

THE **SARATOGA** **SUN**

The Saratoga Sun's Annual Hats off to Ag



**Our salute to the hardworking
agriculture community
of the Platte Valley!**

A publication of the Saratoga Sun

2024 HATS OFF TO AG

"From Tail to Table"

307 Pub and Grub in Encampment only uses local beef on their menu

by J. Hemenway,
Special to the Saratoga Sun

Next time you are considering a burger or steak, consider 307 Pub and Grub. Not only are you sure to have a wonderful meal, but you will also be supporting the Platte Valley economy. That's because 307 Pub and Grub buys local beef.

To date, 307 Pub and Grub in Encampment has bought steers from Zeller Cattle, the Silver Spur Ranch, the Big Creek Ranch and, at the 2023 Carbon County Fair, a steer raised by Quade Jordan. Each steer is appropriately named 307-1, 307-2, and so on. These steers have provided the local beef for the restaurant since it opened over a year ago.

Sally Wells, co-owner of 307 Pub and Grub, acknowledged some of the greatest challenges in pro-

viding local beef is knowing when you need your next steer and finding a USDA certified processor.

"Since 307 Meat opened in Laramie, we have used local beef as they are the only USDA certified processor in the area," said Wells.

Despite these challenges, Wells believes 307 Pub and Grub doesn't just serve its local customers great tasting beef but also supports Valley communities.

"By buying local beef you are notifying custom-

ers about the meat they are eating that they are receiving not only fresh, local beef but are also supporting the community," said Wells.

Jennifer Cunningham, co-owner of 307 Pub and Grub, said that "since ranching is such a large economic contributor to the Valley, it was important for our business to support the local community."

All beef items on the 307 Pub and Grub menu use local meat.

"In some ways, you can

view the menu items as being from "Tail to Table" Wells said. "Local ranchers raise the steers here in the Valley, 307 Meat in Laramie is our USDA processor and our customers are the beneficiaries. People know the difference when using local beef."

The use of local beef by 307 Pub and Grub has also encouraged other local businesses and entities to sell local beef.

Riverside Garage in Riverside supports local beef sales and Carbon County

School District No. 2 has had local meat donated to them. Both Wells and Cunningham said providing local beef had always been part of their business plan and were excited to see other businesses doing the same.

"Using local beef has always been important to our growth as we believe in supporting the community" said Cunningham. "307 Pub and Grub felt it was important to promote the beef industry of the valley."



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Quade Jordan, an Encampment student, has provided one of the steers used by 307 Pub & Grub for their local beef.

UW's Laramie Research and Extension Center to Host Ram Test Field Day April 13

Staff Report

The University of Wyoming's annual ram test will conclude with a public field day Saturday, April 13, at the Laramie Research and Extension Center.

The event, which begins at 11 a.m., will present results from the 140-day performance test and discuss how test results can be used to make selection decisions. Lunch, provided by Wyoming Wool Initiative, will be served at noon. Starting at 1 p.m., attendees will have the opportunity to view the tested rams and participate in a silent auction.

"We've conducted this central performance test since

1961 and improvement in ram quality over this time has been remarkable," says Whit Stewart, UW Extension sheep specialist. "There are only two of these central performance ram tests left in the nation and we're proud it's endured."

Ram performance is evaluated based on growth performance, feed conversion efficiency and muscling as well as wool traits, including weight, fineness, length and clean yield. Rams that perform in the top 30 percent of the test are eligible for the Certified Rambouillet Index and Wyoming Certified Index.

This year, a total of 90 rams from 21 ranches in three U.S. states and Canada were en-

tered in the test. "Aside from the decision-making tool it provides to producers, it's an important partnership with the Wyoming Wool Growers Association and individual producers in our region," says Stewart.

The test also provides key learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in UW's sheep program, Stewart notes. In addition to gaining hands-on experience in production agriculture, students help gather performance data throughout the test and conduct genomic research.

To RSVP for the upcoming field day, email whit.stewart@uwyo.edu or call (307) 766-5374 by Sunday, April 7.



