

Winter 2026

# THE *South Dakota* CATTLEMAN

The official publication of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association





# DON'T KEEP YOUR OPERATION WAITING.

Fill year-end gaps with an adaptable line of credit.

With all the various management needs of your operation – input costs, equipment repairs, labor and livestock expenses – you need a line of credit that can keep up. An operating line of credit from Farm Credit Services of America has convenience, savings and flexibility built in, so you can meet each season's needs without slowing down.



Only borrow what  
you need



Multi-year  
commitment options



No-limit remote  
deposit



Eligible for yearly  
cash-back dividends



> [FCSAmerica.com/lineofcredit](http://FCSAmerica.com/lineofcredit) / 800-884-FARM  
Agriculture Works Here.



# SDCA

## Calendar of Events

January 13: South Dakota Legislative Session | Pierre  
January 28: Board of Directors Meeting | Ft. Pierre  
January 28: Leadership Academy Graduation | Ft. Pierre  
January 28: Legislative Mixer | Ft. Pierre  
January 29: SDCA Day at the Capitol | Pierre  
February 3 - 5: CattleCon & NCBA Tradeshow | Nashville, TN  
February 16: Cattlemen's Education Day | Brookings



### Save the Date

### Legislative Mixer

Join SDCA and Class I graduates of the Cattlemen's Leadership Academy for a Legislative Mixer at Drifters Event Center on January 28, 2026.

## Advertising Opportunities

**The South Dakota Cattleman** is published six times a year and sent to SDCA members including beef producers, beef industry supporters, property owners, allied industry partners, as well as state and local government officials with a circulation over 1,000.

Advertising deadline is the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

The SDCA e-newsletter, **The Cattle Guard**, is emailed to all SDCA members every week. **The Cattle Guard** contains updates and news from SDCA, industry partners, and NCBA.

Follow us on our social media platforms to stay informed of the latest SDCA news, events, and information.



Scan to access  
SDCA's Media Kit

## FEATURES

Meet your Senate and House Ag & Natural Resources Committees.....	14
Getting to Know New Senator Brandon Wipf .....	16
Getting to Know New Representative John Shubeck .....	17
Cow Prolapses - A Real Pain in the Rear End .....	22-23
Member Feature: Dawn Butzer.....	26-27

## IN EVERY ISSUE

President's Message .....	4
South Dakota Beef Checkoff Dollars at Work.....	18-19
SDCA Working for you .....	20-21
For the Cattlekids.....	25
The Cattlemen's Outlook.....	28

## ASSOCIATION & INDUSTRY NEWS

2025 Convention & Trade Show Recap .....	6-11
Leadership Academy Feature: Colton Buus.....	12
Are You in the BEEF Business? .....	24
Water Quality, Stewardship, and Common Sense .....	29
Farewell from the Cattle Pen .....	30



### Mission

To advance the interests of South Dakota Cattlemen through representation and promotion of the beef industry.

### Vision

To be an organization where members can work together to protect their interests; seek solutions to industry problems; provide a unified voice, and to build the good will, esteem, and recognition the industry deserves.

Local Decisions.  
Familiar Faces.

**WITH US,  
IT'S PERSONAL.**



DACOTAH BANK

Dacotah Bank has 33 locations and serves 70,000 customers  
across North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota





## A CALL TO STRENGTHEN OUR ASSOCIATION TOGETHER

Craig Bieber, SDCA President

It is an honor to serve as President of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, and a responsibility I take seriously. SDCA has long been one of the most respected and credible voices for cattle producers in Pierre and beyond. That reputation was not built overnight, it was earned through decades of steady leadership, engaged members, and a shared belief that our industry is stronger when we stand together.

As I step into this role, my goal is simple but important: to grow and strengthen our membership and ensure SDCA remains relevant, influential, and effective for the next generation of cattle producers.

Membership is not just a number on a spreadsheet. It is our voice. It is our leverage when policy is debated, regulations are written, and the future of animal agriculture is shaped. Strong membership is what gives SDCA credibility with legislators, agency leaders, and partners.

One challenge facing agriculture, especially membership-based organizations, is engagement. Too often, we rely on the same dedicated people to carry the load, while others remain on the sidelines. At the same time, we have not always done a good job of planning for leadership succession or creating clear pathways for younger producers, business owners, and managers to step into meaningful roles. That must change!

