Coalition, the Soil Health Coalition brings together individuals learning community. Modeled after the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, the Soil Health Coalition is another excellent example of a learning community. The story on Page 6 about the formation of the new South Dakota Soil Health Coalition is another excellent example of a learning community. The two-year program resulted in 50 families in our two counties, who managed over one million acres of land, implementing holistic long-range strategic plans designed with the technical assistance of Extension, NRCS and BIA professionals. The program was called “Bootstraps.” Ultimately, Bootstraps helped the ranch families who participated achieve their self-determined goals for their operations. 

While I didn’t know it then, what we had created is now referred to as a learning community. Generally defined as a group of people who share common learning goals and whose participants meet regularly to study subjects of common interest, learning communities are a powerful tool to disseminate information and technology. 

An outside group, like SDSU Extension, often plays the critical role of organizer, supporter, catalyst, and facilitator. Learning communities are extremely good at leveraging resources, but it is the self-direction, laser focus and ownership of the programs by the participants themselves that make them so successful. Those are the reasons why we included them as a key strategy as we reorganized SDSU Extension.

The concept seems to be catching on. On Page 4 of this issue of “Growing,” a story about food hubs details how SDSU Extension helped a learning community turn itself into a business opportunity for its participants. While local foods is a hot topic, finding business models that accelerate their impact on the food system has been challenging. Selling produce through farmers markets and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) has proven successful for some growers, but opportunities for sustained markets have been elusive. In 2015, members of SDSU Extension’s Community Development team facilitated the strategic planning process that resulted in the formation of Dakota Fresh, a food hub which connects growers of farm-fresh produce with restaurants and distributors. It is an exciting step for the local foods movement in our state.

The story on Page 6 about the formation of the new South Dakota Soil Health Coalition is another excellent example of a learning community. Modeled after the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, the Soil Health Coalition brings together individuals concerned about improving the health of our state’s soils with experts from agencies and industry that share the concern and have the technical expertise to help. In this case, SDSU Extension and USDA-NRCS are the facilitators, and farmers and ranchers provide the direction and passion behind the program.

The other core principal we built our programming around was the increased use of technology. iGrow became our technology platform to disseminate unbiased, science-based information. This highly successful program is very unique in the Extension system of the United States. While traditional websites at land-grant universities provide outstanding Extension resources, they are structured to reflect the academic disciplines of the university.

In developing iGrow, we took a consumer approach, and have created focus areas that reflect the interests and business enterprises of our users. For example, instead of having a tab on the top of the page titled “Horticulture,” which is the name of the academic home of the science of growing plants for homes and gardens, iGrow’s tab says “Gardening.” And it is very popular! In 2014-2015, 68,232 users viewed 83,976 pages of information on iGrow Gardening. Both increased more than 25% from the previous year.

iGrow as a whole is also very successful. In just its fourth year, iGrow hosted 643,072 users who viewed 971,786 pages of information. It has also become a trusted source of information for over 300 farm publications, newspapers, and television/radio stations who regularly quote the articles and authors of iGrow articles. It is also remarkably efficient. While we have over 100 of our faculty and staff contributing, iGrow is operated and managed by a team of just three individuals; Lindsey Gerard, Matt Knippling, and John Green. What a great team!

As Extension in the United States moves into its second century, certainly its mode of operation has changed. But its core values and positive impact remain the same. SDSU Extension, diffusing information and technology through self-determined learning communities and the unbiased science-based information on iGrow, will help South Dakotans achieve their potential in the areas of agriculture and natural resource management, community development, food and families, personal nutrition and health, and 4-H and youth development. It’s what we do.

FROM THE DEAN:
Learning Communities + iGrow = Impact

“A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.”
~ Jackie Robinson
Contours Program Launched
Aims To Provide Insights & Prompt Discussions

“AGRICULTURAL ISSUES CAN COVER A WIDE ARRAY OF TOPICS – from water quality and soil health to livestock development and animal care. These topics can also provoke a variety of thoughts and viewpoints from stakeholders.

Recognizing this, leaders with SDSU Extension felt an opportunity existed to bring agricultural topics, information and discussions to the forefront – the result was the launch of a new program in November 2015 called Contours.

“Contours is designed to be a venue that leads thought-provoking conversations related to South Dakota agriculture,” says Karla Trautman, SDSU Extension Associate Director.

Specifically, the program brings a panel of ag industry thought leaders together for an in-depth discussion about a specific topic. Presently, the discussions have been video recorded and aired monthly on South Dakota Public Broadcasting. Recordings have taken place in the Performing...
Arts Center on the SDSU campus and video production has been facilitated by Paulsen, a marketing firm based in Sioux Falls. A private donation is funding the program costs.

The topic of livestock development was featured in the episodes that aired in November and December 2015. Soil health was discussed in the January and February 2016 episodes, and animal disease was featured in April 2016.

South Dakota Corn Utilization Council Endowed Dean of the College of Agriculture & Biological Sciences and Director of SDSU Extension Barry Dunn has served as moderator for the panel discussions. Panelists have included representation from state agencies, such as the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture; state organizations like the Livestock Industry Board; as well as producers, legislators and SDSU faculty.

Of the cross-section of people and viewpoints brought together, Dunn says, “Contours brings together experts from SDSU Extension, South Dakota State University and our partners throughout the state to provide South Dakota’s crop and livestock producers with analysis and insights focused on the various challenges we face in agriculture today.”

Trautman adds that the hope is for the panel discussions to create an “ongoing dialogue” important to South Dakota ag issues. But she also emphasizes that the program is not just for agricultural audiences. “As part of our land-grant university mission, SDSU Extension has a role to offer science-based, unbiased information. That information is useful to ag producers, but the topics Contours focuses on are also aimed to help the general consumer gain a better understanding of ag issues important across the state, including how those issues impact our state resources and economy.”

Looking ahead, Trautman says the SDSU Extension team is currently gathering input from producers and state leaders to identify future topics to be addressed via Contours. The goal is to have a Contours program at least once a month. She notes that programs will sometimes be featured on local television, but may also be held at public events, such as DakotaFest or the South Dakota State Fair.

Trautman concludes, “We are excited about the response we have received to this concept, and as a result, we are committed to continuing with Contours as a leadership effort coordinated by SDSU Extension.”

“...the topics Contours focuses on are also aimed to help the general consumer gain a better understanding of ag issues important across the state...”

- Karla Trautman, SDSU Extension Associate Director

PRODUCER PERSPECTIVE ON THE VALUE OF CONTOURS

“The SDSU Extension Contours program is an excellent means to stimulate discussion concerning today’s progressive agricultural production topics. Bringing the conversation into South Dakotan’s homes and offices enables us all to be involved in working to ensure our agricultural resources are regenerative.”

- Doug Sieck, Selby, SD
Chairman, South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

“I believe the Contours program is addressing some of the pertinent questions of the times...If we’re concerned about what we are going to leave our children and grandchildren, we need to be concerned about soil health. If we are going to have the ability to produce adequately for the world population down the road, we need to be concerned about what we are doing today. Contours provides a public podium to express concerns in a forum where we can talk about it and explore solutions.”

