughes at 208-529-8376 or jhughes@uidaho.edu or visit extension.ag.uidaho.edu/district4/potato.html.

Jan. 21-22, 2004

Eastern Idaho Ag Expo, Holt Arena, Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID. Contact David Beale at 800-635-2274.

Jan. 29-30, 2004

37th Annual Oregon Potato Conference, Gleneden Beach, OR., Willamette Valley Potato Growers Association.
Contact Oregon Potato Commission at 503-731-3300.

Feb 3-5, 2004

Washington State Potato Conference and Trade Show, Big Bend Community College and the Grant County Fairgrounds. Phone: 509-765-8845.

Feb. 4-5, 2004

Potato Conference & Trade Show, 2004
Knights of Columbus Hall, Perth-Andover, New Brunswick. Contact: Kyla Stewart at 506-276-1820 or
Fax: 506-276-1828. E-mail: ctpotato@potatoesnb.com.

Feb. 9-12, 2004

International Root & Tuber Symposium, International Society for Horticultural Science, New Zealand. For more information, contact Dr. Mike Nichols at m.nichols@massey.ac.nz.

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CHINESE BEETLES MAY HELP WITH SALT CEDAR PROBLEM

Thousands of plant-eating Chinese beetles may be unleashed in Montana, Wyoming and other western states next year to battle saltcedar, a water thirsty invasive shrub that clings to riverbanks and crowds out native species. The idea is still in the early stages, but if all goes as planned, some of the first releases could begin next spring, according to Bob Richard, regional program director for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Fort Collins, CO.

The beetles, which feed exclusively on saltcedar, certainly won't wipe out the pervasive shrub, but will give farmers, ranchers, and others fighting the weed, another weapon in their arsenal. "It shouldn't be viewed as a silver bullet," Richard said. "It's a control, not eradication."

Saltcedar, also known as tamarisk, was introduced to the Western United States in the 1800's as an ornamental shrub. A native of Africa and Asia, the plant now grows widely in the West, especially along waterways and bottomlands. With its long, deep roots, the shrub taps into water systems beneath the surface and sucks up as much water and perhaps more than any other weed in the West.

Richard said there are some indications saltcedar has even dried out small streams and ponds. The plant also stubbornly takes over the habitat of native species, including willows and cottonwoods.

The "bio-control" proposal to release the beetles is the latest effort in a long fight to

eliminate, or at least manage, the proliferation of saltcedar. "People have chopped it, cut it, used herbicides and different kinds of things," Richard said. "The only new kid on the block, in terms of control is biological control."

Hope now rests on a bug from China, about the size of a pencil eraser, called *Diorhabda elongata* or the saltcedar leaf beetle. This insect only eats saltcedar and over the course of a few years can successfully wipe out sections of the shrub. APHIS is now looking into importing thousands more of the beetles to work on other saltcedar infestations across the West. Under the current proposal, APHIS would work with local and state governments to target key areas for saltcedar control and help facilitate a release of beetles.

Capable of producing two generations each year, an introduced population of saltcedar beetles can grow rapidly from 15 to 30 fold each generation. Richard states "so if you have a release of 1,500 insects (in one spot), they could be spread three to five miles within a few years." The adults and the young feed only on saltcedar leaves and damaging the plant's ability to reproduce and stay vigorous. So there's no risk of a beetle explosion. The research shows if there isn't saltcedar to eat they will die.

APHIS is scheduled to conduct an environmental assessment of the program, take public comments, and then seek final approval sometime next year. Richard

said limits have already been placed on where the beetles can be released, including limiting it to areas north of the 38th parallel. South of that line, the Southwest willow flycatcher, an endangered species, uses saltcedar as habitat, especially since its typical nest site in those areas has been taken over by saltcedar. "Since it has started using (saltcedar) for nesting, we can't do anything that impacts the life of this bird," Richard said.

If the program is approved, it could pay big dividends in Wyoming, where saltcedar has made a home in nearly every drainage in the state, according to Roy Reichenbach of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. A survey of some stock water reservoirs in the Bighorn Basin showed the presence of saltcedar at nearly every one where the weed has grown so thick in places livestock and wildlife can't get to them. "In some areas, it has completely taken out the native vegetation," Reichenbach said, "And herbicide applications for that species are very expensive and only a few products work on it. Realistically, to get a good handle on it, bio-controls are needed."

No one should think the Chinese beetles will rid the West of saltcedar but, when used in concert with chemicals, manual treatments, and education, the beetles could give people the upper hand, Richard and Reichenbach said. "In and of itself, bio-control may not be the answer, but coupled with these other things we probably have a chance."

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PREDATORS KILL MOST ELK CALVES IN PARK

Predators are killing almost two-thirds of the elk calves born in Yellowstone National Park, preliminary results of a study have shown. That is almost three times the death rate found in a similar study in the 1980's before wolves were reintroduced to the park. But grizzly and black bears killed almost four times as many elk calves as wolves did, the study says. P.J. White, a wildlife biologist for

the National Park Service, cautioned that the results are preliminary. The study will last for three years, and only one season's worth of data have been gathered. "It's hard to say what the average will be over three years," said Glenn Plumb, a park supervisory biologist.

Some hunters, outfitters and politicians have blamed wolves for declining elk numbers. Park scientists maintain there

are a variety of factors, like drought and other predators, in the 2.2 million-acre park. "I'm real skeptical about all their reports," said Bill Hoppe, a Jardine outfitter. "We've had grizzly bears forever, and bad winter, and the elk have always done Okay." "The elk herd began declining in 1996 after wolves were reintroduced," Hoppe said, "and it's gotten smaller ever since."

MALIBU WATER RESOURCES • *Farm Pond Care In Simple Terms*

By Dr. Mervin Brown

Pond aeration improves water quality by maintaining good dissolved oxygen levels in the water especially where oxygen is really needed... at the bottom. Pond and lake bed aeration adds oxygen to all of the water, including the bottom. This is very important because once the lake or pond has oxygen near the bottom, new insect larvae, snails, and other fish food can begin to live there.

Bottom aeration is simply using an air compressing windmill or an electric aerator to pump through an air line attached to an aeration stone which is then placed on the bottom of the pond. The rising air bubbles from the aeration stone release oxygen in the water and brings oxygen-poor bottom water to the surface where it is exposed to the atmosphere. Thus, large volumes of water brought to the surface by the rising air bubbles lose poisonous gasses to the atmosphere and pick up more oxygen while on the surface. Aeration speeds up the process of oxidizing or burning up the pollution in the water. The result is fresh, sparkling clear, sweet-smelling water which supports abundant fish life, free from excessive algae and weeds.

REDUCE ALGAE - Aeration reduces algae growth by removing its food (nutrients) - Nitrogen, ammonia, and soluble phosphates are driven into the surface air and out of the pond. Iron and manganese are oxidized and drop out of solution to the bottom of the pond. Once oxidation of these metals begin, they

don't go back into solution. Aeration increases aerobic bacteria which eat the other nutrients on which algae and weeds need to grow. The aerobic bacteria eat these nutrients before the weeds and the algae can... forcing it to starve and die.

Aerobic bacteria are the good guys: They breathe oxygen and exhale CO2 like us. They have a TREMENDOUS appetite...eating anything organic... very quickly. The aerobic bacteria begin to eat the organic sediment at the bottom of the pond... and will continue to eat it as long as they are given oxygen.

Aeration also works for de-icing a winter pond. Moving water won't freeze so there remains a 20' diameter of ice free water above the air stone. The more aeration in the winter, the less algae in the summer.

