

April 2026

RANGE & PASTURE *Journal*

~ Providing Stewardship Strategies For Northern Plains Grasslands ~



Range & Pasture Journal is sponsored
by the S.D. Grassland Coalition and
the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Published by
RL Publications, Philip, SD

Special insert in the April 29, 2026 edition
of *The Cattle Business Weekly*

Inside:

Leopold Winners for S.D. & Neb.
PAGE 4 & 8

"Grazing the Heartlands" Bus Tour
PAGE 4

Managing Burned Pastures After Wildfire
PAGE 5

NEBRASKA Grazing Lands Coalition

NGLC Welcomes Laura Nelson as Executive Director

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition has named Laura Nelson as its new Executive Director.

Nelson brings more than a decade of experience in agriculture communications, organizational leadership, and rancher-led conservation. For the past ten months, she has served as NGLC's Statewide Grassland Coordinator, where she led the development and launch of the Nebraska Grassland Alliance — a collaborative network uniting ranchers, conservation professionals and community leaders around a shared commitment to healthy, working grasslands.

"I'm grateful for the strong foundation so many have helped build over the past two and a half decades at NGLC, and for the growth and positive change Leah led over the past three years," Nelson said. "I look forward to building on that momentum with the board, staff, and partners as we continue supporting Nebraska's ranching families and the grasslands we all depend on."

Nelson's agricultural roots are in Kimball County, where her family still farms and ranches. She began her career writing for the Certified Angus Beef brand before spending nearly a decade

living and working in Montana. There, she served as editor and manager of an award-winning weekly newspaper and later founded an agriculture communications company, providing strategic communications and project management for organizations including the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, the Montana Environmental Stewardship Award Program, and the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance. She returned to Nebraska in 2021 and now resides in Bassett.

As Executive Director, Nelson will work alongside the board and staff to guide strategic direction, partnerships, and pro-



Laura Nelson, NGLC Executive Director

grams advancing NGLC's mission to enhance Nebraska's grasslands through voluntary technical assistance, education, and public awareness.

The board and NGLC staff are deeply grateful for the dedication, leadership, and hard work that former Executive Director Leah Peterson contributed during her tenure.

Young Adult Ranching for Profit School to be Held in August

Registration is now open for Aug. 4-7 ranch business training in Kimball, Nebraska

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) will host its annual Young Adult Ranching for Profit School Aug. 4-7 in Kimball, Neb. The school is a multi-day, hands-on learning experience designed specifically for producers ages 18-25.

The school is led by Dallas Mount, CEO of Ranch Management Consultants. Mount brings decades of experience helping producers improve profitability, grazing management, and decision-making. This intensive program blends classroom learning, real-world ranch tours, and peer-to-peer discussion to help young producers build the busi-

ness, economic, and grazing management skills needed to run profitable, resilient ranch businesses.

What participants will experience

Over four days, attendees will dive into topics such as:

- Understanding paradigms, decision-making, and the drivers of profit
- Applying economic theory to real ranch scenarios
- Interpreting financial numbers and enterprise performance
- Grazing management fundamentals: soil, plants, animals, and planning
- Accountability, action planning, and putting it all together

Who should attend



Young Adult Ranching for Profit School will be held Aug. 4-7 in Kimball, Neb. It is for producers ages 18-25.

This program is ideal for:

- Young adults preparing to enter a family operation
- Beginning ranchers building foundational business and grazing skills
- Students or recent graduates exploring careers in agriculture
- Young producers seeking practical tools to

improve profitability and land stewardship

Registration

The cost is \$400 per person, which includes instruction, materials, and meals.

Registration and full details are available at: <https://nebraskagrazinglands.org/Events/young-adult-ranching-for-profit-school>

NGLC Board of Directors

Sandy Montague-Roes Chairman	Angela Redman Assistant Director (308) 750-2330 angela@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Alex McKiernan Vice Chair	Alex Petersen Burn Coordinator (308) 730-2602 alexpetersen@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Logan Pribbeno Treasurer	Doug Whisenhunt Burn Coordinator (308) 520-1317 doug@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Tim Kalkowski Past Chair	Jack Arterburn Western Nebraska Program Coordinator (308) 249-3717 jack@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Ron Bolze	Laura Nelson Statewide Grasslands Coordinator (308) 235-8420 laura@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Corey Cable	Michele Michaelson Office Manager (402) 707-4570 officemanager@nebraskagrazinglands.org
Vaughn Hinrichs	Twila Phillips Grants Administrator & Accountant Sandhills RC & D (308) 546-9081 (cell) (307) 546-0636 (work) twila@sandhillsrcd.org
Sheila Luoma	
Matt McGinn	
Wayne Rasmussen Honorary Board Member	
Brian Sprenger	
Dan Stelling	
Weston Svoboda	
Paul Swanson	
Vern Terrell	
NGLC Staff Laura Nelson Executive Director (308) 235-8420 laura@nebraskagrazinglands.org	

NEBRASKA Grazing Lands Coalition

Follow us on...

Website nebraskagrazinglands.org

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/nebraskagrazinglandscoalition/>

Instagram @negrazinglands

Twitter/X @NEgrazinglands

LinkedIn Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

On the Cover:

Sharp-tailed Grouse in the Sandhills and one of Nebraska's historic old windmills. Photos by Nicole Loudon, Sandhills Prairie Girl.

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) is a part of a national effort to enhance the resource stewardship and success of grazing land-dependent operations. Objectives of the NGLC board, made up of mostly ranchers, are to strengthen partnerships, promote volunteer assistance and participation, and promote education, training, appreciation, advocacy, and public awareness of the 23 million acres of grazing lands in Nebraska.

Specific projects include sponsoring statewide grazing educational opportunities, collaboration with other partners and agencies focused on grazing management, promotion of farm and ranch transition planning and education, and advocacy for the stewardship of Nebraska's grasslands.

Save the date for these upcoming NGLC events!