- Al Miron, Crooks, SD
Farmer and natural resources advocate
Local Momentum
Formation Of State’s First “Food Hub” Comes To Fruition

THE CONCEPT OF A “FOOD HUB” – a way for local food producers to aggregate their products and distribute them to a broader market, such as restaurants and institutions – is becoming a reality for a group of farmers in southeastern South Dakota.

In 2014, SDSU Extension began working with this group of food producers who were interested in supplying to local markets. Through a series of meetings, outreach and grant funds over the past two years, the group – now called Dakota Fresh – hopes to make their first sales by May 2016. Dakota Fresh is focusing on supplying to markets in Sioux Falls, Brookings, and possibly Sioux City.

TAKING ROOT
SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist Kari O’Neill has worked extensively with the growers involved in Dakota Fresh to bring all of the pieces, particularly grant funding, together for the effort.

Detailed planning efforts began in October 2014 when SDSU Extension was awarded a one-year $25,000 planning grant from USDA Ag Marketing Service through the Local Food Promotion Program. That money helped recruit interested growers, host meetings, and gather resources to explore the food hub concept, O’Neill explains. Specifically, 20-25 local food producers and eight resource providers met regularly in 2015 to create a strategic plan and choose a structure for the food hub.

As well, SDSU Extension organized a field trip allowing interested producers to travel to Illinois and Wisconsin to visit existing food hubs and learn about their structures. O’Neill reports that from those experiences, the group determined that a LLC structure made up of member farmers with a cooperative mindset was the preferred structure. They have since established the Dakota Fresh LLC and created a five-member board of directors. Membership has been set up to include a one-time $1,000 fee and an annual membership fee of $100. Once operational, a percentage of sales will be retained by...
the LLC to pay operating costs, as well as pay the salary for the food hub manager.

Currently, 14 farmers have committed to the effort as dues-paying members. They represent a diverse group and plan to offer fresh greens and herbs, meats, eggs, honey, and many varieties of vegetables and fruits.

In 2015, a $10,000 expansion grant was awarded from USDA Rural Development in South Dakota to focus on marketing Dakota Fresh, and an additional $2,500 was leveraged from a Bush Fellowship grant to host “Meet the Farmer” receptions in four locations in Southeastern South Dakota.

O’Neill explains that these grants allowed members of Dakota Fresh to meet and network with potential customers. The receptions were held in Sioux Falls, Brookings, Wagner and Yankton and attracted chefs, food service managers from schools and other institutions, as well as grocers. O’Neill says interest from the medical community has also been strong.

During two of the receptions, Stewards of the Land food hub manager Marty Travis from Illinois and Chef Dustin Allen from Edge Restaurant in Peoria, Illinois were on hand to share their experiences and provide testimony to attendees to the importance of relationships between farmer, buyer and consumer.

O’Neill reports that the receptions were very well-received, and from follow-up surveys conducted with attendees, 24 potential customers indicated they would purchase food from Dakota Fresh in the future.

**GROWING THE CONCEPT**

In September 2015, SDSU Extension was awarded a $100,000 grant from USDA’s Ag Marketing Service for implementation. O’Neill says, “This two-year grant will have a great influence on the start-up of Dakota Fresh and enable producers to move ahead with their ideas.” During the last quarter of 2015, Dakota Fresh was able to incorporate, hire a part-time manager and is now making plans to choose possible aggregation site(s).

Other efforts going forward will include development of individual farm safety plans, continued relationship building with local customers and establishing an online presence and ordering system, as well as pricing.

Looking ahead, O’Neill says, “The hope is that Dakota Fresh will be sustainable and allow the producers involved to grow and expand. We also hope this concept will create new opportunities for young farmers to get started and have a market.”

Once Dakota Fresh is up and running, O’Neill anticipates the food hub model may be applied elsewhere within the state. She says, “We’ve had a lot of interest from other groups of growers in the state. I’ve been meeting with several of them to share and explain the process. They are watching.”

She adds, “It’s taken a lot of patience and the grant pieces need to fall into place, but there’s certainly potential across the state for more food hubs. Different markets exist.”

Editor’s Note: O’Neill emphasizes that the development of Dakota Fresh has been a collaborative effort. In addition to SDSU Extension, partners include Dakota Rural Action, South Dakota Department of Agriculture, South Dakota Specialty Producers, USDA Rural Development, South Dakota Buy Fresh/Buy Local, HyVee and Birmingham/Cwoch Law Firm.

**More About Dakota Fresh**

• In December 2015, Matt Stone of Yankton was hired as a part-time manager for Dakota Fresh.

• The newly elected five-member board of directors includes: Mary Storo, Beresford; Jared Hanisch, Humboldt; Adam McClary, Parker; Lisa Smith, Pipestone, MN; and Tammy Andrews, Beresford.

• The organization’s mission statement: Dakota Fresh strives to produce and provide high-quality, safe, healthy food to our region while fostering strong relationships between producers, customers and our communities.

• Former South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Lucas Lentsch has said: “Dakota Fresh food hub will allow restaurants, institutions, and consumers to have greater choices in access to local foods. Additionally, it will give farmers more choices in avenues to market the products of their labor with their local community or region. Growing local foods in South Dakota creates new opportunities for growth and development in our rural communities.”
“IT WAS A BUSY YEAR,” says Anthony Bly as he reflects on 2015. Bly, an SDSU Extension Soils Field Specialist, notes that across the state “soil health” was the buzzword for the year – and the momentum for that topic led to the establishment of the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition. The organization is thought to be the first of its kind in the nation.

Regarding the newly formed coalition, Bly credits many producers from across the state along with collaboration from SDSU Extension, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dakota Lakes Research Farm and several others for helping the idea come to fruition. The Coalition was formally established on May 19, 2015 with the clear mission: “To promote soil health.”

The coalition concept comes from another successful coalition that exists within the state – the South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGC). Formed more than a decade ago, and led by a producer board of directors, SDGC serves as a voice for grassland managers and has been at the forefront of offering educational venues and facilitating grazing tours to inform and educate other landowners about beneficial management practices.

SDGC had recently established a soil health committee, but the group eventually realized a South Dakota Soil Health Coalition (SDSHC) had merit to become its own entity. Selby, SD, rancher Doug Sieck is currently serving as chairman of the new coalition. Committees are working on bylaws, articles of incorporation and other facets of a new organization. SDSHC will be led by a farmer/rancher board of directors.

Bly foresees the Soil Health Coalition as a venue that will bring a variety of state organizations with a stake in soil health together to continue building awareness among land owners and managers for conservation practices that promote soil health.

Most importantly, it will connect producers with producers – creating learning communities. SDSU Extension
Rangeland Management Specialist and Range Science Professor Sandy Smart believes that is why SDGC has been successful over the years. He shares, “If I go out and encourage farmers and ranchers to implement research-based practices, like no-till and cover crops, the message will not be accepted as quickly, or implemented by as many producers, because I am not a farmer or rancher. But if a peer shares the same message, along with examples of how these practices improved their land’s soil health and in turn increased production and profits, their neighbors will listen and make changes.”