For windmills, we recommend a 12 foot tower. Tower leg extensions of four foot are available making a 16 foot and 20 foot tower if needed.

Aeration Stone: We recommend that you put some gravel in the bottom of a five gallon bucket, and place the aeration stone on top of the gravel. Attach a cord **and float** securely to the bucket and lower the aeration stone and the bucket into the water. Use the cord/float for retrieval and repositioning if needed.

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For more information, contact Malibu Water Resources, 800-490-9170; Fax: 310-457-4298; www.MalibuWater.com
Recommended Pond Books:
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Ohio Pond Guide: 614-265-6300



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Ranchers And Wildlife Workers Swap Jobs

The new "Walk A Mile In My Boots" exchange program between U.S. cattle ranchers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) employees hit the ground running. Officially launched this past summer, exchanges have already taken place in Idaho, Montana, Texas and Wyoming. The National Cattlemen's (NCBA) and the FWS worked together to create the program, providing and unprecedented opportunity for cattle ranchers and FWS employees to learn about each other's lifestyles.

"All of the recent exchanges have been such rewarding experiences for everyone," says Stephanie Tinsley, NCBA associate director of environmental issues. "We really have received great feedback from both FWS participants and ranchers. Many of our members have long been concerned their local FWS officials do not understand the priorities and challenges of cattle producers, and this sure changes that."

Future plans for exchange programs continue to fill the books. For more information, visit <http://walkamile.fws.gov/> or call 202-347-0228.

Montana ranchers Bob and Kathy Lee hosted Dan Brewer, a fisheries biologist from the Helena Ecological Services Field Office for three hard-working days at their Robert E. Lee Ranch Company near Judith Gap.

"We had a great time participating in the 'Walk A Mile In My Boots' program with Dan," says Bob Lee. "He definitely got hands-on experience out on the ranch, and was enthusiastic and willing to learn about what we do here. The first day was filled with sorting cow/calf pairs and moving cattle by semi-truck. Day two was spent indexing calves, sorting, and moving cow/calf pairs in preparation for marketing (shipping) day. On the third day, we hosted 120 participants at the ranch for a Montana Ag Tour".

Brewer has invited Lee to visit the FWS in a parallel exchange program. Lee says he will take him up on the offer this winter. "We feel we have established a long term relationship with FWS and Dan," says Lee.

New Zealand Lamb Numbers Decline

According to Meat New Zealand, lamb numbers fell six percent over the past year to 31.15 million head, down from 33.09 million. Declining ewe numbers, lower consumption rates and poor breeding conditions have been blamed for the decrease. Given the decline in breeding ewes over the past few years, a fall in lamb numbers was expected in 2002/2003. However, drought, conditions earlier in the year, followed by cooler conditions, resulted in lamb numbers falling further than expected. Mark Jefferies, chief executive of Meat New Zealand stated, "With the colder conditions experienced this year, we would expect the lambing season to be extended. This will mean tighter supplies to our overseas markets prior to Christmas."

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The CattleSale Company

Internet Cattle Marketing: The Time Is Now

With recent high cattle prices, it may be difficult to imagine that the cattle industry will ever see another sorry day. However, we all know that prices such as these are not likely to last forever. Over time, cattle sellers know that the absolute best way to assure receiving top dollar is to broadcast their offering to as many buyers as possible. The Internet provides the tool for cattlemen of all sizes to do just that.

Look at the example Ebay has shown us. Millions of ordinary people are using Ebay and other online auctions to find buyers for virtually anything. Why not cattlemen? Why not broadcast your cattle to anyone that has access to an Internet connection? The CattleSale Company has numerous experienced, qualified representatives that can visit you at your ranch to get you started selling your cattle on the Internet. These representatives will photograph your cattle and gather other key biographical information that helps describe your cattle to potential buyers.

Then the representative posts the pictures on our website www.cattlesale.com along with the photographs, weight, breed and other important information of interest to buyers is also posted. You are given the opportunity to price your cattle. Once the cattle are posted on the site, potential buyers are able to view the pictures, read the specifics regarding the cattle and place a bid. If the buyer likes the way you have priced your cattle, he has the option of paying the asking price. In that case, he enters a contract to purchase your cattle for that price. He also has the option of offering a price less than what you have stated. In that case, you have the option of accepting the buyer's lower bid or holding out for more.

Marketing cattle on the Internet provides the most convenient option for ranches of any size or location to offer their cattle to the broadest spectrum of buyers. Selling cattle on the Internet keeps you in control of the entire transaction. Call one of the buyers in the ad on this page to learn more about this exciting new cattle-marketing concept.

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Nick's Custom Boots, Now That's Value!

What Makes These Boots So Unique?

Since the days of Nick Blahuczyn (Bla-hushun) until today, Nick's Boots has focused on one thing, and one thing alone . . . to hand-build top quality boots using only premium leathers, and time-tested, century-old craftsmanship techniques passed on from generation to generation. As thousands of Nick's customers nationwide, as well as around the world, can attest, once you've tried a pair Nick's handmade, one hundred percent leather boots, you'll never go back to mass-produced footwear again.

The Legendary Arch

Many customers ask about the design of Nick's Boots, especially the strong arch support and heavy heel. Nick's Custom Boots are designed to closely simulate the natural form of the foot and to distribute body weight evenly among the heel, arch and ball of the foot. In a majority of people this feature helps minimize foot and leg fatigue as well as lower back pain attributable to inadequate foot support. Most mass-produced footwear does not have a true arch, thus, the body weight resides on the heel causing tiredness and pain in the middle to lower back, all the way down the legs including the feet. Your boots must be more than just foot covers. They must be strong enough to support your whole body, especially during strenuous work. When it comes to functionality, comfort and great looks, Nick's Boots has you covered!

How Were You Fit

While reading this information, think back to the last time you purchased footwear. Did the store clerk merely ask you for your size or did they accurately measure both feet; not just one? A foot professional will recommend a certain style, height or sole based on the needs dictated by your particular lifestyle and environment. Too often a sale is based solely on current fashion trends and the customer simply tries on a number of sizes and styles until a 'cozy' feel is achieved, regardless of proper fit.

For years, people have suffered needless pain and endless frustration trying to fit mass-produced footwear around their bunions. Custom fitting remedies this condition by building a measured 'pocket' for the bunion to reside, effectively eliminating blisters, pain and inflammation.

Fitting? Do I Need a Custom Fit?

Approximately 90% of Nick's customers are easily fit into a 'stock size'. Each pair of Nick's Boots is built to specific orthopedic measurements based on the length and width of

the foot. The hand-placed orthopedic shaped arch provides enormous benefit to the wearer.

Some folks however require a custom fit. This may include simple adjustments to the arch or require different sizes for each foot. In the retail store (and boot factory), Nick's professional fitters will actually make a drawing of each foot and measure both the feet and legs to create a uniquely customized pattern for the boot makers to follow. Most hard to fit foot problems such as heel spurs, bunions, a thick instep or a low or high arch can be remedied with a professional custom fit.

Prescriptions provided by a doctor or orthopedist, can usually be built into a pair of Nick's Custom Boots. A consultation is recommended with a Nick's representative.

