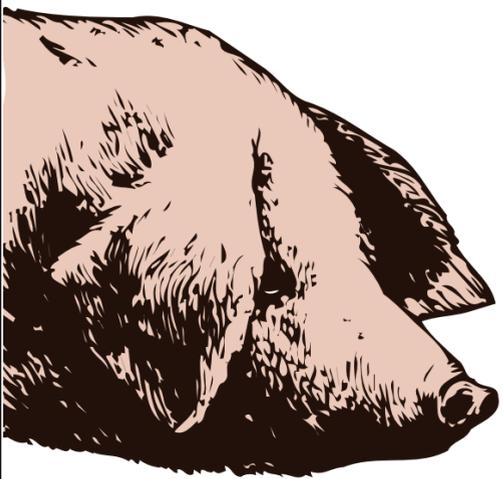


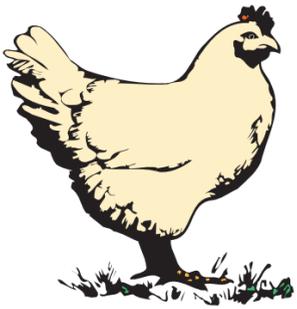


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Valerie Remick, left, and Ryley Alameda pose with one of the Remick Boer Goats.

Photo Courtesy Emily Harver

# What a boer

Ryley Alameda learns the ins and outs of raising goats

By Emily Harver

Ryley Alameda is only 12 years old but she is already a partner in Remick Boer Goats, learning the ins and outs of what it really takes to raise an animal for profit. Ryley is a member of the Saratoga's Finest 4-H club and she has shown goats as her 4-H project for the past four years. It all started when a family friend, Valerie Remick, gave Ryley and her brother two bum goat kids from her Boer herd. They named the goats Tank and Lightning and didn't have high hopes for them. However, both goats grew up strong and healthy and Lightning ended up winning Grand Champion Meat Goat at the Carbon County Fair for Rowdy. From then on Ryley was hooked!

Every year, Ryley buys one or two wethers from Remick Boer Goats and then leases does that she will show all year. She and Remick attend sales together and Remick coaches Ryley on what to look for. Sometimes they buy a doe in partnership to add to the herd. At the sales where they sell goats, it is Ryley's job to show each goat to potential customers and in the sale ring. "We try to always leave them with a local friend the night before [a sale], so they are calmer after traveling. Then, before the sale, I give them scratches and calm them down some more."

Her partnership with Remick has introduced Ryley to knowledgeable people in the industry. It has also allowed her to learn more about the Boer goat breed and spot genetic variety, which is teaching her what makes a great breeding goat and what makes a good meat goat. But there's more to goats than just picking them out; you also have to know how to raise them and show them.

Ryley says the most important thing in raising goats is to keep them healthy. "Last year, one of my goats was a bad eater. He wouldn't eat anything and he wasn't gaining any weight. Then Valerie and I studied many [goat] diets and we found a better feed. He started eating it

like crazy, won county fair, got reserve at Wyoming State Fair and placed second in his class at the Arizona National," said Ryley.

Ryley tries to attend as many jackpots and junior livestock shows with her Remick Boer Goats as she can. She hopes to show at the Nile, the Arizona National, The Denver Stockshow and other jackpots in the coming years.

Halter breaking her goats has been Ryley's biggest challenge. Goats can certainly have a mind of their own sometimes. One of her goats had this trick of jumping up in the air, spinning around, and then falling on her side. At one show, this particular goat chose to show off her "trick" right as she and Ryley were exiting the show ring and the goat fell on the gate.

*In the 1890's it wasn't uncommon to offer a \$25 reward for the return of horses who had strayed or were stolen. That would be about \$2,874 today!*

"Everyone was like 'Oh no! Is she ok?' I just said 'She's alright, she's just crazy!' We still got second place."

Ryley has shown horses, steers, rabbits and sheep in 4-H but goats are her favorite.

"My reserve champion goat last year would come when I called and go on jogs with me. One of my goats has even learned how to sit," Tyley said



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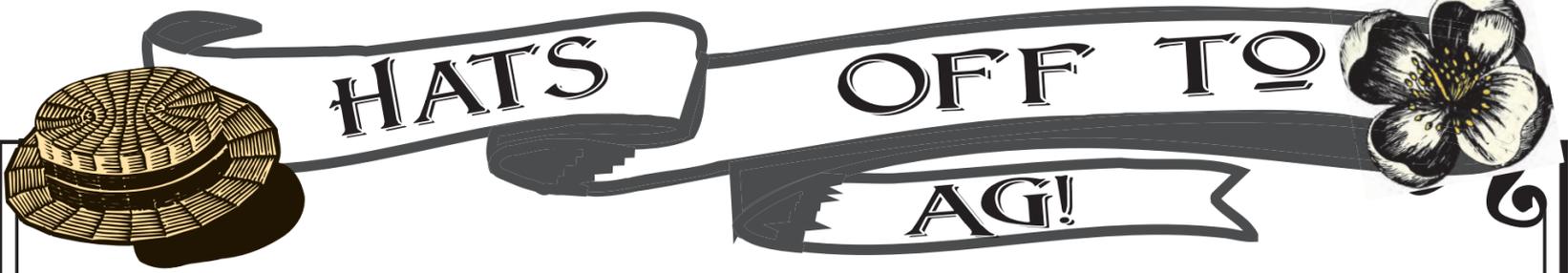



