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Real issues discussed at Wyoming wolf conference

By Jean Petersen

"I feel we owe it to our future generations to tough it out for them," said Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal about Wyoming's battle with the federal government over the state's wolf management plan at a recent wolf conference in Riverton. Freudenthal said he's not going to back down on his stance that Wyoming's plan is acceptable when he addressed the crowd at "Wolves: Wyoming's Reality: Messages from the Front Line" at the end of May. The conference, hosted by the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, was two days long and filled with experts, officials, and many who have been affected by the wolf issue.

Ed Bangs, US Fish & Wildlife Service wolf recovery coordinator, was on hand to address the crowd. "The wolf population is bio-

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Wyo Stock Growers allowed to intervene in elk feedgrounds case

By Cat Urbigkit

Ranchers in northwest Wyoming have a "substantial economic and private property interest" in preserving the state's system of elk feedgrounds, a federal judge says.

As a result, US District Judge Alan Johnson ruled that the Wyoming Stock Growers Association may intervene as a matter of right in a lawsuit over western Wyoming's elk feedgrounds.

The decision allows the livestock industry group to participate in a lawsuit that was filed in federal court by the environmental law firm Earthjustice on behalf of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance and the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

The lawsuit was filed in February against the US Forest Service and Bureau

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News in a Nutshell

by Leesa Kiewel

USDA says new strain of BSE may have afflicted US cases

Last week we reported here that French and Italian scientists have identified a possible new strain of bovine spongiform encephalopathy that presents itself differently than the classic strain. Researchers presented their findings on the atypical form of BSE at a recent international conference in London.

The US Department of Agriculture announced over the weekend of June 10 that the two cases of BSE in Texas and Alabama may have resulted from an atypical strain of the disease that could now be appearing spontaneously in cattle.

Such cases have been identified in about a dozen head of cattle in Europe and in others in Japan.

In the two US cases, scientists did not detect the telltale brain lesions - caused by prions, the agent that causes BSE - which deposit plaque on the brain, afflict normal brain cells and cause a spongy appearance in the brain during postmortem examinations. The tissue samples from the Texas and Alabama cases had a different clinical presentation than what is expected from the classic form of the brain-wasting disease.

Lab studies conducted on mice in France have shown that both the classic and atypical strains can spread in several ways - usually through feed - but scientists theorize the atypical strain may have infected cattle in an unusual way.

"It's important right now, 'til the science tells us otherwise, that we treat this as BSE regardless," said USDA's chief veterinarian John Clifford.

The significance of an atypical strain is that BSE may be far more difficult to detect than first thought and may be spreading by some as-yet-unknown means.

Property rights champion Wayne Hage dies

The world is a poorer place

By Leesa Kiewel

Author's Note: How do you mourn the passing of an American hero? For me, the best tribute I can pay is to do what I know best: write about the man. I've spent much of my career following Hage v. United States, a case that is literally the most important property rights action before the courts today that rights undefended are rights waived and that the protection of property rights is fundamentally the preservation of civil liberties. He knew that, in the end, it matters not what livestock prices are or what a bushel of corn or wheat is worth if our individual property rights are stolen and there's no land left for production. Wayne Hage turned the abomination inflicted on him by the historic event by which we will all benefit.

When the outcome became obvious, his family took him home to his beloved Pine Creek Ranch in Nye County, Nevada, to meet his Maker. Stricken with an aggressive form of cancer, Wayne Hage succumbed to the disease on June 5, 2006. He leaves behind a loving family and a legacy that will touch property owners.

His contributions to modern-day property rights battles earned him the unenviable distinction of being the primary target of those opposed to private property ownership and the protections offered by the Constitution of private property rights. His formal education made him an authority on the subject.

by PATRICK K. GOGGINS

ke a look at your hole card

America while at the Livestock Marketing Association ting in Modesto, California, recently. This man has over 20 field order buyers under his bond and he buys all across America. He said to me, "We better be careful and make sure we don't lose the livestock auctions here in America." This man buys heavily, not only at established livestock auctions in permanent locations, but he buys on the video and through private farm sales as well. He said, "Where else could the livestock buyer find pre-sorted cattle that are ready to ship? All he has to do is view them, match them to an order, bid and buy. I don't have the expense of running around the country, trying to deal with farmers and ranchers one-on-one, and end up buying a few head of cattle a day. Now I buy thousands per day. I pay for the cattle, I put them on the trucks and I'm at another auction the following day."