Our industry today includes more than traditional owner-operators. It includes multi-generational family businesses, hired managers, and producers who balance ranching with off-ranch careers. SDCA must also reflect that reality. A stronger association means making room for diverse perspectives while staying grounded in the values that built this organization, integrity, stewardship, and advocacy for cattle producers.

Going forward, I want SDCA to focus on three priorities:

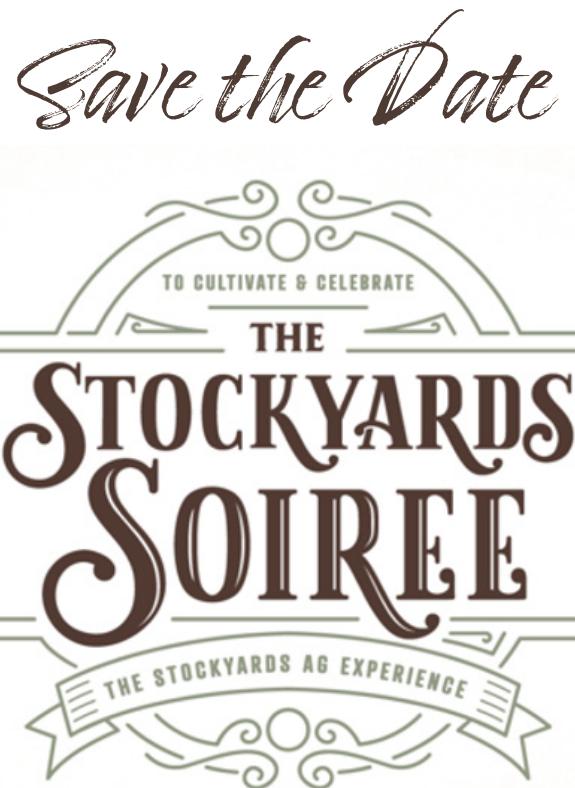
**Membership engagement.** We must give members clear reasons to stay involved, through relevant policy work, practical information, and opportunities to connect with one another.

**Leadership development and succession.** We need to intentionally identify, mentor, and encourage future leaders so that responsibility does not fall on the same shoulders year after year.

**Unity and participation.** Whether you run 50 cows or 5,000, your voice matters. SDCA works best when it reflects the full breadth of South Dakota's cattle industry.

I believe deeply in this association and what it can accomplish. But its strength ultimately depends on your participation, your ideas, and your willingness to be engaged. My door is open, and I invite you to be part of building a stronger SDCA.

Together, we can ensure that South Dakota cattle producers continue to have a respected, effective voice, today and well into the future.



**February 12, 2026**

5 p.m. | Meadow Barn at Country Orchards  
Harrisburg, SD

# Allied Industry Members

## Prime Members



**DVAuction**  
Broadcasting Real-Time Auctions



TRI-STATE LIVESTOCK NEWS

## Corporate Members



## Auction Market Members



## Choice Members



**AgSpire**



**Bill's VOLUME**  
Sales & Service  
We Sell the Best and Service the Rest



**purple wave**  
AUCTION



**WARD**  
Laboratories, Inc.

**zoetis**

## Standard Members

Diesel Machinery, Inc  
DNB National Bank  
First Fidelity Bank  
For-Most Inc.  
J&R Feeds  
Millborn Seeds

OLS Tubs, Inc.  
Renner Corner Locker  
Ritchie Industries  
Rock Veterinary Clinic  
Steele Financial Services, LLC  
White Insurance P&C Inc.

## Select Members

Agtegra Cooperative  
Central Farmers Cooperative  
Custom Genetic Solutions  
Dakota Ethanol, LLC  
Elanco Animal Health

Floyd's Truck Center / Floyd's  
Kubota  
Nutrient Advisors  
Rush-Co

## Supporting Members

3D Security, Inc.  
Animal Clinic, Ltd. - Winner  
Bankwest, Inc. - Pierre  
Bryant State Bank  
C-Lock, Inc.  
Cattlecents Consulting, Inc.  
Chase Consulting  
De-Tye Vet Supply, Inc.

