



Marias River Livestock Association, 72 Sweetgrass Hills Rd, Sweet Grass, MT 59484

Landowners Meet In Whitlash with FWP Commissioner over Elk Hunt Concerns

Pick-ups bumped through the hardened snow drifts in the parking area of the Whitlash Hall. The drivers wondered what would be the best way to solve the over population of elk and doubting if their words would be heard by the Montana FWP Staff and appointed Commissioner.

Diverse opinions from landowners of what would work or what would be tolerated had been discussed at a similar meeting in December, but both FWP Biologist Ryan Rauscher and the Land Owners had left unsatisfied. Chester resident and sportsman, Dennis Hanson, had feared that Land Owners would choose to close their land rather than participate in a general antlerless elk season for region 401. Hanson, who had not been in attendance at the last meeting in Whitlash, called FWP staff and Commissioner Richard Stuker and asked that a second meeting be held in Whitlash before the proposed regulation were voted on by the FWP Commission on February 13th. Bob Thompson and Maggie Nutter helped Hanson arrange the meeting and notify landowners. Since the last damage hunt in the late 1990's early 2000's the Elk population in the Sweet Grass Hills have thrived. Numbers currently have reached a record high of 641 elk per FWP count by aerial survey using photography to ensure accuracy. The goal population for the Hunting District 401 Sweet Grass Hills area is approximately 320. The Elk herd on West Butte was counted at 388 and there are two herds on East Butte numbering 104 and 149. The population is growing at about 15% a year, so if left unchecked the population could hit 1000 in 5-6 years. Some landowners are already noticing damages to hay crops and grazing on their private lands for the last few years and it is generally recognized that the population needs reduced.

Elk cont on pg 3

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FWP Commissioner, Richard Stuker, was appointed by Gov Bullock to replace Ron Moody when his term was up. Commissioner Stuker hales from the Chinook area and is a landowner and rancher. FWP Biologist Ryan Rauscher from Conrad is the biologist who monitors wildlife in this region. Rauscher has only been in this position for about a two years so is still learning the area and the landowners names.

Montana's Next Generation Conference

Held in Shelby, MT Jan 25 & 26

There was great attendance and a wealth of information shared by the many speakers on succession planning, cropping and livestock.

No matter what your age if you are in agriculture there was information there for you.

Hope to see you all there next year!



The Coyote Club & Event Center filled up Friday afternoon, for the Succession Planning Seminar by Kevin Spafford. Kevin's presentation was captivating as well as informational.



Lacy Roberts, Glacier County FSA Loan Officer, was one of the main organizers of the event and the presenter for the Beginning Borrowers Training.

Photo by Trina Jo Bradley

Chad Murnin, Chinook is a Loan Officer at Independence Bank in Havre and member of Montana Hereford Association.

Independence Bank was a Plutonium Sponsor of the event.

Photo by Trina Jo Bradley



Mitch Konen, Fairfield farmer and owner of the ag business, Farm Data Resources was there to teach about Farm Works Software. Mitch was a Bronze Sponsor for the event.

Photo by Trina Jo Bradley



The Livestock Discussion Panel consisted of Jack Holden of Holden Hereford, Valier, Haylie Shipp, with Northern Ag Network as the facilitator for the Panel, Ty Wells, commercial cattle producer and Loan Officer with Montana Livestock Ag Credit, who was a Silver Sponsor for the event. Mark DeBoo, Diamond D Angus, Valier. Diversity is a good thing on a discussion panel and helps to show that each ranch is unique in how they operate and in their succession planning.

Photo by Trina Bradley

Elk from pg 1

The division in opinions seems to be on the hunting method used to achieve the reduction in population. Landowners are concerned that a “general season” on antlerless elk will bring a large number of hunters to the area. Increased in road traffic, trespassing, phone calls, knocks on doors, and overloading of the Block Management Areas and Public Lands are a big concern. Landowners also expressed concern over weeds spread by hunter vehicles, inexperienced hunters chasing off the elk herd and difficulty in retrieval of elk harvested which are concerns with that need addressed even without the “general season.”

