

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Old Spink New Spink

**SD restaurants roll
with the changes**
Page 8

**Dealing with
drought**
Page 12

Joyce Schermer,
Karisma Tripp and Brad
and Lori Johannsen are
shown at Spink Family
Restaurant in Elk Point

Electricity provides everyday value to our co-op members



Tim O'Leary
General Manager

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted. In order to keep electricity abundant and available, we must continue to support an "all of the above" energy future as we transition to new electric generation technologies.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

Our mission is to provide reliable electricity and services to enhance the quality of life in our rural communities. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and business, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

The last rate increase your cooperative had was on January 1st, 2017. Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4 percent; medical care increased 2.8 percent; and education increased 2.2 percent. But the cost of electricity only increased 1 percent. Over the last several months, we have seen numerous items increase as inflation has increased the price of everyday items.

Here at the cooperative, we have seen increased lead times and increased prices in materials over the last several months. These increases, along with increases in other costs over the last 5 years will have us looking at rates to support the 2022 budget. Once it is determined whether an increase is needed or not needed, we will share that information with the membership in our newsletter.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Lyon-Lincoln Electric will continue working hard to power your quality of life, reliably and affordably.

LIHEAP: Resources for paying your utility bills

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP or LIHEAP) provides financial help to income-qualified households for covering natural gas and electric bills.

Eligibility is based on the most recent three months of income.

For the 2020-2021 program year, Energy Assistance is available for households with income at or below 60 percent of the state median income. Only the past three months of income are counted, and recent stimulus payments or pandemic unemployment insurance premiums are not counted.

The income threshold was increased from 50 percent of state median in April 2021, so if you were slightly above the income threshold previously, you may now qualify.

Applications must be received or postmarked by

September 1, 2021 for Energy Assistance for the 2020-2021 program year. Assistance is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you think you might be eligible, contact your local Energy Assistance provider United Community Action Partnership at 507-537-1416.

Household size	3-month max. income	Annual income
1	\$8,479	\$33,918
2	\$11,088	\$44,355
3	\$13,697	\$54,791
4	\$16,307	\$65,228
5	\$18,916	\$75,664

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**LYON-LINCOLN
ELECTRIC**

(ISSN 1540-6989)

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 Kathleen Schreurs, Tyler – Sec./Treas.
 Merv Anderson, Porter
 Jared Dritz, Porter
 Mary Gunnink, Lake Benton
 Scott Johnson, Tyler
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 Kristi Jensen - Finance Manager
 Brian Jeremiason – Manager of
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 Rochelle Borresen – Accountant
 Lisa Hauswedell – Billing Clerk
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 Nathan Pavek
 Wade Thooft – Operations Staff
 Assistant
 Alan Fischer – Warehouse
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www.llec.coop

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 247-5508.

Brian Jeremiason, Editor

Jensen takes over reins as new finance manager

Kristi Jensen joined the Lyon-Lincoln Electric team in June and will be your cooperative’s new Finance Manager.

Prior to coming to the cooperative, Kristi worked as a Tax Accountant for VanderZiel Tax and Accounting. Kristi holds degrees in Accounting and Marketing and a minor in Finance from Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN.

Kristi grew up west of Russell, not far from where she lives now with her husband Jeremy and their three children, Eastyn (10), Archer (7), and Tracker (6).

One thing she’s learned about the cooperative since she started her new position is, “Each and every person here is a piece to the puzzle; we need each person connected with one another to make the entire cooperative puzzle complete.” Donna Amundson – 1500400

When asked about what she enjoys most about her new career, Kristi added, “The obvious answer would be analyzing the numbers, but it’s also the people; everyone shares the same vision and is dedicated to completing their respective tasks. This truly creates a family



Kristi Jensen has joined the Lyon-Lincoln team as Finance Manager.

environment where everybody is there for each other and everybody is working hard on behalf of the members.”