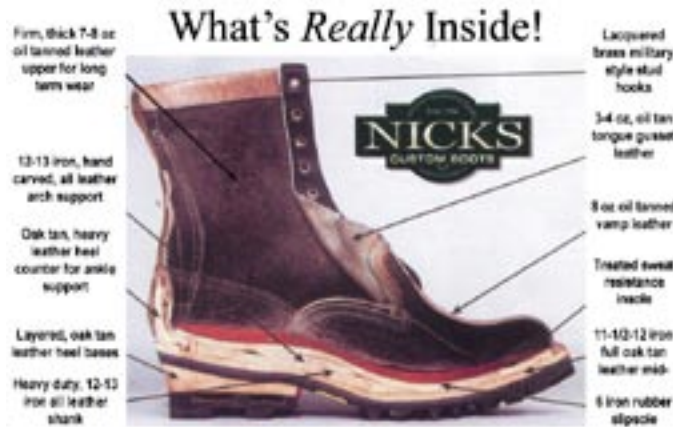
All measurements from stock sizes to custom fitting patterns are kept on file making future orders a breeze for adjustments that may need to be made.

History

Nick Blahuczyn lived the American Dream when he established Nick's Custom Boots in Spokane, Washington in 1964. Nick was a Russian who escaped from Stalin's army during World War II. He immigrated to the United States after the war and made his way to Washington State where he mastered his skills as a boot craftsman from a famous North West bootmaker.

Lifestyle Designs for Work and Play

Nick's offers a variety of work, casual and dress boots to meet most every lifestyle and occupation. Working in adverse conditions from farming to firefighting calls for heavy-duty oil tanned leathers available in various colors. The same com-





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fort and fit made famous in Nick's sturdy work boots is also available in casual and dress styles from the lightweight softy buffalo or a finely trimmed two-tone, to the exotic stingray or shark. Transforming a day of hard work into a night of dining and dancing is as easy as changing your footwear. Because of its comfort and styling, Nick's dress boot is a popular choice in the business community. And, Nick's is proud to supply it's highly popular Wildland Firefighting Boots to those who fight to protect our forests and wildland areas.

Nick's Tips for Break-In and Care of Your Boots

A boot should fit snugly all the way around the foot like a firm handshake, because after break-in the boot will stretch about a quarter inch from side to side. A boot that starts out 'cozy' will end up too sloppy and require extra socks or aftermarket liners to snug up the fit after the break-in period. Break-in takes roughly 80-100 hours of wearing your boots for your feet to adjust to the transition.

During this period, keep the exterior of the boot wet by spraying with a 50/50 mixture of rubbing alcohol and water. When the boots get overly tight or stiff wet them down and friction-rub with your hands as if polishing them. The alcohol allows the water to penetrate and soften the leather.

Does it work to fill the boot with water to speed up the break-in? Sure, but it's detrimental to the long-term health of the boot. The nails in the bottom of the boot begin to rust and will ultimately weaken the structure of the boot.

Keep the boot snugly laced. Its important that the boot be laced tightly over the instep and around the ankle, which allows the leather behind the anklebones to seat properly. Snug is good, snugger is better.

To prevent the infamous 'bite' on top of your instep, lace your boots in the 2-1-3 method as shown in the photo.

Get through the 80-100 hours with the alcohol and water break-in technique and then grease your boots. Avoid greasing the area around the brass hooks and eyes where softening the leather may cause them to pull out. Nick's HD products are recommended because they have no damaging ingredients in them. The pine tars, petroleum, silicones and animal fat in other products clog the pores of the leather which must breathe to allow the acid and salts in sweat to dissipate.

Nick's HD Leather Preservative and HD Boot Oil are so pure it keeps your footwear from becoming crusty, mildewed or foul smelling. It contains a mixture of beeswax and propolis, a natural and waterproofing antibacterial tree resin which provides a high level of protection to the leather, keeping it soft and supple, while resisting water as well as chemicals.

Sweat will slowly corrode the inner part of the boot. If you have not oiled and greased your boots regularly, it is important to neutralize the acid and salt caused by sweat. This is accomplished by pouring a mixture of one heaping tablespoon of baking soda and twenty ounces of water into each boot. After sloshing it around, wetting the interior, pour it out and let the boot dry.

Why Nick's Boots Last

A lot of folks complain that their [mass-produced] boots last only six to eighteen months. Because Nick's Boots

are handcrafted with only the finest quality leathers and expertly fit by professionals, with proper care you should receive years of service and support from your boots.

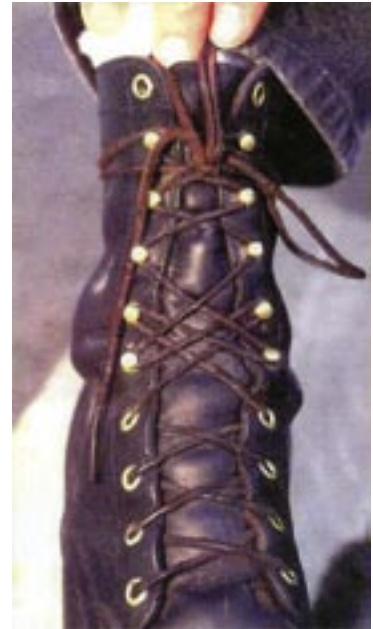
Most customers are able to have their boots resoled two to three times before being rebuilt. When it's time to rebuild, Nick's expert boot makers will replace everything but the portion of the boot that has formed to your ankle and the upper; very little of the original boot remains.

That's like getting a brand new pair of boots that are already broken in to fit your leg and ankle, and at about 50% of the cost of a new pair of boots. . .

Now that's value!

By Gary and Trudy Scott,

Contributions by Bill Rose and Tom Story



Testimonial:

Thank you! I received my custom boots, of which I have worn every day since they arrived. The boots have been on a cattle roundup and helped process two fields of hay so far. I am very pleased at the quality, craftsmanship, and eye appeal of these boots. Thank you again.

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FOOD IN THE MAIL - IS IT SAFE?

Surprise! You don't have to cook dinner tonight. No, it's not a pizza delivery. There's a gift package of food at your front door. Maybe it's smoked turkey or a ham from a friend. "Keep Refrigerated," the box reads. Uh, oh. It's been sitting in the sun. When did it arrive? Is it safe to eat?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline cautions that the food gift you receive or send could give you an unwanted "surprise" foodborne illness, if it is not delivered promptly and handled properly. Mail order food companies take steps to produce a safe, high quality product and to maintain the safety and quality during shipping. "So it is important for consumers to handle the product safely once the perishable items are received," says Susan Conley, director of the Food Safety Education for the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

There's a lot of sending going on. The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) says Americans this year will spend more than \$6 billion on food purchases by mail. "Catalogues and Web sites are convenient for holiday gift-giving since you can place the order, and have it delivered with just one phone call or online order," says Amy Blankenship, director of The DMA's Shop-At-Home information Center.

When receiving or sending meat, poultry

or other perishable foods, they should be shipped in an insulated box packed with frozen gel packs or dry ice. "Keep Refrigerated" should be on the package. Even if a product is smoked, cured and /or fully cooked, it is still perishable and must be kept cold. When received, the perishable food should either be frozen, have visible ice crystals, or feel refrigerated cold in the touch. If the food is not cold, notify the company. Do not eat it or even take a bite.

Homemade food gifts are often sent by mail during the holidays. Perishable foods should be shipped frozen gel packs or dry ice. Ideally the box should be wrapped in two layers of brown paper and mailed by the fastest shipping method possible.

For more information about the safety of food in the mail, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-800-535-4555 or TTY - 800-256-7072, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern time, Monday-Friday. Recorded messages are also available 24 hours a day by calling the same number. Consumer information is also available at the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.

