

THE POST RIDER

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

Teaching the Next Generation How to earn a profit.

"Knowing how to raise livestock is not the same as knowing how to run a business that raises livestock," Dave Pratt from [Ranching For Profit](#) explains. "Profit is to business as breathing is to life," he adds.

Dave will help attendees at Montana's Next Generation Conference move their operation from, "Just a collection of really expensive assets and physically demanding jobs to a real business!" This presentation is good for crop or livestock operations to think about how the decisions they make will affect their bottom line. Dave Pratt will be presenting "3 Secrets to Profit" and "Hard Work and Harmony" workshops from 11:00am-6:00pm Friday, January 27 at the Civic Center, Shelby, MT.

Pratt's week-long Ranching For Profit school costs \$2750 (vast majority says it is more than worth it) and you can get a full afternoon of him at Montana's Next Generation Conference 2017 for just \$25. Plus, your lunch and a roast beef dinner are included. That's not an opportunity you want to pass up!

Maybe record keeping overwhelms you? It is one of those things we all know is important, but how do you know where to start? [Janet Smith](#) will be covering the basics every borrower needs to know including how to develop their balance sheet, cash flow projection and keep financial and production records that will meet FSA requirements. Her workshop will be one of the 42 sessions offered on Saturday January 28th when Montana's Next Generation Conference moves to the Shelby High School to take advantage of the class rooms.

Janet Smith is a Farm Loan Manager for Farm Service Agency. She has been a loan officer for almost 32 years. She earned her degree in Ag Business from Montana State University. She has been involved in ag throughout her life and grew up on a cattle ranch near Livingston, Montana.

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BABYSITTING PROVIDED

Interested in attending Montana's Next Generation Conference 2017 but not sure what to do with the kiddos? Bring them along!

We are providing babysitting services with the conference for \$15/day/kid which covers all snacks and meals for them too!

There will be lots of super fun activities and games to keep the kids happy and occupied while you attend all the exciting workshops we have to offer!

Learning to Manage Land for Now and the Future

By Shaelyn Meyer, Pondera County Ag Extension Agent, 271-4054

MSU Extension, Pondera County will bring Roland Kroos with Crossroads Ranch Consulting, to Conrad January 30th through February 2nd to teach Principles of Holistic Management.

I (Shaelyn) first met Kroos during a Holistic Management course at MSU. Kroos is one of 3 collaborating instructors that teach HM classes at MSU, both in the undergraduate and graduate levels. The first thing I learned in the course was that Holistic Management was not what I thought it was! I thought we would talk about cows and grass (two of my favorite things) during class every day, but quickly found out that it was all much bigger than that.

Holistic Management is a value-based decision-making framework that integrates all aspects of planning, taking into consideration the social, economic, as well as environmental aspects of management. **To put it simply, the decisions you make, have to first of all make you money (that's usually the single most important deciding factor for most producers); but they also have to improve the land and your quality of life.** Those last two aspects often get overlooked. In reality, the three together are like three pegs on a stool. If you lose one, good luck staying upright! I think we can all think of neighbors that have had to sell out because they couldn't make a profit, or maybe they had to sell because none of the kids wanted to come back. Maybe there was a quality of life aspect missing that just made ranching seem unappealing to the next generation.

Roland spends just as much time talking about communication and mitigating conflict as he does about environmental or livestock topics. People get

Predation Report

John Steuber, MT State Director, USDA, Wildlife Services

Both wolf and grizzly bear depredations on livestock are increasing in Montana. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015, wolves at least killed 42 calves, 10 adult cattle, 6 lambs, 5 adult sheep, 2 horses, and 1 guard dog. These are depredations determined to be confirmed or probable wolf kills by Wildlife Services. In FFY 2016, wolves killed 107 calves, 10 adult cattle, 20 lambs, 10 adult sheep, 1 horse, and 4 guard dogs. The number of investigations on reported wolf depredations to livestock increased from 39 in FFY 2015 to 66 in FFY 2016. Prior to FFY 2016 there had been a 3-year decline in wolf depredations on livestock in Montana. FFY 2016 saw a significant reversal in that trend.

Investigations on reported grizzly bear depredations by USDA Wildlife Services remained fairly stable until FFY 2015 when they increased from 46 in FFY 2014 to 88 in FFY 2015. FFY 2016 saw another high year of grizzly bear livestock depredation investigations with 84 such investigations. Although the number of investigations remained near the FFY 2015 level, the actual number of livestock depredated by grizzly bears increased from 111 head of livestock in FFY 2015 to 155 head of livestock in FFY 2016. In FFY 2016, Wildlife Services determined that livestock confirmed or determine probable grizzly bear depredations were 62 calves, 21 adult cattle, 53 lambs, 14 adult sheep, 3 horses, and 2 alpaca.