May 13: FREE Webinar - Planning Ahead: Safeguarding Your Operation

May 14: Nebraska Grassland Alliance All-Alliance Gathering - VIRTUAL

July 28-30: Sandhills Grazing School - Anselmo, NE

Aug. 4-5: NE Grassland Alliance Gathering & Nebraska Grazing Conf. - Kearney, NE

Aug. 4-7: Young Adult Ranching for Profit, Kimball, NE

Aug 24-26: Panhandle Grazing School - Sidney, NE

Sept. 23-24: National Grazing Land Coalition Bus Tour - Sioux Falls, SD

WWW.NEBRASKAGRAZINGLANDS.ORG

Photo by Angela Redman

SDGC Board of Directors

<p>Mike McKernan Chairman 46754 150th St Twin Brooks, SD 57269 605-880-4221 mike.mckernan10@gmail.com</p>	<p>Drew Anderson 19955 Lemon Lake Rd Lemmon, SD 57638 701-770-3237</p>
<p>James Faulstich Vice Chairman 33795 186th St Highmore, SD 57345 605-852-2622 faulstich@venturecomm.net</p>	<p>Jared Knock 41872 SD Hwy 28 Carpenter, SD 57322 605-881-2375</p>
<p>Larry Wagner Secretary 26314 350th Ave Chamberlain, SD 57325 605-894-4448 wagner@midstatesd.net</p>	<p>Ben Juelfs 11578 Wagner Rd Prairie City, SD 57649 605-855-2515</p>
<p>Directors Riley Kammerer 22049 Elk Vale Rd Piedmont, SD 57769 605-209-3544 kammerer-barubeef@gmail.com</p>	<p>Wacey Kirkpatrick 19143 Robbs Flat Rd Midland, SD 57552 605-567-3313</p>
<p>Jori Smiley 17811 Tama Rd Union Center, SD 57787 605-985-5268</p>	<p>AJ Munger 34261 200th St. Highmore, SD 57345 605-521-4468</p>
<p>Jeff Zimprich, PO Box 16, Brandon, SD 57005 (712) 254-0804 jzimp1962@gmail.com</p>	<p>Coordinator Judge Jessop 605-280-0127 jjessop@kennebectelephone.com</p>

Education/Consultant Specialist
Dan Rasmussen

Advisors & Consultants
Sandy Smart
Pete Bauman



GRASSLAND COALITION

Attend a Grazing School This Year

If you haven't attended one of the grazing schools hosted by the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition yet, let 2026 be the year.

Join area ranchers and land managers in a hands-on environment focused on improving grazing management.

Topics include setting goals, assessing pasture health and stocking rates, economics, fence and water sys-

tems, weed issues and more. All will provide information that can be considered and applied on your farm or ranch.

Two Grazing Schools will be host this year.

June 16-18 it will be held in Wall, South Dakota. Then on Sept. 9-11 another one will be held in Chamberlain, South Dakota.

Cost is \$300 for current SDGC members or \$335 for non-mem-



bers. \$150 for additional attendees from the same operation. The fee includes all meals and materials.

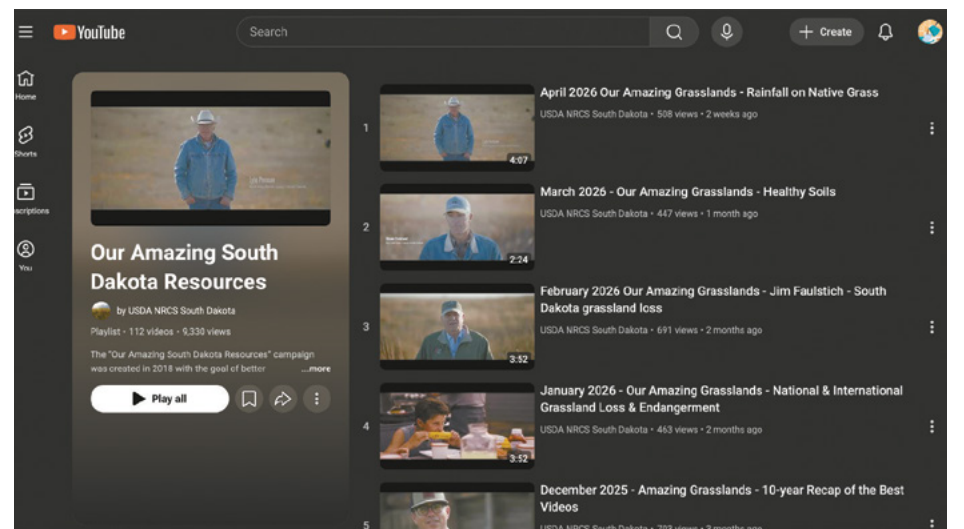
Reserve your spot by registering today. Visit <https://sdgrass.org/grazingschool/> for more and registration.

Check Out These 'Amazing' Videos

Back in 2018, the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition became involved with two campaigns created with the goal of better communicating the importance and value of grasslands and soil resources throughout the state.

The campaigns have striven to better show what South Dakota farmers and ranchers are doing to protect and enhance these resources.

Each video was created utilizing footage from interviews with South Dakota farmers and ranchers and showcases footage of their farming and ranching operations.



The USDA NRCS South Dakota YouTube Channel houses the videos for the "Our Amazing South Dakota Resources" and the

"Our Amazing Grasslands" videos.

By visiting the video archives on the YouTube site you can hear from farmers and

ranchers on what has worked for their operations. You will also gain insight from NRCS professionals and longtime ag experts.

"A unified voice for managing South Dakota's grass resource"

The Coalition's goal is to provide local leadership and guidance in a cooperative effort, and provide information and technical assistance to grassland managers.

By focusing the collective power of resource management agencies, producer organizations, educational institutions, professional societies, environmental organizations and private grassland managers, much can be accomplished.