For sources of reputable catalog and Internet food retailers, check the DMA's consumer. Web site at www.shophthenet.org

Food in the mail is a nice holiday surprise. Be sure its handled safely for gift-giving.

Abare: GM Would Boost World Economy

The world could see an economic gain of \$210 billion a year by 2015 if biotechnology in crop production was accepted in all countries, according to a study released by Australia's Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

"Worldwide adoption of biotechnology in crop production has the potential to generate substantial gains in global welfare," said Dr. Brian Fisher, ABARE executive director. "But conservative attitudes resulting in bans on production and trade in GM products could erode these gains." He added.

In the study, Agricultural Biotechnology Potential for Use in Developing Countries. ABARE studied the economic effects on different groups of countries of adopting GM technologies and pro-GM trade policies, according to a news release.

Potential restrictions on production and trade in GM crops in the European Union could reduce the estimated \$210 billion gain to \$167 billion. In addition, ABARE said, if poorer developing countries failed to adopt the technology, the world economic gain would decline to \$135 billion.



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Angus Group Creates Selection Tools With Dollars In Mind

Beef producers today have access to a powerful list of genetic selection tools, primarily in the form of Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs). However, the wealth of information can become overwhelming when it's time to rank various herd sizes for numerous performance measures. Fortunately, the dynamics of multi-trait selection indexes as tools for commercial cow-calf operators and seedstock breeders are rapidly evolving for the beef industry. These tools, when used as part of a complete breeding system encompassing all production arenas, can combine a set of EPDs into targeted economic values.

As an answer to this call for dynamic performance indicators, the American Angus Association Board of Directors recently approved the release of new tools for commercial producers to add simplicity to genetic selection decisions. The American Angus Association Spring 2004 Sire Evaluation Report will include the release to Total Beef Value (\$B), the first in a suite of bio-economic values, expressed in dollars per head, to assist commercial beef producers. The \$B values will be in the printed version of the Sire Evaluation Report and may be viewed and sorted by accessing the Sire Evaluation Search page at www.angus-siresearch.com. Further enhancements to this technology will include an interactive website, where users can define postweaning and carcass parameters to create tailored \$Values for their given scenario.

"Although carcass merit is an important component of the beef production chain, the Total Beef Value is not to be used as a single selection criterion, since it only combines postweaning and carcass industry segments," says Sally Dolezal, genetic research director for the Association. "The complete system of bioeconomic values, or net merit system, will in the future also include comprehensive reproduction and weaned calf values."

\$B encompasses the dollar per head progeny difference in combined postweaning and carcass merit. The \$B value has two pieces: Feedlot Value (\$G). The values are calculated for animals with growth trait EPDs and end-product predictions (carcass EPDs,

– Continued On Page 29



Boumas' Delta Promise Wins Reserve World Champion

Delta Promise, a 4-year-old paint horse stallion owned by Painted Horseshoe Ranch, Choteau, MT won the Reserve World Champion honor in steer stopping at the American Paint Horse Association World Show in Fort Worth, Texas July 1-2.

Nationally known roping trainer Gary Wells of Lone Grove, OK, rode Delta Promise as he competed in four events. The horse finished fifth in calf roping, 10th in heeling and 13th in heading, finishing four events with 234 performance points.

Delta Promise is a grandson of two famous American Quarter-horse Association horses, Doc Olena and Peppy San Badger. His sire is a world champion calf roping horse and his half-brother, Gay Bar Olena, twice garnered honors as world champion reining horse.

Delta Promise will produce cutting, reining and roping prospects, according to owners Neal and Patty Bouma. The Boumas plan to have Delta Promise compete again in 2004.

Information about Delta Promise and the Painted Horseshoe Ranch is available on the web at www.paintedhorse.com

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Beef Nutrition In Schools

During the 2002-2003 school year, 1.6 million U.S. students learned about beef nutrition, food safety, and environmental stewardship thanks to the widespread distribution of teachers' resource materials by Beef Checkoff Program. School materials were distributed to teachers, reaching the 1.6 million students. Promoted through the checkoff "Teach-free" website (www.teachfree.com) and state beef councils, the kits are made available to teachers of students from kindergarten through high school. Many of the education kits are free of charge to working teachers and include everything needed to integrate beef education into a lesson plan.

Beef Exports Are Up This Year

The U.S. continues to be a net exporter of beef and veal products (on a tonnage basis). U.S. beef and veal export tonnage is three percent larger than 2002 levels. U.S. beef exports continue to substitute for Canadian products banned from world markets.

Of the major trading partners, only exports to Korea and Mexico showed significant year-to-year increases, up nineteen and three percent from a year ago.

Imports of beef and veal have been down from last year due to tight restrictions on Canadian beef. The U.S. imported more beef from New Zealand (up 33 percent) and Mexico (25 percent).

On a tonnage basis, the U.S. was a net exporter of beef in June, July, and August. That trend could continue, but given the recent rise in wholesale beef prices, U.S. beef sales more than likely declined this past fall, leading to the U.S. being a net importer of beef during the remainder of 2003.

Steffes Corporation

Steffes Corporation began manufacturing and selling Hopper Bins in 1983 on a local basis of a 100-mile radius. Currently their customer base is mainly in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. However, their territory is quickly expanding. Steffes Overhead Drive Through Bins have been delivered to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Kentucky, Illinois, Nebraska and even parts of Canada. Steffes currently manufactures two sizes of their square overhead bins. The smaller model holds 30 ton of cake, or 1152 bushels, and the larger model holds 40 ton of cake or 1575 bushels. Drive through clearances range from 7' up to 14' to allow for unloading into trucks, feeders or semis. Split compartments are also available in both standard sizes. This allows you to store two different products on one bin.

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ZENA welders retrofit easily to tractors, pickups, utility vehicles, riding mowers, burned out engine driven welders, and freestanding engines. PTO and hydraulic drive models are also available. The welders can also provide power for MIG or TIG welding, act as a DC power source, or quick charge batteries!

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Blazina notes, "Unlike other welders, ALL welding controls

are literally at the operator's fingertips - - built into the electrode holder -- no more walking back and forth from job site to control panel. You can even adjust power while welding! Incredibly reliable and durable, our weather-proof welders

are designed for the worst conditions -- backed by a three year warranty and a 60-day money-back guarantee."

A 150A welder for tractors and free standing engines is under \$500. A deluxe "truck" version, with bracketing accessories, engine speed control, and quick disconnects is under \$700.

For information contact ZENA, Incorporated, 330 Club Springs Road, Elmwood, TN 38560; 877-936-2462 (toll free) or 615-897-2011; web site www.zena.net. ZENA is a trademark owned by ZENA, Incorporated for its welding systems, components, and accessories.



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DeRuwe Farms

The Cheap guy, the Cowboy and the Commercial Grower

Let me introduce myself. My name is Randy DeRuwe. I've raised alfalfa seed for over 22 years in the Walla Walla Valley in the southeastern part of Washington State. As a seed grower and seed dealer selling alfalfa seed direct to other farmers, I have had three kinds of customers.

1. The Cheap Guy: His only real concern is "What do you have available at the lowest possible price?". The next question is "How much will the freight cost and how fast can it get here? The field is worked and ready to seed today!". This customer doesn't want to hear about fall dormancy ratings, disease resistance or yields. These fellows make for short conversations.

