WY. Dept. of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0100

IN THIS ISSUE

Agriculture Producer Research Grant Program 1

OBJECTION! Forest Service Implements New Objection Process ... 2

Hay Meadows: Enhancement Through Seeding 3

Mediation and USDA Disaster Relief Program 4

The Storm 5

Allotment Planning Meetings: Taking the Fast Lane 6

Drought Contingency Plan Webinar Announced 7

Upcoming Events 8

Quotable Quotes

"I've often said there's nothing better for the inside of a man than the outside of a horse.
-Ronald Reagan

* Banner Photo Courtesy of Mark Grocke

Agriculture Producer Research Grant Program

Justin Caudill, Ag Program Coordinator

The Agriculture Producer Research Grant Program (APRGP) is the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) newest grants program, with the first two Requests for Proposal (RFP) occurring in the fall and winter of 2013. The APRG Program was developed to have Wyoming's agriculture producers participate and lead this program by identifying issues affecting agriculture operations, and through initiating/participating in the research.

The APRGP provides funds to Wyoming's agriculture producers and educational entities, working in cooperation towards developing and achieving applied research related to agriculture needs and ideas. The main goal of the program is to provide the opportunity for research that can be completed quickly, projects cannot exceed three years. Information and outcomes gained from APRGP projects are to be distributed to Wyoming's producers, who then can apply the actions/protections/procedures back on the ground to enhance the natural resource base for their operations, economic viability of agriculture ventures, and/or quality of life for production agriculture within the state.

The APRGP Program was funded by the Wyoming State Legislature in 2013-14 at $200,000 for the program, having a $20,000 per project limit. The WDA has already awarded the entire $200,000 on eleven worthy projects. Some of the issues the research project are dealing with include; Bulbous Bluegrass-

Continued on page 7

If you have any questions or are interested in this program please view our website at http://agriculture.wy.gov/divisions/nrp/aprg-program or contact the WDA Natural Resources and Policy Division at 307-777-7323, or Justin Caudill at (307) 352-0378.

OBJECTION!

Forest Service Implements New Objection Process

Chris Wichmann, Manager

The Forest Service (FS) has developed a new process to allow for objections to occur on proposed actions during the pre-decisional administrative review process of FS projects. This new process will eliminate any appeals or protests. In Wyoming, the new objection process will be implemented for the Shoshone National Forest Land Management Plan and for the Upper Green River Area Rangeland Project (to name a few), but will be the FS's process for all future projects.

Who may object: The objection process determines who may file an objection, including"individuals and entities" who have submitted timely and specific comments regarding the proposed project, during the designated public comment time period. It is important for those who want to maintain "standing" in a project's objection process to submit written comments during scoping or other presented public comment opportunity.

Timeline: The start of the objection-filing process begins the day after the publication of a legal notice in the newspaper of record or the Federal Register. No extensions are allowed, with the exception of the end date landing on a Saturday or Sunday. All objections must be filed within 30 days of the legal notice, if the project is an authorized hazardous fuels reduction process, or within 45 days of the legal notice, if the proposal is a project or activity implementing a land management plan.

Filing an Objection: Individuals or entities must file objections with the reviewing officer in writing. The objection must be based on previously submitted comments, unless the objector can prove new information is available since the original comments were submitted. The objection must include the following: Name and Address; Signature; Name of the proposed project; Name and title of responsible official; Name of Forest or Ranger District project is located; Include specific issues related to the proposed project; and a statement showing the connection between prior comments and the objection.

Resolution of Objections: The reviewing officer will provide written response. This response may not address every individual point, but will provide reasons for the response. In addition to this section, in the case where several objections are received the reviewing officer may consolidate the objections and provide one or more responses. The objectors may request or the reviewing officer may choose to meet with the objectors to discuss issues raised in the objections and potential resolutions. ✦

To receive an electronic or printed copy of The Cornerpost Newsletter, please contact Michelle MacDonald at: 307-777-7323 or michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov.