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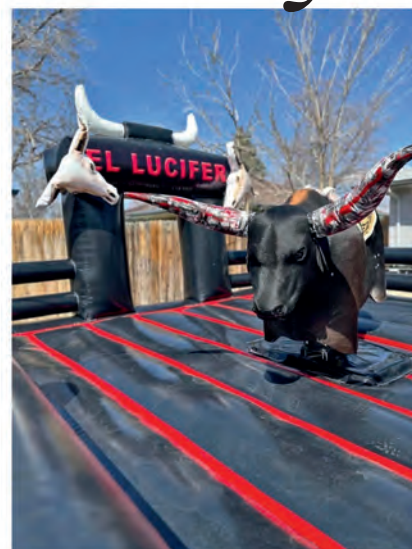
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2024 HATS OFF TO AG

Changing with the times

For nearly 100 years, Shively Hardware continues to supply local ranchers with the tools they need

By Joshua Wood,
Stevenson Newspapers

When Ed Glode's great-grandfather, E.J. Shively, bought Tilton & Son Hardware Store in December 1925 it came with a list of vendors.

"The top vendor was International Harvester," said Glode, who is the fourth-generation to own and run the business. "When they settled the West from Chicago to San Francisco, next to every other rail hub was an International Harvester dealer. We were the product of one of those. Most of those are closed in the western United States. We're one of the few that's still there."

For nearly a century, Shively Hardware has done business with the local ranchers of the Platte Valley by selling them the ranching equipment they've needed. It hasn't been easy and there have been many changes in that time.

"We went through a major merger in the 60s and 70s. International Harvester was just on fire with everything they were doing and then we went through an economic downturn in the early 80s. In 1985, that's when Case and International Harvester merged," said Glode. "That happened

in '85 and we worked through it. Then we built this building and moved here on March 4, 2000 and, right after that, they announced the New Holland and Case IH merger becoming CNH."

As part of this merger, Shively Hardware was required to sell hay tools for New Holland equipment. Having spent decades selling hay tools from International Harvester, the business also took on AgCo as a vendor to continue selling tools which were able to work the Case IH equipment already sold in the Valley.

One of the biggest changes in recent history, said Glode, has been the rapid inflation seen in the past four years. According to Glode, while manufacturers of farm equipment would increase prices by approximately two percent each year to keep up with inflation, that number was "exponentially higher" the last four years.

"If we were selling a \$100,000 piece five years ago, now that piece is \$180,000. The problem with us is all we're trying to do is raise grass in the summer to feed our cattle in the winter," said Glode. "It's a pretty simple diagram and that's how all these families have increased their equity. It's very easy. When that equipment doubles in price, it changes that equation."

It's not always this way. According to Glode, the curves of supply and demand met at

just the right time during 2014 and 2015.

"Calves were selling for three times their average value, so all these family ranches had money they hadn't had for 20 years," said Glode. "So, we sold a lot of equipment in those two years."

We know if calves are selling high around October or November, some people are going to have some year end money they're going to have to spend one way or another.

~ Ed Glode

A common saying among most family ranches in the Valley is that they're working all year for that one big payday when their calves go to market. As the market fluctuates, it can determine whether producers will stay in the black or go in the red that year. Glode said his business also keeps an eye on that market.

"We watch it a lot. We know if calves are selling high around October or November, some people are going to have some year end money they're going to have to spend one way or another. Be it on ranch equipment or irrigation systems or whatever they're doing, they've got to

spend that money or they're paying big taxes," said Glode. "That's an opportunity for us if we have enough time to respond to it."

The increased cost of machinery isn't the only change Shively Hardware has seen over the decades. As technology has advanced, so has what this machinery is capable of doing.

"The big key word would be productivity. With that increase in price comes an increase in production," said Glode. "(We) Had a large account in Walden that hayed about half of the North Park Basin and they had five teams to get all that hay put up. In one swoop, we changed to the newer technology and replaced five teams with two to do the same amount of production."

With every benefit, however, are some disadvantages. The newer machinery can, ideally, increase productivity with less labor but it can sometimes provide more headaches. One example given by Glode was with the emissions technology. Older machines don't have this technology and are less likely to stall while haying, while newer machines could stall due to the technology detecting higher emissions.