2. The Cowboys: These guys raise hay for their own use. A typical question is "What will the stand look like in 10 years?". The answer is don't plant a priority, hotshot, big yielder variety. Generally, they are not enduring varieties. Another question, "Does this variety have a high or low crown in the soil? Will it survive cattle traffic?". Answer: "I have no idea. I'm just a seed grower." The next question I typically hear is: "Is this a coarse stem variety?" The answer is: All varieties will grow big stems if the stand is thin and the plants have room to grow more like a bush. This leads to questions about seeding rates. If you expect the variety to last for 10 years, seed it heavy because all stands thin with age. We have dryland customers in Montana with 12 inches of rainfall per year seed only 5-8 pounds per acre. Irrigated fields in Montana run 10-15 pounds per acre. In the northwest, irrigated fields run 20+ pounds per acre. Even some dryland customers in high rainfall areas of the northwest seed 20 pounds to the acre.

When it comes to seeding rates, alfalfa hay growers should ask themselves: are they looking for fine stem hay or a coarse stem stand? How much weed pressure will there be? Are they looking for an alfalfa/grass mix? How fertile is the soil and how much moisture will be available? What is the life expectancy of the stand? What time of the year are you planning to plant--early spring in cold soil or warmer soil



with a summer planting? What is the percentage of hard seed in the variety you are buying? Hard seed is slow to germinate and might take an extra time to come up. If you apply herbicides to a seeding, there is always the chance you will kill a percentage of small plants that germinated late. What type of seeding equipment are they using and what is the condition of the field being seeded? For example, tine harrows work well on a firm seedbed, but if the field is too light and fluffy, a tine harrow may put some seed too deep. A Brillion packer seeder works well on light fluffy soil, but in wet, heavy soil, seed ends up on the surface. There must be a zillion different ways to establish a stand. I know one grower that plows light soil without packing it, lays out hand line sprinklers in the field, hires a crop duster to fly on the seed, turns on the sprinklers and lets the impact of the sprinklers water in the seed. Lately, I've been impressed with light fall tillage, leaving some residual on the surface and the ground basically undisturbed all fall and winter. When spring comes, an application of Roundup is applied just before planting with a no-till drill. Using this technique, you don't promote weeds because you aren't disturbing the soil and conserving moisture.

3. "Commercial grower". They like to talk about yields. I encourage all producers to check out their State University's forage trials comparisons. Information can be found on the web, or the local County Extension office. Questions concerning fall dormancy and different disease resistance are common subjects. Generally, the lower the fall dormancy rating number, the more winter hardy the variety is.

In conclusion, there is never a simple answer to all the complex questions a "cheap guy, cowboy, or commercial grower" could ask.

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Shipping is an additional .18 to .35 per pound depending on weight and distance. Certified Shaw Alfalfa Seed has been developed by the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station for increased forage yield under dryland conditions. Shaw has a full dormancy rating of 3, which is similar to "5246", Ranger and Perry. Shaw has high resistance to Aphanomyces root rot, and northern root-knot nematode, resistance to Phytophthora root rot, pea aphid, spotted aphid, and has moderate resistance to verticillium wilt, anthracnose race 1, and stem nematode. It has produced significantly more forage under dryland conditions than Ladak 65, which is the standard dryland variety grown in the harsh environs of eastern Montana.

Randy DeRuwe

675 Barney Road, Touchet, WA. 99360 • e-mail: deruwe@wwics.com

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Spokane Ag *From Page 5*

will be featured in the Spokane Arena.

Keynote Speakers - Tuesday, Jan. 13, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., DoubleTree City Center Hotel. "Northwest Weather," an annual Farm Forum favorite with Dr. Art Douglas. "The Australian Wheat Marketing System," Nathan Brown, Australian Wheat Board, Ltd. Sponsored by the Washington Wheat Commission. Cost for main session speakers: \$8.00.

Congressman George Nethercutt - Wednesday, Jan. 14, 9:00 a.m., Ag Trade Center Theater, "Federal Farm Issues." Cost is included in the Ag Expo ticket.

Panel Discussion: "The Global Marketplace - Issues Impacting NW Cattle Producers" - Thursday, Jan. 15, 9:00 a.m., Les Schwab Room, Spokane Arena. This panel will address issues affecting cattle producers, including BSE, COOL, free trade, and animal ID programs. The panel participants will provide many different perspectives. This is an opportunity to have an interactive discussion about issues you are dealing with in your operation. Cost is included in the Ag Expo ticket.

Panel Discussion: "Rural Economic Development" - Thursday, Jan. 15, 1:00 pm, Ag Trade Center Theater. A panel discussion will focus on shrinking rural communities in our area and the economic hardship that these communities face. Panel participants will provide information about resources available, strategies for growth, and anecdotes about what has been successful for other small communities. Cost is included in the Ag Expo ticket.

Show hours - January 13, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, January 14, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, and January 15, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Cost - SPOKANE AG EXPO: \$9.00 for adults (includes free parking at the Arena), \$6.00 for youth (12-18 yrs) and children under 11 years are free. The Ag Expo pass is good for all three days of the show. FARM FORUM: \$8.00 for adults. Farm Forum tickets are for admission to the Tuesday events at the DoubleTree Hotel. All tickets can be purchased through the G&B ticket outlets at the Arena and Convention Center the week of the show.

For more information: www.agshow.org

Veterinary Pet Insurance Incentive

As employees are taking on heavier workloads and working longer days, more companies are seeking innovative ways to provide incentives and keep employee retention rates high. One voluntary employee benefit that continues to grow in popularity is health insurance for pets. The Weather Channel recently started offering Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI) plans to its employees, joining the ranks of hundreds of other companies including GMAC, Navy Federal Credit Union and Chipotle Mexican Grill to offer this benefit. For more information about VPI policies, call 800-USA-PETS (800-872-7387) or visit www.petinsurance.com

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BEARTOOTH RANCH TO DONATE HEIFER TO ANGUS FOUNDATION

Beartooth Ranch, Columbus, Montana, will donate one of their outstanding heifers to headline the 2004 Angus Foundation Heifer Package. The package will sell at the 2004 National Western Stock Show. Proceeds from the sale go directly to the Angus Foundation, which supports youth, education and research.

The sale of the package will begin the 2004 National Western Angus Bull Sale, set for 2 P.M., Thursday January 15 in the Beef Palace Auction Arena at the National Western Complex in Denver, Colorado.

The package includes BT Everelda Entense 51N, a January 2003 daughter

of Twin Valley Precision E161. A picture of the heifer and her full pedigree is available at www.angusfoundation.org. In addition to the heifer, the buyer receives 30 days of free insurance from American Live Stock Insurance Co., Geneva, Ill.; free transportation to the buyer's farm or ranch provided by Lathrop Livestock Transportation, Dundee, Ill; a flush and three embryo implants into the buyer's recipient cows from Trans Ova Genetics, Sioux Center, Iowa; a semen package from Genex; Ivomec provided by Merial; and Angus Information Management Software (ALMS). Package from the Association ALMS department, and a

banner ad from the Angus Production Inc., Web Marketing department.

"The generosity of Beartooth Ranch is greatly appreciated," says James Fisher, American Angus Association director of activities and junior activities. "Beartooth Ranch is donating a very complete heifer with outstanding genetics."

For more information about the Angus Foundation heifer package or ways you can contribute to the Angus Foundation, log onto www.angusfoundation.org or contact the American Angus Association at 816-383-5100 or visit with any regional manager.

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When you hear Auger flighting, most of you think of Egbers. We're very proud that we're so well known by our customers, "Says Doug Egbers, owner of Egbers Flighting & Supply." The Egbers family has been involved in the Auger and Agricultural Repair business since 1974." Doug and Laura Egbers are the newest members to take on the family business. In January, 2003 Egbers Farms Inc. was purchased and Egbers Flighting & Supply was set in place.