Our newsletter is also found on the Wyoming Department of Agriculture website: http://agriculture.wy.gov/divisions/nrp

Hay Meadows:
Enhancement through Seeding

Joe Budd, Senior Policy Analyst

Hay is an invaluable product on most ranches in Wyoming. With recent shortages around the nation, hectic weather and hay prices not wanting to come down, the production of a high quality, sustainable hay crop is in every operator's best interest.

Many hayfields around the state have slowly decreased in productivity and increased fertilizer inputs are not going to get us over the production plateau. The word "diversity" gets thrown around a lot, and is used incorrectly in many cases. Some think of a "diverse" hay field as a few grass species with a bit of alfalfa, but this is not truly diverse.

One of the simplest ways to increase tonnage, nutritional value and overall quality of hay, may be through seeding with a focus on increasing true diversity and soil health. This may mean adding some warm season grasses, legumes and if possible, some tubers. A truly diverse hayfield would include warm and cool season grasses, warm and cool season legumes and warm and cool season tubers. In some areas, this is unrealistic and the closest thing to warm season plants may be different cool season species or varieties. Selecting cool season species based upon specific varieties that are hardier, slower growing or later maturing may be the best approach in these areas.

Where possible, the addition of a tuber like carrots can open up soil macropores and increase infiltration without having to plow the whole field. The tops are highly palatable and, if the carrot stays in the ground, the added organic matter can help reduce fertilizer inputs and increase microflora and microfauna in the soils. Adding one tuber, warm or cool season, can dramatically improve soil health and carbon to nitrogen (C:N) ratios.

In addition to tubers, warm season grasses and legumes can dramatically increase production and soil fertility. Producers can add Bluestem and Indiangrass to increase production later in the year. Sainfoin could be added to a seed mix for some late season, non-bloat feed or added tonnage. Seeding techniques also play a large role in improved soil health and therefore, increased production.

Species	Growth Form	Growth Season	Root Size/Depth	Ease of Establishment	Weed Suppression	Other Info
Grasses						
Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)	Rhizomatous Grass (N)	Cool	small-med; medium	moderate	excellent	extremely hardy, good forage/hay
Intermediate Wheatgrass (*Thinopyrum intermedium*)	Rhizomatous Grass (I)	Cool	small-med; medium	easy	excellent	highly palatable, low maintenance, resistant to mites
Meadow Brome (*Bromus biebersteinii*)	Rhizomatous Grass (I)	Cool	small-med; shallow	easy	good	excellent hay, compatible w/ legume component
Orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*)	Bunchgrass (I)	Cool	small-med; medium	easy	good	winter hardy varieties, maturation varies, good hay crop
Russian Wildrye (Elymus junea)	Bunchgrass (I)	Cool	medium; deep	moderate - difficult	excellent	very winter hardy, deep roots help prevent sodding of other grass spp.
Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*)	Rhizomatous Grass (I)	Cool	medium; medium	easy	very good	hardy, can be mistreated, roots to 5'+
Timothy (*Phleum pratense*)	Rhizomatous Grass (I)	Cool	medium; medium	easy	good	excellent hay and cover for wildlife, requires more water than other spp.
Creeping Foxtail (*Alopecurus arundinaceus*)	Rhizomatous Grass (I)	Cool	small-med; medium	easy	good	good cover and hay, requires more water than other spp.
Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)	Very Tall Bunchgrass (N)	Warm	med-large; deep -very deep	moderate - difficult	fair	warm season grass that is high production, low input, roots can extend past 12'
Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)	Tall Bunchgrass (N)	Warm	medium; deep	moderate - difficult	poor	more favorable for wildlife than Big Bluestem
Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)	Rhizomatous Grass (N)	Warm	medium; medium	difficult	fair	excellent for nesting habitat, good forage or hay
Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)	Rhizomatous Grass (N)	Warm	small-med; medium	moderate	good	winter hardy, high TDN
Prairie Sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*)	Rhizomatous Grass (N)	Warm	med-large; deep -very deep	moderate	good	can form sod as well as deeper roots
Tubers						
Biscuitroot (*Lomatium spp.*)	Tuber (N)	Cool	large; medium	easy	poor	hardy native that will aid in formation of macropores
Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*)	Tuber (N)	Cool	large; med-deep	moderate - difficult	fair	excellent for macropore formation and forage for wildlife/livestock
Wild Onion (*Allium spp.*)	Tuber (N)	Cool	medium; shallow	moderate	poor	increases macropores near surface
Turnip (*Brassica rapa*)	Tuber (I)	Warm	large; med-deep	moderate - difficult	fair	tops provide good forage and roots increase macropores
Legumes						
Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)	Legume (I)	Cool	med-large; deep -very deep	easy	good	mix different types of alfalfa to get better results and capatalize on benefits of each variety
White Clover (*Trifolium repens*)	Legume (I)	Cool	small-med; shallow	easy	good	can be added to alfalfa mix to increase tonnage, excellent for wildlife and soils
Mammoth Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*)	Legume (I)	Cool	small - med; shallow - med	easy	good	add to alfalfa mix to increase tonnage, excellent for wildlife and soils
Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)	Legume (I)	Warm	medium; medium	moderate	fair-good	compliments other legumes and increases tonnage, excellent forage, non-bloat
Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*)	Legume (I)	Warm	medium; medium - deep	easy	fair	excellent forage for wildlife and livestock, rapid re-growth, non-bloat