Despite the ups and downs and number of changes over the decades, though, Shively Hardware is still around to service the Platte Valley and surrounding areas.

Don't underestimate a mother's influence. Especially when it comes to the microbiomes of her reproductive tract and rumen

Staff Report

A new study in the UW Department of Animal Science suggests that investigation of maternal microbiomes in cattle may yield promising results for producers looking to improve herd health, reproductive efficiency, and even feed efficiency. In November 2020, graduate student Madison Shults and assistant professor Hannah Cunningham-Hollinger took vaginal swabs and rumen fluid samples from a group of cows and heifers at the Laramie Research and Extension Center. Open (not bred) cows also received uterine swabs. This was the first step in a study targeting two questions: Does the reproductive tract microbiome differ based on parity (heifer versus cow) and pregnancy status (bred versus open)?

Are there measurable changes in the reproductive tract microbiome and rumen microbiome based on parity, pregnancy status, or stage of gestation (early, middle, late)?

Shults and Cunningham-Hollinger observed minor differences between bred and open cows in the initial comparison.

Bred females were also monitored throughout gestation, with vaginal swab and rumen fluid samples taken monthly. Differences in the microbiomes of heifers and cows were also tracked throughout pregnancy.

The uterine environment of open cows appeared to have a closely related

group of microbes that were different from those present in the vaginal canal of both bred and open cows, Shults reports. This finding was consistent with previous studies and may indicate that specific groups of bacteria interfere with or promote the establishment and maintenance of a pregnancy. Shults and Cunningham-Hollinger also observed shifts in both the rumen and reproductive tract microbiomes throughout pregnancy. Their results showed an increase in the abundance and diversity of microbes present through late gestation, at which point a significant decrease in both

abundance and diversity occurred. The reduced microbial abundance and diversity persisted until calving. It's not clear why this was the case or what mechanisms caused the shift, says Shults, but it may be an important step in preparation for healthy calving. Understanding the role of microbiomes in a healthy pregnancy could ultimately improve herd health and reproductive efficiency. So could investigating the relationship between a mother's microbiomes and the microbiomes of her developing calf. Researchers in Cunningham-Hollinger's lab have already identified a

close connection between maternal microbiomes and the microbiomes of calves in utero. The long-term goal is to determine how to positively influence a developing calf's microbiome by influencing its mother's microbiomes during gestation. "If we could truly link a more desirable maternal microbiome to the developing rumen microbiome in the calf and then see if that more advantageous microbiome helps calves be more efficient at the bunk, we could produce cattle that convert feed more efficiently, finish faster, and go to the line with less days consuming feed," says Shults.



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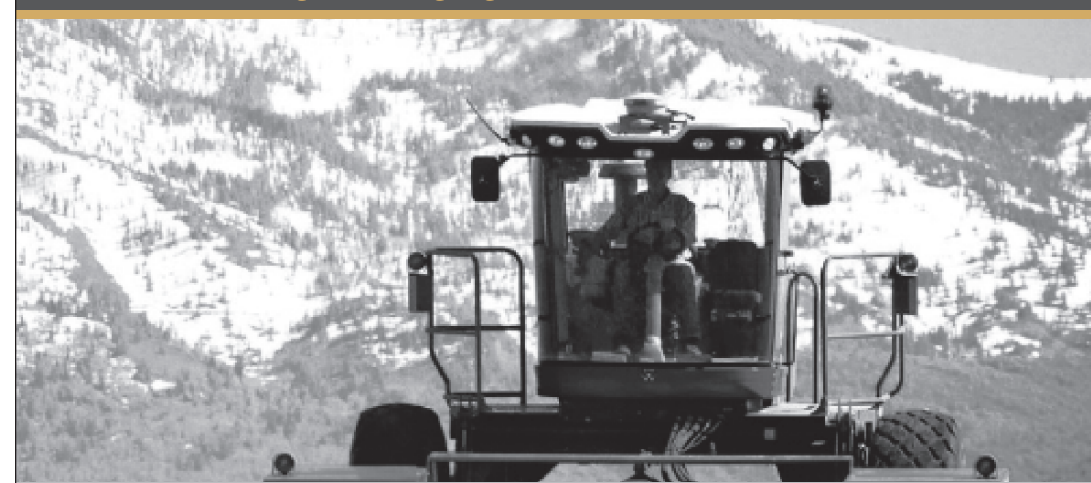


