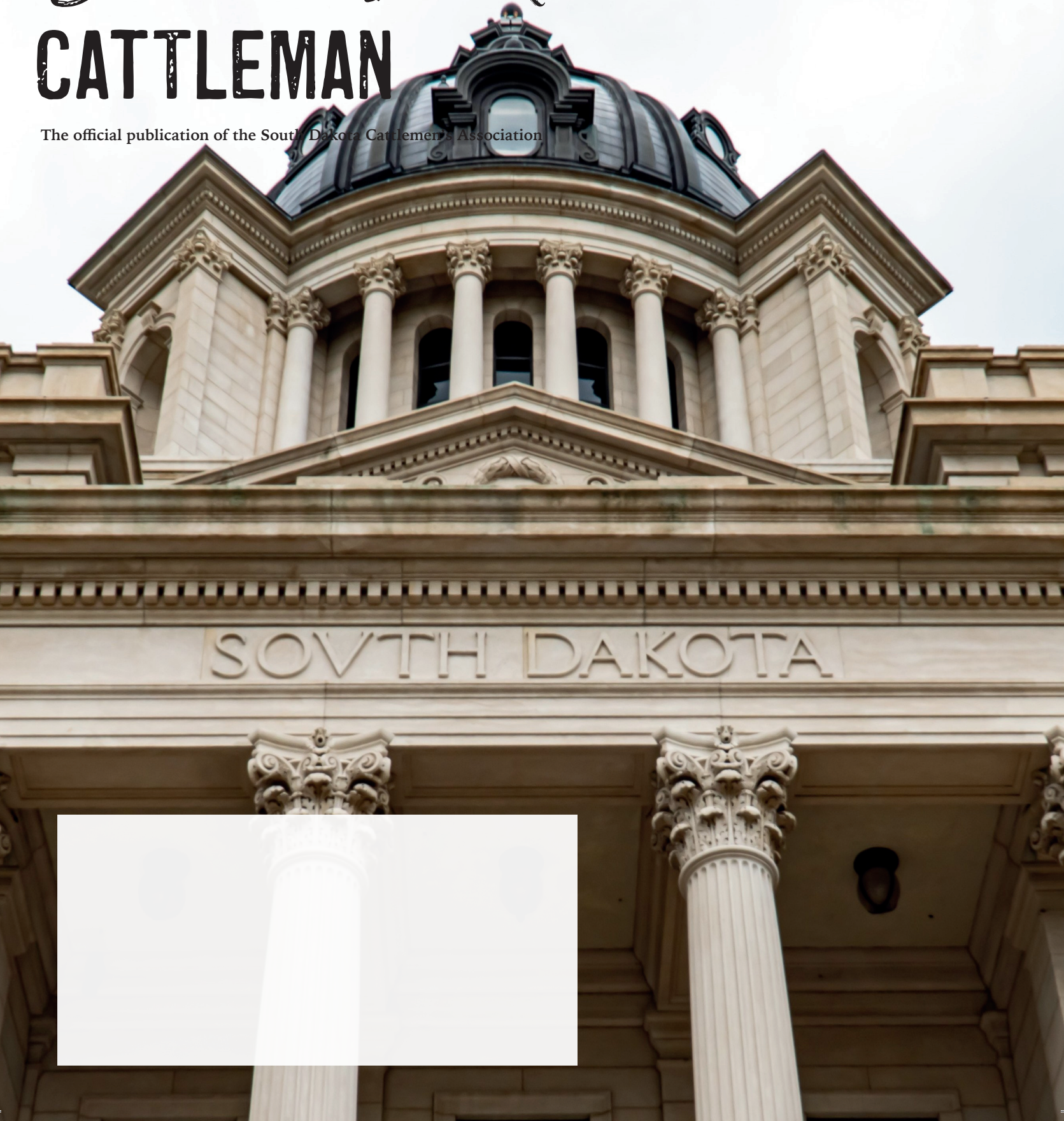


Winter 2025
Legislative Session Edition

THE *South Dakota* CATTLEMAN

The official publication of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association





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SDCA

Calendar of Events

January 29: SDCA Board of Directors Meeting, Pierre, SD

January 30: SDCA Day at the Capitol, Pierre, SD

February 3: Ag Fest, Pierre, SD

February 4 – 6: NCBA Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show, San Antonio, TX

March 7: Leopold Conservation Award Nominations Due

SDBIC Events

January 31-Feb 8:
Black Hill Stock Show
Rodeo, Rapid City, SD

February 4 – 6: Cattle Con,
San Antonio, TX

March 10: SDBIC Quartley Board Meeting –
Drifters, Ft. Pierre, SD



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The South Dakota Cattleman is published six times a year and sent to SDCA members including beef producers, beef industry supporters, property owners, allied industry partners, as well as state and local government officials with a circulation over 1,000.

Advertising deadline is the 5th of the month prior to publication.

The SDCA e-newsletter, *The Cattle Guard*, is emailed to all SDCA members every week. *The Cattle Guard* contains updates and news from SDCA, industry partners, and NCBA.

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South Dakota



Mission

To advance the interests of South Dakota Cattlemen through representation and promotion of the beef industry.

Vision

To be an organization where members can work together to protect their interests; seek solutions to industry problems; provide a unified voice, and to build the good will, esteem, and recognition the industry deserves.



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Meet Your 2025 Executive Committee



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President



Craig Bieber
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Vaughn Thorstenson
Secretary / Treasurer



Calli Williams
VP of Membership



Eric Jennings
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From the Cattle Pen

Warren Symens, SDCA President



There was no blizzard this year, no stranded convention goers or extended stays at the hotel. In fact, the 76th Annual South Dakota Cattlemen's Association Convention and Trade Show was well attended for two days in December. It was inspiring to see an enthusiastic, engaged group of members, who were excited to Lead the Future of the organization and the cattle industry as a whole in South Dakota.

That engagement was evident right away the first morning in the well-attended policy committee meetings. Prior to convention, virtual committee meetings were held to discuss both sunset policy and new policy in all seven committees. With housekeeping things like language amendments cleaned up before hand, members were ready to dig into the policy.

Ag and Food Policy added three new resolutions. One to bolster the US Drought Monitor, one to support the role of beef in dietary recommendations, and finally one that reinforces SDCA's belief that agriculture needs its due recognition by the South Dakota Board of Regents. In Cattle Health and Well Being, SDCA's position on animal disease traceability was further clarified by combining two pieces of old policy. In that same vein, policy was passed regarding the developing situation with the screwworm problem on the southern United States border.

Federal Lands and Property Rights & Environmental Management committees held their meetings together. Amendments to existing policy, cleaned up some language, and modernized positions on the National Environmental Policy Act, climate change, wetlands, and natural disasters.

The International Trade and Live Cattle Marketing committees also shared a meeting. A 2019 mandatory price reporting policy was allowed to sunset, and a more applicable policy was adopted in its place. While nothing changed in the International Trade committee, Luke Lindberg, President and CEO of South Dakota Trade, presented statistics of where the state stands.

