

Economics & Ecology Working Together

Categorized: Livestock, Agronomy, Healthy Families, Health & Wellness, Community Development, Communities
 BROOKINGS, S.D. - By returning their ranchland to pre-settlement condition, a South Dakota ranch family put nature to work for them with incredible results.

"Oftentimes we hear that ecology and environment don't mix with economics, but the Mortenson's prove you can have both. Their ranch is beautiful, full of native habitat and wildlife which provide hunting and other opportunities, but it is also stocked with good quality cattle," explains Carter Johnson, Distinguished Professor of Ecology at South Dakota State University who painstakingly documented the family's journey in a recently released online book; The Mortenson Ranch Story: Balancing Environment and Economics.

"Ranching is a tough job if you have to do everything yourself, but if you can get nature to work for you - like the Mortensons have done - the results are beautiful and pay the bills," said Johnson, who met the family patriarch, Clarence Mortenson in 1990 and began conducting research and documenting the family's restoration progress.

"This story details Clarence's conservation and management philosophy and how it has been implemented by three generations of his family to restore the ranch's environment and economy that ultimately earned the Mortensons the coveted Aldo Leopold Conservation Award in 2011," said Johnson in the book's Abstract.

Johnson explains that Clarence grew up in the early years following the Dust Bowl. As a young boy, he learned from an old homesteader how beautiful and productive the heavily eroded and barren landscape once had been. "Clarence vowed that if and when he took over the ranch he would get it back to its pre-settlement condition of thick grass, clear-water streams, dense woody draws and abundant wildlife. But the ranch was not to be a "preserve," it had to provide a sustainable living for a large family," Johnson wrote.

He added, "In my 40 years of studying riparian woodlands in many states, never have I met producers with more enthusiasm, dedication, and genuine interest in restoration and conservation as the Mortensons."

For five decades, the Mortensons have invited SDSU students, faculty, researchers and SDSU Extension to not only conduct research on their land, but to use it as an outdoor classroom where other ranchers and landowners could see firsthand how various restoration projects worked to enhance the land for wildlife as well as cattle.

Johnson says that what makes all the research on the Mortenson's land unique is Clarence's extensive knowledge of the land's history. "This book chronicles close to 100 years of history. We probably know more about this ranch than almost any other in the state," Johnson said.

Along with scientific data and details on the Mortenson's restoration projects, the book contains historical information as well as photos. "I sort of turned into their family's biographer by accident. It was not an easy role because I'm not a biographer. But I did my best to pull together what we learned during those 25 years and more," said Johnson. "My overall goal was to pull scientific as well as experiential information together so that other ranchers can read, relate and implement projects to help them restore their own ranches."

Today the ranch is managed by Clarence's son Todd and his wife Deb, together with their sons Jack and Quinn.

"Each generation has done something different to improve it. I still see areas that I can improve upon, and I want to be sure that when I hand this over to my boys, it is as good as I could do and, hopefully, it will continue with them," said Todd Mortenson, as quoted in the 2011 Leopold Conservation Award Bulletin.



The Magic Of Magnets

BY SARAH WETZEL
 For the Plain Talk

Kids at the Vermillion library had a chance to explore and learn about the properties of magnets Monday as part of the Summer Reading Program.

This time, the activities were Magneto themed as kids learned why stuff sticks.

First the kids were given magnets and asked to observe their properties along with thinking of other places they have seen magnets.

"We have magnets at my house," said Connor, 4.

"They stick to the fridge," observed Henry, 7. "They stick through paper."

The children were given a bag full of objects to experiment with and see what the magnets would stick to.

"This is plastic so it won't stick," said Libby, 8. "Ooh, a coin and Nails."

"I'll test the things that do stick, you test the things that don't," she said handing a pile of objects she hypothesized would not stick to a partner.

In some cases, the kids guessed right. "I'm guessing that this won't stick," said Henry reaching for a fuzzy ball.

"Yup, it doesn't."

In other cases the kids were surprised.

"Most of the stuff doesn't didn't stick," Henry reported. "I was surprised that the penny didn't stick."

Connor found items that stuck even in the pile of items the kids expected not to stick.

"It finally works!" He said holding up his magnet with a pipe cleaner stuck to it. "Let me try out the straw. No, it doesn't stick. I was surprised the button didn't stick."

The discovery continued.

"Let's try the other pipe cleaner,"



SARAH WETZEL/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Kids at the Vermillion Public Library experimented and explored the properties of magnets at Monday's science activity.

Libby said, "I was surprised that the pipe cleaner stuck."

The children learned that though magnets seem attracted to metal, only Iron and Steel actually stick to magnets which is why items like the penny did not stick to their magnets.

Exploring the Kozak room of the library, the kids found other things containing Iron and Steel.

"I'll show you something that does stick," Libby said to Connor, showing him a metal pole. "Mine also stuck to the thing by the door."

Next the kids explored magnetic fields.

"It's the part that makes things connect," Henry explained.

"It's kind of like static electricity," Libby added.

The kids used a paper clip attached to a string to test how strong the magnetic field was on their magnets.

"It doesn't go very far," Henry observed.

Some doughnut-shaped magnets were placed on a stick with similar poles facing one another to show the kids that like-poles repel each other.

"It feels like there's a bubble," Libby observed.

In between learning all about magnets, kids will be kids.

"This would make a good lock pick," Libby said, bending a paper clip.