Ed's Produce  
Farmers & Merchants State Bank  
Feldhaus Trucking, Inc.  
First National Bank - Ft. Pierre  
Huron Veterinary Hospital  
Kingbrook Rural Water System, Inc.  
Lilac Lane Media  
Liphatech (Rozol)

Lyle Signs Inc  
Moly Manufacturing LLC / SILENCER  
Montrose Veterinary Clinic  
NDECO  
Rick Dockter/ Wealth Partners  
Rivers Edge Bank  
Sioux International  
Sioux Nation, LLC

Statewide Ag Insurance - Winner  
Summit Carbon Solutions  
US Premium Beef  
Y-Tex Corporation  
Zinpro Corporation

Allied Industry Membership information available online at [sdcowmen.org](http://sdcowmen.org)

# ANNUAL CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW



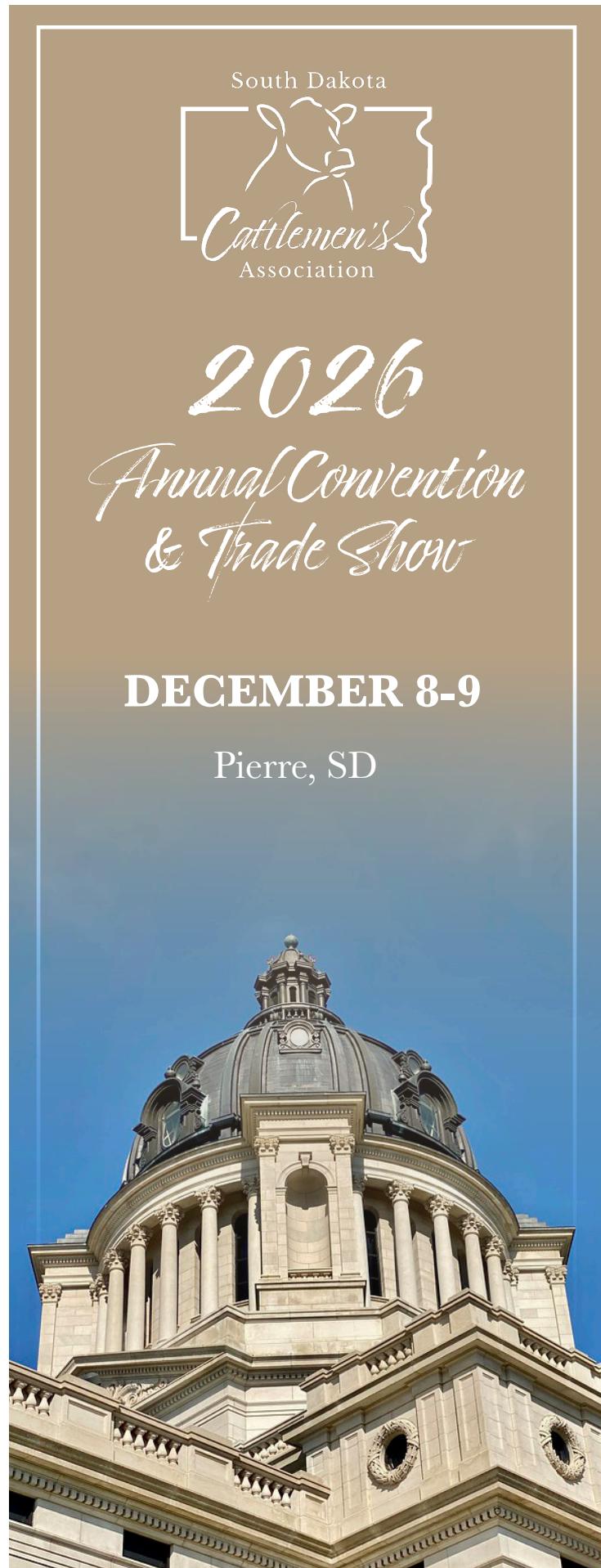
The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association Convention & Trade Show was held for the first time in the historic town of Deadwood, South Dakota.

The 2025 convention drew a strong turnout, with attendees filling meeting rooms to standing room only capacity. Policy sessions were filled with robust discussions and thoughtful debate. Members worked diligently to identify and refine the issues most critical to South Dakota's cattle industry, ensuring that the association's collective voice remains strong and unified for the legislative session ahead.