To that end, the Coalition is a major partner in the Grassland Management and Planning Project. For more detailed information on this project, visit sdconservation.org and click on Grassland.

To become a member, clip and mail the form below with your payment.

SD GRASSLAND COALITION MEMBERSHIP - \$30/yr or \$55/2 yrs.

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

E-mail Address _____

Return to: Judge Jessop
PO Box 401 • Presho, SD 57568



GRASSLAND COALITION

"A Unified voice for managing South Dakota's grass resource."



For information contact Judge Jessop • 605-280-0127
judge.jessop@sdconservation.net • www.sdgrass.org

Upcoming Events

June 3

Grazing Workshop, Bien Ranch, Veblen, SD

June 3-4

Birds At Home on the Range Tour, Bien Ranch, Veblen, SD

June 16-18

Wall Grazing School, Wall, SD

June 22-24

Young Adult Ranching for Profit Workshop, Buffalo, WY

September 9-11

Chamberlain Grazing School, Chamberlain/Oacoma

September 23-24

NatGLCI Tour, Sioux Falls, SD

December 3-4

Annual Conference, The Box, Box Elder

Range & Pasture Journal
Sponsored by the South Dakota Grassland Coalition & Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Published by RL Publications

Editorial:
Codi Vallery-Mills

Graphic Design:
Courtney Gebes
Cam Fagerhaug
Jessica Kammerer
Taylor Grill

Sale Representatives:

Donnie Leddy (605) 695-0113
Ryan Casteel (605) 423-6000
Andy Rest (406) 670-5678
Jay Carlson (913) 268-5725
Trenton Solida (785) 302-0717
Kadon Leddy (605) 924-0757
Jory Boote (701) 789-7047

Darling Creek Ranch to Receive South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award

Dan and Sharon Anderson's Darling Creek Ranch has been selected as the 2026 South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award® recipient.

The \$10,000 award honors ranchers, farmers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working land.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present Leopold Conservation Awards to private landowners in 28 states. In South Dakota, the award is presented with the South Dakota Grassland Coalition and South Dakota Soil Health Coalition.

The Dan and Sharon Anderson family owns and operates Darling Creek Ranch, located near Meadow in Perkins County. They will be formally presented with the South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award later this year.

The award, given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to environmental improvement. In his influential 1949 book, "A Sand

County Almanac," Leopold advocated for "a land ethic," an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

The Andersons are cattle and sheep ranchers who showcase the regenerative ability of rangelands and native grasses to improve soil health, water and air quality, and wildlife habitat while also profitably raising livestock.

"Conservation has always been on the forefront of how we manage our rangeland and our resources," Dan Anderson said.

Conservation is a family legacy for the Andersons. While ranching and grazing practices continue to evolve, a passion for the land they steward has burned strong for generations. Dan's father, Jim, served on the Perkins County Soil Conservation Board for 48 years.

Building organic matter in the soil, building litter as armor on the surface, and retaining soil moisture are all measurements for the Andersons' conservation practices. They rotationally graze beef cattle and sheep to pursue these improvements while also helping native grass populations

reestablish their deep root systems.

"My dad improved the ground from when he bought it, we have improved the ground since we took over from him, and we hope the next generation improves it even more," said Anderson, who is a lifelong member of the Grand River Cooperative Grazing Association.

The Andersons' daughters: Danci, Danika, Dantae, and Danessa, are all involved in the ranch's operation.

"It's great to be able to recognize farmers and ranchers like the Anderson family, who practice conservation and soil health principles that help to improve and maintain the sustainability of their operations," said Mike McKernan, South Dakota Grassland Coalition Chairman. "Their hard work and dedication to conservation will secure a legacy for future generations."

"The operations at Darling Creek Ranch are guided by a commitment to land stewardship, family values, and community engagement. A focus on soil health through holistic management ensures optimal utilization of resources

and shows a passion that continues to be handed down through generations. Congratulations to their families," said Brian Johnson, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition Chairman.

"These award recipients are examples of how Aldo Leopold's land ethic is alive and well today," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and CEO. "Their dedication to conservation is both an inspiration to their peers as well as a reminder to all how important thoughtful agriculture is to clean water, healthy soil, and wildlife habitat."

"As the national sponsor for Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award, American Farmland Trust celebrates the hard work and dedication of the award recipients," said John Piotti, AFT President and CEO. "At AFT we believe that exemplary conservation involves the land itself, the practices employed on the land, and the people who steward it. This award recognizes the integral role of all three."

South Dakota landowners were encouraged to apply, or be nominated, for the award last



Dan and Sharon Anderson operate Darling Creek Ranch near Meadow, South Dakota.

year. Nominations were reviewed by an independent panel of South Dakota agriculture and conservation leaders. The first South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award was presented in 2010. The 2025 award recipient was Stomprud Angus Ranch of Mud Butte.

Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award in South Dakota is made possible thanks to the generous support of American Farmland Trust, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition, South Dakota Farmers Union, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation, South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks; South Dakota State University College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; USDA Natural Resource-

Conservation Service of South Dakota, Agassiz Seed & Supply, Audubon Great Plains, Bad River Ranches, Belle Fourche River Watershed Partnership, Blue Bell Ranch, Cammack Ranch, Daybreak Ranch, Ducks Unlimited, First Dakota National Bank, Jim and Karen Kopriva, Millborn, North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust, South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, Pheasants Forever, South Dakota Soybean Association, The Nature Conservancy, Todd Mortenson family, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and Wagner Land & Livestock.

"Grazing the Heartlands" Bus Tour

Scheduled to take place in Sioux Falls, South Dakota

NatGLC works with individuals from leading agricultural organizations across the country to establish local, state, and regional partner-

ships to foster grazing lands conservation and stewardship. We are founded on the principles of voluntary action by those who own and manage grazing lands, and a respect for private property rights.