The Tax & Credit committee kept an eye to the future on both the state and national levels. A federal tax reform policy added new amendments to advocate for a more farm and ranch friendly tax code. Lending limits at the Farm Service Agency need to be increased, with the price of land and other assets increasing.

Over lunch, we presented Blioux River Ranch with the Leopold Conservation Award for their work in conservation. Members also had ample chances to visit the full trade show. With over 50 vendors, there was something for everyone, and business looked good. Once the Best of Beef Happy Hour hit, it was time for the Roping Contest. There was lots of excitement among membership as they put on a show powered by the Pierre Fort Pierre Rodeo Team. Members continued their support of the association through the President's Auction, which raised much

needed funds to support officer and staff travel around the country, working on behalf of SDCA at national events.

Over breakfast on day two, we heard important updates in two different presentations. The South Dakota Beef Industry Council and Beef Logic gave updates on how well our checkoff is working for us here in South Dakota and beyond. Everyone's favorite, CattleFax, let us know where the data showed the weather, and the markets were going for the next year. Drought may persist, but markets look very strong for the foreseeable future.

The annual membership meeting followed, with the business portion of the meeting held first. Members heard the reports from the board members and various officers and received an update from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association President, Mark Eisele. We're always fortunate when he attends our convention to fill us in on national issues.

Over lunch, we heard from keynote speaker Neil Fulton, Dean of the University of South Dakota Knutson School of Law. From a farm and ranch family, Neil had many insightful words on what leadership looks like. Past president Eric Jennings moderated a panel right after lunch called Leadership from Every Angle. Panelists Kim Vanneman, former South Dakota Secretary of Ag, Jim Ketelhut, President of the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, Mitchell Vander Wal, South Dakota State University student, and Janelle Booth, CEO of South Dakota Ag & Rural Leadership, all answered questions on leadership from their perspective.

The policy and election portion of the annual membership meeting followed, where members voted on all the previously mentioned pieces of policy. Election results, from each region were announced, and officer nominations and elections were held.

The night ended with the banquet, where two recipients were awarded for their work both within the Association and for being there for us in other valuable ways. Chance Popham received the Cattleman of the Year award, and former Representative Roger Chase was given the Friend of SDCA award. The evening ended with live entertainment by Cody Henson Hullinger.

That was all a very windy way of communicating to everyone that this has always been, and will always be, a grassroots driven organization. I overheard a fellow Limousin breeder from Saskatchewan tell his crew at a stock show one day, "it's up to us." Nobody else was going to do the work. Nobody was going to hand them any purple ribbons or plaques. Being a passive observer in any part of this business will ensure that this business passes you by. Membership in SDCA definitely has its perks, but it also has its responsibilities. It's up to us.



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The 76th Annual Trade Show was an opportunity for cattlemen and women to network, learn about the newest programs and products, and take advantage of trade show promotions.



CATTLEMEN'S LAND & LEGACY

Cattlemen's LAND & LEGACY

The Cattlemen's Land & Legacy event featured a keynote address by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's President Mark Eisele, the presentation of the 2024 South Dakota Leopold Conservation Award to Barry & Eli Little of Blioux River Ranch, and a Ranching for Profit workshop led by Dallas Mount of Ranch Management Consultants.



Thank you to the Land & Legacy event sponsors!



Convention & Trade Show

POLICY MEETINGS

The Convention included seven policy committee meetings where members heard from speakers and considered policy resolutions offered by cattlemen's affiliates, committees, individual members or directors. Each policy committee also reviewed resolutions set to expire and voted to renew, amend, or allow the resolutions to expire. All policy passed through the committees was then considered by the full membership at the annual meeting that took place on day two.



BEST OF BEEF HAPPY HOUR



The first night of Convention was capped off with the Best of Beef Happy Hour sponsored by First National Bank in Sioux Falls! The event featured a carved beef station, a host of appetizers showcasing the best of beef, and SDSU ice cream as we gathered to celebrate our industry partners, members, vendors and attendees. Following happy hour, the Merck Roping Contest and President's Auction took place. Thank you to all that supported the President's Auction through donation or participation at the auction. Funds raised through the President's Auction offset expenses for SDCA's officers and volunteer Board of Directors when they travel on behalf of SDCA to national events.





BEEF CHECKOFF UPDATES

Jodie Anderson, Executive Director for the South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) provided an update on programs and initiatives the SDBIC is working on to educate consumers and drive demand for beef. One of the contractors who receives funding from the SDBIC is Beef Logic. Suzy Geppert spoke to the group about Beef Logic's campaign to work with athletes at various levels to highlight the importance of beef as a healthy diet.

MARKET UPDATE **CattleFax** THE DECIDING FACTOR

Holden Ramey of CattleFax provided a market update. Every year this is one of the crowd favorite events! Make sure to look for our weekly Cattlefax updated in the Cattle Guard weekly e-newsletter.

CONVENTION KEYNOTE: NEIL FULTON

Fulton has served South Dakotans through various leadership roles in both the private and public sector roles for decades. Fulton currently serves as the 14th Dean of Knutson School of Law at the University of South Dakota. Read about Fulton's keynote address on page 24.



CATTLEMEN'S EDUCATION SERIES



Moderated by SDCA's Past President, Eric Jennings, the Cattlemen's Education Series sponsored by National Corn Growers Association showcased the leadership 360 panel. Panelists highlighted leadership from every angle - why to get involved, how to take the leap into a leadership role, and how to inspire involvement.

Thanks to the panelists!

- Jim Ketelhut, farmer and President of the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council
- Janelle Booth, CEO of South Dakota Agricultural & Rural Leadership, Inc.
- Mitchell Vander Wal, student at South Dakota State University and founder of SDSU Collegiate Cattlemen's Club
- Kim Vanneman, farmer and former Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Ag & Natural Resources



MYRON WILLIAMS AWARDED BUCKLE FOR LEADERSHIP WITH NCBA

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) honored the late Myron Williams during the annual Convention & Trade Show. At the time of his passing, Myron served as the Chairman of the NCBA's Livestock Marketing Council. Todd Wilkinson, NCBA Past President and longtime friend of Myron, presented Myron's son, Monty Williams, with the Livestock Marketing Chairman's buckle. The honorary belt buckle is awarded to outgoing Chairmen in recognition of their dedication and countless hours advancing the cattle industry.

"Myron was a true leader in the cattle industry and will always be remembered as such," said Wilkinson. "Throughout his life, he devoted much of his time to being a knowledgeable voice for our industry.

As a member of NCBA for over 35 years, Myron was involved in every aspect of the association. "Thank you, Myron, for your dedication to SDCA, NCBA, and our industry," Wilkinson concluded.



Wilkinson and Myron Williams' son, Monty.

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Roping Contest

King of the Reach Rowdy Martin



Team Roping Results

- 1st Place – Casey Heenan & Trevor Hupp
- 2nd Place – Coy Ludemann & Jed Breuker
- 3rd Place - Coy Ludemann & Rowdy Martin

Back by popular demand, the 2nd annual Merck Roping Contest was a success! Ropers competed in a King of the Reach and Team Roping Contest. Congratulations to our winners and special thank you to the Pierre Fort Pierre Rodeo Team for running the contest!