Many Landowners expressed displeasure over the current lack of control and oversight on the Block Management areas. Dan Wolery stated, “If I have to be out there patrolling then write me a paycheck.”

The advantages to “general season” would be that locals who have not had luck getting drawn for a permit in the past would be able to get a tag over the counter and hopefully would fill it. Commissioner Stuker stated, “As a landowner you are in control of who hunts on your place. If ten hunters show up, you get to choose who hunts there and who moves on.” Stuker also was very surprised about the absences of FWP Block Management Staff in this area during the hunting seasons and stated that the issue needed addressed.

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Stuker being a landowner understands the frustration and concerns of high elk populations and poor sportsmen/landowner relations. Stuker asked if landowners would be willing to try one season with the general antlerless tags and he would work to get the lack of assistance in managing the Block Management Areas corrected. If at the end of next hunting season there are issues that need addressed or if insufficient elk are taken Stuker stated that he would be willing to listen to the landowners and take their concerns back to the FWP Commission and get changes made. Most landowners were in agreement to the deal.

Any Landowner who is having problems with lack of management of their Block Management Area is encouraged to contact their Regions Block Management Office. Block Management Contracts are renegotiated each spring/summer. If you are dissatisfied with the current contract do not be afraid to ask for changes.

Region 4 Block Management Office

(406) 454-5862, Monday- Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM,

Region 4 BM e-mail address: fwpr4bmp@mt.gov

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MRLA –While looking at the Hawks Angus website, I fell in love with the long straight back on your Game Day herd sire. Life is probably getting pretty hectic around the ranch as you prepare for your Annual Bull Sale there on the place. We can look and see the quality cattle you raise but tell us some history about your operation Adrian.

Adrian Hawks– My grandparents homesteaded in this area in 1910. Mom and my brother still live on the original homestead. Our family are true Norwegians. Janet and I live on land that was purchased by my brother and I just out of high school about 1975 but we eventually divided the two places.

MRLA– Did your grandparents come over on a ship from Norway?

Adrian– No the old country, Minnesota. Still we don't even realize the sacrifices they made to settle this area. The harsh weather and where would you even find water or wood to burn? They were tough people to come here and stay.

MRLA– I agree, we don't appreciate how tough life was then compared to now. So did your Grandparents have cattle?

Adrian– Yes. This country was full of Hereford cattle, and then in 1941 my Grandfather Clarence Hawks bought his first black heifers. They were some of the first in this area. Overtime the area moved to black cattle. Janet and I were married and running commercial Black Angus when in the 1980's we decided to get a small registered herd. It grew from there to about 300 register cattle on the ranch.

MRLA– So what were your thoughts when you got into registered cattle? What were your goals?

Adrian– Good question! We wanted cattle with good gentle disposition and structurally correct. The kids were always helping with the cattle and we didn't want any wild cows running a kid over. It was hard to choose disposition with using AI semen because you didn't always know the bull's disposition. We worked hard at learning the pedigrees and avoiding hot bulls.

Also trends happen in the industry and about 15–20 years ago the cattle started getting huge. We tried to stay more moderate. We really focused on moderate frame with a natural thickness and feed efficient cow. We leave our cows in the hills and save pasture for winter grass and bring them home to calve then back to the Hills. They need to be good foragers with feed efficiency.

MRLA– So what are your thoughts on EPDs?

Adrian– EPDs are a great tool to focus on to improve herd. Some of the EPDs have gotten so high that

Hawks cont on pg 5



Clarence Hawks with his first set of Black Angus heifers 1941. In the 1940's Black cattle in Montana were pretty rare. Most of Montana raised Hereford cattle at that time. Angus were becoming favored across the United States for their hardiness and dark udders that would not sunburn.

Membership Renewal Time

We want to welcome you all back for another year, and encourage you to send in your membership renewals. Simply use the form to the right and check if you are a new member or renewing your current membership.

Membership runs from November to November.

Any person who became a member or paid their dues between May 2013 and November 30, 2013 are considered paid in full until November 2014.

We hope to see your check in the mail so we can continue to serve you and so that we can see we have your support.