The NatGLC team is currently organizing the third bus tour, scheduled

for September 23 and 24, 2026, based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This year, bus tour attendees will visit operations in three states—South Dakota, Minnesota, and Nebraska—providing an in-depth picture of grazing land management in the Midwest. The National Grazing Lands Coalition has teamed up with three regional organizations to enhance ecosystem context and provide additional expertise. These organizations include: the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition, the Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association, and the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition.

The South Dakota Grasslands Coalition is a producer-driven orga-

nization focused on managing private land. They collaborate with various partners to provide up-to-date, science-based, and proven educational opportunities and information to grass managers and the public in the state.

The Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association is a voluntary group of producers from across Minnesota who work together to offer leadership, guidance, information, and technical support to grassland managers and producers.

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition is composed of ranchers and private landowners, all dedicated to raising public awareness and enhancing grazing lands in Nebraska. The organi-

zation's primary goal is to offer voluntary technical assistance and educational opportunities for grazing land management.

Tour Stops

Tour stops will include: South Dakota: Pasque Hill on Beaver Creek

Minnesota: Amo Creamery

Nebraska: Hochstein Ranch & Jessen Ranch

Attendees of the bus tour will have the unique opportunity to experience the benefits and challeng-

es of grazing in the northern Midwest, engage in peer-to-peer learning, and build networks with producers and organizational partners from across the U.S.

To learn more about the event, get additional information about tour stops, and register to reserve your seat, visit:

<https://natglcevents.zohobackstage.com/GrazingtheHeartland-2026NatGLCBusTour/>

The Annual Bird Tour to be Hosted at Bien Ranch

This year's Bird Watching Tour hosted by the South Dakota Grasslands Coalition is slated for June 3-4 in the Veblen, South Dakota area.

The Bien Ranch will welcome guests to the ranch for the chance

to experience the landscapes, plants, livestock and wildlife that call it home.

In addition to the bird tour, an introduction to Prairie Photography sessions will be held.

"Whether you're using a smartphone or a camera, you'll pick up simple tips and techniques to better capture the landscapes, wildlife, and moments that make South Dakota's grass-

lands so special," says SDGLC's Bri Rupp.

The photography session is optional and will include both a classroom-style portion and a hands-on portion in the prairie.

Ahead of the birding and photography sessions will be a grazing workshop.

Learn more: <https://sdgrass.org/bird-watching-tour>.

QUALITY THAT JUST MAKES SENSE

WIRE WINDERS



Common Sense Manufacturing, Inc.

www.commonsemfg.com

CONTACT KELLY MELIUS for dealer nearest you
35791 160th St., Faulkton, SD 57438
605-598-4157 office • 605-216-0687 cell

“Prairie Prophets” Video Series on RFD-TV

Have you caught “Prairie Prophets”, a new original video series now out on RFD-TV?

The series explores the intersection of agriculture, conservation, and renewable energy across America’s working landscapes.

“Prairie Prophets” brings viewers into the field alongside farmers, conservationists, and industry leaders who are advancing regenerative land management practices while contributing to a more sustainable energy future. Through compelling storytelling and on-the-ground perspectives, the series highlights how prairie restoration and biomass

utilization can deliver economic and environmental benefits at scale.

The series is executive produced by Rudi Roeslein, Founder and Chairman of Roeslein and Associates, whose vision for integrating native ecosystems with renewable energy systems serves as the foundation for the project.

“Prairie Prophets’ is about showcasing what’s possible when we align agriculture, conservation, and energy production,” said Roeslein. “This series gives a voice to the people leading that change on the land and demonstrates a model for restoring ecological balance while

strengthening rural economies.”

The series is hosted, written, and produced by Brandon Butler, an award-winning communicator known for his work in conservation and outdoor storytelling. Direction, editing, and production are led by Nathaniel Maddux of Slate + Glass, with Connor Mobley serving as camera operator. Production support is provided by Adam Voight and Jeff Blumer.

Together, the production team delivers a visually rich and informative series designed to engage a broad audience—from agricultural producers to policymak-



ROESLEIN RENEWABLES

This image shows production of an episode of Roeslein Renewables’ “Prairie Prophets”, a new original video series now out on RFD-TV. The series explores the intersection of agriculture, conservation, and renewable energy across America’s working landscapes.

ers and conservation advocates.

“Prairie Prophets” evening at 8 p.m. CT on RFD-TV. is aired every Tuesday

Managing Burned Pastures After a Wildfire- How to Graze

Bethany Johnston
Nebraska Extension Educator

Jerry Volesky
Extension Range and Forage Specialist

Mitch Stephenson
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Range Management Specialist

Wildfires can leave producers wondering how to manage burned pastures, but the good news is that perennial grasses are resilient and will recover.

How Wildfires Affect Grasslands

Dormant Season Fires (Winter/Early Spring): If a wildfire occurs when grasses are dormant (like in late February), the grass buds that sprout in spring should be unharmed.

Growing Season Fires (May–August): If a wildfire burns during the growing season, grasses suffer more dam-

age because they are actively growing.

Drought Conditions: If pastures experienced drought last year and dry conditions continue this spring and summer, recovery will be harder. May and June rainfall is critical for regrowth and should guide range management decisions. More conservative measures may need to be taken if wildfire is coupled with drought.

Increase in Annual Weeds: Following a fire, an increase in annual weeds is common. This is normal and temporary.

Grazing Strategies After a Wildfire

“Recommendations for grazing after a wildfire used to be a lot more conservative,” says Jerry Volesky, Nebraska Extension Range Specialist. Recent research suggests that grazing restrictions do not need to be as strict as previously thought. However, these

key strategies should be followed:

Protect the Soil

Fire increases the risk of wind and water erosion.

Residual (standing dead plants) and litter (dead plants covering the soil surface) are removed in a fire, which increases the amount of bare ground following a wildfire or prescribed burn.

The goal is to build up biomass in the pasture to protect the soil from wind/water erosion.