Egbers still offers a wide variety of auger flighting and recently they opened up their other stock items for resale. "In the past, we did not heavily advertise our stock of tube, shaft and auger accessories. There are so many companies that require minimum orders, we opened our stock items to better accommodate our customers," says Laura Egbers. Egbers has no minimum order requirements.

Also new with Egbers is their 20 ft. balancing machine. They have found a better-finished product when unloading augers are balanced. "We can take most of the vibration out these unloading augers," Doug Egbers says. The faster the auger runs the greater the need for the auger to be balanced. "We have customers drive from all over just to balance their grain cart augers."

Along with their many stock items, Egbers accommodates their customers by shipping complete augers. "We have a lot of talent in our company, and we like the variety of projects that we do," says Doug Egbers. "We've worked on augers as small as 2" in diameter for corn burners and 24" in diameter for a rock quarry.

Walking into their inventory shed, you see rows and rows of auger flighting. Around 1200 sizes are on hand at all times. 90% of these sizes are the 'Super Edge' Auger Flighting. Egbers possesses a talent for size and application. Just call on their sales staff and they can fit about any application you have for your combine, grain cart, transport auger and more.

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Merrick's A Division of Merrick Animal Nutrition, Inc.

Bringing together experience, research, performance and commitment.

Merrick's mission is to manufacture animal feed products and ingredients for a worldwide market, providing quality and service exceeding the expectations of our customers. Merrick's began selling dairy products to the feed industry in 1959. The experience and knowledge Merrick's brought to the industry helped establish the standards by which milk and fat products are judged today.

Innovative Product Development

After pioneering in the manufacture of 60% and 80% dry high fat products, we expanded this line to include 100% fat for both dairy cow and swine rations. Merrick's was the first to develop and introduce many innovative products that optimize the survival and health of baby animals. In 1982 Merrick's expanded



to manufacture and market a full line of branded milk replacers for calves, baby pigs, foals, lambs and kids. Over the years we have developed innovative supplements, additives and electrolytes for all species.

Milk Replacers . . . and So Much More!

Animal plasma in milk replacers was introduced into the market by Merrick's in 1989. In 1998 we developed a calf milk replacer formulated with spray dried animal blood cells. In the search to develop nutritionally advanced products for use in milk replacers, we test many alternative proteins. This testing resulted in the formulation of egg protein milk replacers for both Merrick's branded milk replacers and private label customers. In 1994 we developed a calf nursing bottle and a patented nipple featuring the first advance in calf nipple design in many years. That year Merrick's also entered the poultry feed industry with products to help producers maintain healthier animals.

Research and Product Formulations

At Merrick's, research is a basic belief and an ongoing process. Research into all aspects of animal nutrition results in the development of innovative products and in our ability to offer products with a wide range of protein and fat sources. The manufacture of these products allows us to fulfill a variety of needs to help guarantee the survival and health of valuable animals. Merrick's qualified nutritionists can help determine which product formulations will best meet producers needs. We also market a wide range of ingredients for swine and dairy rations, in addition to dry fat, including whey, lactose, animal blood cells and plasma.

Commitment

Merrick's is committed to develop, manufacture and market quality products. We maintain a high level of commitment to the individual needs and success of our customers and pro-

ducers. Merrick's technical staff is available to assist with any questions about our products and good animal management practices.

Merrick's, Inc. Brands:

Milk Replacers: Centurion, Millennium, Cell Star, Winter Star, Super Star, Gold Star, Silver Star and Blue Star for Calves; Soweena Litter-Gro and Litter Life for Baby Pigs; Super Lamb and Super Kid; Grow-N-Glow for Foals

Additives & Supplements: Plas/Magic, Super Calf-Kit, Super Guard - Type B for Calves

Electrolytes: Blue Ribbon Electrolytes with Direct-Fed Microbials – for all species

Poultry Vaccine Stabilizer: Vacci-Guard

Nursing Equipment: Super-Calf Nipples & Bottles Super-Calf Oral Bottle Feeder


Dry Fats: Soweena 7-60/4-80 & Select 100 for Swine Rations; Dairy Ultra 100 for Lactating Cows

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The Performance Leader in Baby Animal Nutrition

Profitability Will Be Focus Of Convention

Cattle industry attention, leadership and expertise will meet in Arizona at the Phoenix Civic Plaza this January when the cattle industry holds its 2004 Convention & Trade Show. The event will run from January 28 to January 31st.

Pocketbook issues will be examined in an effort to enhance producers' profitability as part of the many educational and informational offerings at the event. The Cattlemen's College, a trade show, entertainment and networking await the more than 5,500 cattle industry participants expected in Phoenix.

The annual convention and trade show

will again be hosted by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion & Research Board, NCBA, the American CattleWomen, Inc., National Cattlemen's Foundation and Cattle-Fax.

The convention will begin January 28th with Cattlemen's College, a series of education sessions sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health. The sessions seek to keep cattlemen and women up-to-date on may changes going on within the industry.

Included are sessions about selling on a grid system, how to detect and control BVD among your herd, process verification, how to boost profitability and other subjects.

The Cattle-Fax Outlook Seminar, which

will look at trends, strategies and management opportunities for 2004 and beyond, is free with your paid registration to Cattlemen's College. Cowboy poet and humorist Baxter Black will entertain folks at the Cattlemen's College Luncheon, also free to those registered for Cattlemen's College.

The Opening General Session, sponsored by Fort Dodge Animal Health, features speaker Gene Kranz, leader of the team of flight directors who brought the Apollo 13 spaceship safely back to Earth in 1970. For information, call Conventions, 303-694-0305.

Iron Mountain Bison Ranch

Ronald Thiel ran a successful Wyoming construction company with a track record that both competitors and casual observers admired. So what made him sell the company that his parents founded and turn to ranching?

You might call it the call of the wild, or, perhaps more accurately, a desire to reconnect with Wyoming's western heritage. Thiel might never have gone into ranching had the construction company he inherited from his father not done so well. Mike J. Thiel and his wife, Gertrude, founded the company and moved to Wyoming in 1953.

Ronald Thiel and his wife, Janice, purchased their first ranch in 1988 while still involved in the construction industry. They began raising buffalo and enjoyed it so much that they sold Mike

J. Thiel, Inc. to their employees.

Today, Thiel and his family operate five ranches in three states covering 60,000 acres. A son, Mike Thiel, runs a ranch in South Dakota, while a daughter Amy, and another son, Dan, and his wife, Patty, work on the Wyoming ranches which are split into two divisions - ranching and tourism.

Ranching operations are handled by the Iron Mountain Bison Ranch, which produces high-quality bison calves and bison meat. The meat is processed in Colorado Springs and distributed out of Denver through Rocky Mountain Natural Meats under the Great Range Bison label.

Thiel, who has been fascinated with buffalo for as long as he can remember, would have been content to raise buffalo had he not discovered that others shared

his fascination with these nomadic creatures. He spent so much time showing his buffalo to curious passersby that he decided to add a tourism component to his business.

Dan and Patty Thiel helped start the tourism division on Terry Bison Ranch. The ranch offers visitors a wide range of activities from horseback riding, pony rides and a tour of the bison held to fishing, horse-drawn wagon rides and cowboy poetry readings. The ranch also has a general store, restaurant and RV park. Other accommodations include cabins that sleep four and a 17-room bunkhouse that sleeps two per room.