Kristi looks forward to focusing all her effort and knowledge to this one business, and is excited to see what the future holds.

YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON		
	May-20	May-21
Total Revenue	\$4,392,129	\$4,336,342
Cost of Power	\$2,482,638	\$2,469,360
Operating Expenses	\$1,929,985	\$1,944,833
Operating Margins	-\$20,494	-\$77,851
KWH's Purchased	42,783,835	41,233,139
Services in Place	4,115	4,130
Miles of Line	1,668	1,670
Revenue per Mile	\$2,633	\$2,597

Be aware of overhead power lines on farms

Powerlines pose a major hazard for South Dakota farmers. Lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet but just 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of your cooperative's power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them and stay free from harm. To stay safe around overhead power lines, farm operators and workers must:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near utility power lines.
- Use extra caution when raising augers or grain truck beds around co-op power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines - at all times, and in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine the proper clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it to get added clearance.
- Call your electric cooperative immediately if a power line is sagging or is

hanging too low.

- If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the cooperative immediately.

- The only reason to decide to make an exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, then remember to jump off the equipment with both of your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time.

Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away from the vehicle until you reach a safe distance.

If you see someone else's equipment that has come in contact with a power line in your area, the best help you can give will be from a safe distance.

Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he or she remains in the vehicle, and notify your local cooperative immediately.

Please remember to follow these tips to avoid accidents during the harvest season.

TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST



The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center offers this useful checklist for farm safety called Stop-Think-Act. Take these steps to minimize injury risks during harvest season.

Stop

- What could go wrong?
- How bad could it be?
- Has anything changed?

Think

- Do I clearly understand the task?
- Am I physically and mentally ready?

- Do I have the right equipment and tools for the job?

Act

- Make it safe.
- Use the right tools.
- Follow proper procedures.
- Reduce risks.
- Stop the task if it cannot be done safely.



You put the 'pow' in power!

Madilyn Gaikowski

Madilyn sends out a special note of appreciation for line workers across the state of South Dakota. She is the daughter of Gene and Loree Gaikowski. Gene serves as the Wessington Springs line foreman at Central Electric in Mitchell.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

CROCKPOT CRAVINGS

CROCKPOT APPLE BUTTER

Ingredients:

4 cups of sugar (more or less depending on sweetness of apples)
 4 tsp. cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. cloves
 ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Fill a 5 quart crockpot full of chopped apples (quartered or smaller), no need to peel, but do remove seeds. Tart apples are best. Top with the ingredients above. Lid won't fit at first but settles down as apples cook. Begin cooking on high and when bubbling, put heat on low and cook all night, or until thick and dark color. Stir occasionally. If need be, blend a few seconds to soften peels. Pour into jars and seal.

Cherie Leibel, Timber Lake

SLOW COOKER BEEF STEW

Ingredients:

3 cups water
 1 package McCormick® Classic Beef Stew Seasoning Mix Packet
 2 lbs beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
 1/4 cup flour
 2 cups potato chunks
 1 1/4 cups carrot chunks
 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
 1/2 cup sliced celery

METHOD

Mix vegetables, water and Beef Stew Seasoning Mix in slow cooker. Coat beef with flour. Stir into ingredients in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 5 hours on high until beef is tender.

mccormick.com

CROCKPOT BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH APPLES

Ingredients:

1 ½ to 2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled and chopped (about 5 cups)
 2 to 3 tart apples, chopped (about 2 cups)
 ¼ c. dried cherries or cranberries
 1 ½ tsp. grated fresh ginger
 ½ tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp. pepper
 ½ tsp. cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. nutmeg
 ½ c. apple cider
 ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Combine all ingredients in your slow cooker and stir together. Cover and cook on low 3-4 hours or until squash is tender, then turn to warm until serving. Can also be baked in conventional oven at 325 degrees until fork tender. Sweet potatoes can be used instead of butternut squash if desired.