Recent research in the eastern Nebraska Sandhills (Barta Brothers Ranch) evaluating dormant season prescribed fire (not the same as wildfire, but similar response) has not seen differences in grass growth in the summer following a fire. According to Mitchell Stephenson, Nebraska Extension Range Specialist, the big difference is the amount of carry over plant material (standing

dead and litter) which increases the amount of bare ground following a wildfire or prescribed burn.

Delay Grazing & Reduce Stocking Rates

Wait as long as possible before grazing to allow residual plant material to rebuild and protect the soil.

In a normal precipitation year, delay turnout by 1–2 months.

Reduce stocking rates by 20–40% in normal years and even more during drought conditions.

The longer you wait to graze, the less you need to reduce stocking rates. If you wait until September or later, you can graze at full stocking rates since plant residual/litter has been established to cover bare soil.

Monitor Rainfall in May & June



BETHANY JOHNSTON

The longer you wait to graze, the less you need to reduce stocking rates.

Good early-season precipitation helps grasses recover quickly, often making burn areas hard to spot by mid-summer.

Continued drought will reduce grass production, requiring more conservative grazing practices.

If your pasture is dominated by cool-season grasses (like smooth brome), a quick grazing in early spring, sometimes called a “flash grazing” can help knock down smooth brome

and promote growth of warm-season grasses.

Next year in 2027, pastures should return to normal grazing rates, pending drought conditions.

Assistance Programs

Emergency or disaster recovery programs for wildfire recovery may be available through your local NRCS or FSA office. Contact them to express interest and check for available support.

Check out the Nebraska Grassland Alliance

NGLC partners with several other organizations and individuals as part of the Nebraska Grassland Alliance.

Nebraskans now have one place to go for education, resources, and to advocate for the grasslands that make up

nearly half of the state. To learn more about the Alliance, visit their website <https://nebraskagrasslands.org>.

Visit these organizations online:

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition
www.nebraskagrazinglands.org

South Dakota Grassland Coalition
www.sdgrass.org

Grazing Guide

A calendar listing of pasture and range events

May 13 FREE Webinar - Planning Ahead: Safeguarding Your Operation

May 14 Nebraska Grassland Alliance All-Alliance Gathering - VIRTUAL

June 3 Grazing Workshop, Bien Ranch, Veblen, SD

June 3-4, Birds. At Home on the Range Tour, Bien Ranch, Veblen, SD

June 9-10 Rangeland and Soil Days, Belle Fourche, SD

June 16-18 Wall Grazing School, Wall, SD

June 17 Montana Range Tour, Thomas Herefords, Gold Creet, MT

June 22-24 Young Adult Ranching for Profit Workshop, Buffalo, WY

July 28-30 Sandhills Grazing School - Anselmo, NE

Aug. 4-7 Young Adult Ranching for Profit, Kimball, NE

Aug. 4-5 Nebraska Grazing Conference, Kearney, NE

Aug. 24-26 Panhandle Grazing School - Sidney, NE

Sept. 9-11 Chamberlain Grazing School, Chamberlain/Oacoma

Sept. 23-24 NatGLCI Tour, Sioux Falls, SD

December 3 - 4, South Dakota Grassland Coalition Annual Conference, The Box, Box Elder, SD

Have a Range & Pasture Event you would like others to know about? Send information to cattlenews@gwtc.net.

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition Hosts Workshops on Farm & Ranch Legacy Planning

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition Hosts Workshops on Farm & Ranch Legacy Planning in Kimball and York, Nebraska – The transition of a farm or ranch from one generation to the next is both a meaningful milestone and a complex undertaking. In support of producers navigating this important journey, the Nebraska

Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) recently hosted one-day Farm & Ranch Legacy Planning Workshops in Kimball and York.

These gatherings provided a valuable opportunity for producers to step away from daily operations and focus on the long-term vision for their land and livelihood. Attendees heard from

estate planning attorney Pamela Epp Olsen, who offered thoughtful guidance on the legal considerations involved in succession and estate planning. The workshops also featured a panel of producers who shared their personal experiences—offering honest reflections, lessons learned, and practical insight into the realities

of transitioning an operation to the next generation.

“Succession planning is essential to preserving the strength and sustainability of our farms and ranches,” said Angela Redman, Assistant Director of NGLC. “By planning ahead, producers can help ensure their operation, and the legacy they have built, con-

tinues to thrive for generations to come. These workshops create space for meaningful conversations, connection, and inspiration as families begin shaping their own transition plans.”

This educational event was made possible through support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Conservation Partners Program.

“We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to bring these workshops to Nebraska producers,” Redman added. “Investing in thoughtful transition planning not only strengthens individual operations, but also helps sustain the health and resilience of our grazing lands for the future.”

For more information about this program and upcoming events, please visit nebraskagrazinglands.org.

Webinars to Check Out

On May 7 the National Grazing Lands Coalition will host a webinar “Let’s Talk Grazing 101.”

The webinar will feature Tom Shea and Troy Bishopp as they cover the fundamentals of grazing management.

Both Shea and Bishopp are regional resource managers—hands-on technical experts who work directly with farmers and ranchers to improve grazing systems, soil health, and profitability.

Register online at grazinglands.org.

Planning Ahead: Safeguarding Your Operation

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) is pleased to announce an upcoming free webinar on May 13 titled Planning Ahead: Safeguarding Your Operation Through

Succession, Agreements & Smart Financials.

This event will feature Miles Garwood, Financial Advisor with LPL Financial, who will discuss strategic financial planning for the next generation, and Jane F. Langan Mach of Rembolt Ludtke Law, who will provide insight into pre-marital agreements and the legal considerations around them. This webinar will explore why these topics are important when planning for the next generation.

A variety of factors influence how operations prepare for the future, and NGLC is committed to addressing important topics as you consider and evaluate the long-term sustainability of your operation.