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HESSTON
by MASSEY FERGUSON

2024 HATS OFF TO AG

Lost in the leather

Hatch Tack in Saratoga continues the tradition of working tack for working ranchers

By Joshua Wood, Stevenson Newspapers

Tack shops were once a common sight across the country, but especially the West. As the tools used in ranching have evolved from riding a horse to riding an all-terrain vehicle, these iconically western businesses seem to have all but disappeared.

Not in Saratoga, though, where Hatch Tack has set up shop on Bridge Avenue. Cordell Hatch and his wife, Siara, have operated Hatch Tack for nearly two decades and opened up their storefront in Saratoga over a year ago. Since then, said the couple, they've had a great reception especially due to the fact that they create functional tack.

"Right before we got married, I started working in a saddle shop back in Idaho. After we got married, we started Hatch Tack just so we could start making some extra money when we were in college," said Cordell. "I worked for that saddle shop for about two years. When we moved and took other jobs and changed schools, we worked out of our house."

In 2009, Cordell made his first saddle under Hatch Tack. There's been no looking back since then. Cordell, who works for TA Ranches, is honest about the reason he started working with leather and making tack.

"I started out because I was too cheap to buy it," said Cordell with a laugh. "I just like doing a lot of different things with my hands. I liked working with leather, I had done a little bit working with my dad growing up. As I got into saddles, I liked doing it because you can build something and there's a function to it and you can do it right."

There are saddles which are designed just to look nice and are ideally for show, then there are saddles built only for



Cordell Hatch explains the process of saddle making.

Photo by Joshua Wood

working day-to-day. Cordell tries to meet somewhere in between when it comes to building his saddles.

"There's an artistic element, but there's a very strong functional element. It has to work for what we do. There's strictly functional saddles, there's strictly artistic saddles and I try to hit where those two meet," said Cordell. "We'll make some stuff that's fairly ornate but there's got to be a form and a function. It's fun to build things that blend those aspects, sell them to people who put them to work and then see them use them."

Working on a ranch gives Cordell an idea of exactly what a saddle needs to be able to do, but there's still a lot of what is up to the customer among other factors. What job is the customer using the saddles for, how do they ride and what horse do they ride are just some of the examples.

"If I know a guy works a certain type of horse, I can make some adjustments. Some guys

like a big horn and if you build that right, it works really nice. Some guys like a smaller horn and if you build that properly, it works right," said Cordell. "I can make it work for what he wants and the way he wants it and then I can see him use it for the next 20, 30, 40 years depending on how much they use it and how well they take care of it."

There's an art to leatherwork and tack and, like with any other artistic medium, there are ways in which the artist needs to work with what he's been given.

"You have to pick your battles. Different parts of the hide work better for different things. Some areas are more moldable, some have a denser, firmer texture and they're going to be more durable but you also can't work them as much," said Cordell. "You have to work within the space that gives you."

Using one of the saddles in their storefront—one they didn't build—Cordell provides

an example. The fork, orommel, of the saddle is thick and has obviously been spliced with additional leather. On either side, an upside-down V shape can be seen where there wasn't enough leather to wrap around the section but the splicing is done well and doesn't draw notice to itself. As Cordell points to different areas on the saddle, his passion for leatherwork becomes clear. The image of a man of few words melts away and is replaced by an artist who can sell his work just by talking about it.

"I enjoy most of it. The design, you know, there's always a little bit of a puzzle. They're usually not very complicated puzzles but there's something to keep me engaged," said Cordell. "I enjoy making things look and work the way that I want them to."


Hatch Tack is located at 102 W. Bridge Avenue in Saratoga. Visit their website at hatchtack.com for more information.