Photo Courtesy Emily Harver

Emily Donough shows off her giant pumpkin seeds.

# Good seeds

Emily Donough hopes to grow big

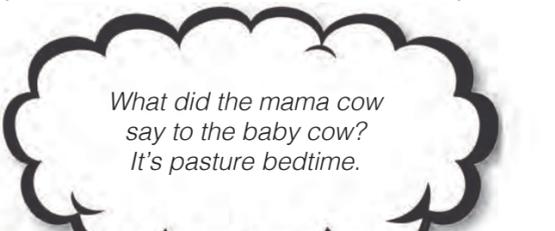
By Emily Harver

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to ride in a pumpkin carriage like Cinderella?

Well, three Carbon County 4-H members are one step closer to finding out; they are growing giant pumpkins for their 4-H project. One of those 4-Hers is Emily Donough, a three year member of the Rawlins Reliables 4-H Club.

Gardening & Horticulture is her main 4-H project and she got her love of growing things from her mom, Melissa Donough, the biology teacher at Rawlins High School.

"I've always loved planting things and I started thinking this was something I could get better at and then my mom said you can do [gardening] in 4-H." Last year Emily built an



aquaponics system with her mom's help and grew tomatoes and peppers that she used when making tacos!

"I've never grown a pumpkin before," said Emily, "but it's my goal to start early this year then I'll [transplant] it in our yard

and watch it so the dogs don't get to it." Emily says that's the biggest challenge with gardening, keeping other things from destroying your crop, including her younger siblings.

"I have to make sure they [her siblings] don't pick the flowers or vegetables before they're ready!"

There will be lots of trials as she cultivates her giant pumpkin project, but Emily is ready for the challenge. The giant pumpkin seeds come from a pumpkin in Washakie County named "Keira" that weighed 922 pounds.

"They [the 4-H members] are starting with seeds that have good genetics," says Jay Richard of Jay's Giants. Kiera was his pumpkin.

Richard started growing pumpkins in 2003 and he took his first giant one to the Wyoming State Championship Weigh-Off in 2012. Now, he works with other giant pumpkin cultivators across the state to produce pumpkins that hover around one thousand pounds! Once they are harvested and cut up, Mr. Richard gives his pumpkin seeds away to anyone who wants to try growing them. That's how Emily ended up with three seeds from Keira.

"You've heard of Johnny Appleseed? I guess I'm Jay Pumpkinseed!" laughs Jay Richard.

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Emily will be planting her giant pumpkin seeds in her greenhouse this weekend has plans to transplant the seedlings once temperatures are more consistent. With a little luck and a whole lot of care, we'll be seeing Emily and her giant pumpkin at the Carbon County Fair in August.

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**Common Yard Calls**

Common yard problems and what to do

By Abby Perry

One of my favorite parts of being a University of Wyoming Extension Educator is going on yard calls. Residents from around the county will call the office and ask questions about things that are giving them fits in their landscape: yellow patches in grasses, odd-shaped holes in leaves, funny insects marching up and down the bark and so forth.

Sometimes people stop in the office with a sample; sometimes they bring pictures. If I can't figure out the problem from the sample or the picture, I travel to the property and take a look in person. In remote areas I often schedule more than one of these visits in a day to make good use of the travel. If I don't know what's causing the problem, I take pictures and send them to specialists on campus and all together we try to resolve the situation.

Over the years we've seen insects never spotted in the state before, and some very curious wildlife situations, but there are also "repeat customers" so to speak. These are problems that are common for several landowners across the county. I thought I'd share some of those common issues in this article.

Due to the early snow we received in October before the ground was frozen and the fact that it never melted all year long, many residents will be finding snow mold when their lawns are finally visible again. It may look like wispy white spider webs or a thin layer of white cotton candy on the lawn. It can also occur from fertilizing too late in the fall but, this year, snow mold will be common from the snow accumulation. I've already seen it. The best thing to do is simply rake the matted grass. The heavy snow layer and no air flow has essentially made a sauna for fungus. Raking the sections allows airflow back in. In most cases the lawn doesn't require any follow up after the raking, however, if there are dead spots, the grass will not grow back and will require re-planting.