Linda Sherry, Sioux Falls

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



BOARD NEWS

Win Money

Find Your Name & Member Number and Win \$

The tradition of listing member name and numbers in the newsletter continues in the Cooperative Connections. If you find your name and member number, call the office and let us know and you'll receive an energy credit. The amount of the credit is \$20.00.

In last month's Cooperative Connections, Andy Deutz and David Kallemeyn spotted their names and will receive an energy credit. Once again there are two new names and numbers hidden in this issue. Good Luck.

Energy efficiency tip

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills. By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30 percent on your energy bills while helping our environment.

June Board meeting minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative was held on Monday, June 28, 2021. Directors present were James Rokeh, Jared Dritz, Kathy Schreurs, Scott Johnson, Mary Gunnink, Galen Grant, Merv Anderson, Dale Fier and Sandy Ludeman. Also present at the meeting were Manager Timothy O'Leary, Finance Manager Kristi Jensen and Attorney Michael W. Cable.

President Ludeman called the meeting to order and routine business was conducted including, review of the check schedule, applications for memberships, review of shares to be cancelled and payment of capital credits to estates.

A review of the Annual Meeting was presented. The Director Election and Bylaw vote were conducted by Survey & Ballot Systems. The Bylaws were approved and directors elected to the board were Mary Gunnink, Sandy Ludeman and Jared Dritz.

Attorney Cable conducted the election of officers of the board, results were President – Sandy Ludeman, Vice President – Galen Grant, Secretary/Treasurer – Kathy Schreurs. Committee assignments were set for the board and appointments were made to the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc. Trust Board of Directors.

General Manager Timothy O'Leary gave the Financial and Statistical Report for the period ending April 30, 2021.

The board was advised that Western Partners Technology was dissolved on May 31st. Lyon-Lincoln had received cash in the amount of \$30,658.31 and allocated capital credits in the amount of \$103,143.21.

Lyle Lamote, Line Superintendent, gave the outage report and advised the board that there was a safety meeting

held on May 11, 2021 concerning Trenching and Excavation Safety by Andrew Sjolie from MREA and a safety meeting held on May 19, 2021 concerning the topic of Annual Switchman Training held by Colton Sanderson from East River. Mr. Lamote indicated that the linemen had finished work on lines 2 miles north of the Ivanhoe Substation, and were working on putting in underground and line maintenance and tree trimming. Central Applicators will start in June of 2021 spraying for trees in the right-of-way.

Brian Jeremiason, Manager of Marketing and External Relations, gave a report on Grant Opportunities from the Volkswagon settlement, the current market of Electric Vehicles and the upcoming FarmFest event.

General Manager Timothy O'Leary then gave his manager's report; some of the items reviewed were as follows: The Board reviewed the power bill and sales to members and compared those figures to budgeted amounts and looked at line loss for the system. Mr. O'Leary reported on the East River Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. MAC Meeting.

Mr. O'Leary discussed the upcoming meetings and events and then viewed the East River Electric monthly video which included the Basin Summary. The board then reviewed the May Cyber Security Program Report provided by East River Cyber Security Department.

The board adjourned for lunch and reconvened at 12:16 p.m.

The board was advised of upcoming meetings and education workshops.

There being no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Monday, July 26, 2021.



CO-OP BIDS FAREWELL TO LONG-TIME EMPLOYEES

June 30th marked the end of an era, two actually, as Vickie Rost and Linda Johansen retired after 48 and 30 years with the cooperative respectively. Employees gathered to send the retirees off in style prior to their last days, and the ladies were gracious enough to share a little bit about their plans and history with the cooperative as well.

Linda Johansen spent thirty years as the Executive Assistant for the cooperative. She was thankful for the

family environment provided by the cooperative, where everybody is there for each other. Linda enjoyed the diversity of the work she did and the feeling of accomplishment she'd have at the end of the day.