Overall, the simple addition of a few plants may increase tonnage, lower input cost, increase nutritional value, add habitat and change forage dynamics of the field while

Continued on page 5

Mediation and USDA Disaster Relief Program

Lucy Pauley, Mediation Program Coordinator

In mid-March, Joe Producer had 300 pairs on winter pasture when a heavy snowstorm came through and lasted several days. Joe tried to get out to check on his animals and provide supplemental feed and water but the snow had piled up and drifted in such a way that he couldn't get out of the barnyard. When the storm finally passed, Joe went out to survey the damage and unfortunately found a higher than normal percentage of death loss in his cattle. He took pictures and tried to document the loss as best he could. Because Joe had heard about the Livestock Indemnity Payments (LIP) with USDA-FSA, he knew that he might be eligible for compensation for up to 75% of his documented loss above the normal mortality rate. Joe submitted the necessary paperwork on time. Later, he received an adverse decision letter from the agency indicating that LIP application was denied. As part of the appeal process, Joe requested mediation with FSA to further discuss the issue.

The passage of the 2014 Farm Bill brought back to life two disaster relief programs for Wyoming producers – the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

The programs will be retroactive to 2012 and producers may start signing up on or before April 15, 2014. As with other USDA programs, producers who do not agree with the agency's determination can ask for reconsideration, appeal to the state committee, request mediation, or appeal to the National Appeals Division (NAD). The Wyoming Agriculture & Natural Resources Mediation Program has received a few requests for assistance regarding disaster relief programs in previous years and encourages producers to consider using the process to resolve these issues.

In the example above, Joe will need to pay careful attention to the timeline for his appeal. He'll need to request mediation within the window laid out in his adverse decision letter. After officially requesting mediation, Joe will sit down with the mediator and the local USDA-FSA representative and talk about the situation that has occurred. Joe may gain a better understanding of the rules and regulations governing the disaster relief program. While not every case may reach an agreement, in some instances producers, like Joe, may be able to provide additional documentation in the form of time-stamped photographs or paperwork showing livestock ownership, to help strengthen his claim. Joe may also gain a better understanding of the program to help him with future disaster related events. If mediation is not successful, Joe retains his appeal rights and can move to the next step in the process. ✦ *For more information on mediation, contact Lucy Pauley at (307) 777-8788 or by email at lucy.pauley@wyo.gov.*