Bly emphasizes that several existing organizations have already laid important groundwork in the area of soil conservation, and points to NRCS, crop commodity groups, the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station at SDSU, and the South Dakota No-Till Association, which was created 20 years ago. Bly anticipates efforts by these groups will continue, but now they will have an additional partner to collaborate with in the Soil Health Coalition.

Bly says, “I like to point out a comment made by NRCS State Conservationist Jeff Zimprich. He said, ‘This sandbox is big enough for everybody to play in.’ I believe that is testament to the fact that we need a lot of people [and organizations] involved in building awareness and adoption of soil health practices.”

He adds, “We need to make sure we are doing all we can to improve soil health… History shows us that society is really influenced by soil’s ability to grow food. In South Dakota we are blessed with really good soil. If we can take care of our soil, it will continue to be productive for generations to come.”

Editor’s Note: The Board of Directors Charter for the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition includes: Dennis Hoyle, Ipswich; Terry Ness, Pierre; Levi Neubarth, Hayes; Doug Sieck, Selby; Bryan Jorgensen, Ideal; Al Miron, Sioux Falls and Dan Forgey, Gettysburg.

Soil Health & Cover Crop Tours Held

In the continuing effort to spotlight soil health, SDSU Extension hosted five field tours at farms along the I-29 corridor during a two-week period in September. The tours highlighted producers using no-till and cover crops to enhance soil health and conservation on their land.

“We wanted to showcase producers who are making no-till work in this region of South Dakota. We know growers really learn from other growers, and this was an opportunity to introduce them to real producers who are using no-till,” says SDSU Extension Soils Field Specialist Anthony Bly who coordinated the tours, along with David Karki, SDSU Agronomy Field specialist.

Tours were held on farms in Turner, Minnehaha, Lake, Brookings and Clark counties with a total of 200 producers participating in at least one of the five tours. In addition to the field tours, demonstrations with water infiltration rings and a rainfall simulator were shown. Bly says, “That often provides an ‘aha moment’ for some people when they see the infiltration – or lack of it – based on different tillage systems and residue management practices.”

Bly says SDSU Extension will continue to work with organizations in the state to “find ways to keep soil health and conservation front and center.”

The Natural Resources Conservation Service defines soil health as “the continued capacity of the soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.”
WHEN EARLY EXPLORERS reached the Northern Plains region in the early 1800s, what is now South Dakota was described as a “sea of grass.” A good portion of that native prairie still remains and is a beneficial resource for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, and watershed filtering, as well as providing open space and recreation opportunities.

Helping youth and adults learn more about South Dakota’s rangelands – and stewardship in managing these lands – is the purpose of a series of SDSU Extension activities throughout the year. As examples, annually each summer SDSU Extension helps co-host and coordinate a Youth and Professional Range Camp at Sturgis, SD and South Dakota Rangeland & Soils Days, which rotate to different communities. These programs were founded several decades ago by the South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management, which continues to lead the organizing and funding for these activities.

Additionally, SDSU Extension frequently partners with the South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, along with other state and federal agencies and area ranchers to host rangeland education events such as an annual “Birds at Home on the Range” tour, a grazing school, range tours, and bringing nationally-known grazing management speaker experts to the state.

Helping urban youth recognize the value of rangelands is achieved through activities at Ag Day held at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls each spring. SDSU Extension and SDGC collaborate for that effort.

“Through partnerships we’ve been able to reach and influence a large number of youth and adults with information about rangeland management,” says Pete Bauman, SDSU Extension Range Field Specialist.

Dave Ollila adds, “These events provide a valuable opportunity to learn more about one of the state’s most important resources, our rangelands.” Ollila has been actively involved in Rangeland Days for several years, first as a high school agriculture education teacher and today as an SDSU Extension field specialist.

He explains that through participation in these events, youth and adults have the opportunity to learn range plant identification, as well as gain skills to assess range condition and habitat value – and ultimately become better stewards of the land.

In 2015, the Range Camp curriculum was retooled to offer ag lenders, assessors and other agri-business professionals an opportunity to learn firsthand out on the range. “Participants gain an understanding of how human management impacts rangeland health which in turn affects rangeland value,” Ollila explains.

Regarding the youth who come through these range education programs, Sandy Smart, who has a dual appointment as a Range Science Professor and SDSU Extension Rangeland Management Specialist, says he has witnessed another valuable result. “The attention on youth rangeland education has fostered a strong interest in those same students pursuing the Rangeland Ecology and Management major at SDSU,” Smart shares. “It’s been neat to see the full circle of young people participating in range events becoming adults pursuing range management careers.”

Editor’s Note: SDSU’s Natural Resource Management Department offers an accredited program in rangeland ecology and management. Learn more about rangeland management through the articles written by SDSU Extension and posted to iGrow.org.
Our Mission Continues...
A Healthy South Dakota Future Ensures All Citizens Have Access To Education & Emerging Innovation
By Karla Trautman, Associate Director of SDSU Extension

I WOULD BE LOST without my cell phone. While I’m not proficient at using all of its bells and whistles, I use the right tools to manage my work and personal life. I can remember getting our son his first cell phone seven years ago. At the time, the primary objective was to call and text. How quickly the technology has changed!

In 1908, the challenge of reaching rural farmers with knowledge and techniques to improve farming practices was explored through the concept of demonstration. It was a simple approach, but it was quickly endorsed by businessmen’s organizations and state educational associations as a critical innovation to the adoption of new technologies. It was the birth of the Cooperative Extension movement and the mission quickly became clear... “to diffuse among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture, home economics and rural energy, and to encourage the application of the same...”

Technology has never been stagnant. The advancements of research, and the teaching of knowledge gained from that research, has been foundational to the continued growth of our state and nation. Despite the incredible changes in technology, communication and transportation over the past 100 years, the need for interpreting that change, and providing leadership to it, has remained constant.

While the face of SDSU Extension has changed dramatically since its early beginnings in 1914, the mission of our work has not. SDSU Extension continues to provide unbiased, scientific knowledge and innovation to families, communities and industries across the state. Today, with a staff of approximately 130 individuals, SDSU Extension engages citizens in dynamic learning environments – connecting people who share a common interest in order to learn information, interact with technology and explore innovation while also learning from one another. The importance of the human relationship is reinforced and emphasized as critical to success.

The concept has root in the historical foundation of Extension – when learning environments were based on a common topic and the learner engaged in active exploration of a technology with other learners. Today, the groups are a bit more dynamic and complex, but just as life changing. While this environment can occur in person, it can occur in a virtual environment as well. In fact, many users of SDSU Extension demand a technological interface to obtain information and interact with staff or other learners.

SDSU Extension has responded by creating iGrow.org – our virtual Extension Office and learning platform. This platform is different from many “websites” because it is designed to serve as a virtual classroom, newsletter, newspaper, merchandise store, registration site and video training site – bringing learners to knowledge and knowledge to learners.