He said that some ranchers and farmers want to sell their cattle privately and they're willing to negotiate a price, sometimes over the telephone. They'll put them on a truck and ship them with the designated buyer instructed to send the check in a few days. But, he pointed out, that buyer can always sort the cattle on arrival and dock the owner on the proceeds.

"I wouldn't like to be in that kind of a situation if I was a producer," the man said. He handles over 450,000 head of livestock a year! "I could no more do this than fly," he said, "if I didn't have the livestock auctions available to make purchases."

He went on to say, "I know there are days that I give more than the market. It benefits the cattle producer, but it also benefits me because I can fill my orders. I have to rotate with the market. Some days it's a little higher than I want... other days it's cheaper than I thought... it'll roll into average over a course of a year."

The independent cattle feeders of America had better take precautions and figure out a way that they too can get open, competitive bidding on their product out of the feed yard, just as the cattle producers are able to get open, competitive bidding on their stock.

Consider that over 80% of all the fed cattle in the US are fed and marketed between North Platte, Nebraska and southern Oklahoma - a spread 350 miles wide. Can you imagine what planned, bonafide, weekly video livestock auctions could get done in that area? Unbelievable, I tell you. It would be good for the packers, it would be good for the feedlots, and it would give vision to the American livestock industry.

You don't think so? I can show you how!

But the money is wonderful

Dear Editor,

I loved your comment ut folks in Southeastern Montana either hesitating and thinking about tomorrow or taking the money and running (concerning coal-bed methane development, in the March 17 issue).

I'm going to share our experiences, as owners of the first small privately owned ranch in Big Horn County to be raped by CBM development and Federal Split Estate.

My grandparents homesteaded the ranch and my parents worked their butts off to barely make a living and keep the ranch. We cross-fenced, sprayed sage, rested and rotated pasture until it became solid native grass sod.

In those pastures now, our cows can't eat the roads, well pads, compressor stations, pipelines and power s. Some of the pipelines a few sprigs of grass and weeds after three years, but for the most part are bare - except for the tons of rock they dug up. But the money is wonderful!

One by one our water wells are going dry. They have to be plugged because the gas coming from them is dangerous and cows can't drink it. But the money is great! In the West, water causes more fighting than anything else. Some people believe Montana floats on an ocean of underground water. I believe the prehistoric water was trapped under the coal as it was formed, and when that water is gone... it's GONE!

We have lived with "soda water" all our lives. I have drank it for 68 years and I ain't dead yet. Our sprinkler pump is less than 1/4 mile from a large CBM discharge into Tongue River. After pumping that onto our meadows for a few years, areas began to die from lack of water to their roots. We spread gypsum and reseeded and the hay came back. Last year the gypsum for 100 acres was $7,000. This year it was $9,792.

In this day and age acronyms are popular. I'll give you a new one. Anytime you think any mineral company or government agency gives a RA (rat's behind) about a private property owner, THINK AGAIN! But the money is great!

The ranch rape never ends when it becomes a gas field. Did I mention how wonderful the money is?

They have cut our fences, drove over our fences, left our gates open and ground up our water lines - causing us stress and anger almost daily. But the money is just wonderful.

Deanna Visborg
Decker, Montana

Ignorance is not the problem...

Dear Editor:

I liked the article that Pat had on fueling engines with water (in the May 12 issue). I have had personal experience with an engine designed to burn water.

My father had a 1927 John Deere "D" that was built from the factory to mix water into the engine when pulling heavy loads. The water came from the radiator, which had an area above the core to give extra capacity. John Deere for a number of years made tractors that would burn fuel that was heavier than gasoline, but not kerosene. The engine started on gasoline, and when warmed up, switched to the other fuel. If the load was heavy (like plowing), the engine would start to knock, and then you turned on the water from the radiator.

We had two ten-gallon milk cans at the end of the field to fill up the radiator. It burned enough water that we had to refill the milk cans at noon. It was real easy to regulate the water: if you got too much it started missing; not enough, it would knock. The principles that made this work are simple: a hot running engine, hot water from the cooling system, a heavier fuel than gasoline, a low compression engine. I remember that the fuel was 8¢ a gallon when gasoline was 12¢.

With what they knew how to do 80 years ago, it is not ignorance that is the problem today. They could build

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