Additional information on these programs can be found on the USDA website at:

Livestock Indemnity Program

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20140214_distr_en_lfp.html

Livestock Forage Disaster Program

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20140212_distr_en_lip.html

The Storm

Larry Bentley, Eastern Wyoming Consultant

The devastating snowstorm in the fall of 2013 will long be remembered by livestock producers of Wyoming and South Dakota for the physical and financial losses it created. The winter of 1977, and many other storms, some local and some west-wide, were known for the cold, wind, and snow impacting the agriculture industry. However, no storms have impacted the livestock industry as greatly as the fall and winter storms of 1886 and 1887.

The spring and summer of 1886 were ideal for the ranchers, with stands of native grasses waving in the warm breezes of fall. But all that changed just before mid-night on November 13, 1886.

The snow started to fall, and a cold north wind blew causing cattle to shelter in draws and other natural wind breaks. The snow and wind continued for the rest of November and into early January of 1887.

In January a warm-up lasting just long enough to melt the surface of the snow covering the grass; then the temperatures plunged to 20, 30, 40 below for days on end, freezing the melted snow into a sheet of solid ice. More snow fell and drifted cattle, already weakened by the cold and poor feed, died by the tens of thousands.

Those cattle that didn't die, drifted many miles from the home range before the blizzards. Some cattle from southern Wyoming ended up as far south as Texas.

The weather warmed again in February, but was once again short lived and again the melting the snow became a sheet of ice, as the cold and snow returned. This cold lasted until March when spring finally came.

As the snow melted, tens of thousands of livestock carcasses were uncovered and the true losses were realized. (Charles Wells recorded that over 100 carcasses per hour, floated down the Big Horn River during the flood stage.)

The winter storms during the fall and winter of 1886-87 led to more changes in the management of the western livestock business than any other single event in western history. ✦

Hay Meadows (continued from page 3)

improving soil health. The variations in root depth, growth season, plant type, water requirements and various differing soil benefits from a healthy mixture of plants can lead to more productive soils and a better hay crop. More information on seed mixes, improved seeding techniques (such as no-till), basic soil science and simple soil testing kits can be found on the NRCS's website(s) under Soil Health or on YouTube (keywords: NRCS soil health). The table on page 5 is a starting point for creating a seed mix with endless possibilities. ✦

Allotment Planning Meetings:

Taking the Driver's Seat!

Justin Williams, Senior Policy Analyst

Long gone are the days where public grazing permittees could meet out in the field with their Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS) range cons and make management decisions on a given grazing permit and seal the deal with a hand shake. Recent environmental organization interest and litigation to remove livestock grazing from public lands has shifted the BLM and USFS' approach to managing livestock grazing permits.

While the approach varies greatly across the state and between federal agencies, the end result remains the same; management decisions and discussions are much more publicly advertised and often inclusive of interested public. Most permittees may only meet with their range con once before grazing begins and once after to discuss terms and conditions, actual use, or other basic regulatory allotment management topics. Other issues may surface, including communication issues or resource concerns requiring a more in-depth discussion or outside expertise to help resolve matters, which may also take a number of meetings.

Instead of waiting for the BLM or USFS range con to initiate the meeting, permittees can take the driver's seat and schedule additional planning meetings regarding their allotment. Some of the advantages of permittee initiated meetings include: creating the agenda, developing the invite list, and ensuring adequate time to prepare for the following grazing season. We recommend the following basic organizational tips for successful planning meetings:

- Develop an agenda with only those items you can cover in the appropriated time.
- Keep meetings to no more than a couple of hours.
- Locate and reserve a neutral, off-site location for the meeting, such as a community center or conservation district office. Avoid having the meeting at the BLM or USFS office, which may convey the meeting as a public meeting.
- Develop a list of appropriate staff to participate, including consultants, conservation district staff, Extension staff, in addition to federal staff.
- Provide a number of meeting dates for options to ensure high participation.
- Keep detailed minutes of the meeting, including an action item list, with the person(s) who will take the task and a timeline for them to complete the task. Tape recording the meeting can help capture what was discussed and used to develop minutes. Send a draft copy of the minutes to those in attendance to allow for changes.
- Set the next meeting date before the meeting ends.