SDSU Extension recognizes that a healthy South Dakota future ensures that all citizens have access to education and emerging innovation. This outreach must continue to be extended to our traditional audiences as well as to the new immigrant populations and first generation learners that are calling South Dakota home. By doing so, we will ensure that the land grant mission continues to flourish, just like it did in 1914, when many South Dakota families were first-generation citizens to the United States.

Technology has changed in 100 years. I’m sure the next 100 years will prove just as prolific. It will be the responsibility of your land-grant university, South Dakota State, and its outreach arm, SDSU Extension, to provide continued leadership for that change, just as we have for the past 100 years.
STRIVING FOR “CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT” is a mantra Heidi Carroll often shares with livestock producers across South Dakota. Carroll is the SDSU Extension Livestock Stewardship Associate, and in that role works to ensure that livestock caregivers are well-equipped to follow quality assurance protocols.

Additionally, when she can, Carroll aims to conduct outreach to the general public to help them better understand the care that is provided to livestock and the management practices used to ultimately produce a safe, quality product for consumption.

Carroll, whose position was created within the Animal Science Department at SDSU in 2013, acknowledges that animal well-being is a topic of increasing interest – and often misunderstanding – among consumers. Of this, she says, “Over time the image of raising livestock has changed, but the foundation of animal husbandry has stayed the same. I try to bridge the gap of understanding between producers and consumers.”

She adds, “Livestock stewardship and animal well-being is a daily responsibility. I try to convey to consumer and youth audiences that livestock caregivers have the animal at the center of their decisions.”

Carroll’s efforts include writing articles for iGrow.org and speaking at events on the topics of animal well-being and stewardship, as well as working directly with livestock producers and handlers to enhance their knowledge and skills of quality assurance practices.
Pilot Project Reaches Dairy Workers

Providing dairy farm workers with a better understanding of animal care and handling, as well as animal health and milk quality was the goal of a 10-week pilot project initiated by SDSU Extension during the summer of 2015.

Called the “Dairy Tool Box Talks,” weekly trainings were conducted with dairy employees at three dairies in Eastern South Dakota, which included Golden Dakota Farms, Elkton; Hammink Dairy, Bruce; and MoDak Dairy, Goodwin. Nine of the trainings were 30-minute classroom-style sessions covering production knowledge and animal care to worker safety, ergonomics and hygiene when handling raw milk. Participants received handouts with detailed information on the week’s topic at each session. A tenth session provided a stockmanship demonstration with live cattle.

Maristela Rovai, SDSU Extension Dairy Specialist; Heidi Carroll, SDSU Extension Livestock Stewardship Associate; and Tracey Erickson, SDSU Extension Dairy Field Specialist; collaborated with colleagues at Colorado State University to develop the project curriculum. Rovai conducted each training in Spanish, the native language of all of the participants.

Rovai, Carroll and Erickson strived to make the trainings interactive, and often utilized pictures as examples from the actual dairy where the trainings were held. Cultural differences within the workplace were also addressed.

Seventy-five dairy employees from the three dairies completed the trainings and received certificates. Feedback from participants and employers was positive. At MoDak Dairy at Goodwin, SD, Greg Moes says having employees participate in the training proved beneficial.

“The nutritionist, veterinarian and others who have visited our farm have all given compliments in the way our employees handle cattle,” says Moes, who credits that to the stockmanship portion of the training. He adds, “We take for granted some of the basic knowledge that employees may not have had the opportunity to learn.”

Rovai says opportunities are being explored to continue offering the trainings in the original, 10-week period, or a shorter version to other dairy operations in the future.

SDSU Extension stewardship efforts extend across all livestock sectors – swine, dairy, beef, equine and sheep. Carroll notes that some of the livestock quality assurance programs have been in place since the early 1980s, but they continue to improve and adapt to the changing needs of the industry – and producers must stay abreast of the updated best management practices.

To that end, SDSU Extension hosts several quality assurance programs throughout the year to provide information and hands-on trainings to livestock caregivers. Eight Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) and eight Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) trainings were hosted in different communities within the state from October 2014 through October 2015 – reaching a total of almost 500 livestock operators. Additionally, 11 PQA Site Assessments were conducted for individual producers.

Carroll also worked with the South Dakota BQA Coordinator to update the state’s BQA Critical Management Plan producer manual that will be used in future trainings, and she collaborated with SDSU Extension Swine Specialist Bob Thaler in creating a curriculum and conducting trainings to prepare swine producers and their employees for the Common Swine Industry Audit. Six trainings, with nearly 100 participants, were completed at Redfield, Huron, Freeman, Aberdeen and twice in Mitchell.

Conducting surveys among livestock owners to assess quality assurance awareness, implementation, and training needs has been another effort by Carroll. During 2014 and 2015, she conducted a survey among South Dakota’s sheep industry, as well as an equine well-being survey. Of the information gathered, Carroll says, “Producer input provides a roadmap for SDSU Extension efforts and program planning going forward.”

An opportunity for beef and dairy producers to enhance their livestock handling skills was provided in September 2015 when a multi-state collaboration helped bring nationally known stockmanship expert Curt Pate to the region for nine training demonstrations.

Pate presented live cattle handling demonstrations using both beef and dairy cattle at locations in South Dakota, Minnesota and North Dakota. South Dakota locations include Bakken Feedyard, Garretson; Turner County Dairy, Parker; SDSU Dairy, Brookings; SDSU Animal Science Arena, Brookings; and Moes Feedlot, Florence. The trainings were coordinated by the Beef Industry Councils from South Dakota, Minnesota and North Dakota, as well as SDSU Extension and members of the I-29 Moo University collaboration.

Carroll reports that over 500 individuals, including several college classes, participated in the trainings over the week-long tour. Training certificates were presented to all attendees to document participation for their quality assurance records.

Overall, Carroll says feedback from the event was extremely positive, and most importantly, she says producers went home with new knowledge and skills that they can apply in their efforts to continually improve livestock stewardship practices.
Wellness Wisdom
Variety Of Efforts Available To Encourage Health & Wellness

BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE – whether it is a daily walk, a series of stretches, or adding yoga to a regular routine – is beneficial to individual's health and wellness. That's a message SDSU Extension Health & Physical Activity Field Specialists Nikki Prosch and Tara Shafrath emphasize to South Dakotans of all ages.

The duo encourage South Dakotans to pursue an active lifestyle and share health and wellness information through a variety of SDSU Extension efforts, including wellness-related articles on iGrow.org, a workout video series on YouTube channel, presenting health and wellness sessions to interested audiences and offering one-on-one wellness trainings to youth educators and worksite wellness leaders.

Prosch notes that most adults spend a significant portion of their day at work – often in front of a computer. She and Shafrath say adding physical activity to each day can benefit health and quality of life, as well as lower an individual's risk for chronic disease. Research has shown that workplace exercise can also be a morale booster.

To encourage wellness while at work, in 2015 Prosch and Shafrath developed a five-part workout video series available online via the SDSU iGrow YouTube channel. Each session can be completed in quick five-to-10 minute sessions. The videos target different areas, including upper body, lower body, core, stretching and cardio exercises. The videos are designed for all fitness levels and worksite settings.