Linda and her husband Jim live on a farm near Verdi. She has three adult sons, Troy, Justin and wife Lisa, and Jonah and wife Abby. She also has three grandchildren, Carsen, Parker, and Hayden. In addition to spending time

with her family, Linda plans to wing it and see where the next chapter of life goes.

Vickie Rost retired as the Manager of Finance and Administration after 48 years with the cooperative. Her duties included planning, coordinating, and managing all finance and accounting activities at the cooperative.

She's going to miss the wonderful people she's had the opportunity to work with and for over the last 48 years, and mentioned that the cooperative has been her second home for many years.

Vickie and her husband Tom live on a farm near Ivanhoe. They share two daughters, Jennifer and husband Troy VanOverbeke and Tami and husband Aaron Jalas, and grandchildren Jada, Tessa, Taten and Grace.

Vickie plans to spend her retirement golfing, fishing, reading, traveling, and following their grandchildren in sports as well as spending time with family and friends. Brian Rogge - 1149700

We wish both these dedicated employees a long and fulfilling retirement and thank them for their 78 years of combined service to the cooperative and its members.



Linda Johansen served 30 years as executive assistant.



Vickie Rost served cooperative members for 48 years.

RISING FROM THE ASHES



Rhonda Otten, along with her husband and three sons, has worked to keep Spink Family Restaurant open for business.
 Photos by Billy Gibson

Spink restaurant emerges strong from hardships brought by fire and pandemic

Billy Gibson
 billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Old Spink. New Spink.
 That’s how Rhonda Otten variously refers to her restaurant, depending on whether she’s alluding to the Spink Café that burned down in 2019 or the Spink Family restaurant that was throttled by the pandemic but is thriving today.

For more than 20 years, the Spink Café was a big draw in the township located in Union County. The eatery was known for its Friday night fish fries during Lent, Sunday dinners and its famous Spinkburger. The 80-year-old structure had recently been re-decorated with a 50s theme, featuring old LPs, vinyl album covers on the wall and pictures of Elvis Presley.

But life for Otten and her husband Sam changed in November of 2019 when the area’s most

popular attraction was totally consumed by fire.

The way the Ottens saw it, there was no option but to rebuild. But the planned resurrection of the business wouldn’t occur in the confines of Spink. The new iteration, renamed Spink Family Restaurant, would be located in the old American Legion hall in downtown Elk Point.

By all accounts, the “new Spink” wasn’t so easy to bring forth from the ashes. Two weeks after working hard to get the new facility ready for business in Elk Point, the pandemic hit and threatened to dash the Ottens’ hopes for good.

“The fire was in November, we made the decision to keep going in December, and we re-opened in March. We were open for two weeks when the pandemic hit, Rhonda said. “Those two weeks were very, very busy. It was a madhouse in

here. We had a lot more space and we were finally getting in the groove.”

Facing the same problems as just about every restaurant owner in the state and nation, the Ottens were forced to hit the pause button and try to figure out the next step to take. They closed for a month, regrouped, and then returned to offer carry-out service only.

Members of the community rallied to support the restaurant, including employees at Union County Electric located just two blocks away.

According to Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein, the cooperative always strives to support other local businesses that help the community thrive.

“At lunchtime you’re likely to see some of our guys eating there,” Klein said. “When they had carry-out, we ordered food for meetings and just did what we could to help – just like we do with other members of the community. We help whenever and wherever we can.”



Server Karisma Tripp tends to another satisfied customer at Spink Family Restaurant in Elk Point.

Rhonda said it was inspiring to see the town pull together to face the impact of the pandemic, and also to help the business survive after the back-to-back calamities.



Cody Olson, center, enjoys lunch with his co-workers from Valley Ag Supply.

“The community really supported us and we’re very grateful for that,” she said. “But we’ve seen this many times before; people watching out for each other and helping when there’s a need. That’s what really pushed us through.”