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Cattlemen of the Year Awarded to Chance Popham

By Kristen Smith



Popham Livestock in Hamlin County near Hayti, South Dakota, is home to the 2024 South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA) Cattlemen of the Year, Chance Popham. On the fourth-generation farm, they run a commercial Black and Red Angus cow-calf, feedlot, and grain operation.

"Chance is a driving force, fostering growth within the Clark-Hamlin Affiliate," said Craig Bieber, Vice President of SDCA. "Chance exemplifies exceptional leadership and dedication to the SDCA and the industry."

Chance has been an active member of the Clark-Hamlin Affiliate for six years, with three of those years as President. He enjoys working with people on the board, planning the annual meeting, and watching the attendance and participation numbers continue to increase.

"Knowing I am doing some good for the SDCA and the cattle industry means a lot to me," says Chance.

Chance got involved and supports SDCA because he wants to be part of the future of the cattle industry. Chance encourages others to be involved so producers' voices can be heard.

"We can sit around and talk about what needs to be done, but without being a part of something like SDCA it will never be done. Being a member, gives us better representation at the state and national levels," says Chance.

"The most rewarding part of the SDCA is being part of such a great organization and meeting the great people who are part of the organization," says Chance.



South Dakota Cattlemen's Names Friend of SDCA

By Kristen Smith

Roger Chase's work on behalf of cattle producers earned him the honor of the 2024 South Dakota Cattlemen's Association Friend of SDCA award.

As a state Representative, Roger enjoyed serving on the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee during his tenure, which came to an end in 2024 when he chose not to seek reelection. He prided himself as being one of only a few members of the legislature that was actively involved in farming and ranching, with even fewer involved in beef production.

Serving as Committee Chairman gave Roger the opportunity to set the schedule when the bills pertaining to the cattle industry would be heard. Being that Chair also allowed him the opportunity to control the discussion to make sure everyone had the opportunity to discuss the proposed legislation fairly and completely.

Over the past eight years, Roger enjoyed working with SDCA and talking SDCA leadership when they came to Pierre to discuss what was happening within the legislature.

Roger appreciated the opportunity to both educate and learn from cattlemen on both the pros and cons of proposed legislation.

"A good legislator and advocate, of any industry, looks to pass good legislation and keep harmful legislation from passing," says Roger.

Roger looks back on some of the positive legislation that will have long-term, positive effects on the cattle industry, including:

- Constructing the South Dakota Animal Disease and Diagnosis Laboratory at SDSU (2017)
- South Dakota Raven Precision Agriculture building at SDSU (2018)
- Dakota Events Complex DEX on the South Dakota State Fairgrounds (2021-2023)
- Cottonwood Research Farm at Philip (2022)

Aside from work as a realtor, Roger continues to be active on his family farm located north of Huron. The family farm was built from scratch in November 1971. Now a multigenerational operation, Roger works with his oldest son, Derek and looks forward spending more time with his grandchildren too.

Roger expressed the importance of cattle producers knowing who their elected leaders are at the local, state, and national levels. "Be involved, be heard, and participate in the political process. Your livelihood depends on it," said Roger. Decisions made by elected leaders will have an impact on businesses and industry. He encourages all to reach out to those leaders and let them know if you have any questions about policy that affects the cattle industry.



"This award is a great honor, and I hope that the decisions that I made while serving in the legislature have a long lasting, positive impact for South Dakota in the future," says Roger.



Generations of Growth

How Peterson Cattle Balances Tradition, Adversity, and Service

Peterson Cattle is located north of Salem in northern McCook County, South Dakota. Cattlemen's Association talked to 5th generation farmer and rancher Drew Peterson learn about their operation and how it's changed from one generation to the next.

Peterson Cattle History

Drew's great-great grandfather Erik Peterson came from Sweden to just east of Canova in 1900. The next year he moved 7 miles closer to Salem in northern McCook County, along a Vermillion River tributary, where the farm and ranch headquarters is today. He grew up across the road from his great grandparents, who lived on the original Peterson homestead. When he wasn't at daycare or school, he got to visit them for coffee every morning alongside his grandpa Roland and father, Steve. Five years ago, Drew's mother died of cancer, she was the natural glue on the farm and an amazing woman to be around and learn from.

Today, Drew and his wife, Lauren (Eichacker), and their one-year-old son, Michael, live across the creek and up the hill to the south of the original homestead. Lauren's parents live three miles south, where they also farm and ranch. Drew is the fifth generation Peterson to farm and ranch. Michael will soon be the sixth when he gets his first heifer and starts his herd.

The operation

Drew and his father Steve run a commercial cow/calf herd, running Red and Black Angus cows bred Black Angus. They background home raised calves and develop replacement heifers that go back into the herd. Some years they sell spring pairs or bred heifers. They expanded their cow herd and ran their feedlot at capacity (1,999) for many years when after Drew and his brother Kent had both returned to the farm. Since Kent left the farm, they no longer run the feedlot at capacity but have added more cow numbers. They summer a majority of the herd near White River. Drew and Steve work alongside one full time employee, Matt, and bring in additional help during spring calving and planting, grain hauling, and harvest. Every fall they welcome a lot of family and friends to the farm to hunt.



Transitions

In 2021, after 11 years as farming and ranching partners, Drew's brother Kent decided to pursue opportunities off the farm. The brothers worked out a fair deal that resulted in a buyout, doubling the size of the operation for Drew and Lauren. Before the buyout agreements were finalized, the derecho in May of 2022 destroyed much of the co-owned farm assets (bins, shop, vehicles, trucks, trailers). With Kent able to assign his half of the insurance proceeds to Drew, they finished the deal, moving forward to rebuild and replace everything.

In April of 2023, son Michael was born at 28 weeks and 2 days and spent the first 3 months in the NICU in Sioux Falls. Today he is thriving, and Drew is beyond thankful for his and Lauren's health. A year and a day after Michael's birthday, the Peterson's found themselves back in the hospital. During night calving Drew had a cow rough him up while tending to her new calf. Eventually he was able to get the gate latch open and crawl out of the pen. He spent four days in the hospital after a surgeon structurally rebuilt his right knee and a put a titanium plate and dozen screws in his tibia that was broke vertically from the knee down due to hyperextension. He has since been working to get back to full strength by next calving season. Drew hopes 2025 brings a more normal year for our ranch and family, "going through some of those things makes a person appreciate every day, normal life, our health, and our ability to take care of our land and family. We leveraged our farm to buy out Kent, so I'm looking forward to fulfilling those obligations in the next few years. My wife has been very patient to live in our old farmhouse as we continue to invest in our farm and ranch."

Drew said if he has some advice for new producers, or those looking to grow in their operation, its "appreciate where you are in life, the people in your life, the opportunities that you've had so far, and trust that more will come your way."



Representative Drew Peterson

District 19



How can groups with different opinions find a path forward?

Sit down at the table and talk to each other. Anything is possible when we all sit down and talk, especially when we don't care who gets the credit. If we don't find common ground on one issue, be respectful and don't burn any bridges. We take hundreds of votes every year, so we might disagree with someone on one issue and agree on the next ten.

How can SDCA Members help our elected leaders in their decision making?