The presentations will conclude with an interactive Q&A session, offering

Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition
Webinar series

Jane Langan Mach
Rembolt Ludtke, Law

Miles Garwood
Waddell & Reed, Financial Advisors

Planning Ahead: Safeguarding Your Operation Through Succession, Agreements & Smart Financials

May 13th, 12pm CST

Scan the QR code for information or to register

www.nebraskagrazinglands.org/Events

attendees the opportunity to engage directly with the speakers and have their questions answered.

Event Details:

Zoom Webinar: May 13, 2026, 12:00pm – 1:00pm CST (allow extra time for questions!)

Registration: https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/jkKfs6vR-RVqmzq-RCG_zlA#/registration

This online webinar is part of the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition’s ongoing effort to support ranchers and landowners in making thoughtful, sustainable decisions for the future. It is provided through a grant received by NGLC

from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. For information on this and other Nebraska Grazing Land Coalition events, please visit www.nebraskagrazinglands.org.

with results and awards presented after lunch.

Registration is \$50 per person, which includes lunch and supper on June 9 and lunch on June 10. To register, visit extension.sdstate.edu/events and search “rangeland”. To pay by check, send registration fee to: Butte Conservation District, Attn: Yvette, 1837 Fifth Ave., Belle Fourche, S.D., 57717. Registration is due by May 22.

Rangeland Days students learn plant identification, ecological sites and how to determine suitability for cattle and wildlife. Age categories are: New Rangers (ages 8-10), Wranglers (ages 11-13), Scouts (ages 14-18, typically first-time attendees), and Go-Getters (ages 14-18, previous attendees).

Students who attend Rangeland Days can compete in three different categories: display, talk and judging. Youth who participate in all three contest categories are eligible for the Rangeland Top Hand awards, which are given to the highest overall score in each division.

The top-scoring Scout or Go-Getter in the talk contest will represent South Dakota as a delegate for

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
MAY 7 AT 6 PM CST

Let's Talk Grazing 101
A CONVERSATION WITH TOM AND TROY

Nat GLC
NATIONAL GRAZING LANDS COALITION

GRAZINGLANDS.ORG/EVENTS

with results and awards presented after lunch.



Students must identify plant types, ecological sites and grazing suitability for cattle and wildlife as part of a Rangeland and Soil Days contest.

the high school youth forum at the National Society for Range Management Meeting. Additionally, the top Go-Getter team in the 4-H divisions will represent South Dakota in the National Land and Range Judging Contest the following year in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

“Participating in the student talks and displays is an excellent opportunity for youth to present their 4-H projects and get feedback on them prior to county fairs later in the summer,” said Kaylee Wheeler, SDSU Extension Range Field Specialist.

Soil Days is for youth 14–18 years old. Students learn about soil texture and types, factors that limit soil health, land management recommen-

dations and understanding suitability for building infrastructure.

The Soil Days judging contest includes evaluation of four sites for land and homesite use. The overall top scorer in soils receives the Soils Top Hand award. The top-scoring Soil team in the 4-H division will represent South Dakota in the National Land and Range Judging Contest the following year in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

This year’s Rangeland and Soil Days event is hosted by the Butte and Lawrence County Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Dakota Society for Range Management and SDSU Extension.

SDSU Extension invites youth to 2026 Rangeland and Soil Days

South Dakota State University Extension invites youth interested in learning more about grasslands and soil health to the 2026 Rangeland and Soil Days in Belle Fourche.

The annual Rangeland Days contest promotes education on South Dakota’s most threatened natural resource – grasslands. Similarly, the purpose of Soil Days is to pro-

mote education of South Dakota’s most important resource – soil. Combined, the event provides youth with hands-on experience in understanding rangeland resources and a sense of stewardship in natural resource management. Both FFA and 4-H youth can compete in Rangeland and Soil Days.

This year’s event is June 9-10, 2026, at the Belle Fourche Commu-

nity Hall. Registration, check-in and student display setup begin on the morning of June 9. Next, students will spend time in the field learning about rangelands and soils and practicing their contest skills. Student displays and speeches will be presented in the evening. The rangeland and soil judging contests begin the morning of June 10,



Join Us

MEMBERSHIP

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition connects ranchers, landowners, and partners who believe in keeping our prairies productive, profitable, and healthy.

Members gain access to grazing schools, pasture walks, and the annual Grassland Conference – all focused on practical, proven management.

CONTACT INFO

Online

sdgrass.org

Contact

judge.jessop@sdconservation.net

605-280-0127

Native Plants for Bird Habitat

South Dakota State University Extension has published new research on native plants that can support birds in the state and region.

“Native Plants for Bird Habitat in South Dakota” provides an overview of habitat types in South Dakota, important native plants in those habitats that can support birds, and general recommendations for improving bird habitat. To read the fact sheet, visit extension.sdstate.edu/native-plants-bird-habitat-south-dakota.

plants-bird-habitat-south-dakota.

“Many people are interested in bird watching, but to have abundant backyard birds, waterfowl and other species, we have to have appropriate habitat to support them, either by providing food, nesting materials or shelter,” said Robin Buterbaugh, SDSU Extension Horticulture Field Specialist.

Adding native plants to personal yards directly supports bird popula-

tions by providing nectar, seeds, nesting material and ground cover. Native plants also support bird populations indirectly by boosting native insect populations, which birds then eat. A black-capped chickadee, for example, will feed its chicks 350-570 caterpillars per day.

The fact sheet provides an overview of habitats in South Dakota, including grasslands. The research notes that grassland birds have declined noticeably over the past 60 years,

with widespread habitat loss considered a key factor. There are a mix of native prairie grasses – tallgrass, mixedgrass and shortgrass – along with flowers, trees and shrubs that can support bird populations.

“Although large-scale conservation efforts are essential, adding bird habitat to your yard can be a great way to make a positive impact on birds in our region, and native plants are an important component of that habitat,” the fact sheet notes.