One regular patron who is happy to see the new Spink succeeding is Joyce Schermer. She occupied a table in the restaurant one recent lunch hour along with her son Brad Johannsen and his wife Lori. The Johannsens are regular visitors to the

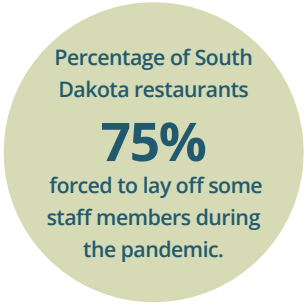
area from Sedona, Ariz., and always make a point to stop at Spink, preferring the hot beef sandwich and the prime rib sandwich.

“It’s always good every time you come,” said Schermer, a resident of Akron who opted for her go-to French Dip. “You’re never disappointed in the food or the service. It’s wonderful.”

Also enjoying a lunchtime meal were several employees of Valley Ag Supply. The company is located a half mile from the old Spink building that was destroyed by fire.

“We used to go there all the time and we were disappointed when it burned down. You could see our fertilizer plant from there,” said Cody Olson while noshing on the French Dip. “Now there’s no place to go. So, we just drive into town because it’s so good. It’s great that they came back and are still operating.”

As for “old Spink,” the Ottens are still trying to figure out what to do with the heap left in the wake of the conflagration. The building had an upstairs apartment where several members of the family lived at



various times through the years.

“It’s going to have to be torn down eventually, but we just don’t want to let it go,” Rhonda said. “There are so many memories attached to that place; both of our parents were such a big part of it.”

She emphasized that while the restaurant is in a new location, the food is the same as before. The Ottens, who have always used family recipes, depend on all three of their sons – ages 17 through 23 – to handle the cooking to maintain consistency on a daily basis.

“The secret to our success is that the five of us do all the cooking here. We use time-proven family recipes that have been popular for decades,” Rhonda said.

Shady Oaks Native Prairie ATV Trails has fun for the entire family

Gary Thooft has spent many years building cabinets for home and businesses throughout the region. In recent years, Thooft has turned his attention to building something else – ATV trails. Thooft has built 6 miles of trails on 100 acres of land on the edge of Russell, MN. This network of trails has become the Shady Oaks Native Prairie Adventure Trails.



Thooft, a Veteran of the United States Army, built the trails in memory of his father Harry Thooft and his friend Edward Burckhardt, who was owner of much of the land the trails are on. The trails on the Northwest edge of Russell on 170th Ave, run next to and through



Gary Thooft continues to add new trails and hidden features for riders to find.

Coon Creek, including four river crossings and eight bridges.

Named one of the top Day Trips by Minnesota Offroad Magazine, Shady Oaks Native Prairie Adventure Trails has transitioned from a few private trails to a Public Park after much work by Thooft.

By working with the DNR, the Lyon County Park Board, the Russell City Council, Southwest Ridgerunners snowmobile club, and others, Gary was able to have the trails added to the DNR State Trails system.

Once the trails became a part of the DNR State Trails System, the trails are eligible for partial funding for maintenance. Other costs for signs, bridges, maintenance, insurance, fuel and utilities comes from donations and volunteers.

Thooft continues to add new trails and hidden features for riders to look for. Fairies, Dragons, Tree Faces, and assorted animals are hidden throughout the trails. A map, available at the start of the trails, not only provides routes to follow but also indicates where

to find some of these hidden treasures.

Along the trails there are numerous spots to stop and take in the scenery or pull up to a picnic table for a lunch break. In addition to the trails, Thooft has added four 50 Amp services for campers at the park. Camping spots are available for \$34 per night, and there is a sewer dump available. Call 507-823-4215 for reservations.



Shady Oaks Native Prairie Adventure Trails is open, weather permitting, from May 1st through Mid-October. Information on trail closings is posted on Facebook by searching for Shady Oaks Native Prairie Adventure Trails.

Feeling stressed this harvest season?

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Breakdowns. Long hours. Setbacks. There is no way to predict what harvest will bring.