Thank You
Maggie Nutter

Hawks cont from pg 4

you really need to look at what you want to do with your herd. Is it a terminal herd going to slaughter or are you saving replacement females? If you are keeping replacements you need to keep balanced EPDs for maternal traits and for the forage you have. I think many people are working at getting back to the more moderate frame so they need to watch and think when they are selecting bulls to make sure it is adding the qualities they are looking for.

We really try to give people all the information we can. We want to sell them an animal that is going to work or fit in their program. The best animal there it won't make them happy if it is not a good fit.

MRLA– What do you see for the future of Hawks Angus?

Adrian– Well, it's great that Cory is so interested in cattle and is 4th generation. His son Jaxon is growing up here. I'm really hoping that it will continue on.

Marias River Livestock Membership Application

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

Marias River Livestock Association
Carrie Sue Lerum
PO Box 56
Galata, Mt 59444

Active Membership is per individual not per ranch or corporation.

This a new membership _____

This is a renewal _____

___ Active Member \$50

Any individual 18 years of age or older, active in the livestock production industry in the counties of Glacier, Liberty, Pondera, or Toole, Montana is eligible for active membership in the Marias River Livestock Association

___ Youth Member \$10

Youth are under 18 years of age and interested in learning about livestock production, promoting the livestock industry and willing to volunteer 5 hours a year.

___ Associate Member \$50

An individual, firm, corporation or partnership, no matter where it's or his/her place of business or residence may be eligible for non-voting Associate Membership

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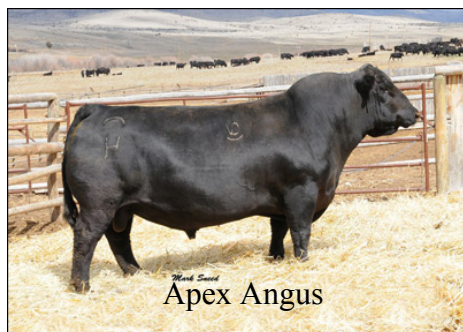
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Bull Bucks

The thick of spring bull sale season has arrived with a slew of local choices. Don't forget to give the many producers that sell private treaty a call too. There are great genetics right here closes to home and we should be proud of that.



BULL BUCKS 2013 Participating Producers

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Bobcat Angus– Sale Nov 25, 2013
www.bobcatangus.com

Curry Cattle Inc– Gene & Cheryl Curry 279-3561
Replacement Angus females

Connelly Angus– Sale Feb 25, 2014
www.connellyangus.com

Diemert Ranch Herefords– Ace & Tara Diemert 432-3412
http://www.ngrbulls.com/diemert_ranch_herefords.htm

Apex Angus Sale March 4, 2014
<http://www.apexangus.com>

Flesch Angus– Sale March 7, 2014
www.fleschangus.com

Holden Hereford– Sale Date March 10, 2014
<http://www.holdenherefords.com/>

Turner Angus– Sale April, 2014 www.TurnerAngus.com

Rocky Ridge Angus– Seed stock females, Dean Lerum

Hawks Angus– Sale March 17, 2014
www.hawksangus.com

Kicking Horse Ranch Gelbvieh– Sale March, 2014
www.kickinghorseranch.com

Gillespie Show Cattle– Butch & Doreen Gillespie 337-2943 or 949-4453, www.gillespieshowcattle.com

Box O Breeders– Russ Offerdahl 406-278-3710
boxous@yahoo.com

Enneberg Angus Ranch– Jason and Pamala Enneberg
406-845-4901 EnnebergAngusRanch@ymail.com

Musings of a Feed Salesman

By Jake “Spoon” Seavert

As we enter into the time of year that brings busy days and busy nights, ensuring our year’s paycheck as calves hit the ground. We are reminded that the things we do today are important in the overall management of our herd for the future to come. Calf prices are impressive and by all indications may stay that way for the next couple years (knock on wood). What are some ways we can put some pounds on our calves this year, as well as put our overall herd in better health and have better efficiencies?