The Terry Bison Ranch gives visitors the opportunity to reconnect with nature, while the Iron Mountain Bison Ranch ensures that an important piece of the American fabric of life lives on.

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Bale Buddy Mfg. Inc. Big Bale Flaker™ To Meet Your Needs

Bale Buddy Mfg. Inc. introduces the Big Bale Flaker. It is the original "Bale Flaker". Due to the extended drought in the late 90's in Southern Oklahoma, ranchers were forced to feed large quantities of hay that was brought in from long distances. The best way to transport this hay was in large square bales, but it left ranchers with the predicament of how to feed this hay efficiently. On Sparks Ranch, it was a problem that had to be addressed. Cattle were fed cubes by automatic cube feeders, which allowed one man to feed by himself. To have two men feed large square bales from one pickup was unacceptable. So ranch manager, John Sparks, and ranch foreman, Todd Whatley, proceeded to solve the problem. The idea was simple: Push the bale over the edge of the bed of the feed truck. However, controlling the amount of hay coming off was not quite so simple. Fortunately, Sparks Ranch had roughly 800 cows to feed which allowed John and Todd to experiment with several different models before designing the final prototype. It was first used in the winter of 1998 and has been in use for five years. Since it was designed by the same men who were going to use it, it was made as simple and convenient as possible. Cost efficiency and low maintenance were crucial to the final product. No unnecessary "bells and whistles" were allowed. The "Big Bale Flaker" is an all-electric, completely remote controlled system. It uses the 12V system on any truck or tractor as a power source. It fits on any flatbed and feeds any size of large square bale, using electric winches and motors. The "Big Bale Flaker" comes in single or multi-bale reloading units that allow more than one bale to be taken at a time. The reloading unit can carry from two to six bales. Another feature of the "Big Bale Flaker" is the optional "flaker assist". This device helps to break up tightly bound hay such as alfalfa. It is an electric motor spinning paddlewheels, which strike the top edge of the bale, causing even the tightest bale to come off one to two flakes at a time. The "Big Bale Flaker" is the original Bale Flaker. It is a safe, convenient way to feed hay from the comfort of your pickup or tractor. It is a labor saving device that is economical to operate. It sells for less than \$2,000 for the base unit and less than \$6,000 for the largest reloading unit. For more information call 580-868-3330 or 580-856-3637

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New Cheeseburger Fries Introduced

Cheeseburger Fries are the new snack food item, developed using beef checkoff funds to sweep America. The product represents an untapped opportunity to provide beef lovers with another way to enjoy beef. Capitalizing on the huge cheeseburger market, and consumer demand for more portable food options, the industry has produced Cheeseburger Fries, a tasty combination of ground beef and cheese in a French-fry-shape with a crispy coating. It has been described as a cross between a chicken nugget and a cheese stick, capable of being served with a variety of menu applications in a variety of flavors and shapes.

USDA Announces Initiative To Donate Dry Milk

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced recently that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will donate non-fat milk to non profit, faith-based and community organizations for use in meal services or for distribution to needy recipients. "Partnering with faith-based and community organizations to provide a healthy food staple builds on President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative", said Veneman. "This program will contribute to our efforts to meet nutritional requirements of those in need."

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North American Clun Forest Association

Many sheep producers raise Clun Forests because they are tired of pulling lambs, tired of sluggish lambs that don't seem to know where to find their first drink, tired of having to buy one ram for market lambs and another to produce replacement ewes, tired of having to pour pound after pound of grain into their market lambs because they just don't fatten on grass, tired of high-maintenance ewes, tired of ewes that don't look after their lambs, and just plain tired.

The dominant traits of the Clun center around lambing—despite their dark faces, Cluns are predominantly a maternal breed. They lamb easily by themselves, they produce tremendous amounts of milk, they are very protective of their lambs, and they generally drop twins. Experienced Clun breeders know that commercial, first-cross Clun ewes act like purebreds. Even the ewe lambs do well on their own. A breeder in Alberta reflects on first lambing Clun ewe lambs on 600 acres of unfenced bush: “I had

thought that the ewe lambs were going to be a nightmare on their own in the wide open spaces but they have surprised me. So far, only two needed any attention at all. A couple needed a few hours of quality time with their lambs inside a portable pen and then they were on their own. A couple had twins and needed no assistance from me.”

Clun lambs are vigorous from birth and quick to their feet. Although they do grow quickly, many people unfamiliar with them have the same comment: “Gee, they're kind of small, aren't they?” The answer is: “Weigh them.” These are compact animals with a lot more pounds per square inch than is apparent.

Clun purebreds and crossbreds alike are



meaty lambs with a good dressing percentage, consistent muscling, and a mild flavor. One breeder reports having two lambs, a Clun cross and a Suffolk-Finn-Targhee cross, slaughtered. Although there was a 20 pound difference in live weight between the two, there was only five pounds difference in the carcasses. It was easy, she reports, to tell which was the Clun: it was the one with the meaty leg. Another breeder, who caters to a trade at his local farmer's market, was short of ewes to turn into sausage and shishkebobs, so he bought five Hampshire ewes. He butchered them and five Clun ewes. “From the five Cluns,” he says, “we had a medium-sized mixing bowl of fat, and from the five Hampshires we had two five-gallon buckets full! Surprisingly, there wasn't much more meat from the Hampshires.”

Cluns are good sheep, working sheep developed by and for working shepherds. Try them; you'll see.

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Manage Farm Stress To Stay Safe

Farmers cope with more job stress than the average worker. In fact, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that farming is one of the 10 most stressful occupations and one of the most dangerous occupations - with an accident rate second only to mining.

The combination of stress and daily work around powerful machinery and/or large animals in varying and unpredictable situations can lead to accidents. The most effective way to counter farm stress is to recognize that some events can be stressful and to plan ways to deal with those stressors effectively - before symptoms become severe.

Stress can manifest itself as physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach problems, or as emotional symptoms through angry outbursts or depression. In most people, stress affects relationships with others and is often first noticed by someone other than the person experiencing it. Stress can also lead to action or behavior that results in a farm accident.

Research shows that even under similar circumstances, farmers react differently to

the amount of stress they experience, Slocombe said. This is because some farmers develop more effective coping strategies than others.

Stress levels among farmers may increase farm accidents.

Tips for managing stress:

- Recognize your personal symptoms and make a conscious decision to do something about them
- Eat nutritious foods daily. Just as machinery needs quality fuel, our bodies need nutritious food to function properly.
- Keep machinery and equipment in good working condition. Elimination potential breakdowns can minimize stressful events.
- Talk about your stress with family or a close friend.
- Do something relaxing every day - even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Exercise. Farmers get a lot of exercise, but it's not always vigorous enough. Try to do some type of aerobic exercise at least three times a week.

Sheep & Goat Industry Loans

National Livestock Producers Association (NLPA) Sheep and Goat Fund Committee recently announced the availability of loans at four percent interest projects aimed at improving the sheep and goat industries.

The fund is being used to benefit all sectors of the sheep and goat industries, with the sole exception of production loans which are outside the scope of the loan program.

A 1999 agreement between the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center and NLPA enables the Sheep Center funds to be used in the sheep and goat industries. The agreement allows NLPA to maintain a revolving fund used exclusively for loans to the sheep and goat industries.

Currently, the NLPA Sheep & Goat Fund Committee has extended 32 loans to 26 entities in 17 states and has received 53 applications. More than \$6.9 million has been loaned to sheep and goat businesses, leaving about \$7 million still available for new applications.