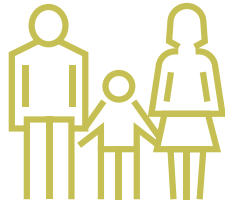
Have your PLAN in place to manage your stress for a safe and healthy harvest.



P

Prepare for the season

With preparation, some stress can be avoided. Anticipate the demands of harvest and plan ahead. For example, prep healthy meals, fuel equipment and perform routine maintenance ahead of schedule. **What can you do to prepare?**

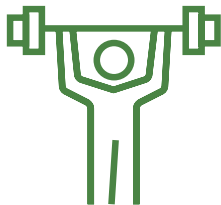


L

Lean on loved ones

Seeking support from others rather than taking on everything yourself can help reduce stress. Text or call a friend or family member when you need support.

Whom can you lean on?



A

Activate coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms can help manage stress. They include engaging in physical activity, finding ways to make yourself laugh and carving out time for hobbies.

Which coping mechanisms will you use?



N

Nip negative self-talk

Negative self-talk leads to decreased morale and feelings of hopelessness. When your inner critic nags, be kind to yourself and remember thoughts are not reality.

How will you tell your inner critic to take a hike?

Content developed by Josie M. Rudolphi and Courtney Cuthbertson, University of Illinois Extension



Need immediate assistance?

Iowa Concern Hotline:
1-800-477-1985

National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255



LEARNING FROM ADVERSITY



The Dakota Lakes Research Farm produces information helpful to farmers and ranchers dealing with drought. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

SDSU agriculture researcher Dwayne Beck looks for better ways to gain higher yields through crop rotations and other techniques

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The drought conditions that gripped the state through the summer months caused difficulty for farmers and ranchers. The drought in 2012 also made it difficult to grow and harvest a productive crop.

But it's the drought that occurred in 1988 that Dwayne Beck remembers most. Beck, 70, is a researcher with SDSU who runs the Dakota Lakes research farm near Canning.

According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, as of June 23 more than 97 percent of South Dakota and all of Minnesota were categorized as "abnormally dry."

As someone who considers himself a seasoned investigator and problem solver, Beck looks at the current drought conditions as an

opportunity to learn.

So, what exactly did the farming and ranching community learn in 1988 when adverse weather conditions caused an estimated \$60 billion in agricultural damage across the U.S.?

"We learned not to do tillage," Beck responds without hesitation. "This drought is about the worse I've seen since 1988, and we learned then that in this part of the country if you till, you're screwed. No-till gives you a chance to have a decent crop and run a viable farming operation."

And the key to succeeding without tilling is proper crop rotation. That's what keeps Beck and other researchers busy.

On a recent afternoon, Melanie Caffe and her assistant Nick Paul were operating a small combine to gather their test crops laid out in strips measuring five feet wide by 20

feet long. Caffe, a native of France, is an ag professor at SDSU, while Paul is a local farmer and research technician.

The two-member team moved from section to section, cleaning out the collection bin as they went to keep the samples from being contaminated and corrupting the research data. The samples were



Dwayne Beck runs the Dakota Farms research facility near Canning.



Melanie Caffe and Nick Paul collect samples from a field at the Dakota Farms Research Station near Canning.

bagged and taken into the lab where Caffe and Paul planned to perform fertility experiments with the goal of developing varieties with higher yield, higher quality and stronger drought resistance.

Much of the research centers around maximizing yields through effective crop rotations. Beck has spent much of his career considering the ways farming was conducted 100 or more years ago and how it can be improved.

“The Natives grew crops before the Spaniards came and brought horses. They were all no-tillers because they didn’t have cows and horses to pull the plows. They grew 13 different kinds of corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They were very successful. The settlers never asked anyone how to grow crops here, they just got out their plow and started turning over the soil.”

Beck has seen the wonders of crop rotation in his research. Some of his fields are rotated five ways.