Grasshoppers are also on the radar. They can easily outcompete livestock and wildlife for forage. Carbon County doesn't usually have huge outbreaks but some residents were noticing an influx of insects last fall. Carbon County Weed and Pest and grasshopper specialists can assist with these cases, but first it's important to monitor for the grasshoppers. Noticing large populations in the fall is too late to take action. One to seven grasshoppers per square yard is a very

reasonable population, but grasshoppers can use their size to their advantage. It's important to be vigilant in detecting them. Not every grasshopper is problematic either. There are 120 species in Wyoming, but only a fraction of those are pests. In fact some are even beneficial. USDA-APHIS, Weed and Pest, and Extension Grasshopper specialists are all great resources to call on if you find yourself asking "hoppy" questions.

A lot of my annual calls have to do with trees. It's a challenge to grow trees in Wyoming, and it feels quite devastating when things aren't going according to plan. Scales on both needle-bearing trees and aspens are common calls. Dead branches in conifers that have been over trimmed or suffered too much direct wind through the winter season are often common concerns. Of course, we are always dealing with dear old aphids. The treatment, or lack thereof, can vary

*One time manager of the Sand Creek Land and Cattle Company W.B Cowan, kept tame deer. They were adorned with bells and a piece of red flannel tied around their necks to ward off danger and hunters.*



depending on the

severity of these situations, but I almost always tell people to start with increased watering. Its difficult for trees to fight attacks if they are under stress and the number one stressor for trees in our area is not enough water due to both climate and wind. If they are getting all their needs met, trees are great at fighting off attacks on their own.

If you have questions about these or other issues, I'd love to help you find a solution and can be reached at the Carbon County Extension Office, 307-328-2642 or [ajacks12@uwyo.edu](mailto:ajacks12@uwyo.edu).

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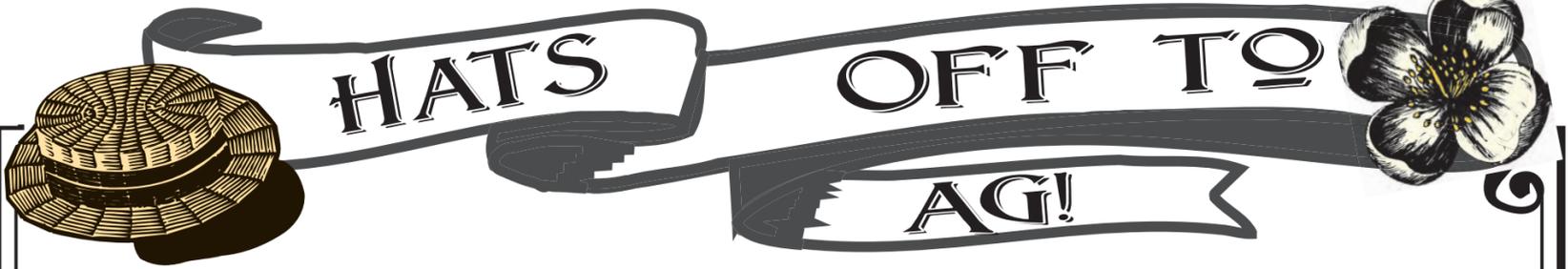
**THE SARATOGA SUN**

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# Picking the right wildflower

Some wildflowers can accent a landscape, others can be pests

**By Abby Perry**

Wildflowers can be a great addition to a landscape. The cottage look is just what many gardeners are seeking. Additionally, when we hear wildflowers, we tend to think about flowers that are easy to grow, require little maintenance, and maybe even require less water than some of the other plants in the garden. However, there are a few things to keep in mind.

The term “wildflower” implies the flowers have not been cultivated and are not hybrids; the flowers should not differ from their native flower counterparts. Wildflowers are not, and cannot be, native to everywhere. It’s important to understand the varieties in the seed mix and be intentional about what is planted and where it is planted.

Most wildflower mixes have a list of the seeds enclosed. Before buying seeds, it’s important to double-check that none of the seeds the grower is interested in introducing are problematic. This can be done by comparing the contents to both the state and county noxious weed lists

or by simply giving the local weed and pest office a call. Lots of weeds in Wyoming served a previous life as an ornamental.

In addition to the noxious weeds list, there is The Wyoming Weed Watchlist Field Guide available at <http://www.wyomingextension.org/agpubs/pubs/B1227.pdf>. The purpose of the watch list is to build awareness around weeds that are not yet present in Wyoming or are present in low populations. This is a part of the state’s Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) program. The premise is that it is much easier to eradicate one weed or a handful of weeds rather than pastures and rangelands full of weeds.

Baby’s Breath is a weed in this field guide, a flower to be on the lookout for, that is often found in wildflower mixes.