Additionally, Prosch, whose position is contracted with the South Dakota Department of Health, is administering a five-year program designed to encourage worksites to develop physical activity and wellness opportunities for their employees. Called the “Steps to Wellness Worksite Physical Activity Policy Project,” Prosch says the goal is to promote sustainable worksite changes that result in active employees.

The program was started in 2014 and Prosch has worked with 10 employers each year to assist them – and their employees – in putting an emphasis on physical activity. “This program is now in its third year and I have worked with 28 different worksites all around the state,” says Prosch. She reports an array of businesses have been involved with the program, from banks and county offices to hospitals and a trucking company. Some employers have had as many as 500 employees; the smallest had six. Of this, Prosch says, “Wellness is important to all workplaces regardless of size.”

Through the program, some grant funding is available to make enhancements to promote active lifestyles for each worksite. Some employers have been able to add partial gyms, locker rooms and showers. Other employer efforts have included adding bike racks, mapping out walking areas within a building or parking lot, or simply allowing a more flexible schedule to encourage stretch breaks or workouts during the workday.

Prosch says post-assessment results from the worksites that have incorporated wellness-related policies indicate employees have increased their physical activity levels.

For employers interested in learning more about the Steps to Wellness program, visit www.goodandhealthysd.org.

Youth wellness activities are also an objective of Prosch and Shafrath. In 2015, they hosted trainings in May and
MINDFULNESS FOCUS OF TRAININGS

Amber Letcher, SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist, is helping youth and adults think more about wellness through activities focused on mindfulness. Letcher explains that incorporating mindfulness into daily activities can help manage stress and even chronic pain. “It’s about self-awareness,” Letcher says. Mindfulness strategies include breathing exercises and conducting a mental body scan to become better in tune with signals from one’s body.

In 2015, Letcher conducted professional development trainings with 4-H Youth Program Advisors from across the state to highlight incorporating mindfulness into their lives for achieving work-life balance, as well as utilizing this tool with 4-H youth and leaders in meeting settings.

Letcher has also presented mindfulness strategies at a SDSU campus workshop for women in the military. Currently, she is working with a 4-H Youth Program Advisor to implement a mindfulness program in an elementary and middle school setting during lunch. Letcher says, “My hope is the mindfulness strategies that students learn would infiltrate into the classroom to positively influence behavior there as well.”

June for South Dakota educators to learn more about incorporating yoga in various locations, including the classroom, afterschool program, early childhood and counseling settings.” Prosch says it has been a fun effort and is designed to help promote physical activity among youth without having an emphasis on competition.

The Yoga For Kids curriculum, developed by the University of Arkansas, was used for the educator training, with a total of 27 individuals across South Dakota trained. Participants represented early childhood providers, elementary teachers and afterschool program and YMCA staff, and Prosch reports they went on to impact 1,100 youth with the new “yoga skills” they gained.

For the future, Prosch and Shafrath hope to expand the yoga trainings to impact even more youth. Prosch shares that yoga is not only beneficial for the physical activity it provides, but has also been shown to promote self-esteem and help address behavioral issues among youth.

Pictured top: Adding a workout area to a workplace can help encourage physical activity among employees and may benefit their health. One South Dakota employer was able to add the space pictured with grant funds provided through the Steps to Wellness Worksite Physical Activity Policy Project coordinated by SDSU Extension.

Bottom: South Dakota educators participate in a Yoga for Kids training that taught healthy physical activity skills to incorporate when working with youth.

Search “Active in the Workplace” wellness series to view the five-part workout videos online.
“IT’S A PLACE KIDS CAN COME BE SUCCESSFUL and dream big dreams.” That’s how SDSU Extension 4-H Science Field Specialist Kathryn Reeves describes the state’s popular 4-H Shooting Sports program, which currently serves over 3,000 youth across the state.

Designed to develop safe shooting habits in youth ages 8-19, the 4-H Shooting Sports program provides students opportunities to gain skills in the discipline of their choice including rifle, shotgun, air gun, muzzle-loading, trap/skeet and archery. Participants are under the guidance of certified instructors and coaches who have received over 18 hours of training in the areas of safety, techniques, coaching and youth development.

Reeves says that’s another unique aspect of the program – the many volunteers who serve as coaches. “One of the most amazing things about 4-H Shooting Sports is that it’s predominately managed by volunteers. Many have been coaches for 5, 10, 15 years.” She estimates annually there are 450 to 500 active 4-H Shooting Sports volunteers across the state.

With the main 4-H Shooting Sports season, running from January through April, and practices averaging two to three hours each week during that time, Reeves calculates coaches contribute nearly 27,000 volunteer hours for the program annually. “And that’s a conservative estimate,” she says.

Of the huge time commitment, Reeves says coaches and participants often “become a family” with students and coaches having a lot of respect for one another.

“The coaches are firm with the 4-H’ers. Students have to be able to obey and behave and toe the line, or they can’t be on the [shooting] line,” Reeves explains.

Support For Youth
4-H Shooting Sports Helps Youth Achieve Success

Along with the respect, Reeves credits the program with fostering young people’s critical thinking and problem solving skills. “Students are analyzing and focusing and often doing math and physics in their head to figure out their angles or their score,” she notes.

Reeves has also witnessed several students who struggle with ADHD or may not “fit in” at school find success through 4-H Shooting Sports because it helps them learn discipline and focus while also helping them achieve success.
A scholarship is one of the most meaningful ways to help a student. It not only provides important financial support; it shows them that someone wants to help them succeed.

That impact can be sustained forever. Consider an endowment that ensures support in perpetuity. Beyond that, consider a planned gift that increases its impact and safeguards against future inflation. Best of all, planning a gift through your estate can be done without diminishing what is intended for your heirs.

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If you would like to learn how a planned estate gift can benefit scholarships at South Dakota State University, please call:

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**Spending for the Long Term**

“Way of the West,” “Dino Mania,” and “Gone Hollywood.” Those aren’t TV show headlines, they are the themes of several camp activities that were offered by South Dakota 4-H to youth across the state during the 2015 year.

“One of our main priorities is creating youth experiences that provide a safe environment where kids can learn and explore new skills sets in a different environment,” explains Peter Nielson, SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Director for South Dakota.

During the past year, more than 1,000 youth across the state participated in educational, overnight camps coordinated by South Dakota 4-H. Camp opportunities include 4-H camps for 8-12 year-olds at Lake Poinsett near Arlington, and Camp Bob Marshall near Custer; Teen Leadership Camp (TLC) held on the SDSU campus at Brookings, as well as a teen camp at Camp Bob Marshall; and two camps for military youth in the Black Hills.

Across the state, 4-H Youth Program Advisors are also active within communities offering “day camps” and educational workshops. As one example, an Ag Safety Day hosted in Haakon, Jackson, Jones and Mellette counties in 2015 was attended by 432 youth and involved 40 community volunteers.