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2024 HATS OFF TO AG

Serving local, supporting local

Along with serving local protein at The Malt, owner Danny Burau hopes to help local ranchers revolutionize how we think about food

By Joshua Wood, Stevenson Newspapers

Danny Burau, owner of The Malt in Saratoga, knows the concept of farm-to-table isn't new or revolutionary in the food industry.

It's been around long enough it was once parodied by the sketch comedy series "Portlandia" when two characters—played by Fred Armisen and Carrie Brownstein—are so invested in the chicken on the menu they visit where it was raised. Being a comedy series, hijinks ensue. While it may seem almost hyperbolic in its critique of the locally sourced movement, there is perhaps a small kernel of truth to be found.

"Those trends have been in food for a while, we're certainly not pioneering any new concepts, but these animals around here are getting a pretty free range lifestyle," said Burau. "When you're hiking around in the mountains and you come upon a herd of cattle that a ranch around here is raising, what better quality of life for that animal."

Burau's goal since starting The Malt—and before that, Firewater Public House—was to reconnect people with their food, especially their protein. According to Burau, a major issue facing both the economy and health of the United States is a lack of understanding where our food is sourced.

"It really did come down to wanting to understand where our food came from, how those animals were being treated, why they were being raised the way they were and that, in turn, provides a really great product for our guests," said Burau. "I want people to be aware that they're eating animals. These animals died. They're lives were taken so that we could survive."

Whenever possible, primarily when the price point allows, The Malt serves beef from Berger Beef, owned by Kyle and Stacy Berger. Recently, said Burau, the use of Berger Beef is for specially catered events. Burau also serves bison from Iron Creek Bison Company, owned by Les and Tammy Barkhurst, whenever possible, too. To serve either protein, it has to be processed in a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspected facility. One, which is used by Iron Creek Bison Company, is located in Hudson. Another, 307 Meats, is located in Laramie. For Burau, it's a concept that he both believes in and can sell: protein raised in Wyoming, processed in Wyoming



Photo by Joshua Wood

Bison from Iron Creek Bison Company is often on the menu at The Malt.

and served in Wyoming.

"Prices are a little higher when we do it this way. We're working with Bergers right now trying to figure out how we can help them scale, who we can connect them with so they can distribute more across the state and then we'd be able to serve more of their stuff because they're price could come down per pound," said Bura. "Working with a supplier so they understand what the demand is, that helps us set a price point where we can keep selling it."

Due to current beef prices, Burau buys beef from his wholefoods supplier to serve on his menu. It's an economical decision, but not one he is entirely pleased about. As he continues to explain his philosophy, he touches on the push for COOL (Country Of Origin Labeling) among rural and family ranches when it comes to USDA certified beef. The practice ended in 2015 and, today, most beef labeled as "Product of USA" may actually come from a foreign country but can be labeled as such if it is processed domestically.

Burau understands the task he's assigned himself isn't easy. Serving locally raised protein is a novel concept, but not one which could be reproduced across the country. According to the USDA, Americans consume 57 pounds of beef per person per year. In 2021, that number hit an all-time high with 30 billion pounds of beef consumed in a year.

"I think we're lucky to be in a place like Wyoming where ... if we can get that country of origin labeling, people would be willing to spend a little bit more in order to get local beef because it means something to them," said Burau. "McDonald's is not worried about where their beef is coming from, they're moving it at huge volumes, they're not worried about quality. They certainly don't care about country of

origin [labeling]."

And while McDonald's is estimated to have served more than 300 billion hamburgers since its founding, Burau said interactions with his customers is encouraging. With tourism being one of the major economic drivers of the Valley, The Malt sees guests from across the country and the world who, said Burau, want locally sourced protein.

"When people take time to read the menu, they would want to ask questions. They would want to know how local, is it just from Wyoming. I could say it's a herd eight or 10 miles down the road. You could see a smile on their face because they're understanding this is really a local product," said Burau. "It helps me from a marketing perspective, so it's not entirely altruistic. I know people get excited about that and they like that we can give them a story. People so often are buying a story in a cocktail or a food item."

Changing the consumer mindset and getting people hungry enough for locally sourced protein to pay a little extra is only half the battle, though. The other side is helping local ranchers and producers change how they've

operated for generations. That battle, according to Burau, doesn't seem to be as difficult.