Give them honest, fact-based information and relate the issues at hand to how they will affect your family and operation. One or two thoughtful conversations can go a long ways and lead to an impactful relationship. Legislators want to know people that are credible industry leaders, and they want to know people they can trust. My biggest advice is to tell the truth no matter what and treat everyone with respect.

What are your goals for the 2025 session?

A balanced budget and funding our core obligations. We are in a down budget year, so it's critical to be fiscally conservative as a legislature. I represent a rural district, so making sure our towns, schools, and taxpayers are treated fairly is my focus. There will be a lot of tax proposals on the table, and I'll focus to make sure ag is treated fairly and equitably.

What are you especially proud of that you have been able to accomplish in the legislature so far?

I've passed several bills as prime sponsor that were good for ag working alongside SDCA, and I hope to pass a few more this year. I am proud of the relationships I have with SDCA, Farm Bureau, Corn, and Soybeans, and work hard with all those groups to represent ag in Pierre. When they ask me to carry a bill on behalf of SD ranchers and farmers, it's a true honor. There is no neutral or abstain button when we vote in Pierre, so at the end of the day I do what I think is right with the knowledge and facts at hand. Working with a group like SDCA helps me make an informed vote that is good for South Dakota cattlemen and women.

In 2023 Drew was elected to serve as a Representative for District 19 in the South Dakota State Legislature. He serves on the House Agriculture and Natural Resource, House Transportation, and Government Oversight & Audit Committees. In the summer of 2024, he was co-chair of the Property Tax Assessment Summer Study.

What inspired you to go into public service?

I got to work for the Rounds/Daugaard reelection campaign while in college and served as College Republicans President. Shortly after college I knew my goal was to farm and ranch the rest of my life, but I also hoped to serve in the legislature someday rather than pursuing a career as a political aide.

There are many new legislators from urban districts. Is that a challenge or an opportunity for the ag industry?

Both. We have an opportunity as ag producers to educate and find common ground with the new members from urban areas. Some of the best ag supporters in Pierre live in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. There are only a handful of ag producers in the legislature, so it's critical for SDCA and other ag groups to advocate in Pierre.



SDCA Announces Inaugural Leadership Academy Class to Empower Future Leaders

Two years ago, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA) Board of Directors discussed ways to identify and grow future leaders and arm them with knowledge of various sectors of cattle production and marketing, the skills to advocate on behalf of producers, and the desire to mentor the next generation. Fast forward to last year, the SDCA proudly announced the Leadership Academy to accomplish those goals and more.

This year, the SDCA, in partnership with Farm Credit Services of America and the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, was proud to announce the inaugural class of the Leadership Academy during the 76th Annual Convention and Trade Show.

"The Leadership Academy will foster industry knowledge, enhance leadership, improve communication skills, and promote mentorship among emerging leaders. The program will drive sustainable growth and positively impact the beef production industry by equipping participants with critical skills, knowledge, and networks," said Warren Symens, SDCA President. "Congratulations to the inaugural Leadership Academy class,"

- Mitchell Vander Wal | Howard, SD
- Colin Geppert | Kimball, SD
- Riley Casper | Lake Preston, SD
- Addie Womack | Mitchell, SD
- Colton Buus | Canova, SD
- Maria Buus | Canova, SD
- Trevor Johnson | Centerville, SD

Class I participants will engage in a series of events, tours, interactive

seminars, and experiential learning opportunities. Guided by seasoned cattle industry veterans and experts, participants will connect with fellow professionals, industry leaders, and potential mentors. This environment will foster the exchange of best practices, expand professional networks, and allow opportunities for addressing industry-wide challenges.

"Leaders in our industry must understand the unique challenges faced by all segments of the industry—from the cow/calf producers to feedlot operators, packers and retailers," said Eric Jennings, SDCA Past President and chair of the SDCA Leadership Academy Steering Committee. "A comprehensive understanding of these various segments and regional experiences, coupled with effective communication, is essential in today's dynamic landscape."

The Leadership Academy has also inspired support from the broader SDCA community. Contributions to the Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund have played an important role in bringing the Leadership Academy to fruition. The SDCA also partnered with the Williams family to honor Myron Williams, through the creation of the Myron Williams Leadership Award. Each year, one Leadership Academy participant will receive the distinguished award, which includes the opportunity to travel with SDCA leaders to Washington D.C. While in D.C., they'll meet with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, members of Congress, and various agencies, putting their leadership, communication, and advocacy skills to work on behalf of SDCA members.

The announcement of Class I of the Leadership Academy marks a new chapter for the SDCA, one where emerging leaders will be equipped to steer the cattle industry into a bright and sustainable future.



From left to right: Maria Buus, Colton Buus, Addie Womack, Mitchell Vander Wal, Trevor Johnson, and Riley Casper. (Not pictured Colin Geppert)



Thank you to all of those who have donated!

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The Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund is a voluntary fundraising initiative to support specific SDCA programs and initiatives selected by the SDCA Board of Directors that will advance the interests of cattlemen across our state and ensuring the sustainability and growth of the organization. The SDCA Board of Directors has elected to earmark contributions to the Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund in fiscal year 2025 to support the creation and administration of the new South Dakota Cattlemen's Leadership Academy.

The SDCA launched the new South Dakota Cattlemen's Leadership Academy to strengthen our association and tackle the challenges ahead by identifying and developing future leaders within the beef industry. The South Dakota Cattlemen's Leadership Academy will empower emerging leaders with knowledge of the various sectors of cattle production and marketing, skills to communicate and advocate on behalf of producers, and the desire lead into the future. Enclosed is additional information about the Leadership Academy. Learn more and apply at sdcattlemen.org.

Contributions to the Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund are tax deductible, thanks to the partnership between the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association and the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Members who go above and beyond their membership dues to support the Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund will be recognized in an issue of The South Dakota Cattleman magazine and on the SDCA website, or they may choose to give anonymously.

Thank you for considering a donation to the Leave Your Mark Legacy Fund. Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact on SDCA and the future of the beef industry.



Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact on the future of the beef industry.

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2025

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Ag & Natural Resources Committee



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District 15



Richard Vasgaard
District 16



Julie Auch
District 18



Drew Peterson
District 19



Tim Goodwin
District 30



Trish Ladner
District 30

Not Pictured:
Representatives Jana Hunt of District 28A, Travis Ismay
of District 28B, Kaley Nolz of District 20, Kathy Rice of
District 29, and Kevin Van Diepen of District 22.

Get involved in Session 2025

In grassroots policy organizations like the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, members work to create policy and set the tone of the organization. When January rolls around, it may be tempting to leave the legislative work to the lobbyists or the Board of Directors, but the role individual members play in the process is just as important -- if not more important -- to accomplishing the organization's goals. Here are a few ways you can be involved and make a difference during session:



Attend Local Events

Cracker barrels and legislative coffee events that take place throughout session give you an opportunity to meet your elected leaders, hear what initiatives are important to them, and discuss what is important to you and the organizations you support.