Editor’s Note: In 2015, nearly 1,700 South Dakota 4-H Youth competed in the State Shooting Sports event held the last weekend of April in Pierre-Ft. Pierre. The state competition for muzzle-loading and shotgun is held the second weekend in September in Mitchell. Over the years South Dakota has had several individuals and teams earn national champion titles in 4-H Shooting Sports.

“Looking ahead,” Reeves says interest in the South Dakota 4-H Shooting Sports program, which was established in 1983, continues to grow. “We may hit 4,000 participants this year,” Reeves says. The program now offers scholarships for top achievers, and in 2015 a Hall of Fame was created to honor volunteers and contributors.

Five inductees were recognized during a 4-H Shooting Sports Rendezvous held Dec. 5, 2015 in Pierre. The event offered educational workshops for current coaches and a recognition lunch honoring founders who established the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the state in the early 1980s. Those individuals were: Marlin Scarborough and his daughter Michelle Scarborough Julian, Dennis Hardy, Bob Fillingsness, Jr. and Dan Jones.

Editor’s Note: In 2015, nearly 1,700 South Dakota 4-H Youth competed in the State Shooting Sports event held the last weekend of April in Pierre-Ft. Pierre. The state competition for muzzle-loading and shotgun is held the second weekend in September in Mitchell. Over the years South Dakota has had several individuals and teams earn national champion titles in 4-H Shooting Sports.
LELAND “LEE” SUDLOW JOINED SDSU EXTENSION in 1952 as the Visual Aids Specialist and spent the next 38 years capturing images of SDSU Extension serving people across South Dakota.

Opened in September at the SD Agricultural Heritage Museum in Brookings, the exhibit “Through Leland Sudlow’s Lens: 40 Years of Extension Service History” portrays the evolution of SDSU Extension in the latter half of the 20th Century.

Images in the showcased collection were chosen from more than 80,000 photographs that Sudlow took during his career. The photos chronicle Extension history from 1952-1990, illustrating how different communities and farming and ranching practices are today compared to when Sudlow worked in Extension.

“We used his work as a framework to create a visual history of SDSU Extension and life in South Dakota,” Gwen McCausland, Director of the SD Agricultural Heritage Museum, says of the collection, which the Sudlow family and the SDSU Agricultural Communications Department donated to the museum for safe-keeping.

McCausland says the exhibit reflects the focus of Extension, which is people helping people, and shows the importance of the education Extension provides to communities and individuals.

Black and white still lifes, along with brochures, Sudlow’s camera and a recreated 1950s-era office, introduce visitors to different times in South Dakota’s history and the ways SDSU Extension provided them with valuable information from the Cold War era when citizens needed directions on how to build a fallout shelter, to guidance on how to use a microwave and prepare easy meals as mothers entered the workforce, to knowing how much DEET to spray on crops.

“The great thing about SDSU Extension is the programs they offer change to meet the needs of the people they serve,” McCausland says. “Extension today is much different than it was in the 1950s - but so are the needs of South Dakotans.”

Karla Trautman, SDSU Extension Associate Director, shared a couple reasons why the exhibit is important to SDSU Extension and the state.

“It tells the historical story of Extension and shares the talent of the staff and their love for helping people,” Trautman explains. “Lee’s photos show a snapshot of what Extension was like, its work, and the impact it had on the citizens of South Dakota, as well as sharing the common passion point of the employees — they love to help people.”

The exhibit was showcased at the Agricultural Heritage Museum through February 29, 2016. “It was created to be a traveling display, so will be utilized at public venues and county fairs across South Dakota in the coming years,” McCausland informs.

Trautman believes that it is important for the exhibit to travel because not everyone has the ability to visit Brookings to see it. “It’s important to outreach and also for Extension to solidify and reconnect people to the Extension mission,” Trautman says.

By Sydney Sleep, communications intern College of Agriculture & Biological Sciences
WHEN THE FIRST DIAGNOSIS of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was announced in South Dakota in April 2015, a team of SDSU Extension specialists quickly came together to help address the ensuing outbreak.

The disease outbreak impacted many sectors – from commercial poultry producers and owners of backyard poultry flocks requiring biosecurity and animal health expertise, to consumers with questions about poultry and egg food safety. Questions from 4-H youth involved in exhibiting poultry at county and state events had to be addressed, while issues of stress and personal finance among those individuals affected financially by the losses to their flocks also were a concern.

A cross-section of SDSU Extension specialists came together to address these needs in the state, with Russ Daly, who has a dual role as SDSU Extension Veterinarian and State Public Health Veterinarian, Suzanne Stluka, SDSU Extension Food & Families Program Director, and Joan Hegerfeld-Baker, SDSU Extension Food Safety Specialist working closely with the South Dakota Animal Industry Board to provide information and resources to the public. Collaborations with personnel from the University of Minnesota and Iowa State University, states dealing with HPAI outbreaks as well, were also part of the response process.

Of utmost importance was emphasizing that no human disease risk was apparent and that Avian Influenza does not affect properly cooked and prepared meat and eggs from poultry.

Daly explains, “The HPAI strain did not affect people, but this was unknown during the time of the outbreak. Because influenza is a virus that can affect many different species as well as people, it raised a lot of questions.”

To address the concerns and questions, SDSU Extension experts participated in numerous radio and television media interviews and provided comments for print articles to convey pertinent information to the public. One specific event organized by SDSU Extension leadership was the “South Dakota One Health” seminar to focus on influenza in people and animals, with particular emphasis on avian influenza. The seminar was held on September 24, 2015, at the Sanford USD School of Medicine and brought together 70 attendees with interests in animal and human health.

As well, a series of articles were developed and distributed to the media, and an Avian Influenza: Resources and Contacts page was made available on iGrow.org.

Outreach efforts to consumers and the public also included a strong social media presence.

Additionally, specialists worked closely with poultry operations to provide information on detecting the disease, as well as biosecurity steps to protect flocks.

“Avian Influenza has had a very real impact on families,” Stluka says. She notes that the multi-discipline, multi-state collaborations allowed for leveraging resources to provide timely information to those affected during the outbreaks – from technical information to producers, to management of finances and stress during tough times, to helping consumers with food safety and food budget concerns.

While the HPAI crisis has currently been minimized, Alvaro Garcia, SDSU Extension Agriculture & Natural Resources Program Director says important lessons to remember for all livestock sectors are those of biosecurity, vigilance and preparation.

He says, “The Avian Influenza outbreaks have shown that, in spite of very stringent biosecurity measures adapted by the poultry industry, animal agriculture is still vulnerable to disease outbreaks. It is important to remain vigilant and report any suspicious animal health problems to the proper authorities.”

Garcia also counts the state as fortunate to have within SDSU the South Dakota Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, which has had an integral role testing for HPAI and other livestock diseases, as well as conducting research to develop future vaccines to prevent emerging animal disease.
SDSU Extension took a lead role in coordinating the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AM-PIC) held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center July 12 - 16, 2015. The conference marked the 100th anniversary of NACAA.