"I think it's an interesting point to consider that we've had these producers in this Valley for this long and their willingness to try to find ways to provide protein locally, I know they don't have to do that," said Burau. "It's extra work, it's an extra challenge because it isn't the same volume."

And while farm-to-table, or ranch-to-table in this case, isn't a revolutionary idea, Burau still sees something of a revolution ahead. A substantial change to how people think about their food, about how they can better connect with it by knowing how it was raised and where it came from.

"This kind of disruption, if we can find a way to empower smaller family operations to get their foot in the door and then really get pushing, that's great for everybody except the giant producers. I don't really feel any emotional attachment to them so I'm fine disrupting them in the biggest way possible," said Burau. "It's not a small amount of work, but it feels like everybody I've talked to is willing to entertain it."

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2024 HATS OFF TO AG

New UW Extension Educator Bolsters Local Food Efforts

Staff Report

The University of Wyoming Extension welcomes Jennifer Faulkner as a local foods coordinator in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Faulkner grew up on a Wyoming cattle ranch and managed a ranch operation in Riverton for three years. As a rancher, she was highly active in the local foods movement and sold meat, dairy and produce to local customers.

Faulkner's experience with agriculture and passion for local foods serve her well in her new role. "Jen rolled up her sleeves and hit the ground running,

finding creative solutions to grow and strengthen Wyoming's producers and food entrepreneurs," says Anders Van Sandt, UW Extension specialist and assistant professor of regional economics in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. "She brings a unique blend of thoughtful determination and innovation emblematic of her Wyoming ranching roots."

Faulkner's position is funded by the Northwest Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center grant, which is led by Oregon State University and Colorado State University. Members of the food business center team work within their individual states as well as across a six-



state region to develop a robust regional food system. Those funded by this grant

serve underinvested communities and small to medium-sized food businesses. Their aim is to help small food businesses grow and connect food entrepreneurs to resources; support investment in effective infrastructure; and build meat supply chain capacity and resilience.

Over the first eight months of this grant, which launched in summer 2023, the food business center team has already impacted Wyoming's food landscape. In particular, they have connected Wyoming food businesses to wholesalers and other resources.

Last month, the team sponsored a workshop at the statewide Wyoming Food Coalition

conference, which is dedicated to bringing together food system leaders from across the state. The workshop showed participants how to move from a home kitchen into a shared commercial space.

Faulkner is excited to keep improving Wyoming's food system infrastructure. "I'm especially eager to connect local food producers with resources and technical assistance to promote successful operations," says Faulkner. "I want to help foster a sense of community around the state of Wyoming."

Faulkner assumed her new position in early 2024. She can be contacted at jennifer.faulkner@uwyo.edu.

New Livestock Production and Marketing Specialist Joins UW Extension

Staff Report

The University of Wyoming Extension welcomes Rob Ziegler as the new livestock production and marketing extension specialist with the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Ziegler earned his bachelor's degree in animal and veterinary sciences from UW in 2018 while working as a laboratory technician for the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory. He went on to earn a master's degree in

ruminant nutrition from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2020. His master's thesis focused on cow size and optimizing resources in range production environments.

After graduating, Ziegler worked as a customer technical communication specialist for Telus Agriculture in Alberta, Canada, where he helped producers make informed decisions about livestock using animal performance data.

"We're so excited to have Rob join us to help serve the needs of

livestock producers across the state," says Ben Rashford, head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. "His extensive background in livestock production and animal science, combined with his hands-on experience in the supply chain, is going to bring a wealth of knowledge to Wyoming."

Ziegler's combination of professional and academic experience have prepared him well to engage with educators and producers across the state. He looks forward to supporting UW

Extension county educators' programming and learning about Wyoming producers' needs.

"I was anxious to get immersed back in the cow-calf sector, since that's where most of my formal training is," says Ziegler. "What excites me the most is supporting the land-grant [university] mission and making a positive impact on the livestock producers around the state."

Ziegler joined UW Extension last month. He can be contacted at rziegler3@uwyo.edu or (307) 766-3719.



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