“Good rotations can produce a lack of disturbance in places where you don’t have a lot of water. Our research shows 99 percent of resistance issues could be solved with better crop rotations. There are fields where we haven’t used insecticides for 18 years.”

Beck said his methods aren’t always adopted by industry but he continues to gather data and push out the information obtained through research.

“The nice about being a research guy is you always have more things to learn,” he said. “The more you research, the more you don’t know, but we’re always looking for answers.”

HOPS GROWERS NAVIGATING THEIR WAY THROUGH CHANGING INDUSTRY

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In many ways, Ryan Heine is like the average South Dakota farmer. He frets about the weather, plans for the future, worries about finances, watches the markets and is constantly trying to find a buyer for the crop he hopes will make.

But his crop is unlike most of the others that emerge from the South Dakota soil. Heine is owner of 6th Meridian Hop Farm near Yankton. His is one of six such farms left in the state growing hops for brewers to transform into craft beer.

Heine also sees his work as different compared to most farmers – he relies on his nose a lot.

“There’s a lot of experimenting with different aromas.

There are so many flavor profiles and varieties of hops that are used in creating craft beer,” he said. “There’s a vast palette of different aromas, and the market will dictate what consumers prefer.”

Ryan and his wife Michelle launched their hop operation in 2014, leaving Omaha and returning to the small family farm near Yankton in pursuit of a more grounded lifestyle for their five children.

“We wanted to get out of the city and back to our farming roots,” said Ryan, who works remotely as an electrical engineer for a company out of Minneapolis.

Ryan’s interest in growing the essential elements of craft beer began when he was a student at Parks College in St. Louis, Mo. He went out with his friends and found most of what was offered at bars, pubs and restaurants was bland and uninspiring. He knew he liked the flavor of beer and he knew he liked the simplicity of the farming lifestyle.

“So I started doing some home brewing and found that it was a fun hobby to pursue. Now we have one of the biggest operations in the state,” he said.

Heine’s time on the farm is spent fussing over flavor and aroma profiles, acid levels, yeast growth, oil content, insect invasions, disease infections and more. He and Michelle do all the growing, harvesting, processing, drying, pulverizing, preserving, pressing and packaging.

He finds markets by visiting with brewers, forging relationships across the region and even keeping in touch with his college buddies.

“There are some college roommates I’ve kept in touch with who are brewers and we’re always talking about how to improve our products,” he said. “Hops growers are down to just a handful in the state, but for those who have survived, I think the outlook is good.”



BULLISH ON BEES



Beekeeping industry struggles with drought and other obstacles along with overall agriculture sector

Billy Gibson

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Becoming a beekeeper wasn't something Chad Holbrook dreamed about back when he worked as a farm loan officer in Texas.

But he decided it might be an interesting hobby, so about 10 years ago he bought himself a hive just for the fun of it.

As things sometimes tend to go, one hive led to two, two hives led to four and before he knew it, Holbrook was giving his day job the boot. Goodbye business suit, hello beekeeping suit.

These days, Holbrook manages about 3,000 hives out of his main headquarters in Fairfax, MN, although he still has some hives back in Texas. A member of Renville-

Sibley Co-op Power, he ships his hives for pollination purposes all across the Midwest and to other regions as well to help growers gain higher crop yields.

"After I got my first bee hive I just really enjoyed doing it, and it snowballed and just kept increasing every year," Holbrook said. "I finally quit my day job to run the business in January of 2017, which is something I never thought I'd do."

That's a move that took some courage because Holbrook knew from his brief experience that while bees can be tough buggers, they also have plenty of obstacles threatening their place in nature and their very existence.

After all, some of the boxes, frames, pallets and extraction equipment he purchased to start

his own operation were acquired from beekeepers making a bee-line straight out of the business.

The list of real and potential apiary antagonists is long. Apiculturists are constantly trying to protect their colonies from various types of threats including several species of mites, insecticides, pesticides, extreme weather and destruction of their habitat.