One way to show off the genetic potential of our calf crop, extend grazing on summer and fall pastures as well as decrease our feed costs in the winter is to creep feed our calves. Some people look at me like I am that crazy person in tattered clothes walking downtown talking to himself. I don’t blame them as often we only look at creep feeding or supplementing our calves during times of drought, where feed is short and less productive. Why not take advantage of lower feed cost and high calf prices and put some extra weight, condition and health on those calves on a normal year.

By introducing creep to calves you are extending the grazing period of your cows. For research has proved that every five calves on creep can save enough forage for one cow. Multiply that by 100 cow calf pairs and you have saved enough grass for 20 head of cows for that day and possibly increase grazing time on that particular pasture allotment by 20 days.

Calves will consume about 1–1.5% of their body weight in calf creep daily. Thus relieving the pressure on milk production on the cow (calves will still be nursing the cow during creeping) and will allow her to utilize the nutrients from the forage. Cows use the nutrients for the priority of herself maintenance, activity, growth (if a young cow), energy reserves, pregnancy, lactation, additional reserves, estrous, and last but not least excess energy reserves (in order of priority). Priority of the calf she is raising is down the list as you can see. By assuring the next year’s calf crop and condition of the cow going into winter to lessen feed cost are just the added benefits of creep feeding your calves.

Plus by supplementing these calves with a creep



Jake “Spoon” Seavert Nutritionist for Co-Feeds

product you are ensuring these calves are receiving a vitamin trace mineral package that is crucial for overall growth potential and the calf’s health. Research has shown, calves on a fiber based formulation versus a starch formulation (grain), can gain an additional 75–100lbs of weight by weaning time. Fiber based formulas are beneficial as it complements the fiber found in the grass, to maintain a positive associative effect to have better feed efficiency and weight gain. Starch grain formulations may cause a negative associative effect and raise pH levels in the rumen causing acidosis and other issues of the rumen.

Let’s assume creep is worth \$300 dollars per ton. Calves may average 5 pounds of pellets per day over 120 days. 600 pounds of pellets per calf over the creep season will cost \$90. Let’s say you wean a 700 pound calf instead of a 600 pound calf. They are contracting calves at \$1.70 at 700 pounds. That will equal a check of \$1190. The 600 pound calf may bring \$1.75 giving you a check of \$1050. The difference is \$140 dollars and the program cost you \$90 giving you a profit of an extra \$50 per calf. It’s a program where you see the benefit on the calf weight, and along with that, the added benefit of cow condition, less feed on the cow in the winter and an extended grazing period on the pasture allotment. Not to mention the young first calf heifer and your three year olds that are still growing, raising a calf and rebreeding to maintain longevity of your herd.

Musing cont. on pg 10

WHITTLINGS....

Let the Chips Fall Where They May

By John J. Maatta

For the past year and a half or so, when I've not been playing cowboy (actually fencing) for my son-in-law in Eastern Montana, I have been teaching a Sunday school class on the perspectives of our Founding Fathers as they prayerfully considered the proper framework for a new nation based on Godly principles. It is obvious that we have gone a very long way from the principles and precepts that our Founding Fathers envisioned for the United States of America. I believe it is important that we have an understanding of these foundational precepts from which we came. Thus, I hope to share some of what I have gleaned from my studies regarding the birth of our country in future Whittlings.

First, why does history matter? There is a profound example found in the Old Testament with the story of King Josiah. This event is found in II Kings 22 & 23 and in II Chronicles 34. The documents that had been lost for many years that told of the true history and Godly purpose of the nation Israel were found during repairs being made in the temple. When the Book of the Law was read to King Josiah he was horrified to learn how far Judah had departed from the Law of God. This discovery provided a new momentum for the reformation that Josiah had begun beforehand.

We as a nation must relearn our root beginnings for we, like Ancient Israel and Judah, have forgotten our past. Our national forefathers were not perfect but they were, for the most part, godly men with a moral compass based on the Word of God. Our history has been rewritten in recent decades and as a result our children of today as well as the recent boomer generation do not know what made our

nation a recipient of God's blessings, and at one time, a true beacon to the world.