Tell Your Story

Often times, a bill sounds good on paper, but there are unintended consequences. If there is a bill that would negatively impact you, your operation, or your community, it's important to share that perspective with your organization leaders, lobbyists, and with legislators directly. Session isn't all about fighting bad legislation. Often the biggest successes are when ag groups join to pass legislation that helps producers. If there is a bill that would have impact, or you would have an idea that could solve that issue, share that too!



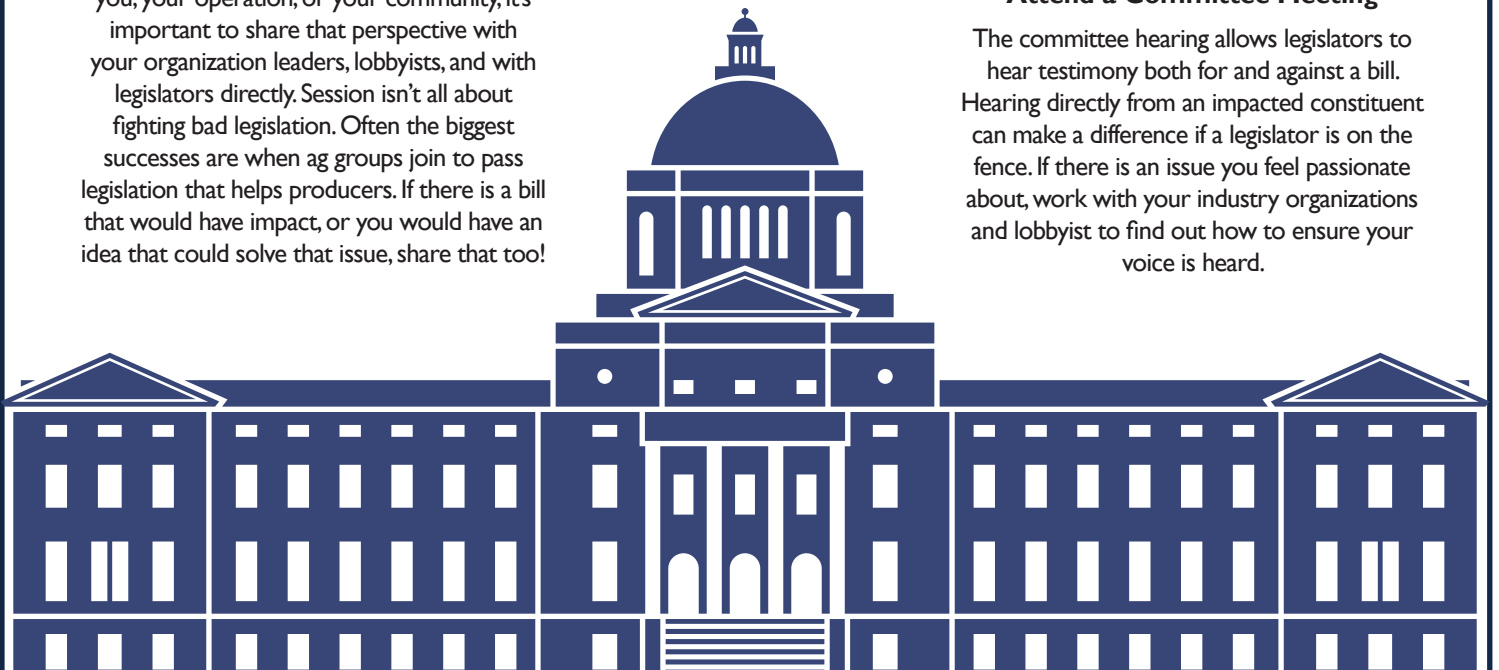
Stay Informed

The SDCA legislative update is a weekly newsletter during session to keep you informed about the bills that have been filed, which bills and issues SDCA will take a position on and how you can support those efforts. You can also scan the QR code along with the SDCA's legislative tracker.



Attend a Committee Meeting

The committee hearing allows legislators to hear testimony both for and against a bill. Hearing directly from an impacted constituent can make a difference if a legislator is on the fence. If there is an issue you feel passionate about, work with your industry organizations and lobbyist to find out how to ensure your voice is heard.





View from My Side of the Fence

Craig Bieber, Vice President

SDCA held its 76th Annual Convention mid-December, and if you missed it, you missed a very good event. We heard from great speakers and had lively policy discussions. I enjoyed the workshop led by Dallas Mount of Ranching for Profit. His insight is similar to what my father Ron Bieber believed in and drilled into us for years – that knowing your numbers and knowing your costs is key to successful business. I left the workshop refreshed and enjoyed visiting with Dallas afterward.

Neil Fulton, the Dean of the USD Law School was the keynote speaker on the topic of leadership. I realize that not everyone is cut out for formal leadership roles, but there is always something you can contribute- whether in your family, community, church, industry, or government. Neil shared during his remarks what he believes sets leaders apart. I have summarized those beliefs below because there are key points that we can all take away from his address and use in our own lives to make an impact.

Leaders plant trees not flowers

Flowers are beautiful, they grow fast, and they are pretty; but they die in the winter. Planting trees is hard work, they take time and resources to grow over years, but they provide shade for generations. Leaders must look for solutions for the next generation, not next week. Leaders must accept that some of their best work will provide shade for the next generation, but not themselves.

Leaders committed to planting trees not flowers, imagine an invisible future. They look toward to future generations and see the world that they want, and commit to creating it, knowing that they may not live to see it. Leaders put tomorrow ahead of today and recognize the value in making investments for the future.

Leaders expand their circle

Often people decide that it is easier to focus on what divides us, or that someone from another party or another group is an enemy with which they can never agree or worst of all that the person who agrees with 75% of their solution is 100% wrong. Too many leaders particularly around politics and public policy want to shrink to circle, but true leaders are constantly working to expand their circle. Our nation's founders didn't agree on much, but they did agree that our political system is built around compromise and slow incremental progress; that the most meaningful accomplishments come when everyone gets some of what they want and not when everyone demands all of what they want and deny everyone else anything they want. Good leaders in public policy and civic engagement expand the circle to include people who can communicate and find compromise, people who disagree without becoming disagreeable. The best leaders expand their circles to find a role for everyone to contribute and know that everyone has a place.

Leaders are imperfect

Leaders are imperfect, good leaders acknowledge it. When they admit they are imperfect as a leader they communicate to the people working with them that they need help and input from others to solve big problems. Very few problems worth solving can be done alone. By admitting they are imperfect, leaders are communicating that

mistakes are going to happen, and that's OK because when we make mistakes, we learn and grow.

Leaders keep learning

We learn or we are left behind. The best leaders keep learning to improve their imperfections and grow from mistakes. Leaders look to the future with curiosity and thought about the world that can be, not just the world as it is. Great leaders are ones who ask questions and are consistently curious to learn everything they can. Really great see how their world fits into the larger world.

Leaders say what they do, and do what they say

Leaders say what they do, and they do what they say. The best leaders communicate clearly, and they have integrity. Leaders must follow through on their promises. Nothing destroys leadership more quickly than not doing what we say. Leaders organize and activate people around them to achieve goals. Having a plan of what you should do makes you a dreamer, having a plan to achieve it makes you a leader. Saying what you do and doing what you say does not mean that a leader's mind is fixed. Great leaders do change their mind. Leaders who learn expand their thinking, leaders who expand the circle make room for new and different ideas. Leaders continue to do what they say when they are honest about changes and explain to other people why they are changing course.