Depending on the packet and mix, some seed labels also show a percentage of inert material. Inert material is essentially a mix of dirt, sand, stem pieces, broken seeds, and other miscellaneous materials. Some seed producers allow weeds to be in this inert material and some do not.

So even if the seed content list looks to be problem-free, check for weeds in the inert material.

Once seeds have been verified and planted, they’ll begin to germinate. It can sometimes be difficult to identify the keepers from unwanted seedlings that simply sprouted up from having the soil watered. Although not a fool-proof plan, prolific seedlings with purplish/green undersides are often weedy. The best plan is to let the seedlings grow to aid in identification, but if they are the “bad guys” as we say in our household, pull them before they start to seed out. Otherwise the cycle continues.

Additionally, wildflowers should never be introduced to “wild” spaces such as BLM, state, or other federal land. They can be problematic in wild scapes for the same reasons they are in domestic landscapes. Oftentimes weed populations flourish because they can out-complete neighboring plants and don’t have natural predators, such as insects or wildlife, that eat them. As previously mentioned, wildflowers are wild to

some places but not all places. It’s best not to alter the landscape and leave that to trained professionals who sometimes do plantings after wildfires, other disturbances, or to improve wildlife habitat.

And, a final note about wildflowers—although it can be tempting to pick wildflowers while hiking and enjoying the outdoors, it is vital to remember that some are rare plants right here in our forests, and we must do our part to support and protect them. Picking wildflowers can have devastating impacts on the wildflower populations, as well as the insects, birds, and wildlife that rely on them. Often flowers wilt right after picking. They could be enjoyed much longer if they were simply photographed. That being said, there are ways to legally collect wildflowers. You can contact the U.S. Forest Service office for more information.

“Wildflowers” give us much enjoyment, whether they are cultivated or in the wild. They are simple beauties, yet it’s good to know where they are best suited and why they’re there.

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The interior view of the WyOasis green house as it is being constructed.



An exterior view of the greenhouse.



One of the vegetables currently being grown is artichoke.

## A WyOasis in Medicine Bow

Kani and Lyle Flansburg hope to bring citrus and other seasonal items to the plains of Wyoming

By Mike Armstrong

Imagine: citrus trees growing in Medicine Bow, Wyoming all year round.

As unlikely as this might sound, Kani and Lyle Flansburg believe it possible and are taking the steps to make this unlikely scenario a reality.

They have already built a greenhouse in Medicine Bow that is the beginning of this citrus growing world.

"We have started a small permaculture design, food forest and sustainable agriculture demonstration business, WyOasis, LLC," Kani said.

For those who don't know what permaculture is, Kani explains.

"Permaculture is the name for a design system that mimics nature to increase soil fertility, thus increasing yield" Kani said. "One of the major elements is called a food forest. This diverse planting scheme imitates the layers of a forest. The top canopy (large trees), the under canopy (small trees), the shrub layer, perennial and annual herbaceous layer, ground cover, vines and roots. Also with permaculture, the idea is to have all the design elements multi-task."

She said that when thinking of permaculture, all facets of nature's ecosystem should be considered.

"For example, fruit trees not only provide food but also blossoms for insect food and shade for the plants underneath," Kani explained. "Caragana (Siberian Pea Shrub) grows well in our climate. Not only do the peas provide food for birds, but it is a great nitrogen fixer, thus increasing the health of the soil and enabling other plants to use that nitrogen."

She said there are real benefits of permaculture for

the environment.

"Permaculture design uses polycultures to create ecosystems, not the typical agricultural monocultures," Kani said. "The inter-planting of different plants together that are mutually beneficial are called guilds."

Kani explained the guilds have a component of one main plant anchor.

"Usually, there is the main tree in the center with the layers planted around it. A guild might have various plants that are beneficial to the entire system," Kani said. "Attractors lure pollinators and beneficial insects."

The benefit of pollinators is only one attraction of guilds.

"Nutrient accumulators, deep roots, harvest minerals from the soil and make them available to the plants," Kani pointed out. "Biomass plants have large or abundant leaves to use as mulch around the plants, nitrogen fixers provide nitrogen to the root systems, encouraging mycorrhizae (tiny fungus) which are necessary for good plant growth."

She said the benefits of these plants can make a difference to the environment.

"Some plants provide shelter for birds and other critters, others repel pests through scent or thorns," Kani said. "And some plants, through their dense root systems, keep unwanted 'weeds' from being able to encroach into the guild."

She said another feature of permaculture is how water is used.

"Another main tenet of permaculture is water control. Catch the water, slow it, spread it and store it," Kani said. "We are doing this by creating swales (ditches on contour) to soak the water into the ground. Next to the swales is a raised berm

which is used for tree and shrub planting. Our idea is to use the swale and berm system to create a Wyoming version of English hedgerows. We have a variety of berry and nut bushes as well as nitrogen fixing trees and shrubs."