We need to go back to our spiritual roots and determine a right response to divine truth. II Kings 22:13b states, "Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with **ALL** [emphasis mine] that is written concerning us."



Brian Lee was a member of the Succession Planning Discussion Panel on Friday Night of the MT Next Generation Conference. Kevin Spafford facilitated the panel which helped to inform the approximately 180 attendants about the many different aspects of succession planning. Lee Law Offices of Shelby was also a Silver Sponsor.

Photo by Trina Jo Brandley

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As Rancher, You have a Great Story to Tell

By Carol Nutter, Treasurer, Teton Cattlewomen

I like to eat. Really!!! I love good food and therefore I care about agriculture. I am not a farmer or rancher, but unlike many others, I do know where my food comes from. I moved off the ranch over 30 years ago, live in town, grow a small garden and raise a few hens. The survival of agriculture is a huge concern in my life, so I decided to take action.

On January 30 and 31st I attended the Northwest Regional Agvocy Conference in Portland Oregon. I had never heard of AgChat and had no real expectations but hoped that whatever I learned would be useable.

Bloggers, Tweeters, & Facebookers spilled their guts to inform us of the actions we could take to advocate for agriculture. We were told in order for agriculture as we know it to survive; producers need to become relevant to the consumers. The young consumer is currently engrossed in Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. They want to know your cow personally through pictures and posts. They want to feel connected to where their food comes from.

We all need to start getting your story out. YES! Your story! Why do you ranch? How do you treat your animals? How will current legislation affect your operation? All this communication seems like a lot of work doesn't it?? Yet, it can be simple. Jump online and check out the websites and Facebook pages of other ranches and farms. Perhaps "Dairy Carrie" or the "Farmers Wife" Learn about the different types of social media. Then set up your accounts and start telling about your operation.

Post pictures, then tell the story behind them. People love to look at cute calves and how you live and work. The stuff you do every day is interesting to the urban dweller two or three generations removed from the farm. Develop a following of potential allies and customers.

Golden Rule---Once you are online, ***be nice and always truthful***. Don't put other producers, their method of raising their animals or their product down. Those in Agriculture must work together to promote farming and ranching as beneficial to the customer and the

environment. There is a market and room on the shelves of the grocery store for all types of product. If someone posts something negative or downright mean, don't stoop to their level. Think your response through, be polite and don't battle with them. State the truth of what happens on your ranch/farm. If someone repeatedly attacks your way of life on your forum, block them. Post something about 3 times a week, often enough so your followers stay interested but not so much that they become overwhelmed or bored. If you're not sure where to start, ask someone. Your association has members with experience in social media and I am sure they would be glad to help. Attending a class, workshop or conference will give you contacts that can be your technical support. Get relevant and keep raising your livestock so I can continue to eat great food.



Montana was well represented at the AgChat Regional Conference in Portland OR, Jan 30 & 31, 2014. Lisa Schimdt, Land of Grass Ranch, Conrad, Rachel Endecott, MSU Extension Beef Specialist and commercial Hereford producer, Doreen Gillespie, MT WIFE & Club Calf Producer, Carol Keats, Treasurer, Teton Cattlewomen, Mary Ann Murry, MT WIFE and Rancher, Linda Newman, President MT WIFE, Butch Gillespie, V.P. Marias River Livestock Association and Rancher, Ryan Goodman, Montana Stockgrowers and Blogger Agriculture Proud, Maggie Nutter Pres. Marias River Livestock Asso. & Rancher. Also not pictured is Lacey Ehlke, MSGA Young Stockman and Ehlke Herefords.

Find out more about telling your story by going to www.agchat.org

Musings Cont. from pg. 8

With this being my topic of the month, it never hurts to explore your options early in the year to get a plan together with your local feed store to ensure product and equipment availability. I want to see success in the cattle industry and have you be able to take advantage of the opportunity that is laid out on the table this year. "It takes money to make money", and a few extra dollars is never turned down, not even by me. God bless and happy calving!

Beef is Tweeted, Posted, Pinned and Blogged for the Millennials

Yes! That is all in English.