Participants enjoyed the lively setting of Deadwood, taking advantage of opportunities to network, celebrate, and set the course for the year ahead. The trade show added another layer of excitement, showcasing innovations, products, and services designed to support ranchers and strengthen the industry.

The 2025 Convention & Trade Show was not only a celebration of community but also a testament to the resilience and vision of South Dakota's cattlemen and women. With an eye on the coming year, the association continues to build on its legacy of leadership and service to the industry.





# SDCA Awards at 2026 Convention

## MYRON WILLIAMS LEADERSHIP AWARD

### *Colin Geppert*

In 2024, South Dakota lost a true cattle industry giant, Myron Williams. Known for his passion for family, community, and the beef industry, Myron devoted his life to service and leadership. His commitment left a lasting impact on countless organizations. The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association was fortunate to be one of the many organizations who benefited from his vision and guidance. To honor his legacy, Myron's family partnered with SDCA to establish the Myron Williams Leadership Award, ensuring his spirit of advocacy and mentorship continues to inspire future generations.

At this year's convention, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association proudly presented the inaugural Myron Williams Leadership Award. Myron's daughter, Misty Mattox, represented their family in presenting the award to Colin Geppert.

As part of this recognition, Colin will join SDCA leaders in Washington, D.C., engaging with members of Congress and federal agencies. His efforts will continue the tradition of strong leadership and advocacy that Myron embodied.

The SDCA extends our heartfelt gratitude to the Williams family for their generosity in making this award possible and congratulates Colin on carrying forward the spirit of leadership that defines the association's mission.





## 2025 FRIEND OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA CATTLEMEN

### *Drew Peterson*

The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association proudly named Representative Drew Peterson as the 2025 Friend of the South Dakota Cattlemen. This award honors individuals who go above and beyond in supporting cattle producers and advocating for agriculture across the state.

A dedicated SDCA member and active voice in the Southeast Region, Peterson has been a steadfast advocate for agricultural producers in his community. Since beginning his legislative service in 2023, he has played a key role on the House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee, where his leadership has helped shape positive outcomes for cattlemen and women statewide.

His commitment to advancing the interests of South Dakota's cattle industry and his tireless work on behalf of agriculture make him a true friend of the industry.

## 2025 CATTLEMAN OF THE YEAR

### *Eric Jennings*

The Cattleman of the Year award recognizes a member of SDCA who is active in SDCA and demonstrates leadership within the beef industry. SDCA is proud to name Eric Jennings as the 2025 Cattleman of the Year.

During his term as SDCA President, Eric led the organization through times of change and uncertainty - including a global pandemic, staff transitions, and a board reorganization. He championed new programs, fostered growth, and mentored countless cattlemen and women along the way.

As Past President, Eric remained a vital part of SDCA's executive leadership team. On the national level he has taken on a new responsibility as Vice Chair for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Ag & Food Policy Committee, ensuring the voice of South Dakota cattlemen and women is heard on federal policy.

Eric's dedication to this organization, our industry, and his fellow cattlemen is truly remarkable.





# 2025 Vendor Trade Show





The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association had a sold-out trade show this year! Featuring 56 outstanding companies and organizations dedicated to advancing the cattle industry, this was a trade show to remember. Vendors came prepared with innovative ideas, cutting edge technology, and unwavering support for our attendees.



**MERCK**  
Animal Health



**SenseHub™**  
**VENCE**



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**



## LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

*Spotlight***Meet Colton Buus**

By Kristen Smith



Colton Buus grew up on a farm near Lennox, South Dakota. He attended South Dakota State University where he graduated with a degree in Animal Science. There, Buus met his wife Maria and a few years after graduation the two moved to Canova, South Dakota to Maria's family's cow-calf operation and eventually purchased the farm from her parents, establishing Horizon View Farms LLC. Now, Colton and Maria own and operate Horizon View Farms alongside their

four children, Barrett, Eli, Corbin, and Landry. Their family-run operation has the assistance of two great full-time employees and many seasonal helpers from their family and friends.

What began as a commercial cow-calf operation has since shifted over time into a Simmental and SimAngus seedstock herd. "Our passion for livestock genetics, performance and phenotype evaluation and a desire to add value to our new operation were all players in making the shift," Colton said.