The Flansburgs have enjoyed success with their efforts.

"Last year we planted over 600 shrubs and trees and, the year before, 175. Most survived," Kani said. "We have used snow fences to capture snow that would have been scoured off by the wind, installed a drip system to conserve water on the berms, and mulched with straw and wood chips to slow down evaporation and keep the soil moist. If we can mitigate the wind and keep the soil from drying out, mostly anything will grow here."

This is why the Flansburgs believe that they will eventually be growing citrus in their greenhouse. They put a lot of thought into the specifications of the greenhouse.

"Our greenhouse is 16 feet by 72 feet and is built over a four foot deep, 11 foot wide excavation," Kani said. "We are employing geothermal principles to heat and cool the inside using only a blower. We have 13 five inch tubes, 250 feet long, buried 12 feet underground."

The Flansburgs employ a machine to keep the air down on the tubes.

"A blower pushes air down the tubes from one end, and when it reenters at the other end, it is always 55 degrees," Kani explained. "So in the winter it warms the air and in the summer, it cools the air in the greenhouse. Also, we have a tube along the peak to vent hot air to the outside or under the dirt floor of the greenhouse to warm it."

Having the greenhouse working in this manner, growing citrus trees is a reality.

"In the greenhouse food forest, we'll be using citrus and avocado trees as our canopy layers. Vines will run along the top to help provide shade. We'll be planting nitrogen fixers and nutrient accumulators such as comfrey," Kani said. "We will also have plants, such as strawberries, as ground cover. Along with the perennial plants we'll have the tomato, squash and pepper extravaganza. Eggplant is also in the offing."

Kani said, at this point in the growing of plants in the greenhouse, they are still figuring out what are the best methods and plants to concentrate on.

"For the first few years this will be a grand experiment to see what we can grow, how we can extend the seasons and what will keep through the winter," Kani said. "Other similar greenhouses in the same climatic zone are producing 150 pounds of citrus per tree. If we are able to be this productive, we anticipate adding more greenhouses and possibly employing workers in the future."

Another crop they have had success with is the Autumn Crocus. The stem of the plant produce the spice saffron.

"Saffron is more valuable than gold by ounce," Kani said. "We are going to enjoy some paella (a Spanish rice dish that uses the spice)."

The Flansburgs are actively involved in the Medicine Bow community. Lyle is a town council member and Kani is president of the Lions Club. Before moving to Medicine Bow three years ago, their home was in Saratoga.

They said they got the idea to delve into permaculture in Medicine Bow after watching a video on YouTube from

Geoff Lawson titled How to Green the Desert. After watching the video, it is understandable how the Flansburgs got inspired. Lawson has created oasis' in deserts throughout the world.

Lyle's brother, Miles, also got them interested.

The Flansburgs put their greenhouse together with a partial kit from Russ Finch in Alliance, Nebraska and improvised with other parts. They acknowledged a few minor mishaps as the building was constructed but, in general, nothing seriously bad happened. They did lose their bulldozer to snow drifts this winter but they got it out and all is well.

Kani has a certification in permaculture design and she and Lyle have been forthcoming with information and help on building a greenhouse on the website [peremies.com](http://peremies.com). The greenhouse's construction is chronicled on the website through a series of pictures and blogs starting back about 11 months ago. To find the Flansburgs' history of the greenhouse's creation, go to the website and search for WyOasis (in the snow) Greenhouse Build.

The Flansburgs are excited by what they have created and what it could mean for the future.

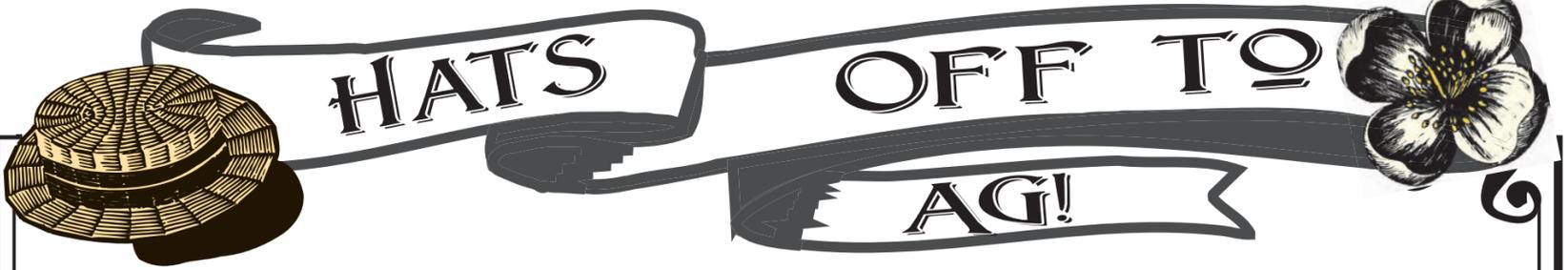
One exciting aspect of permaculture is that it is adaptable to any size yard. Whether you have a small urban plot, or a ranch, it is feasible," Kani said. "It is just a matter of scale. Some of the most successful are in backyards, because the plant density is so great. Also, once it gets going, it is very low maintenance."

