



Disaster aid programs available for Wyoming producers

By James Sedman and John Hewlett

Another production season is well underway in Wyoming, and, as with previous years, the effects of drought and other weather-related disasters will play a major role in the management decisions of Wyoming producers.

A large array of crop insurance products is available for both crop and livestock producers under the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation program, including fall-seeded crops and forages and livestock risk insurance. Tools for risk management are also available at the state level and are administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). These programs vary by year and area and are often dependent on the declaration of a drought or other disaster by the FSA.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is designed to assist producers in rehabilitating lands se-

verely damaged by natural disasters. Program sign-ups are determined by local FSA committees based on need and priority.

Recent legislation designates \$3 billion for emergency assistance for disaster-related losses of crop and livestock production from January 1, 2005, through February 28, 2007. This program covers losses outside those covered under ECP and has a payment limit of \$80,000 per producer. A total of \$16 million has been allocated for both the ECP and the dairy assistance program with payment limitations of \$200,000 per producer.

Wyoming had been under a drought disaster declaration through July 16. Producers should contact their local FSA office for information and applications. Documented losses of 35 percent or greater in addition to losses not covered under crop insurance programs or the Noninsured Crop



Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) are covered by this program. Funding for the program is divided into several areas including crops, livestock and feed losses, emergency conservation, and dairy losses.

The Crop Disaster Program (CDP) covers losses within the drought disaster declaration period. Producers must choose the worst loss out of the three-year period

to apply for program benefits. Additionally, only lands covered by federal crop insurance programs or NAP coverage are eligible for disaster assistance. Losses must reach 35 percent of total production or a 25 percent quality loss to be eligible. Payments are calculated based on 42 percent of established prices. Total payments cannot exceed 95 percent of the total value of the crop, including any other federal program or insurance payments.

The Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) is similar to the CDP program and covers feed losses for livestock producers within the drought disaster declaration period. Limitations are similar to the CDP program, and payments for forage and feed losses are restricted to 61 percent of the determined national payment rate. The Livestock Indemnity Program covers actual livestock losses due to drought, fire, or blizzard in the program time period

at 26 percent or above the market value determined by the USDA.

Producers should contact a local FSA office as soon as possible about sign up information for these programs. Several of the programs have limited funding so timely applications are important. Information on available programs is on the Web at www.fsa.usda.gov. For more information on this and other risk management topics on the Web, visit the Western Risk Management Library at <http://agecon.uwyo.edu/riskmgt> or the USDA Risk Management Agency at www.rma.usda.gov.

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Wyoming AgrAbility offers suggestions to help producers wrestle with arthritis

By Amanda O'Brien

Arthritis and other similar conditions are the number one cause of disability in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Approximately 31 percent of Americans clinically diagnosed with arthritis report experiencing limitations in their normal work routine. An estimated 43 million adults in the United States reported some form of arthritis in 2002. Of these, more than 50 percent were age 75 and older.

Ranchers and farmers are heavily affected by this disease, which can reduce their ability to perform everyday tasks efficiently and to the best of their ability.

Several steps can help alleviate symptoms and allow performance of day-to-day tasks on the ranch or farm.

- Avoid long durations of gripping or grasping objects tightly; build up handles or levers with padding to reduce amount of grip needed.
- Avoid jarring motions or shocks when operating or servicing equipment. Never jump from equipment, and take breaks to stretch and walk.
- Maintain proper posture.
- Move around; don't stay in the same position for extended periods of time.
- Use power equipment to move and hoist heavy objects when possible.
- Use caution when entering and exiting equipment. Climb one step at a time leading with the weaker or more painful leg. Consider installing additional grab bars or step extensions.

- Wear good-quality shoes with proper fit to support feet and ankles to relieve pressure, absorb shock and reduce pain.
- Use assistive aids such as simple splints to support weak fingers and prevent deformities, handle extensions, canes, etc.
- Use hot and/or cold treatments to help reduce pain.
- Practice simple, daily exercises such as range-of-motion, strengthening and fitness, or endurance exercises to reduce chances of painful movement or potential deformities. Walking, bicycling, and swimming are examples of exercises that may help alleviate symptoms.
- Conserve energy by pacing tasks and match them with times you are most able to complete them.

Ranchers with arthritis should take extra precautions when working with livestock to reduce the chances of further or secondary injuries. Adding gates and panels to limit direct contact can assist while sorting, treating, or shipping animals. Dairy farmers may consider automatic milking unit detachers to reduce the number of times they must bend and reach.

Automatic gate openers or cattle guards and automatic hitching systems allow easier access and reduce the number of times a farmer or rancher with arthritis must mount and dismount a tractor or other vehicle.

Remember that working with a doctor to manage arthritis is the best method of approach. Stay educated, work smart, and learn to work with, rather than against, your arthritis.

If you or someone you know has additional ways they continue to farm and ranch with arthritis and you would like to share, or if you would like additional information from Wyoming AgrAbility, call toll-free (866) 395-4986 or e-mail AgrAbility@uwyo.edu. A portion of the information shared in this article is from Purdue University's Breaking New Ground and the Arthritis Foundation.

Amanda O'Brien is project coordinator of the Wyoming AgrAbility Project.



Be safe out there this summer

By Ron Cunningham

Outdoor activities accelerate with summer's arrival. The hazards of working and playing outside also increase.

Accidents on the farm, ranch, and rural acreages account for one of the worst safety records of all kinds of work and recreation. Many are injured and killed in farm and ranch equipment accidents every year. Many, if not all, of these can be avoided with some safety instruction and using common sense.

- Crossing ditches and driving tractors, swathers, and four-wheelers on side hills can cause them to roll resulting in serious or fatal injuries.
- Driving any piece of equipment or four-wheeler too fast. Slow down and make sure the machine is being operated at a safe speed and can be controlled no matter what is around the next curve or whatever object is blocking your view. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service publication *Training puts ATV riders on road to safety*, MP-118.1, is available at <http://ces.uwyo.edu/commsrv.htm>.
- Inexperienced four-wheeler operators are injured every year because they are allowed to operate a four-wheeler without instruction and safety training.

In addition to the hazards of operating equipment on a farm or ranch or operating four-wheelers, there are several personal safety issues while working or recreating in the county, on a farm, or on a ranch.

- Heat stroke or heat stress can be deadly but is also avoidable. Wear a good hat with a wide brim for protection from the sun. A ball cap is even better than going bareheaded.
- Make sure you, your employees, and your family keep hydrated. On a hot summer day, plan on drinking at least 1 quart of water or an electrolyte-replacement drink for every hour under the hot sun. Heat stroke can cause brain damage and other health issues.
- Protect yourself and all others from the threats of West Nile virus. Drain all puddles of water, and dispose of old tires lying around, as the water that collects inside is a breeding ground for mosquitoes that spread the virus. Using *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) mosquito larva donuts can be very effective in ponds and are available at many hardware and farm and ranch stores. Remember the three D's – use lots of DEET-based insect repellent at dusk and dawn.
- Protect family and young children from pesticide poisoning. A number of pesticide products are used in the summer on the farm, ranch, and other rural properties and in city homes and yards. Keep them out of reach of all children. Keep in their original containers, and never put pesticides in pop bottles or other containers that previously held beverages or food. Always read the label of any pesticide product, and follow all safety instructions. These are not just recommendations – they are safety instructions.

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