One pitfall not often discussed in the public discourse is the attrition that takes place from merely moving colonies from one patch of farmland to the next, and in some cases, moving hives from one spot to another to protect them during the inclement non-pollinating months.

Holbrook figures the attrition rate can be up to 10 percent anytime hives are loaded onto a truck and hauled to different locations. It's a significant loss considering an estimated one-third of the world's food supply depends on the pollination work performed by



Honey bees pollinate roughly one-third of the world's agriculture crops.

honey bees. Since 2010, beekeepers in South Dakota, Minnesota and across the country have experienced historically high colony loss rates of nearly 30 percent a year impacting roughly 90 different agricultural crops ranging from almonds and apples on the West Coast to cotton and cranberries in the East.

“Keeping them alive is the hardest thing,” Holbrook said. “There are substances farmers use to manage vegetation and help their crops, but it’s causing a reduction in the forage area for bees. But everybody has to make a living and I don’t fault the farmers...if I were them I’d probably be doing the same thing. But we can all look for ways to be more environmentally friendly because we’re all making a living off nature.”

Holbrook, who describes himself as a migratory commercial beekeeper, typically transports bees to California every January to pollinate that state’s almond crop and then heads to his facility in Texas to extract honey. July is the slowest month of the year, then there’s a short fall season before the bees head to an indoor storage facility in Idaho for protection against the cold.

Despite the drought conditions that have caused stress for farmers, ranchers and apiculturists across the region, Holbrook is bullish on the beekeeping industry. He noted that the city of Sioux Falls recently approved an ordinance that allows residents to maintain hives on their property. Would-be beekeepers must

apply for a permit, take an online class, inform their neighbors of their intentions and adhere to other prescribed guidelines.

Holbrook reports that through the spring and summer seasons - and despite the drought - honey prices have seen an upward shift. For instance, he said the price for honey in the region last year was about \$1.70 per pound but has climbed to more than \$2.25. The international market is expected to expand from \$9.2 billion to \$19 billion by 2028.

“We were fortunate that we’ve had some timely rains and the hot, dry weather hasn’t caused problems for my business. It has been an average crop for me. But you don’t ever really know for sure until the honey is extracted,” he said.



According to owner Kiah Crowley, Sunrise Hives in Spearfish maintains about 400 bee colonies. *Photo by Sunrise Hives*

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Corn Palace Festival

604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

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AUGUST 27-28

Sizzlin' Summer Nights

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AUGUST 27-29

Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival

Hot Springs Municipal Airport, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

AUGUST 28

McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Rodeo

McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-1203

SEPTEMBER 2-6

South Dakota State Fair

State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

SEPTEMBER 9-12

SD State Senior Games

Watertown, SD, Contact Howard at 605-491-0635 for more information

SEPTEMBER 10

Mickelson Star Trail

Rochford Trailhead, Hill City, SD, register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mickelson-star-trail-night-tickets-140121383831>

SEPTEMBER 10-11

Ribs, Rods & Rock n' Roll

Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 605-624-2021

SEPTEMBER 11-12

Fall Harvest Festival

Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

SEPTEMBER 12

Annual Antique Car & Tractor Parade

Main Street, Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

SEPTEMBER 17-18

Deadwood Jam

Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

SEPTEMBER 18

Health Connect Fair

Sanford Pentagon, Sioux Falls, SD, 888-761-5437

SEPTEMBER 18-19

Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games

37925 Youth Camp Road, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-5828

SEPTEMBER 23-25

Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival

13329 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

SEPTEMBER 25

Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival

526 Main Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 25-26

Menno Pioneer Power Show

Menno, SD, contact Daniel at mennopowershow@yahoo.com for more details

OCTOBER 1-3

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1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit siouxpercon.com for more details and tickets

OCTOBER 8-10

2021 Black Hills Powwow

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

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