Learning to Manage continued

stuck in a paradigm of thought and action and continue to do things out of habit without much consideration as to how they're being reimbursed for their time and investment. Roland is going to shake up your thought process and really find out what is important to you, where you're wasting your resources, and how you can change the way you think about everyday management decisions. I guarantee you'll be glad you invested in your own education and your future.

To learn more about this class call Shaelyn at 406-271-4054 or register online at www.CrossRoadsRanchConsulting.com and click on the "Workshops & Upcoming Events" box on the lower part of the page.

Let's Talk About Bears

Or at least their management

Marias River Livestock Association was just formed when the issue of Grizzly Bears was brought forward by a few members in the fall/winter of 2012. Most of the MRLA members had not had to deal with bears but members in Pondera County and a few along the Marias River had found bears to be a problem. It was a time for us all to learn what was happening at our neighbors'.

During the legislative session of 2013, Woolgrowers took the lead, bringing two important bills to the Legislature. The first bill was to authorize Montana's Livestock Loss Board to compensate Montanans for livestock losses that occur as a result of grizzly bear kills. The second bill was to provide money to the Livestock Loss Board that would then be allocated out to ranchers, associations, and wildlife managers for implementing preventative measures such as electric fences to minimize or stop conflicts between grizzlies and humans or livestock. These bills gained the support of MRLA and the other agriculture groups and met with success.

In spring of 2013, Marias River Livestock Association held three meetings called "Let's Talk About Bears." The meetings were held in Shelby, Conrad and Valier and were well attended by 30 to 65 people at each meeting. Montana FWP was invited to listen to the concerns that the local residents had. The passion seen in these meetings helped to focus the MRLA leadership on ensuring that the local voices were heard and the concerns addressed.

While the 2013 meetings brought forward wide and diverse points of view and various levels of experience with bears, there were two objectives that could be generally agreed on.

- 1. Bears are not acceptable in towns, colonies or ranch yards (Human Settlements) and FWP/ USFWS bear management should reflect that. Problem bears need removed from the population.**
- 2. Education on how to live with bears could be made available to those who wanted to participate. Our prime objective should be keeping people safe.**

MRLA has engaged and worked with the MFWP, USFWS and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee since that time, striving to continuously bring those two objectives to the forefront and have them addressed. While MRLA pressed the issue, the Grizzly population continued to increase and spread past the Eastern Rocky Mountain Front and onto the prairie to the Sweet Grass Hills and past Brady into the Golden Triangle area. MRLA engaged the Department of Livestock, reminding them of their obligation to

protect livestock from predation and they too began to advocate for ranchers' livestock, human safety and property rights.

MRLA wrote letters, made phone calls, attended meetings and generally dug in and fought for human safety and the safety of private property to be of top priority.

During the Winter NCDE IGBC Subcommittee, November 29, 2016, Nina Baucus, Board of Livestock, George Edwards, Livestock Loss Board, Miller colony, Birch Creek and Pondera Colony, Cody Yeager and his father Harold and Maggie Nutter, Marias River Livestock Association, all stood and gave public testimony of the abundance of bears and need for better management. FINALLY, we were heard.

During the December IGBC Executive Committee meeting December 13 & 14, Jim Williams, MFWS, introduced the NCDE annual report by stating, "We have exceeded the social tolerance for grizzly bears in some parts of the ecosystem." He went on to explain that social tolerance is a big deal. That there is biological feasibility for wildlife population growth and support in an ecosystem, but there is also social tolerance. Williams expressed the need for amending the management of the Grizzly bears in the NCDE.

Cont. page 7

Continued from page 1, Teaching the Next Gen

Also on Saturday, pulse crop producers, won't want to miss Dr. Jessica Rupp's workshop. Pulse crop acres have really grown in our area and many are still learning the ins and outs. Rupp is a great resource and will have some insight into what we should be watching for in terms of diseases as they move this direction.

Blaine Juedeman, who works as a Grain Merchandiser at Big Sky CHS while also operating his own farm, will speak about marketing pulse crops and how and why to rotate them into your farming plan.

Colleen Gustafson is a believer in the value of the Next Generation conference. She says, "We are so fortunate to have this conference in north-central Montana. The caliber of speakers and workshops is always fantastic. Agricultural producers have so little control over markets and weather, but we can control our approach to learning new things and focusing on keeping our family businesses viable and healthy. Regardless of our age, we truly need to always think about 'The Next Generation.' It is, literally, our future, the future of agriculture, and the future of feeding the world. I can't think of a single family-owned business who shouldn't take advantage of every succession planning event they can attend.

And on top of all that, this conference is fun! It is a great opportunity to connect with friends and neighbors and to meet new people who are involved in our great industry."

Colleen ranches with her husband, Barr, near Browning. Both are firmly committed to their next generation, Greta and Owen, budding veterinarians and ranchers.