"I made a sword," announced Henry. "It's tiny but it still hurts. Poke! Poke!"

"My controller broke," Connor lamented but quickly reshaped his makeshift weapon. "It's a super shooter!"

What's New with Beef Quality Assurance

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) and Dairy Animal Care and Quality Assurance (DACQA), also known as Dairy BQA, focus on best management practices for the day-to-day husbandry practices used in caring for cattle that provide beef for family's tables across the United States and abroad.

"The National BQA program continually works with all sectors of the beef and dairy industries to improve the content, credibility and the uniformity of standards for raising food animals to assure the quality of beef products," explained Heidi Carroll, SDSU Extension Livestock Stewardship Associate.

Antibiotic stewardship is a key component to both BQA and DACQA programs. This includes all medications or feed additive use. As changes occur to FDA regulations, Carroll reminds cattle producers to maintain their cattle treatment records, veterinary instructions and drug inventory lists accordingly. "Records should be maintained for two years.

Additionally, remember to keep veterinarian's prescriptions and VFDs with the records," Carroll said. "More importantly, maintain a valid veterinarian-client-patient

relationship (VCPR) to be able to acquire feed-grade medications when situations arise and have veterinary input to continually improve herd health plans."

Feed yards & BQA Feed yards are held to high standards and often put under the microscope in the eyes of meat packers and the public. Because of this, Carroll explained that the National BQA program continues to collaborate with major packing companies to create a more uniform producer training program on cattle handling instead of multiple packer-specific programs.

"All employees should maintain a current BQA certificate," she said. The BQA program strongly encourages feed yards to complete a Feed yard Assessment every three years and create written Standards of Practice Protocols. Once an assessment is complete a feed yard qualifies to be included on the National BQA list of certified feed yards.

"The National BQA list of certified feed yards will allow packers to verify feed yard BQA certification before purchasing cattle," Carroll explained. She added that this assists packers in keeping their commitments to consumers about the well-being of the cattle they either own or purchase.

The database will solely be accessed by national or state BQA coordinators and packers to ensure producer confidentiality.

Dairies & DACQA Dairy beef accounts for 15 to 20 percent of the United States' beef production. The National BQA program teamed up with the dairy industry to provide a collaborative effort to handle producer training programs and develop uniform resources on animal care and handling.

Carroll explained that the DACQA program will more closely reflect the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (F.A.R.M.) standards that are required by milk processors. "Since dairy feedlots are not required to participate in the F.A.R.M. program, they should maintain DACQA or BQA certification," Carroll said.

New training materials will be available soon. Become certified The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) still requires cattlemen to complete both levels of the South Dakota Beef Quality Assurance / Critical Management Plan (SD BQA/CMP) program, the educational training (Level 1) and the veterinarian approved site and treatment plan (Level 2), to be considered a certified producer.

"Feed yards should get

in the habit of completing a Feed yard Assessment on a regular basis and updating their files to have current written Standards of Practice Protocols, which is similar to Level 2 requirements," Carroll explained.

The SDBIC and SDSU Extension are updating the South Dakota materials appropriately and compiling the National BQA resources for producers.

2015 DAVID KRANZ SCHOLARSHIPS GIVEN

Two student journalists have been awarded 2015 David Kranz-Argus Leader Media Journalism Scholarships.

Heidi Kronaizl, a South Dakota State University senior, and Matthew Housiaux, an Augustana College senior, were selected for the awards, which recognize long-time journalist and political columnist David Kranz.

Kranz worked as a reporter, editor and columnist at the Argus Leader and other newspapers until his retirement in 2010.

Kronaizl is a Vermillion resident. She has worked as a reporter and news editor on The Collegian and has served as an intern at South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Housiaux is from Brookings and will be a senior this fall at Augustana.

This is the first year that two scholarship awards were presented. The \$1,500 scholarships are awarded for the upcoming school year.

"We are thrilled that we are able to award two scholarships this year," said Maricarol Kueter, chair of the David Kranz-Argus Leader Media Journalism Scholarship Committee. "Working with young journalists was one of David's passions and being able to assist two students in his name is gratifying."



JACKIE WILLIAMS/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Rylee Black, Rotary Youth Exchange Program was in Romania August 18, 2014 thru May 27, 2015 and was sponsored by the Vermillion Rotary.

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Surplus Property Sale

The University of South Dakota will be offering for sale surplus washers and dryers on
Wednesday, July 22nd from 10am to 2pm

Location of the sale is at the USD Quonset located north of the Dakota Dome on Hwy 50, next to the Vucurevich Day Care Center.
Any questions call 605.677-5669 Terms of Sale: Cash Only

Items to be sold

Qty: 16 - Frontload Maytag Commercial Washer, white color, model number MAH22PRBWW0, 5 years old with coin operation feature, **\$35.00 each**

Qty: 25 - Top load Maytag Commercial Washer, Heavy Duty High Efficiency Washer, white color, model number MAT12PDLAW, 8 years old with coin operation feature, **\$35.00 each**

Qty: 16 - Maytag Commercial Dryers, Stacked combination upper and lower unit, white color, model number MLG23PDHWW (natural gas), 8 years old with coin feature, **\$35.00 each**

Qty: 3 - Top load Sears Kenmore Commercial Heavy Duty Washers, 1 speed, beige color, model number 82403830, 25 years old with coin operation feature, **\$20.00 each**

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