There are also sections for woodland plants and



KC JENSEN, SDSU
The black-capped chickadee feeds its chicks 350-570 caterpillars every day, which requires suitable habitat.

birds, wetlands and urban/residential areas, along with steps to create

bird-friendly landscapes and plants to attract hummingbirds.

Programs Highlight Forage Alternatives for Dryland Producers Amid Challenging Markets

With low grain prices, soaring input costs and strong cattle markets, dryland producers are rethinking traditional cropping systems and exploring livestock integration to boost profitability. The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) and Nebraska Extension recently hosted two targeted program

series on practical, forage-based alternatives.

Annual Forage Integration Series

A three-part series on incorporating annual forage grazing into dryland cropping systems drew producers to Chadron, Scottsbluff and Sidney. NDSU Dickinson Beef Cattle Specialist Doug

Landblom presented over 15 years of research comparing annual forage rotations to continuous cropping, highlighting improved soil health, yields and profitability.

Complementing his insights, a producer panel shared real-world successes—like enhanced grazing flexibility—and challenges,

such as timing and weed management. Attendees gained actionable strategies tailored to western Nebraska conditions.

Perennial Pasture Conversion Programs

Responding to demand for converting marginal cropland to perennials, sessions in Kimball and Rushville featured UNL

Range Extension Specialist Dr. Jerry Volesky. He outlined critical steps for establishment, including site prep, species selection and management.

Presentations continued with overviews of cost-share programs from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and

NGLC’s REPI Project. Local producer panels wrapped up each event, discussing lessons from their transitions and fielding audience questions.

Funded by the NGLC REPI Project and Nebraska Extension, these programs equipped dozens of producers with tools to diversify operations and build resilience.

Visit nebraskagrazinglands.org for resources and upcoming events.

New Book Illuminates Connection Between Soil Health and Human Well-Being

Jeff Tkach, CEO of Rodale Institute and a leading voice in regenerative organic agriculture, announced the launch of his debut book, *The Farm Is Here*. The book brings critical attention to the direct link between soil health and public health, leveraging both scientific research and Tkach’s own health journey to highlight agriculture’s

role in addressing national health challenges.

In *The Farm Is Here*, Tkach uses his experience overcoming a personal health crisis to illustrate the broader impact of declining soil quality on public health, food security and chronic disease. By demonstrating his transformation and finding real solutions in nature, his story draws a vital connection

between the environment and the well-being of our communities.

“If we as a nation are to achieve real progress on health, we must start by rebuilding the soil beneath our feet,” said Tkach. “I want readers to understand that healing ourselves and healing our land are inseparable goals. This is bigger than agriculture, it’s about the future of our food, our

environment and our collective well-being.”

Drawing from several decades of scientific study and community implementation at Rodale Institute, the book integrates the Institute’s innovative research and leadership, proving regenerative organic agriculture as a central strategy for building healthy communities and strengthening

environmental resilience across the country.

“The answer lies much closer than we think,” Tkach writes. “Health isn’t just a personal matter; it grows from the health of our environment and our choices as society.”

Tkach emphasizes how the fate of public health, climate and community well-being are intertwined, and everyone has

a role to play, presenting evidence-based guidance and actionable steps for individuals, institutions and policymakers to foster regeneration in daily life that can yield measurable, long-term benefits. As Rose Mercario, former CEO of Patagonia, puts it “The Farm Is Here is an important book rooted in hope for our planet.”

The Farm Is Here can now be found at all major book retailers.

– Rodale Institute

Speakers and Tour Locations Announced for S.D. Governor’s Ag Summit

The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) is excited to announce the speaker lineup and tour locations for the upcoming 2025 South Dakota Governor’s Agricultural Summit. Hosted by Governor Rhoden, the two-day event on June 17-18 in historic Deadwood, South Dakota at the Deadwood Mountain Grand brings together stakeholders from across the agricultural community to connect, collaborate, and discuss industry challenges and opportunities.

Tuesday, June 17

Governor Rhoden will provide a Policy Update and Present the 2025 Governor’s Ag Ambassador Award;

DANR Secretary Hunter Roberts will provide a Welcome Address;

Bernt Nelson, economist with the American

Farm Bureau Federation will lay out the current trends in cattle inventory, why it matters, and how family farms can lead their business through this “hypercycle” in the cattle industry;

Jack Hubbard will present “Animal Agriculture is Under Attack,” which will address current challenges facing animal agriculture, focusing on the threats to the livestock industry and the actionable steps necessary to protect its future;

Dr. Brett Kaysen from the National Pork Board will provide insights into consumer trends and behaviors within the meat industry;

Alan Hojer from the South Dakota Ag Foundation will present an overview of their “Keep Farmers Farming” program, offering essential estate and transition planning support for

South Dakota’s agricultural producers, along with a producer panel; and

A forestry roundtable will bring together both South Dakota and Wyoming State Foresters as well as leading industry experts to discuss the importance of effective forestry management practices.

Wednesday, June 18

The following day will include a regional forestry tour, focusing on forestry management from tree growth to finished product, and other industry tours to be announced.

Registration for the Governor’s Ag Summit

is still open, the event is free, and attendance is open to the entire agriculture community; however, pre-registration is required.

For more information and to register for the Governor’s Ag Summit, please visit: <https://danr.sd.gov/AgSummit/default.aspx>

PASTURE PIPE FOR SALE

Providing clean water to our livestock is imperative to livestock health.

Above-ground water systems are a popular tool to deliver clean water to pastures. The Hamlin Conservation District handles 1” and 1 ½” High Density Polyethylene black pipe, rated at 200 PSI. This tough material can withstand being walked over by cattle or driven over by lighter vehicles.

These pipeline rolls are sold in 500’ or 1000’ rolls and are readily available.

Please stop in our office at 301 Marsh St., Hayti, SD or call 605-783-3642 x4 to speak to the District Manager.