If the Flansburgs realize their dream, it is just a matter of time before Medicine Bow will be the citrus capital of Wyoming.



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# No recourse, no compensation

Local rancher, a victim of cattle rustling, works to protect herd for the future

By Joshua Wood

For those who are not involved in the world of agriculture, the word “cattle rustling” may invoke images of sepia-toned movies in which black hatted villains abscond with the property of hard working ranchers. Perhaps it brings to mind gritty western movies, still set in the Old West, in which lynch mobs are formed and the thieves are brought to some form of justice.

Unfortunately, the theft of cattle is not the problem of a bygone era.

While ranches and ranchers have adapted with changing times and technology, so to have those who seek to profit off their hard labor. In the past two years, Cheryl Munroe has had to deal with a major loss of her stock and estimates her losses to be nearly 100 calves between 2019 and 2020.

“The cattle that we’ve lost for two years now have been here on the ranch on our private land, state land and BLM land,” said Munroe. “Because it’s easy access, we have county roads that come right through the ranch and right close to it, it’s easy for them in the dark of night just load up a bunch of cattle, throw them in a horse trailer and head east with them.”

Not just “east” but to eastern Nebraska, where brand inspections aren’t required.

“Once you get into eastern Nebraska, there’s no requirement for brand inspections so they can just sell them,” Munroe said. “If you took just calves, you could probably put 15, 20 calves ... in a trailer and it’s pretty easy to do that and be gone with them.”

Like other ranchers, Munroe’s pastures are a mixture of private, state and BLM land. Additionally, she leases land from the United States Forest Service for her cattle to graze in the Medicine Bow National Forest.

“As they come down, some of them

get in the neighbors’ and the neighbors’ get in with us. So, we sort off and everything else. You really don’t know what you’re missing until you get everything gathered,” said Munroe. “Usually, we’ll lose probably one or two from the National Forest but it’s probably from predators, a poison weed, something like this.”

In the case of a missing calf, a rancher may eventually find a body to be able to put in their records that the loss of the animal was due to

Munroe, if that were the case, any rancher could simply write off missing cattle and expect to get a payout from their insurance company.

The first time that Munroe suspected that her cattle were being stolen was December 2018. As they brought in the herd, they figured they were about 45 calves short. Not a small number by any means. That same month, however, Munroe had more pressing matters as she had to deal with the passing of her husband,

Those records show the number of cows branded, the calves lost to death, the cows that were tested for pregnancy and the cows that actually calved.

“We know, this year, we lost 16 cows and 52 calves,” Munroe said.

That was even with adding a big death loss for the calves.

With no recourse and no compensation for missing calves, the only solution that Munroe can think of is to tighten things up around the ranch. This includes securing and rebuilding sections of fence and locking gates.

“I’m just going to close it to everybody,” said Munroe. “We usually had it open and I’d let people come up and they would maybe go four-wheeling and just enjoy the country. I can’t do that anymore. I’m going to have to shut it off.”

For those who know Munroe, a woman who welcomes many people with open arms and offers whatever food she has on her table, this is a big change. Ultimately, she feels that she has no choice when it comes to protecting her cattle and her property.

“It’s not a money making business. It’s a lifestyle and we work hard, we work diligently. Long hours, early mornings, late nights,” Munroe said.

Even worse, Munroe believes that the theft of her cattle may be by someone she knows. According to a March 27, 2012 article in *BEEF* magazine, this is the case more often than not.

“It’s probably somebody that I know that knows what’s going on here and I would be terribly hurt that they would take advantage of someone else,” said Munroe.

She added that if they were someone who had fallen on hard times and need some income, she would offer them a job.

“I would work them or something so they could earn a little bit of money to get by but stealing is not getting by,” Munroe said.



Photo by Joshua Wood

Cheryl Munroe’s cattle suspiciously eye the photographer on Saturday afternoon.

death. If a body can’t be found, it may have criminal implications but leaves little recourse for the rancher, especially if they were taken to eastern Nebraska.

“Here, I’ll talk to the local brand inspectors and they’ll put it out statewide and then they do their networking to any of the sale barns that check the brands,” Munroe said. “The only way you might stop them is if they happened to get stopped on the interstate.”

Not only is there no recourse, but there’s no compensation either. While insurance will pay out for a dead calf, it won’t pay out for suspected cattle rustling. According to

Monty.