You can register, view the agenda and 42 workshop schedule for the Montana's Next Generation Conference at www.MariasRiverLivestock.com



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JAY HOULD
 President/Owner

Need may be the Father of Invention but lack of money is often the motivation

Perhaps you have heard the old saying, "Use It Up, Wear It Out, Make It Do, or Do Without." It was used frequently during the hard times of the Great Depression but many still live by that sentiment today.

It is that attitude which has spurred many in agriculture to get inventive. We want to see your farm and ranch ingenuity at the **'New or Improved' Fair** at Montana's Next Generation Conference 2017 in January!

If you've developed or modified an item that saves you time, money, or stress, we want to see it! Items or photos of the items will be on display Saturday at the conference, with attendees voting for their top picks. Cash prizes will be offered.

Look in the shop, fencing shed, or barn for your top entry, and then make sure to get it registered. Don't forget to signed up for the conference so you can vote as well! Early bird registration ends in just one month, so get signed up now!

Contest and Display Details:

1. Item can be either homemade or a purchased item you have gussied up to save you time, labor or money.
2. Item (or photo of it) needs to be set-up and on display from 8:00am- 5:00pm, January 28, 2017 at the Shelby High School.
3. Conference participants will vote for their favorite "New or Improved" item, with the top vote getters determining the winners. Cash prizes will include: 1st place- \$100, 2nd place-\$75, 3rd place-\$50

Any and all inventive farmers and ranchers are eligible to enter. Please register your entry with Kari Lewis (kari.lewis@montana.edu or 406-873-2239) by January 23, 2017 so we can reserve a spot for your item. Please complete the registration form found at www.MariasRiverLivestock.com

News Bites

Up Date on CWD study on Mule Deer in the Sweet Grass Hills.

CWD: For the most part, hunters were cooperative with collecting samples. Only 2 hunters noticed the collars prior to harvesting a deer with a collar. A total of 14 collared bucks were harvested by hunters. While this may seem like a high number, it is good data. Keep in mind that we targeted older age class deer which have a higher harvest rate and received permission on those lands that generally allow some level of hunting. One collar is off the air and I have been unable to locate it. Another collar was cut off and thrown in a ditch. If you hear that someone has a collar, let me know. So currently there are 5 collared bucks and 5 collared does still transmitting. There are no deer in Canada. We were able to take samples on 12 of the collared deer. I was able to collect an additional 5 samples from bucks in the Sweet Grass Hills and 1 sample from an older buck in HD 400. I did not try to collect samples elsewhere.

All samples have been submitted to the lab. As this is a busy time of year for them, it may be some time before we know if there are any positives. As we haven't had a positive in the past, I am going to assume all are negative unless we hear differently. When I get the results, I will let you know.—Ryan Rauscher, biologist, MFWP.

Something to watch

Status of USFWS petition to list Yellowstone bison under ESA— In 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a negative 90-day determination on two citizen's petitions to list a distinct population segment of Yellowstone-area bison as threatened or endangered. Three groups recently sued over the agencies decision and currently USFWS is in the process of responding. PJ White, YNP, said that to his knowledge no date has been set for trial. The issues include lack of historical habitat, concerns about genetic diversity, and contentions regarding the numbers of animals that should exist in the Northern and Central herds.



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Grizzly Continued from page 6

recovery, it is reasonable to review our response in light of **current grizzly bear abundance and expanded distribution**. As a listed species, ultimately under federal oversight, this review needs to happen in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Serendipitously, cold weather offers a respite as bears find their way to winter hibernation. **FWP is committed to using this quiet winter period to work with partners, communities and the USFWS to be better prepared as bears begin emerging next spring.**



Congratulation to the Russ Suebert, who was highest bidder on the right pie. Russ's pie was the pie with the key to the trigger lock on the Weatherby Vanguard 300 Win Mag. We thank ALL who bid at the Three Pie Auction and on the delicious Prime Ribs donated by Dick Kinyon. The Youth Fund Auction at the Annual Prime Rib and Rib Tickler allows us to give the Beef Breeding Project awards and the Public Speaking awards at the Marias Fair along with other projects targeting the youth and young producers.

Grizzly Bear Management

Along the East Rocky Mountain Front

By Quentin Kujala, Wildlife Management Section
Chef, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 444-5672

A growing and recovered grizzly bear population in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, which includes the Rocky Mountain Front, has bears in areas they haven't been for decades. East Front landowners have expressed growing frustration and concern over the frequency and close proximity of grizzly bears to human work and home sites well removed from the Front. The department has also heard criticism of agency response as staff is increasingly hard pressed when responding to conflict across an expanding geographic area.

2016 hasn't been easy, but we have had some successes.