Chaley Harney,

Beef is one powerful protein and it makes perfect sense to promote this benefit to consumers if they are judicious Paleo diet followers, beef lovers or anywhere in between. Current Beef Checkoff advertising showcases beef's nutrient density, beef as a lean option, and of course, the power of protein.


Checkoff advertising has also advanced into the digital arena and moved away from traditional print and radio to where the consumers are looking for information. There are 5.5 million estimated daily food-related searches by Millennials. **A Millennial is someone born from 1980–2000 and there are more than 80 million in the U.S.** The Beef Checkoff is focusing on this target audience, which is a larger group than the Baby Boomers, and specifically focusing on older Millennials that are newly married and starting their families. These individuals are increasing their buying power while Baby Boomers are on the decline for spending. There is an estimated 2.5 million food-related social media posts by Millennials daily and an estimated 4.5 million daily page views on the top five cooking sites by Millennials. The Beef Checkoff is there to meet their demands. **Digital advertising also allows for rapid and continual updates to imagery and descriptors to maintain a presence with constantly changing preferences within a day, a week, a season and more.**

At the recent Cattle Industry Convention producers from across the nation met to help set priorities and give direction to contractors as they participated in their committee meetings. There were 30 priorities that came out of eight different committees/subcommittees. **One priority that came out was, “Stay on top of food trends and capitalize on them.”** This has already been happening to a certain extent, but the committee felt it was important to make it a priority. This directly relates to following trends

like the Paleo diet and consumers looking to include more protein in their diets.


Additionally, the Beef Checkoff has moved towards working with “influencers” to help reach consumers as opposed to so many large tradeshow and national magazines. The Beef Checkoff is reaching out to qualified, appropriate, credible influencers who range from nutrition professionals, health professionals, bloggers, fitness professionals and the like. By helping these individuals understand the benefits of beef they can feel confident when they recommend beef as a part of daily diets to their clients, readers and followers. The information shared is checkoff-funded, peer-reviewed, sound science that we can feel confident about sharing to boast the numerous benefits of beef.

In Montana we extend many of the national efforts by working with influencers locally, such as hosting a Dietetic Intern Pasture to Plate Tour to educate students that will become registered dietitians and helping them become beef advocates. We also carry out digital promotions to engage consumers through social media and continue our mission to build beef demand. These are just a couple of the statewide efforts, but producers are encouraged to call, click or stop by any time to learn more. Visit MontanaBeefCouncil.org and sign up for regular e-mail updates at MyBeefCheckoff.com.



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BREAKFAST TOMORROW
Beef & Spinach
Breakfast Sandwich

Funded by the Beef Checkoff 

A Visit with Dr. Marty Zaluski MT State Veterinarian

Hey! Marty, got a minute to let us in on what is going happening with a few issues??

Doreen Gillespie and I traveled to Helena and took in the FWP Commission Meeting on Feb 13th. The next Day before heading home we decided to stop in and see Montana State Veterinarian, Dr Marty Zaluski and catch up on any bits of news he might have for us.

PED

So first we discussed the Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PED) which was just discovered in a Montana hog facility. Dr. Zaluski states, "It has been running the course throughout the country. Our number came up. Within a few days of its discovery in Montana it was found in Idaho. We are hoping to contain it to the one facility here in Montana." Zaluski didn't think it would have much impact on 4-H kids and the any Fairs this summer but he stated that Fairs should be terminal, meaning what goes to the fair should all go in one group to slaughter. Zaluski thought that Mark King from Big Timber Extension Office would be putting out a little more information for the 4-H kids and fairs.

It takes very few particles of the virus to infect an animal. Simply answering your cell phone while in the pig barn or setting it on the counter in the barn could cause it to be contaminated. If you slip the phone back in your pocket, then both the phone and pocket will be contaminated. Your hands could be re-contaminated each time you reach in your pocket until that article of clothing and your cell phone are washed. Thankfully the virus only affects pigs so there isn't cross species transmissions and over time the herds immunity can be build up to lessen the losses from it.