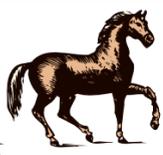
When Munroe went to sell her cattle in January, she was unable to keep any replacement heifers. Traditionally, the ranch keeps approximately 30 head of calves for themselves to use for breeding. This ensures that the next generation of the herd will have the genetics the ranch is looking for and is more adapted to the elevation and climate.

“We did not keep any replacement heifers back because we had to have enough sale animals so we could meet ranch payments,” said Munroe.

In December 2019, as Munroe and her family brought their cattle in, they went back into their records to 2015.

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## Parts of Agriculture

- Down**
1. animal dung sometimes used for fertilizing land
  3. transfer of pollen to a flower part or plant to allow fertilization
  4. a thin crust of weathered rock and foundation for life on earth
  5. a plant grown where it is not wanted
  6. domestic animals raised as an asset
  7. prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall
  9. unit of land equal to 4,840 square yards

- Across**
2. riding for the \_\_\_\_\_
  3. land covered with grass and plants suitable for grazing
  8. the practice to supply water to land or crops to help it grow
  10. the practice of garden cultivation and management
  11. a young plant raised from seed
  12. the study of insects
  13. a large group of animals, usually hoofed
  14. cultivated plant grown for food

Why do cows have hooves instead of feet?  
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# HATS OFF TO AG!

## Uploading to ICOW

Les Barkhurst named President of the Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming for 2020

By Joshua Wood

Among the many bills that were introduced during this past legislative session, one that may have caught the eye of ranchers throughout Wyoming was House Bill 0244. This piece of legislation, introduced by Representative Hans Hunt, would have repealed Wyoming State Statute 11-37-108, which may fine a rancher up to \$750 for not paying the beef check-off dues currently owed to the Wyoming Beef Council.

The bill failed by a vote of 27-29-4, Representative Jerry Paxton was excused, and so the \$1 per beef check-off is still to be paid by ranchers within the state. One group that was hoping for the bill to pass, however, was the Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming (ICOW). Formed in 2007, the grassroots group recently elected Valley resident Les Barkhurst as the president of the organization.

"There is no lobbying money coming in. We address legislative issues and bills that come up and we show support, or the lack of support, and by being a grassroots group the direction is a base that helps all cattlemen," said L. Barkhurst. "A base of ideas and principles."

According to their website, [newsite.icowwy.org](http://newsite.icowwy.org), the group was formed by Moorcroft rancher Judy McCullough as an affiliate of the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA). McCullough still serves on the leadership of ICOW as the secretary. Elk

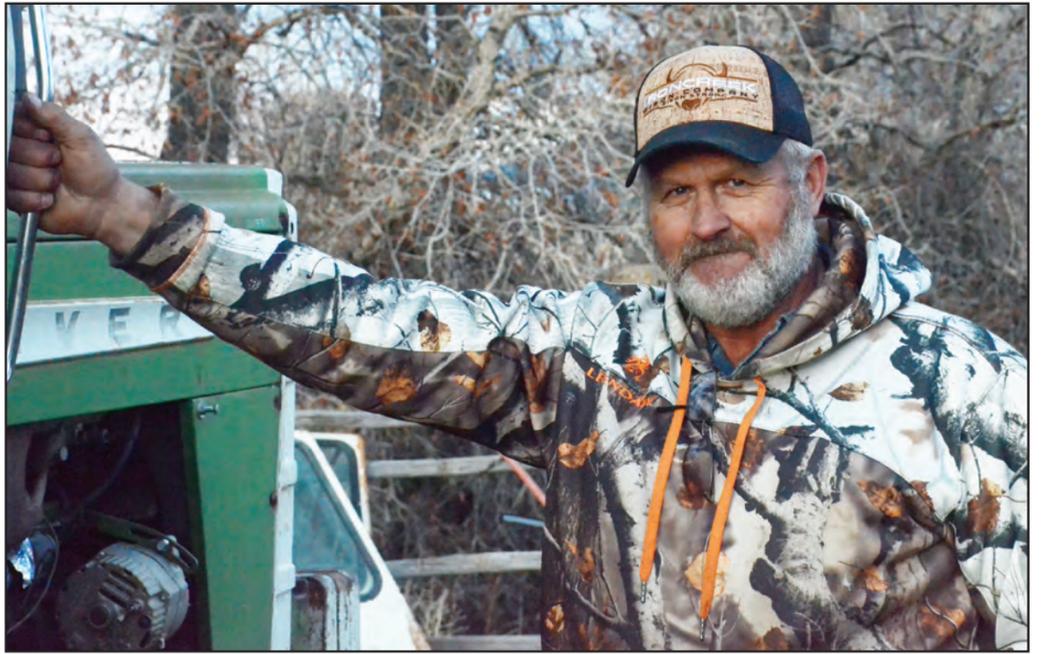


Photo by Joshua Wood

Les Barkhurst, a fourth generation rancher in the Valley, was elected president of the Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming in January.

in taxes as they believe that organizations and governments need to work within their means. One such increase in the past, which would have added an additional dollar to the beef check-off dues to the Wyoming Beef Council, was opposed by ICOW and ultimately failed.