Of the centennial annual meeting, NACAA President, Mike Hogan said the focus was on looking at ways that agricultural extension and the land-grant university system can continue to be that catalyst for change in rural America. Workshops, seminars and tours were offered to provide agriculture and natural resource extension staff and employees from across the U.S. opportunities to network and develop professional skills. More than 1,000 people from more than 40 states attended the event.

An SDSU Extension team organized all on-site logistics from room scheduling and meals, to keynote speakers, entertainment and tours for participants, as well as overseeing the budget and fundraising and coordinating some of the technical sessions and seminars.

“It was a significant undertaking, but the event brought a lot of great visibility to the state and SDSU Extension. We received many great compliments about the professional improvement tours and many other aspects of the conference,” says SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist Laura Edwards, who served on the organizing committee along with SDSU Extension faculty including Connie Strunk, Steve Munk (retired) Chris Zdorovstov, Adele Harty, Robin Salverson, Chris Hay, Erin Cortus and Heather Gessner. Edwards notes that many other Extension staff helped on-site at the event, and staff from North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Nebraska were partners in planning and holding the event.

During the annual awards banquet, the achievements of Extension personnel from across the nation were recognized, among them SDSU Extension field specialists, Adele Harty and Robin Salverson. Harty received the 2015 Achievement Award, which is presented to individuals with 10 years or less of service in Cooperative Extension, and who have exhibited excellence in the field of Extension Education. The 2015 Distinguished Service Award presented to Salverson recognizes Extension personnel with more than 10 years of service who have exhibited excellence in the field of Extension Education.

Both women provide programming focused on assisting cow/calf producers in making sound management decisions to improve profitability and sustainability of their operations. Harty has been a leader in developing and delivering Annie’s Project and beefSD programming. Salverson has been active in developing programs for women including SD Women in Ag and Annie’s Project.

Several SDSU Extension personnel were recognized for state and regional awards as well. View highlights from the event at www.nacaa.com/ampic/2015/2015AMPIC.php

A Community Impacts of Energy Development Conference was held February 11, 2015 in Belle Fourche. Hosted by the SDSU Extension Community Development team, the conference had over 30 participants and featured topics on “boom and bust” communities impacted by uranium, oil, and gas energy development.

Guest speakers and a panel discussion shared the positive and negative impacts of energy development, resources available to assist communities impacted, the pitfalls and how to overcome them, and how to work with the industry.

Paul Thares, SDSU Extension Community Development Field Specialist, who coordinated the event, reports that community leaders who attended the event commented on the valuable information provided. One attendee shared that they realized the importance of community leadership and that it “makes a big difference in how a small town develops and avoids long-term problems in the process.”

Thares also shares articles on the topic of energy development and communities on iGrow.org under Community Development.

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**69%** of South Dakota dairy producers enrolled in USDA MPP Dairy program, which reduces risk from price volatility

**26,000** Farm Bill training participants increased use of FSA programs, resulting in a **$202.5 million** impact on South Dakota family farms
An educational activity book developed by SDSU Extension has received national recognition. Titled Tatanka’s Healthy Tales, the book was recognized by the National Extension Association – Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) division with the Mary W. Wells Memorial Diversity Award during the 2015 Annual Conference in West Virginia. This was only possible after receiving the Excellence in Families Award from the South Dakota affiliate of NEAFCS.

The activity book was designed for first and second-graders to teach nutrition and healthy lifestyles and developed by SDSU Extension educators, Suzanne Stluka, SDSU Extension Food & Families Program Director and SNAP-Ed Director and Karlys Wells, SDSU Extension Program Associate and Project Coordinator.

“We designed Tatanka’s Healthy Tales for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) as a resource to engage American Indian families and educators by including culturally appropriate images, language and topics,” Wells explains.

The activity book features Curly, a wise and healthy buffalo, who coaches his young American Indian friend, Max, to eat well and be physically active. The book features creative drawings and text in the Lakota and Dakota language. Audio recordings of the languages assist teachers who are not fluent Lakota or Dakota speakers to introduce the youth to the dialects.

The softcover workbook is being used in educational programming by SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Advisors, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education (EFNEP) and SNAP-Ed Nutrition Assistants, elementary teachers and after school program staff. The book has also attracted attention from tribal leaders in South Dakota and the Native Diabetes Program of the Centers for Disease Control.

Classroom quantities of the workbooks and audio files are available for educators who will provide pre- and post-feedback. For information contact Karlys.Wells@sdstate.edu or call (605) 688-4039.

Sometimes “show and tell” is the best approach to make sure that a concept sticks. With that in mind, SDSU Extension is developing a three-part video series to remind producers of proper techniques for cattle artificial insemination (AI).

The first of the three videos is available on iGrow.org and highlights semen handling procedures. It has received 1,300 views and is being used in some college courses. Two additional videos are being developed, one focusing on heat detection protocols and the other highlighting the differences in semen viability and motility when it is thawed and handled properly compared to being mishandled.

“Healthy Tales” Activity Book Earns Recognition

Each video will average five to 12 minutes in length and will be available on iGrow.org. It is anticipated all three videos will be available by May 2016.

“These videos are designed to provide a visual reminder to cattle producers of the best AI and heat detection techniques,” says SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist Warren Rusche. He along with SDSU Animal Science Professor & SDSU Extension Beef Reproductive Management Specialist George Perry and SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialists Jim Krantz (retired), Robin Salversen, and Taylor Grussing collaborated in the development of the video series. Undergraduate student Christy Mogck also contributed research for a portion of the educational videos.

SDSU Extension hosts AI schools during the year, which Rusche says are always well-attended. He notes that once producers return home and prepare for AI season, the videos offer an opportunity for a “refresher course.” Perry adds that a successful AI program is the result of many separate steps done correctly.

View the first video at http://igrow.org/livestock/beef/semen-handling-procedures/.

In 2015, SDSU Extension AI schools were offered in Cottonwood and Brookings. For 2016, one school was held on campus in Brookings in January, two more are planned for Mitchell and Cottonwood in May and June. Schools are limited to 20 participants to allow for hands-on training and experience. The registration fee is $400/person. To register contact SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist Taylor Grussing at (605)995-7378 or taylor.grussing@sdstate.edu.
STUDENTS STUDYING AG-RELATED CAREERS are taught about improving farm and ranch production and management skills, but opportunities to learn about the strategies necessary to transition back into a family operation are often limited.

A Beginning Farmer and Rancher Symposium coordinated by SDSU Extension is now being held annually on the SDSU campus each winter to address that need. The 2015 event marked the fourth annual symposium and involved more than 400 college-aged students from SDSU, Northern State University, Mitchell Technical Institute and Lake Area Technical Institute.

“These students represent our state’s next generation of agriculture. We want to provide them the information and resources to kickstart the conversation about transition planning when they go home,” says SDSU Extension Livestock Business Management Field Specialist Heather Gessner, who coordinates the one-day event.