Leaders eat last

Leaders eat last, an idea written about by Simon Sinek in the book Leaders Eat Last, captures the relationship of a leader to the people they're leading. Leaders put themselves last, considering what's best for others before thinking about what's best for themselves, lifting other up even when it's not to their own benefit.

Leaders can be lonely

Leaders can be lonely. Not disconnected or disinterested in other people, but leaders are apart from the people they lead. To lead people there is a degree of distance that leaders must maintain to avoid excessive entanglement. They owe the people they lead the objectivity of distance. Leaders owe the people they lead the vision of the future and big picture that not everyone sees, because if everyone saw it, we wouldn't need a leader to get us there.

If we fail to accept the loneliness of leadership there's a danger. If we are too close to people we lead, we can be too emotionally engaged to be there for them. If we delay making decisions because we don't want to make someone mad, we are not leading. If we ignore the long term and the difficulty of making tough decisions and don't focus on the big picture that no one else sees, we can lose the potential to get somewhere important. Leaders must have the confidence and fortitude to live with that loneliness.

Leaders matter

Leaders matter. Leaders set our agenda, they set the tone of discussion, they model our values. Leaders are built not born, and all of us can be leaders if we choose to take on that work.



The Reproductive Microbiome: A Small but Big Player in Artificial Insemination

Jessica Drum, SDSU Extension Beef Reproduction Physiology Specialist
Riley Puck, SDSU Graduate Student
South Dakota State University Extension



Microorganisms, or microbes, like bacteria, protozoa, and fungi play a role in the environment and interact with one another making up the microbiome population. Microbes can be found all around the environment and animal bodies, acting on many biological systems, including the reproductive tract. Microorganisms are responsible for the odors produced by a cow in heat, protect the animals from pathogen invasion, and enhance the immune system defense. They are also associated with reduced proinflammatory cytokines, inflammation, and enhanced oocyte quality.

Many of the beneficial properties of microbes in the reproductive tract were linked to the genus *Lactobacillus*¹. However, not all microorganisms in the microbiome are favorable. *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), have been associated with pseudopregnancy, luteal cysts, and anestrus in cattle¹. In addition to that, throughout their productive life, cattle are usually troubled with events that can cause dysbiosis in their microbiome. One example is the retention of fetal membranes (RFM) that disturbs the reproductive tract microbiome by stimulating bacterial proliferation. After parturition, females who experience RFM are more likely to present inflammatory diseases such as endometritis and metritis. That can extend uterine involution and calving interval leading to decreased reproductive performance.

The origin of cattle's reproductive microbiome is not fully known. However, there are three possible theories of establishment of microbe populations:

1. Rumen theory: comes from the rumen through the blood to the reproductive tract and is established in the cavities.
2. Male theory: from the male reproductive tract are present in the ejaculate and become established in the female reproductive tract through copulation.
3. Ascension theory: enter through the tract from the outside and ascend to the uterus.

For the first theory, the only intervention method is nutritional management. The other two theories consider human interference by using assisted reproductive technologies such as Artificial insemination (AI). The use of AI minimizes the male effect since processed semen contains antibiotics in the semen extender. On the other hand, even though ascension can happen naturally, AI can contribute by carrying the microorganisms in the tools utilized.

Conversely, monitoring the microbiome profile to determine if the AI tools carry microorganisms requires expensive and deep analysis, which makes it unviable as routine management practice. Despite it not being completely clear which microbes are good or bad for fertility and where they are coming from, the rule of thumb is to avoid the introduction of new agents by cleaning. A major advantage of AI includes preventing the spread of venereal diseases, like trichinosis, that can impair reproductive efficiency. Hence, maintaining clean equipment

as a standard practice is vital not only to prevent the technicians and producers from introducing diseases, but also to prevent the disturbance of the microbiome population.

Cleanliness during the synchronization process is the first step to minimizing microbiome change. Synchronization protocols that include progesterone implants alter the microbiome. Especially when the same applicator is used in multiple cows. The applicator is a foreign object constantly exposed to the environment that enters the vaginas, which facilitates microbial transmission. However microbial populations can be reduced with the use of antimicrobial agents such as chlorhexidine and povidone-iodin². It is recommended to maintain a bucket with a Chlorhexidine solution and clean the applicators between cows. Also, products such as pre-concentrated chlorhexidine lube can be found in the market and used to facilitate the insertion of implants.

Another tool to monitor the degree of disturbance in vaginal health after the use of a progesterone implant is grading the implant's appearance after removal. The scoring system can be done as follows:

1. Grade 1: a clean implant with no mucus.
2. Grade 2: clear mucus.
3. Grade 3: pus-filled mucus.
4. Grade 4: blood and pus-filled mucus.

The length of the synchronization is an important factor to consider since longer protocols imply more time with the implant inserted. In a study we conducted at SDSU, using a 14-day implant protocol, the implant score averaged 3, with 88% (118/133) of the cows having scores of 3 or 4. Other studies using a 7-day protocol have demonstrated that about 62.9% (722/1149) of the cows presented scores of 3 or 4³. Even following the recommendations for cleaning mentioned above, in our study, we had a high incidence of greater scores, which suggests mild inflammation caused by long-term use of progesterone implant.

At AI time, the breeder is also recommended to keep the equipment as clean as possible and use 70% ethyl alcohol to clean it periodically or between cows⁴. Additionally, there are breeding sheaths available in the market, to cover the gun and sheath through the vagina before crossing the cervix. This can help to prevent the assisted ascension of bacteria from the vagina to the uterus at AI as well.

The microbes are small but can affect cattle reproduction greatly. Technicians have the power to minimize their damaging effects on reproduction by following simple cleaning recommendations. Additionally, researchers are working on understanding and improving the conception rates by utilizing the microbiome in their favor. Recently, prebiotic implants have been developed to establish beneficial bacteria in the reproductive tract. However, more studies need to be conducted to identify and target beneficial and detrimental microorganisms, hence developing management strategies to utilize this knowledge.



Meat Production in Action: SDSU's Hands-On Approach to Beef Processing



Meat processing is an important component within the beef production industry, but also one that is not familiar to everyone. South Dakota is seeing a shortage of meat industry knowledge and labor. It's more than just cutting and packaging meat; it's also about using techniques to keep the meat fresh and safe, and making different meat products for various cuisines.

Since 1977, when the Meat Lab opened on the campus of South Dakota State University (SDSU), they have been working in three key areas - teaching, research, and extension. Students are offered classes where they learn to harvest animals and handle carcasses, going through the entire procedure of fabrication and meat processing. The Meat Lab is a fully inspected facility where beef and pork are processed. The Meat Lab also features a retail space employed by students to sell packaged meat products. This hands-on experience is a unique opportunity for student to explore future careers in meat science or processing.

The Meat Lab is dedicated to conducting research and providing outreach as well as education. SDSU offers a program, Beef 20/20,

designed to give a hands-on experience to beef industry stakeholders and agriculture educators to learn how cattle management impacts beef quality and yield. The program covers topics such as live animal evaluation, humane slaughter, quality and yield grading, carcass fabrication, marketing, and beef palatability.