For more information, contact the NLPA at 1-800-237-7193 or go to: www.nlpa.org.

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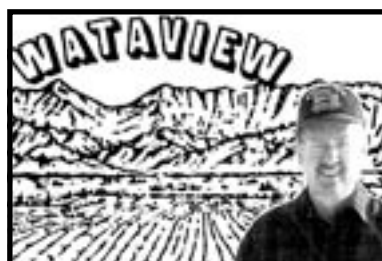
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Manhattan, MT 59741

406-282-7529
Fax 406-282-7189

PFENDLER POST & POLE, INC.

Pfendler Post & Pole started in business in April of 1985. Leo Pfendler is a transplant from Fryburg, Pennsylvania and moved out here in 1972. In August of 1975, he married a local girl. Sherry Skinner, who grew up on a ranch west of Hall. They have three children — Jeremy (24), Christian (22), and Racquel (15).

Leo enjoys the out-of-doors, and worked as a sawyer for several years in the Helmville and Drummond area, then for Energy Operating Corporation, an oil well drilling company that started exploratory drilling in Drummond. He worked away from home for several years before deciding that it was time to make Drummond his permanent residence. He began sawing timber on the right-of-way for the Bonneville Power Line. That is when he realized there was a need for a post and pole yard in the area, as there was none at that time. The Pfendlers purchased the post yard business from Paul Johnson at Race Track and during the winter of 1985-86, it was moved to its present location on the east end of Drummond. The present site, just off I-90 makes it very convenient for suppliers and buyers alike.

The business employs six full-time people, including Leo and Sherry, and provides jobs for many self-employed cutters. One of their most recent changes has been the hiring of Don Bickel, their manager. He oversees the telephone, takes orders, scales cutters, keeps track of the inventory, and does follow-up phone calls with customers. His expertise in the field has been a great asset to the business. This has freed Leo up to do more building, repair, and upgrade of the current equipment, so as to make the work easier and more efficient. Sherry is still doing the bookkeeping and runs for parts when needed.

The business supplies a variety of products, such as tree stakes, rails, posts, jack-legs, crotch-legs, doweled rail fencing, gates, and split-rail haystack panels. The product can be purchased either peeled or unpeeled, and untreated or treated with CCA wood preservative, which means shipping the material to Marks-



Miller Post & Pole in Clancy and back to us again.

The agricultural wood products such as tree stakes go primarily to California markets. The posts and rails go all over the United States and have been used in the furniture market, as well as for building fences. The wood chips are sold to Stone Container in Missoula and scrap wood is usually disposed of as firewood.

Some of the changes that have occurred in the past few years have been the buying of whip material. Whip material is logging truck loads of trees that have a 3-inch minimum top and the butt sizes vary from 5 inches up to 10 or 12 inches. When we first started in business, all of the material we bought was cut to length. Now we buy about 40% of our material through whips and 60% through cutters. Our supply is much larger and there seems to be a good demand for that supply.


Another recent purchase has been a new dowel machine from Harold Bouma of Choteau. The previous dowel machine made material uniform in size from 2 inches to 3-1/2 inches. This machine does material from 2 inches to 5 inches in diameter and does a better quality material, which has opened up new markets, especially in the furniture business. The markets range from all over the United States, even as far away as Hawaii, Australia, and Alaska.

Leo was a charter member of the Intermountain Roundwood Association and is now back on the board again. This association's purpose is to promote roundwood products and educate the public in the buying of high quality roundwood material. They have also been instrumental in the utilization of sub-sawlog material in areas where there are large amounts of smaller trees.

All in all, Leo and Sherry have come a long way in their business venture. There have been so many improvements made over the 18 years in business—they just wished they had taken more pictures when they first started to see how far they have really come.

It is Leo and Sherry's hope one day to have one of the children take over the business, but that has not come to pass yet.

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Medi-Dart offers three styles suitable for any operation. The Crossbow Medi-Dart uses a specially designed crossbow and it allows you to treat animals out of the window of your truck. Because it is so handy, the Crossbow Medi-Dart is the favorite among cattle producers. Would you like more information? Please call White Oak Enterprises at 417-246-5643

Angus Group *From Page 17*

ultrasound EPDs, or both). The Feedlot Value (\$F) assigns a \$ per head difference in expected progeny performance to post-weaning genetic merit. The Grid Value (\$G) combines quality grade and yield grade attributes, and is calculated for animals with carcass EPDs, ultrasound EPDs, or both types of EPDs. \$B facilitates what almost every beef breeder is already seeking simultaneous multi-trait genetic improvement for feedlot and carcass merit, based on dollars and cents.

Real-world economics of this \$Value concept are a powerful addition to the already sizeable list of 17 EPDs currently available through the American Angus Association. The \$Values were derived using available EPDs converted into economic terms using industry relevant components for feedlot performance (i.e. days on feed, ration cost, cash price, etc.) and carcass merit (i.e. choice-select spread, heavyweight and YG 4 & 5 discounts, etc.). These new tools provide commercial producers, along with seedstock breeders, an avenue to simplify the use of EPDs, evaluating feedlot and carcass separately or simultaneously.

Details on the \$B will be available online at www.angus.org during the release of the American Angus Association Spring 2004 Sire Evaluation Report. Questions can be directed to the American Angus Association Performance Programs Department at ahir@angus.org or 816-383-5100.

The American Angus Association, with headquarters in St. Joseph, Missouri, is the world's largest beef breed organization, providing programs and services to thousands of commercial producers and more than 34,000 members nationwide.



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At 5L Red Angus we are a family operation (Larry & Lisa Mehlhoff & our 5 children: Laramie (17), Larisa (15), Landon (12), Larinda (10), and Logan (6), located in the heart of the Ruby Valley near Sheridan, MT.

Larry's family started switching from Shorthorns to registered Red Angus in North Dakota in 1977. Larry borrowed money to begin his own herd in 1979. Though there have been some tough times, and changes of location through the years, with the Lord's help, our herd has grown to 800 mother cows plus 300 bred heifers. We have built our herd using an extensive A.I. program. We A.I. most of the cows and put in around 150 embryos. In the past few years, we have been using some top black angus sires to widen our red angus gene pool. As a result we also sell some black, red-carrier bulls we call "profit plus" bulls.

We run the operation as a family, with some seasonal help during calving and in the summer for irrigation. Our kids are a very viable part of our operation. We lease most of the ground we run on, as land is too costly in this area for us to own it. We run on around 2000 irrigated acres, along with some foothill country. We put up 4000 ton of hay, along with oat, barley and pea silage. We also do some custom haying and custom combining in the area. We have a small feedlot where



we performance test our own bulls on a high roughage ration. Most of our male calves are left bulls until weaning in September. Then the majority of them are castrated and fed until the end of November when they are contracted for delivery. Only the top bulls go on test and are sold as bulls. We sell our bulls at our annual production sale the 2nd Tuesday in March at the ranch, usually along with some yearling heifers.

Our cows calve in February and March. In our area, it is usually close to the first

of June before we can turn them out on summer pasture, so we A.I. up until that time. We do not creep feed our calves - the cow has to do it on her own. We focus on raising the moderate, easy fleshing kind of cattle, with good dispositions, that do all things well. We use ultrasound and actual kill data to ensure our cattle have carcass merit as well. We breed for balance in all traits.

We thank the Lord for this way of life and for His many blessings.

Larry & Lisa Mehlhoff & Family

The Larry Mehlhoff Family
Back: Laramie, Lisa, Larry, Landon
Front: Larisa, Logan, Larinda



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