Through speakers and panel discussions that include ag lenders, attorneys, and real producers, students have the opportunity to hear the experience of others involved with transition planning. The 2015 keynote speaker was Dave Specht, who has authored a book and created an online app to assist families in asking “inspired questions” to facilitate
Additional Beginning Farmer & Rancher Outreach

SDSU Extension has additional efforts in place within the state to serve the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers. Through the SDSU Extension Native American Program, commercial horticulture and livestock/ranch management skills are being taught to interested members on South Dakota Reservations through a combination of classroom sessions and hands-on training.

Six students from the Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne Indian Reservations have been involved in the commercial horticulture program during 2014 and 2015. The program has provided opportunities to learn about soils, crop varieties, commercial growing techniques and strategies and business and marketing planning to be a commercial level grower.

Nine students from the same three reservations have been pursuing new skills in the livestock ranch management program during 2015. Topics emphasized have included cattle nutrition, genetics, reproduction, health, management and range management.

A three-year, $659,000 grant from the USDA-Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) has made the programs possible. For 2016, the third year of the grant, new program manager Jason Schoch will lead the continuation of these efforts. Hiring of a commercial horticulturist is also planned.

An additional USDA-BFRDP grant has helped fund the beefSD program that was initiated in 2011 to provide Extension programming to beginning beef producers in South Dakota.

The goals of beefSD are to provide an education and mentoring opportunity to beginning beef producers that equips them with the tools to make wise management decisions that lead to economic, ecological, and sociological sustainability and in turn contribute to ongoing agricultural production, land stewardship, and rural community viability, explains Ken Olson, SDSU Extension Beef Specialist.

The first beefSD class included 43 participants from 30 operations throughout South Dakota involved in the program from 2011-2013. A second group, dubbed beefSD2, included 16 participants from nine operations. They were involved in program activities in 2014 and 2015. Additional USDA-BFRDP grant funds were recently awarded to fund a third class that will begin meeting later in 2016.

Of the programs, Olson says, “One of our intended impacts was for each beefSD class to develop into a learning community of beef producers that continues to seek out learning and mentoring opportunities after the completion of their class. It has been rewarding to see that occur among the participants of the first two classes.”
Dawn Frank

**Current Role:** An alumnus of the Oglala Lakota College (OLC) at Kyle, SD, and an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Frank currently serves as Vice President for Instruction at OLC. The college has over 1,400 students and Frank’s responsibilities include overseeing all academic programs, as well as providing administrative and student support services.

**Collegiate History:** Frank earned a bachelor’s of science degree in Human Services in 2002 and her master’s degree in Lakota Leadership and Management in 2004, both from OLC. In the midst of her master’s program, she was accepted into the Kellogg-funded “Prairie PhD” program at SDSU in 2003. Frank appreciated that the program allowed the flexibility to fit with her work and family life at that time. She earned her doctorate degree in biological science in 2010.

**Science Focus:** Frank’s PhD path allowed her to study sciences, something she says she was always interested in. She also credits her grandmother for fostering her interest in school. For her research, she explored the traditional Lakota use of the porcupine, and from the data collected her resulting dissertation was titled: Integrating Lakota culture and biological science into a holistic research methodology.

**Appreciation for SDSU Experience:** Reflecting on her Prairie PhD program, Frank says she values most the people she met and worked with – many of whom she still keeps in contact with. A cohort of 20 students from different communities and tribal colleges began the program together. “We took core courses together, but could customize the program to our interests. Everyone was unique and had their own strengths,” she says. Regarding the SDSU faculty, Frank appreciated the “genuine support and acceptance of diversity and cultural differences.” She adds, “They didn’t give up on us or reduce expectations.”

**Community Involvement:** Community work has been important to Frank throughout her life, especially in the areas of youth development and health. Frank’s involvement in numerous community organizations includes serving on the Wacante Kiyapi Board of Directors, Tasunke Wakan Okolakiciye, and founding the annual Mni Huha Wacipi located in Calico, SD. She has been a member of the American Evaluation Association (AEAS) since 2006, South Dakota Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (SD EPSCoR), and the Circle of Life Steering Committee through the University of Colorado. She has been a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Research and Review Board (OSTRRB) since 2009 and was appointed to the Black Hills Treaty Council in 2012. With the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation designated as a federal “promise zone” in spring 2015, Frank hopes to continue working with others to bring in additional grant funds and programs that can strengthen health care initiatives on the Reservation.

**Goals Going Forward:** Developing an enrollment management plan aimed at sustaining student retention and improving completion rates at OLC is among Frank’s goals. She is also on SDSU’s Advisory Board and is committed to helping find avenues to recruit – and retain – Native students to pursue degrees at SDSU, particularly in nursing.

**Advice to Students:** “I share with all of our students that as long as they are committed and dedicated, they can overcome any type of challenge. I believe obstacles are placed in front of us for a reason, and it is our job to figure it out…”
SDSU Extension faculty and staff are listed below, categorized by area of expertise. Visit http://iGrow.org/about/our-experts to access titles, contact information and their most recent published content.

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Lessons Learned

I’ve been in my position now at the Foundation for just over four years. As they say, I’ve now been around “just long enough to be dangerous.”

I thought I knew SDSU pretty well. Turns out, what I knew was the tip of the iceberg. I’d like to share a few things I’ve learned during my time here.

Leadership matters. Effective leadership is critical to organizational success. I used to think of leadership as the person willing to stand in front of the room and deliver the message. I now realize that strong leaders create a culture, think about 10 years from now more than they think about tomorrow, and are extremely thoughtful in the decisions they make.

The leadership provided by President Chicoine and Provost Nichols during their time here cannot be overstated. Good things are happening. But more importantly, we are positioned for even greater things moving forward. That didn’t happen by accident.

People care. When our teams lose, people are mad. They are prone to second-guessing coaches, players, referees and even the person who chalked the lines or polished the floor. Welcome to the big time. People care about results. This holds true with academics and research. People want employees who are prepared and research results that matter. They want Extension that is helpful and will better their lives. They hold our University accountable – because they rely on it and they expect performance.

Our university is worth investing in. If SDSU were publically traded, I’d buy that stock. If you could make that investment specifically in our students, I’d take out a loan and buy more. As great as this place is, it is getting better every day. To those of you who invest in SDSU and our students – THANK YOU!

BUILD A LASTING LEGACY

One of the most powerful reasons people establish endowments is to create lasting legacies. The ongoing nature of these funds provides support to SDSU and reminds family and friends of one’s values and commitments. Children, grandchildren and further generations will encounter their own heritage as they see “their” endowment at work. With an endowment you can build a lasting legacy that benefits SDSU and inspires others.

ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWMENT IS SIMPLE

Endowments may be established with a one-time gift of at least $25,000 or through installment payments contributed within a five-year period. Endowment programs and scholarships are often named for the donors who create them and may honor an organization, family or individual.

You may also wish to consider unrestricted endowments that enable the University to respond to new challenges and opportunities for students, faculty, research and other academic endeavors. The Foundation also has a General Unrestricted Endowment for donors that want to generate perpetual support, but not establish a named endowment. Every gift contributed to an unrestricted endowment makes an impact.

For more information or to make a contribution, please contact:
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