The entire cattle industry relies on consumers having access to beef and other proteins. The Meat Lab is one way that South Dakota is leading the way by attracting students to the field, giving them valuable experience, and providing skills for the labor force needed in local processing facilities to allow them to grow. "Many family-owned ranches could make direct beef sales a part of their business if they had access to more locker plants," said SDCA Board Director Troy Hadrick. "Anyone can take advantage of the extension services offered by the Meat Lab faculty, or participate in the Beef 20/20 program. Hadrick noted how important it is to continue to have this resource in our state, "personally, we've relied on the faculty at SDSU to help us build and grow our beef business. Even our restaurant partners have utilized this resource."

To learn more about the SDSU Meat Lab or Beef 20/20 contact the SDSU Extension Meat Science Specialist.





Taya Runyan
SDCA Executive Director

SDCA *Working for You*

In his book *Hidden Potential, The Science of Achieving Greater Things*, organizational psychologist and professor at the Wharton School of Business, Adam Grant wrote, “It’s more important to be good ancestors than dutiful descendants. Too many people spend their lives being custodians of the past instead of stewards of the future... the responsibility of each generation is not to please our predecessors—it’s to improve conditions for our successors.”

South Dakota Cattlemen’s Association has embraced that philosophy in so many ways over the years. At this year’s convention, the theme **LEADING THE FUTURE** explored how investments made today have positive impacts on your operation and the cattle industry. The seminars, workshops, and speakers inspired attendees to become, and support be leaders who envision a better future and take steps today to improve conditions for our successors.

CONVENTION

The 76th Annual Convention was a success thanks to our sponsors, vendors, attendees, speakers, directors, committee chairs, and members! Making sure things went smoothly behind the scenes was a dedicated group of staff, interns, and volunteers who put in long hours before, during, and after the event to ensure things went off without a hitch- a big thank you to Lorrin, Megan, Kristen, Grace, Taylee, and Katie!

POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Policy resolutions are reviewed every 5 years to see if they are still relevant. In November SDCA hosted a series of virtual meetings open to members to discuss current policy, proposed new policy, and hot topics related to each committee area. These meetings provided an opportunity to suggest substantive and style and form edits, contemplate industry issues the organization lacked policy to address, and identify topic to discuss at convention. At the annual meeting, a few resolutions were allowed to expire, most remain important and were renewed without changes. A handful of resolutions needed minor updating and were amended. There were also several new policies or significantly amended resolutions adopted by the membership. The full 2025 Policy book will be mailed to members in January and available in electronic format at sdccattlemen.org.

SDCA ELECTIONS

Congratulations to all our regional directors on their re-election to the SDCA Board. While our slate of regional directors will stay the same in 2025, we have a new face the officer team. Calli Williams of Letcher will join the board as Vice President of Membership. Welcome Calli!

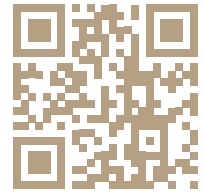
JANUARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & SDCA DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The next regular board meeting of the SDCA will be in Pierre on January 29th. Please reach out to SDCA at office@sdccattlemen.org if you have an issue to place on the agenda. The following day will be the annual SDCA Day at the capitol, the board and policy chairs will attend legislative committees, meet with cabinet and agency leaders, and spend time getting to know the new and returning members of the legislature.

GENERAL PERMIT

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) is preparing to reissue the state water pollution control general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations and a proposed water pollution control general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations using DANR’s delegated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) authority.

The SDCA will be submitting comments to the agency, if you have feedback, please reach out to SDCA at office@sdccattlemen.org Please include specific examples, technical concerns, and any suggested solutions. Comments are due the end of February. To view a copy of the draft permit or submit your own individual comments, scan the QR code or visit the DANR website at danr.sd.gov.



GETTING READY FOR SESSION

The 100th Legislative session kicks off January 14, 2025. The SDCA will be keeping track of legislation that impacts producers, and you can follow along with the online bill tracker at sdccattlemen.org. We will also send out weekly legislative e-updates about the bills we are working on and those we are following.



Updates from Capitol Hill

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

As December ended there was a flurry of activity on Capitol Hill. With a government shut down looming, the House and Senate worked right up to the deadline to pass a short term stop gap that will fund the federal government through March 14. Included in the bill is also a one-year farm bill extension, through September 30, 2025.

ADDITIONAL EID TAGS

USDA APHIS announced that for 2025, they will be ordering an additional three million EID tags, bringing the total number of tags to 11 million. SDCA and our national partners at NCBA pushed for more EID tag funding for the implementation of the Animal Disease Traceability rule, and this one-time purchase will help alleviate the cost of these tags while enabling the fastest possible response to a foreign animal disease outbreak. This will continue to be a priority to secure funding and adequate supply of tags to producers to comply with the rule.

CORPORATE TRANSPERANCY ACT

The continuing resolution included a one-year delay to beneficial owner reporting requirements under the Corporate Transparency Act for business which existed in 2024. NCBA is still working to determine whether this extension also applies to entities which will be established in 2025. The outcome remains very unclear on this requirement and entities that are subject to reporting are encouraged to comply despite this delay.

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Farewell

Jake Harms



As the year draws to an end, so does my time as the Vice President of Membership for South Dakota Cattlemen's Association. My time on the board has been filled with listening, learning, and good conversation about how we can serve current members and grow membership. We have loyal members who continue to believe and see the value of making our voices heard, specifically at the state level where agriculture is the driving force. Now it is time to grow that voice with more members as we move into the next legislative session.

Each person has issues that affect or could affect their operation. SDCA has a seat at the table to make your stories heard and to share where you need action. Recently at the convention held in Pierre, a member brought up their issues with cattle theft and the hardships of understanding the various jurisdictional authorities during the process. They shared this issue because of SDCA's relationship with industry stakeholders and our voice at the Capitol.

Membership is the best way for our association to continue to have influence. During my time as Vice President of Membership I strove to give our members a better direct return on investment. Our partnership with Neogen has helped members by providing products at close to the same dollar value as their dues. Moving forward, I hope more businesses partner with SDCA for the betterment of the organization and to give our members more. If you or people you know have a business that would be interested in partnering with the association, please reach out.

Thank you for electing me last year. It was great to meet fellow cattlemen and women and visit with them about their operations and how being an involved member has helped them. Involved being a key word. Being involved is an important action if you want to be heard. I believe we have many involved members, especially our leadership, who volunteer their time to keep our association going.

May God continue to bless our families, operations, state, and country.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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*TSUs must be submitted to Neogen for Igenity, AngusGS, and GGP testing.

South Dakota Cattlemen's Association



Meet SDCA's Vice President of Membership

Calli Williams



The SDCA welcomes Calli (Pritchard) Williams as the newly elected Vice President of Membership. Calli resides near Letcher, SD with her husband Tate and two sons, Jack and Tommy, where they own and operate TW Angus.