Permittee initiated meetings are proving invaluable in areas across the state. The Wyoming Department of Agriculture Natural Resources and Policy division is always available to provide assistance or attend and help facilitate meetings. ✦

Americans with Disabilities Act

To obtain this publication in an alternative format, contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7323.

APRGP(continued from page 1)

Control, Effect of Time and Fertilizer Management on Quinoa Production, Perennial Cool Season Grasses for Hay Production, Genetic Resistance to High Altitude Disease in Cattle, Harvest Losses in Dry Bean Production, Development and Validation of PCR test for *Brucella abortus.*

As you can see the issues these projects are investigating are very diverse and wide ranging. The short list of projects in this article relate to invasive plants, timing of nutrition and production for a new and traditional crops in Wyoming, hay production, and livestock health issues. So if you have an interest in studying some aspect of your enterprise having the potential to benefit you and other producers in your area, or across Wyoming keep this program in mind. The WDA strongly encourages agriculture producers and researches to utilize this program.

As stated earlier the current funds for APRGP have been awarded, however the program was refunded for the 2015-16 biennium. The WDA will most likely advertise an RFP mid-spring of 2014. If advertised, the RFP will have a 45 day window before applications are due. If you would like to develop an idea, please work with someone you already know associated with education and or research, or contact a UW Ag-Extension Rangeland Educator or the WDA Natural Resources and Policy for help in finding a researcher to work with. ✦

Drought Contingency Plan Webinar Announced!

The Natural Resources & Policy Section is excited to announce that our Drought Contingency Plan Workshop for USFS and BLM permittees will be conducted via webinar on May 6th. More details will be available soon and on our website at http://wyagric.state.wy.us/divisions/nrp/mediation-program/drought-workshops.

The webinar will help participants understand the role of drought contingency plans play with respect to their grazing permit and the importance of developing a plan. Along with this, there will be a focus on improving dialogue with federal agencies and developing a better understanding of the financial impacts of proactive planning for drought by comparing cost-savings of a contingency plan to costs for emergency feed, transportation and more.

During the webinar, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and hear from others about best management practices and resources in their specific region to help address issues that arise during a drought. Specifically, the webinar will cover basic components of drought contingency plans, communication strategies between permittees and federal agencies, the financial impacts of proactive drought planning and more.

Partners for this project include the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, the Wyoming State Grazing Board the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. ✦

WYOMING
Drought Contingency
WORKSHOP

For more information about the May 6th webinar, contact Lucy Pauley by phone (307) 777-8788 or email lucy.pauley@wyo.gov.

The webinar is made possible in part by a grant from the Western Center for Risk Management, through work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2010-49200-06203.

Upcoming Events

April 8-10:	WACD Module II Water Quality Training, Lander (Tentative)
April 14-15:	WY Board of Agriculture Meeting, Cheyenne
May 6:	Drought Contingency Plan Webinar
May 28-30:	Water Quality Re-Certification, Casper
June 3:	WACD Spring Board Meeting, Casper
June 4-7:	WY Stock Growers Association Summer Convention, Cody
June 10:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call
July 8:	WY Board of Agriculture Conference Call
July 8-9:	WACD Module III Water Quality Training, Lander (Tentative)
July 19-22:	National Association of Conservation Districts Summer Board Meeting, Indianapolis
August 9:	Kaycee Sheep Herders Rodeo, Kaycee
August 9-16:	Wyoming State Fair, Douglas

If you have questions or comments about the information in this newsletter, please contact Michelle MacDonald, WY Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Policy Division at 307.777.7323 or michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov.

The Corner Post
Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources & Policy Division
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0100