August 4-7 | Kimball, NE
Farmers & Ranchers age 18-25

The Sagebrush – Meadow Lark Room
615 E 3rd St. Kimball, NE 69145



Scan the QR code for details and save your spot



www.nebraskagrazinglands.org

Sand County Foundation Receives Grant to Enhance Grasslands Resilience

Sand County Foundation is among six nonprofit organizations nationally to receive the first round of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) "Grassland Resilience and Conservation Initiative funding." The initiative will help cattle ranchers enhance wildlife habitat, conserve water resources, and improve soil health across the nation's grasslands.

A nonprofit conservation organization, Sand County Foundation has been awarded a multi-year, \$7.8 million NFWF grant to accelerate regenerative grazing practices, habitat restoration, and

conservation of wildlife and water on working ranches across the nation.

Healthy grasslands are critical to supporting people, wildlife, and rural economies. This initiative advances voluntary conservation practices that can support grasslands and strengthen the resilience of working ranchland.

"Sand County Foundation is thrilled about this opportunity," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation CEO. "For years, our network of ranchers has been seeking ways to expand grassland conservation. Thanks to NFWF, we can

help them realize their ambitions."

"Sand County Foundation's team looks forward to providing technical assistance for land managers who want to improve ecological and economic resilience across their grazed land," said Dr. Heidi Peterson, Sand County Foundation's Vice President of Agricultural Conservation and Research.

Sand County Foundation will support ranchers in California, Colorado, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Schuler Red Angus Receives Nebraska Leopold Conservation 2026 Award

Schuler Red Angus of Bridgeport is the recipient of the 2026 Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award®.

The award honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

The Butch and Susan Schuler family raise beef cattle and manage 20,000 acres at Schuler Red Angus in Morrill and Banner counties. The Schulers will be formally presented with the \$10,000 award later this year.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present Leopold Conservation Awards to private landowners in 28 states. In Nebraska, the award is presented with Nebraska Cattlemen, Cargill, BASF, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

The award, given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, recognizes farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to environmental improvement. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold advocated for "a land ethic," an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

"Schuler Red Angus represents the best of Nebraska ranching," said Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen. "Across generations, they have remained dedicated to investing in our state's agricultural community and its future. Our ability to provide world-class

beef depends on producers like them, and we are grateful for their commitment to the long-term sustainability of our land and our industry."

Nebraska landowners were encouraged to apply, or be nominated, for the award last year. Nominations were evaluated by an independent panel of Nebraska agriculture and conservation leaders.

David and Stephanie Schuler have spent their lifetimes watching their parents Butch and Susan make their ranch "more beautiful, efficient, and sustainable for the next generation."

Located in Nebraska's Panhandle, Schuler Red Angus is known for supplying other ranchers with high quality live cattle and genetics. Equally impressive are the conservation efforts that have taken place on this unique landscape, diverse in its topography and ecological communities.

The Schulers have long been committed to improving the health and resilience of their 20,000 acres of pastures and irrigated cropland in Morrill and Banner counties. Investment in extensive water infrastructure has led to better distribution of grazing cattle.

Collaboration with public and private partners has led to innovations in how to combat cheatgrass throughout the region. The invasive species from Eastern Europe found its way to western Nebraska and Wyoming. It chokes out native grasses, and its flammability is of grave concern to ranchers. Cheatgrass seeds are notorious for festering in the eyes of animals. Early each spring, cheatgrass

grows, heads out to seed, and dies before livestock and wildlife can derive any nutrition.

Schuler Red Angus is one of the region's first ranches to demonstrate the effectiveness of a herbicide with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The herbicide prevents cheatgrass from going to seed for a couple of years, during which this time native grasses can get reestablished.

The Schulers treated 1,500 acres with cost-share assistance from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and Mule Deer Foundation, and self-funded treatment of another 1,000 acres. Livestock actively graze the treated areas, while leaving untreated areas with cheatgrass untouched. Schuler Red Angus hosts workshops to educate other ranchers about this research.

The Schulers conserve water by having proper pressure and shutoffs on pipelines. Dry wells and broken windmills have been replaced with solar wells to provide water for cattle and wildlife on parts of the ranch that the pipeline does not reach. Some solar wells were relocated to create better grazing patterns across the ranch.

After every stock tank was fitted with a metal bird ladder, the Schulers noticed a large decline in bird deaths. At least one water tank is left full for wildlife even when cattle are not grazing that area. Likewise, in the absence of cattle, gates are left open for Mule deer, elk, antelope, and white-tailed deer to pass freely through the range.

S.D. Grasslands Summit



SD GRASSLAND INITIATIVE

In March, the 2026 South Dakota Grasslands Summit brought together 250 landowners, producers, conservation professionals, researchers, students, and community leaders to celebrate and strengthen one of our state's most valuable resources: our grasslands.



The Butch and Susan Schuler family of Bridgeport, Nebraska. Shown (l to r): Christy, David, Susan, Butch and Stephanie.



Located in Nebraska's Panhandle is Schuler Red Angus.

Sand County Foundation President and CEO. "Their dedication to conservation is both an inspiration to their peers as well as a reminder to all how important thoughtful agriculture is to clean water, healthy soil, and wildlife habitat."

"As the national sponsor for Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award, American Farmland Trust celebrates the hard work and dedication of the award recipients," said John Piotti, AFT President and CEO. "At AFT we believe that exemplary conservation involves the land itself, the practices employed on the land, and the people who steward it. This award recognizes the integral role of all three."

The 2025 Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award recipient was Diamond Bar Ranch of Stapleton. To view profiles of all award recipient since

2006, visit www.sandcountyfoundation.org/Nebraska.

Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award in Nebraska is made possible thanks to the generous support of American Farmland Trust, Cargill, BASF, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Cattlemen, Farm Credit Services of America, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service of Nebraska, Audubon Great Plains, Green Cover Seed, Nebraska Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Sandhills Task Force, University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Natural Resources, and World Wildlife Fund-Northern Great Plains.

For more information on the award, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.