"ICOW has fought against the Wyoming Beef Council being able to receive an additional dollar on top of the first dollar and, if the first dollar isn't working, why add another dollar to it? The lower the cattle inventory in Wyoming gets, the less beef check-off dollars that is used for the Wyoming Beef Council to contract for advertisement," L. Barkhurst said. "The Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming have sat with the Senate Ag Committee and presented our position and that additional dollar was shot down."

In addition to their position on taxes, ICOW also places importance on education.

"We love to educate and we want to continue the education of our youth. We want them to come back to the ranches but why do they want to be on the ranch when there's not enough prosperity to even maintain (the ranch)? The kids tend to go off into other entities that are not ag related and that is financially affecting the communities in our rural town communities," said L. Barkhurst.

The fourth generation rancher says he has talked with other ranchers in the Valley about joining ICOW, but says that many appear to

be dissuaded by the \$50 per year dues to be a member of ICOW. L. Barkhurst believes that they should view this as an investment, not an expense.

"My theory is that if you have 300 cows the Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming has stopped a tax of an additional \$300, so your membership would not only increase the broadness of the group, the dynamics of the group and the voice of the group but it would also save you some tax," L. Barkhurst said.

"It's not any corporation. It's not any special interest group. It's people that are living and dying, literally, off the land. A lot of entities criticize ranchers and farmers for destroying the land, and I think there's probably some corporations that have caused that mentality in society, but when you sit down and you walk out in that field and you see him on his hands and knees looking at the soil," said L. Barkhurst's son, Byron. "There are no better stewards of the land than the ranchers and farmers that live off of it. I'm talking about the guys that live and die by the soil."

It is L. Barkhurst's hope that the membership of ICOW can continue to increase and will allow the organization to fight for a more fair market for Wyoming cattle. While there are a number of differing opinions, as one might expect with a grassroots organization, L. Barkhurst says the goal is the same, "to bring health and wealth back into our communities."

According to the USDA website ([nass.usda.gov](http://nass.usda.gov)), Wyoming ranks second in the U.S. in wool production and lamb crop.



Mountain rancher Joyce Menke currently serves as the treasurer.

According to Barkhurst,

ICOW views the beef check-off dollar, which is paid per head before sale, as a tax that does not aid the cattlemen.

"If we could do away with the beef check-off nationally, as it is today, then there are organizations that want to hold onto that penalty in the state of Wyoming that, if we did not pay the 50 cents out of that dollar that goes to the state organization—which would be the Wyoming Beef Council—that that would defund that," L. Barkhurst said. "We're in favor of not putting in any money into either one. The national or state beef councils."

This viewpoint goes in line with one of the topics that ICOW is concerned about; taxes.

"We have always been against increasing taxes—an income tax, a state income tax, those kinds of things—because we can see what other states have done," said L. Barkhurst.

The president of ICOW opposes any increase



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### Where's the beef?

These are just a few of the items beef and beef by products go into that you probably use every day

<b>SPORTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Footballs</li> <li>•Basketballs</li> <li>•Baseballs</li> <li>•Baseball gloves</li> <li>•Soccer balls</li> <li>•Volleyballs</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>AUTOMOTIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Oils</li> <li>•Tires</li> <li>•Upholstery</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>INDUSTRIAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lubricants</li> <li>•Explosives</li> <li>•Pesticides</li> <li>•Flotation agents</li> <li>•Fertilizer</li> <li>•Sandpaper</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>FOOD ITEMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•650 lbs of meat per 1200 lb market steer</li> <li>•Candy</li> <li>•Margarine</li> <li>•Chewing Gum</li> <li>•Gelatin</li> <li>•Marshmallows</li> <li>•Ice-Cream</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>
<b>CLOTHING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Jackets</li> <li>•Footwear</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>HOUSEHOLD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Biodegradable detergents</li> <li>•Buttons</li> <li>•Glues</li> <li>•Wallpaper</li> <li>•Papers</li> <li>•"Camel hair" brushes</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>HEALTH &amp; BEAUTY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lipstick</li> <li>•Face Creams</li> <li>•Toothbrushes</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>	<b>MEDICAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Insulin</li> <li>•Surgical sutures</li> <li>•Over a hundred drugs that: Settle upset stomachs Prevent blood clots Help babies digest milk Relieves asthma</li> <li>•MORE</li> </ul>

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