Calli's passion for livestock started at a young age as she showed cattle throughout her 4-H and FFA career. Calli's fire for promoting the beef industry was lit when she was named the South Dakota Beef Ambassador. She then went on to serve as a member of the National Beef Speakers Bureau. Calli later branched out to promote the beef industry to a new audience when she competed for the title of Miss South Dakota. Calli was named Miss Congeniality at the 2012 Miss South Dakota pageant where she competed with a platform of, "Be BOLD and ZIP into a healthy lifestyle with BEEF." Calli went on to complete internships with Zoetis, and Certified Angus Beef.

Calli and Tate are first generation ranchers, owning a purebred Angus cow-calf operation where they host an online bull sale the first weekend of March. They also operate a direct-to-consumer beef business, TW Angus Beef. Calli currently serves as a Livestock Field Representative with the Wyoming Livestock Roundup, assisting livestock producers and agricultural businesses from the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Colorado with their marketing needs. Calli has been involved with the Davison-Hanson Cattlemen's Association, the Young Cattlemen of South Dakota, is an active member of the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce Ag Committees and was recently named a Finalist for the 2023 Dakotafest Woman Rancher of the Year Award and served as a representative of the SD Cattlemen's Association for the Emerging Farmers and Ranchers Roundtable Discussion for the Next Generation of Ag Producers held with Governor Noem.

Welcome Calli!



Livestock Insurance Gains

Matthew Diersen, PhD

Griffith Chair in Agricultural Finance at South Dakota State University



An unusual semester just wrapped up on campus. All fall I had students interested in knowing more about crop and livestock insurance. Pasture insurance and livestock products have gained popularity nationally. Producers in South Dakota have been familiar with Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) for several years. However, following a change in the subsidy level for the 2021 coverage year, usage greatly increased at the national level. To a less extent, Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) coverage has also seen growth. A few trends and observations about these products are offered here.

From their start until 2020 the premium subsidy on LRP was only 13 percent, meaning the cost was very close to buying put options. The main advantage LRP had compared to using put options was the ability to cover a specific number of head rather than the fixed option contract size. In 2019 there were only 90,255 head covered nationally with LRP for feeder cattle. In South Dakota, there were 28,363 head covered, more than twice the volume of Kansas, the next closest state. Coverage for fed cattle was only 4,095 head nationally. LGM only covered 947 head nationally.

For insurance year 2024, which ran from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the number of head insured was much higher across policy types. At the national level, LRP on feeder cattle led products with 4.9 million head covered. LRP on fed cattle covered 1.6 million head. LGM, also on fed cattle, covered over 700,000 head. All totals are up sharply since 2019 predominantly because of the subsidy on the premiums, reducing their cost to producers by over \$200 million in 2024. For producers that will be selling cattle that have downside price and/or margin risk, these products are very competitive from a cost standpoint.

Are there any cattle left to insure? Or how do you put 4.9 million feeder cattle and 2.3 million fed cattle insured into perspective? In the February Cattle on Feed reports, NASS gives annual totals of inventory in large and small feedlots. They also give total cattle marketed across lots. In 2023, NASS estimated that feedlots nationally marketed almost 25.0 million head of cattle. Because LRP for fed cattle and LGM would both be appropriate for feedlot marketings, the total insured was less than 10 percent of the cattle that could have been at risk for lower prices or margins. For a given year, marketings and placements would be roughly equal. Thus, LRP feeder coverage was on about 20 percent of the cattle placed. Whoa! In addition to covering feeder weight animals, LRP can be used on calf-weights and on unborn calves. The 2023 calf

crop in the U.S. was 33.6 million head. Some calves could be insured by cow-calf producers. Some of those calves could be sold to backgrounders or someone running yearlings and the same cattle could be insured again as feeders. Let us just agree that the feeder volume could be well above 25.0 million head.

In South Dakota the totals reveal some differences compared to the national trends. In 2024 there were about 465,000 head with LRP feeder coverage. This was down from 2023, likely because of better cattle prices and less perceived risk. South Dakota's calf crop was 1.65 million head, so LRP covered a sizeable share of the calf crop. Calves come into South Dakota to be fed, but a similar number leave South Dakota to be fed in other states. Many feeder weight animals also leave the state to be finished elsewhere. Not every head warrants being insured. Replacement heifers would not present the same type of price risk as steers. Forward contracted cattle would not have price risk to be offset. If optimism or the ability to self-insure is present, then spending on subsidized coverage may not be optimal.

In South Dakota there were also 70,000 head with LRP fed cattle coverage in 2024, down slightly from the year earlier. Large feedlots in South Dakota marketed 434,000 head in the 12 months reflected in the annual Cattle on Feed totals (mainly covering 2023). Small feedlots had another 200,000 in inventory at the start of 2023. Conservatively estimating a single turn by those lots implies all lots would have had 634,000 head marketed. Note there is disparity compared to the Census of Agriculture total for 2023 of 532,371 cattle on feed sold. Regardless, the share of fed cattle with LRP coverage was likely higher than at the national level.

LGM is a little bit puzzling. Only 413 head were covered in South Dakota in 2024. This seems at odds with the national trend. The sharp increase in LGM volume has occurred in a small number of policies predominantly in Texas. Maybe there are conditions specific to Texas to warrant the coverage. LGM bundles fed cattle output risk, feeder cattle input risk, and corn input risk together. Perhaps the combination is cost-effective compared to other locations. Maybe a few feedlots or insurance agents are being cautious or using LGM as part of a broader approach to manage risk. Perhaps next semester a curious student will want to explore it further.



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C	M	E	B	S	T	N	E	W	O
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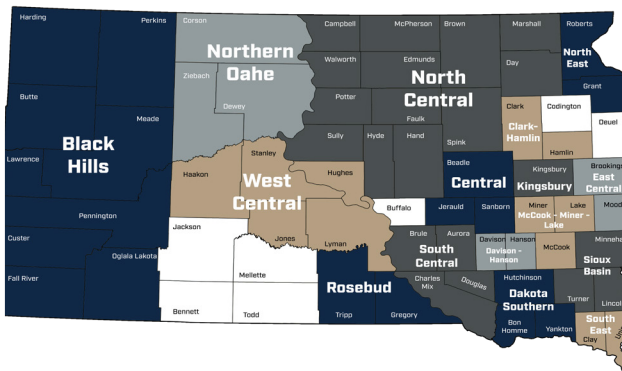
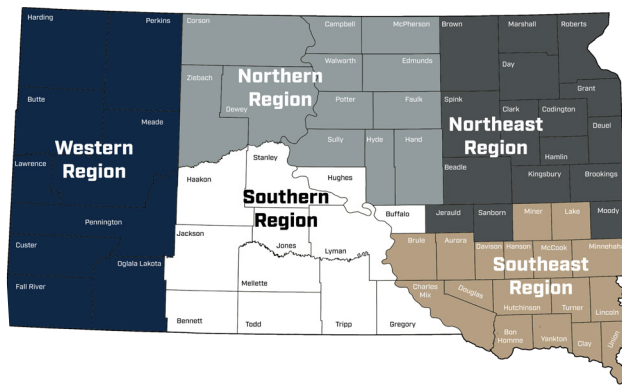
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