BISON

What's happening with the bison? Marty shakes his head. It is not his favorite topic. Zaluski was very supportive of Yellowstone National Park sending some bison to slaughter to help reduce the population in YNP. With approximately 4500 bison in YNP and the recruitment (growth of herd) being about 13% annually there would need to be approximately 600 a year removed from the population to maintain it where it is now. Zaluski is also supportive of



Marty Zaluski, DVM. MT State Veterinarian
He is always willing to chat and answer a question or two, even about bison.

allowing the Tribes to hunt bison in a larger way as it would be fulfilling their treaty rights, aboriginal hunting practices, food needs and reducing the bison population in a constructive way.

The quota for the bison hunt passed by the FWP Commission on Feb 13, 2014 was for 200 for sportsmen. The Tribes take does not fall under that quota. During the 2012-2013 hunting season approximately 250 bison were taken by sportsmen and Tribal hunters combined. Currently the amount taken is dependent on how many leave YSP and are available to harvest.

ELK

Elk was on the agenda at the FWP Commission meeting yesterday as the proposed hunting regulations were voted on by the Commission. "Marty you were quoted during the FWP Commission meeting yesterday." Kathryn QannaYahu. A member of Gallatin Wildlife Association was very adamant about opposing the Elk Working Groups requests for fencing and possibly extending the period where lethally taking elk would be allowed. Qanna Yahu stated, "Your own State Veterinarian in a report to other State's Livestock Departments says that the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle is only .00024 percent."

Visit cont on pg 14

Save The Date

Feb 21 end of Comment Period on importing Brazil Beef. Brazil is a Country with Foot & Mouth Disease.

Feb 20, 21, 22 MATE SHOW Billings MT

March 13 FWP Commission Meeting Helena MT

March 19 & 20 MT Environmental Quality Council, Capital Bldg, Helena

March 13 8:00am FWP Commission Meeting Helena

March 15 Hanger Dance, Chester

March 25 National Ag Day

April 10 Interagency Bison Management Plan Council meeting, C'Mon Inn Bozeman

April 15& 16 FWP Bison Meeting, Lewistown

April 23 & 24 Montana Nutrition Conference and Livestock Forum, Bozeman MT

May 2 & 3 Cattlewomen's Region 5 Annual Meeting, Billings

May 22 FWP Commission Meeting to be held at FORT PECK I just have to mention here. The BISON meeting is in Lewistown in April and the FWP Commission is at Fort Peck in May. Just sayin' Commissioners are the ones who vote on the plans and such they may need to hear your voice. Perhaps contact and see if you can get on the agenda.

June 4-5 Montana Farmers Union Mid Year, Lewistown

June 10-12 MT Farm Bureau Federation, Mid Year, Kalispell

June 13-14, Montana Stockgrowers Mid Year, Miles City

June 27 Temple Gandin and More, Shelby Montana

July 10 FWP Commission Meeting, Missoula

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Just a little note to say Thank U! Mitch and Dan for welcoming us into the Coyote Club and Event Center for the Montana's Next Generation Conference

Dr. Pat Trindle, from Fort Benton, filled the crowd in on why herd health is so important. A few dollars spent on prevention will save many dollars trying to fix a wreck.

Trindle did a excellent job of sharing information that would save both new and experienced cattle producers time and money.

hoto by Trina Jo Bradley

Working for You

Jan 14 & 15 Montana Stockgrowers, Affiliate Mentoring Program, Helena. Butch Gillespie and Maggie Nutter attended. The goal was to meet the leaders from other livestock association that we could share information and ideas with and could possibly work together on local issues that arise. Workshops on media presentation were also given. It was time well spent.