FWP Region 4 staff established a phone tree in Valier to warn residents when bears are observed in or near residents and or town, started the process for a similar phone tree in Choteau, put up signs in Valier and Choteau to remind people they are living and recreating in an area where grizzly bears could be present, worked with Be Bear Aware at several town days to educate the public on the proper use of bear spray, and helped agriculture interests set up more than a dozen new electric fences aimed at reducing conflict.

In addition, FWP recognizes the need for additional resources and is looking for those resources to better respond to grizzly presence and conflicts. FWP also understands the current protocols for responding to bear conflicts were developed and first implemented under very different circumstances. While FWP conflict specialists have a long history of successfully using these protocols in dealing with bear conflicts as part of grizzly bear

BULL BUCKS PLUS 2016

Apex Angus – Sale March 7, 2017
www.apexangus.com

Bobcat Angus – Sale January 28, 2017
www.bobcatangus.com

Connelly Angus– Feb. 2017 www.connellyangus.com

Curry Cattle Inc – 279-3561
Replacement Angus females

Diamond D Angus – Sale Nov 10 2017, Spring Private Treaty www.diamonddangus.com

Diemert Ranch Herefords – 432-3412
www.ngrbulls.com/diemert_ranch_herefords.htm

Enneberg Angus Ranch – 845-4901 Private Treaty

Flesch Angus – Sale March 2017
www.fleschangus.com

Gillespie Show Cattle – 337-2943 or 949-4453
www.gillespieshowcattle.com

Hawks Angus – Private Treaty 432-5355
www.hawksangus.com

Holden Hereford – Sale March 13 2017
www.holdenherefords.com

Kicking Horse Ranch Gelbvieh – Sale March 15 2017
www.kickinghorseranch.com

Superior Livestock Video Auction – 450-4586
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Tomsheck Angus – April 5, 2017 in Nebraska,
937-3726 www.blackranchesinc.com

Timber Coulee Columbia – 937-2775

Turner Angus – April 2017 434-2823
www.TurnerAngus.com

Save the Date

Jan 2 First Day of the Montana Legislative Session

Go to leg.mt.gov to keep up on all the latest Committee hearings and bills.

Jan 27 & 28 Montana's Next Generation Conference

Go to www.MariasRiverLivestock.com for full details.

Jan 30- Feb 2 Holistic Ranch management, with Roland

Kroos, Crossroads Ranch Consulting. Seminar will be held in Conrad, MT

Feb 10 Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Commissioners

Meeting in Helena, Headquarters.

April 6 Interagency Bison Plan Meeting, West Yellowstone

June 20, 21, 22 Interagency Grizzly Bear Meeting in Choteau MT at the Stage Stop Inn. IGBCOnline.org

Cont. from page 3 Bears

Ken McDonald, Wildlife Chief of Staff, MFWP, made a motion at the very end of the last IGBC Executive Meeting in Missoula, (Dec 13 & 14, 2016) asking the IGBC Executive Committee to send a letter to the USFWS requesting them to gather the resources/science and staff to write the Delisting Rule. **In effect McDonald was saying Montana FWP believes all the science is there, the population numbers meet the goal and that the Forest Service is putting in place the habitat protections.**

The conservation Strategy was prepared and put out for public comment in 2013. You can go to this site and find the Conservation Strategy under the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/grizzlyBear.php> That Conservation Strategy needs population updates or another post delisting management plan with population updates needs developed.

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Executive Committee unanimously voted to ask the USFWS to move to gather the resources (science /research and staff) and write the delisting rule for the NCDE.

Then Karen Bush, head of USFWS for the State of Montana, stated that as soon as the new Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator is put in place they would make that a priority. They have the person selected but their job needs wrapped up and all the paperwork USFWS does to transfer staff needs done first. They figure that will be a few months out.

So the process is moving forward. It is not an immediate eraser of all the problems, but the issue has been recognized and steps are being taken. Yes, it should have been done a couple years ago, but we can't change the past.

The testimonies of Harold Yeager, Ben Waldner, David Wipf and Ruben Hofer were key in getting the IGBC committee on track and giving them the support to take action. We need more people at the summer IGBC executive meeting which will be held in Choteau, Montana, June 20, 21 and 22. Being silent allows other organizations and agencies to decide our fate. By being present we can provide factual information to those who make the decisions and remind them of the commitments they have made towards delisting.

Side note: Google Marias River Livestock Association YouTube to see a couple short video clips of the IGBC meeting that was held in Missoula, Dec 2016.

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72 Sweetgrass Hills Rd
Sweet Grass, MT 59484

Phone:
406-937-2751

E-Mail:
nutter@northerntel.net

Montana's Next Generation Conference January 27 & 28

Civic Center and High School Shelby Montana

**Friday- Dave Pratt- Three secrets to
increase profits and Hard work and
Harmony.**

**Saturday- approximately 40 breakout
sessions on livestock, cropping and
succession**

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