January 24 Are You Getting A Passing Grade In Farm Family Business Management?" Lewistown. Full day seminar by Dick Wittman. Butch Gillespie attended the workshops

Jan 24 & 25 Montana's Next Generation Conference, Shelby Succession planning and multiple breakout sessions on crop and livestock and agriculture bookkeeping. BJ Brown, Butch Gillespie, Janet Hawks, Carrie Sue Lerum, Jeff Habets, Maggie Nutter

Jan 30 & 31 AgChat Regional Conference on Social Media and advocating for Agriculture. Butch (& Doreen) Maggie Nutter

Feb 10 Landowners/ FWP Meeting in Whitlash to discuss hunting proposed hunting regulations in HD 401 Sweet Grass Hills Area. BJ Brown, Bob Thompson, Maggie Nutter

Feb 13 MT FWP Commission Meeting in Helena. Proposed Hunting Regulations explained and voted on with public comment. Maggie Nutter

Feb 14 Visit with Dr Marty Zaluski, MT State Veterinarian. Helena Maggie Nutter

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Zaluski stated, "You shouldn't be bothered by her quoting that number. It shows that the likely hood of transmission is low, but Trading States don't want low they want 100% no risk. It is obviously high enough we get some transmission, as we did last year, but we find those disease animals before it spreads. That is a positive outcome."

APHIS is searching for a better livestock brucellosis vaccine but they have been working on it for many years and if it was easy they would have it by now. Marty guesses we could wait another 20 years before we see a better vaccine.

A phone call from Christian MacKay saved Zaluski from further interrogation and Doreen and I headed out the door for the trip home.



Joe Parks, Toole County Extension Agent and Carrie Sue Lerum, Marias River Livestock Association Sec/Tres. enjoying a few quiet moments at the registration table for the Montana's Next Generation Conference on Saturday.

Hoo, Hoo Loves Hoo In the Winter



By Bruce Auchly, FWP Region 4 Information Officer

Just in time for Valentine's Day, we bring you those wonderful love birds – great horned owls. That's right. The fiercest, most aggressive, most impressive owl in North America as a symbol of Valentine's Day.

Look, it may be winter with all the attendant cold and snow, but great horned owls are in the midst of their mating season and, pretty soon, if not already, sitting on eggs. No other birds in Montana court and mate during the winter.

That hoot-hoot-hoot you heard at night or just before dawn in January is the mating ritual of the great horned owl. After mating, the owls will continue to hoot, not so much to proclaim their love and affection but to stake out a territory and warn other owls away.

So the great horned owl mates and begins nesting in the dead of winter. Must be crazy, right? Maybe. Or maybe no other birds are as smart as the wise old owl.

Actually, it's neither wisdom nor craziness that drives the great horned owl to nest so early. Rather it's just that it takes so darn long to raise a young owl.

First, the female owl takes two to three days to lay on average two eggs, then she sits on them (incubation) for 30-35 days.

After hatching, the young birds will remain in the nest for close to two months before their first flight, called fledging. That can be mid- to late May or later.

Afterward, the young have to be taught and practice to hunt at night, neither short nor simple tasks. It can take as long as six months after hatching – we're into September now – before the young have fully acquired

their first winter plumage and are good fliers and hunters.

Because owls are mostly nocturnal and silent on the wing, we don't see them much and therefore we've come up with all sorts of myths.

Folklore has bestowed owls with wisdom and magic, or sometimes they symbolize death and messengers to the afterlife. Reality is more exciting.

Although much of the great horned owl's activities take place from sunset to sun up, sunlight does not blind them. They have keen vision day or night.

Their eyes are designed for maximum sensitivity rather than resolution. That means they can see very well at low light levels but not very crisply. So they use their eyesight mostly to avoid obstacles, locating prey with their ears. Their eyesight is good, their hearing superb.

Like all Montana owls, the great horned version has a facial disc that funnels sounds to ear openings covered by feathers on the side of its head. Those inconspicuous ear openings are lopsided (asymmetrical) not like ours.

That allows them to triangulate sounds and find a mouse scurrying under several inches of snow in the dark of night. Remarkable.

Those tufts of feathers atop their head? They are not ears and have nothing to do with hearing. But their purpose is a bit of a mystery. Some think the tufts help camouflage the bird against a tree. Others say the tufts help with communication or recognition. Like maybe one bird signaling to its mate on a winter's night.

So this Valentine's Day think of great horned owls – amorous in the dead of winter and the dark of night.

This month's sponsor of *The Post Rider*

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