**I HOPE THE LEGACY I LEAVE TO MY OPERATION  
WOULD BE TO LOVE JESUS, LOVE PEOPLE, AND  
DO YOUR BEST WITH THE TALENTS, SKILLS AND  
RESOURCES YOU HAVE.**

- Colton Buus

Relationships and experiences gained through programs such as 4-H, FFA, and being a member of the SDSU Livestock Judging team was a big part of moving the business into the seedstock direction. "All that being said, my wife and employees would probably just say that "Colton just really likes cows," Colton said. Aside from a few herd bulls and female purchases, the biggest contributing factors to shifting the Buus herd to where it is today has been the extensive artificial insemination and embryo transfer practices.

They began small, marketing 15 to 25 bulls a year to private treaty and then slowly increased their numbers as their customer base and genetic quality grew. Right now, Horizon View Farms hosts a bull and female live auction sale in March, marketing 100 bulls and a group of females each year. "The most rewarding part is getting to meet other cattle producers from all over the country and watch our genetics work," Colton said.

Along with the bull business, the Buus's still have a strong foundation in the commercial sector by backgrounding many of their own steers and

heifers, with a few groups of bull customer calves. Many heifers are developed and bred each year and marketed both on the commercial and purebred side. The Buus's have some farm ground but is mainly used for feed production for their cattle.



Looking forward, the goals remain the same at Horizon View Farms: push the herd to the most consistent of genetics and the best customer service that they can offer. "We want to make sure that the business and cow herd we are building is sustainable for our careers and also for the next generation," Colton said. "Our family is growing up quickly and so we are more mindful every day of their potential involvement and what that might look like should the chose to come back."

The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association has always been an organization that piqued Colton's interest. It began in college through the Young Producer Council and attending meetings and events through the local affiliates. When the Cattlemen's Leadership Academy was announced, it seemed like a great fit to become more involved and gain a great insight into the industry.

"The world we live in now is different than the one our grandparents farmed in, and the next generation will have requirements that are unseen," Colton said. "I hope the legacy I leave to my operation would be to love Jesus, love people, and do your best with the talents, skills and resources you have."





# TRIFECTA

Cattle Co.

## JANUARY 29, 2026

GLACIAL LAKES LIVESTOCK, WATERTOWN, SD • 1:00 PM

AVERAGE OF OFFERING 202 \$API - 106 \$TI



**433M** ASA 4448620

KBHR GUNSMOKE J131 x RRR JLN CONTESSA 86H

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
11	83	124	7	21	0.87	0.78	186	102



**440M** ASA 4448627

LBRS GENESIS G69 x CLRS GENOME 979G

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
11	90	148	7	18	1.28	0.92	208	118



**461M** ASA 4448547

CLRS JAY LENO 957J x TRIF CONQUEST 202K

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
17	80	124	10	22	1.09	0.78	215	112



**478M** ASA 4448564

TRIF KEV 226K x TRIF SABEL 220K

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
12	94	147	7	19	0.84	0.89	187	108



**484M** ASA 4448570

KBHR MR RED OCTOBER J108 x KRRS 253K

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
12	77	111	6	15	0.87	0.82	156	92



**486M** ASA 4448572

KBHR MR RED OCTOBER J108 x TRIF MS DEBUTANTE 240K

CE	WW	YW	MCE	STAY	MARB	REA	SAPI	STI
13	86	124	8	21	0.82	1.04	189	105

*Selling* 32 AGE-ADVANTAGE SIMMENTAL AND SIMANGUS BULLS

SIREs INCLUDE: LBRS Genesis - Gibbs Essential - KBHR Gunsmoke - TRIF Kip - TRIF Kev



Cody Kenyon  
17615 480th Avenue, Clear Lake, SD 57226  
605-880-8191

trifectacattle.com

Request a salebook on our website  
or at the numbers listed.

BID LIVE ONLINE  
**DVAuction**  
Broadcasting Real-Time Auctions

**ALLIED**  
GENETIC RESOURCES

Marty Ropp 406-581-7835  
Corey Wilkins 256-590-2487  
Jared Murnin 406-321-1542  
www.alliedgeneticresources.com

# 2026

## Senate Ag & Natural Resources Committee



**Tom Pischke**  
District 25  
Committee Chair



**Kevin D. Jensen**  
District 16  
Committee Vice Chair



**Sydney Davis**  
District 17



**Sam Marty**  
District 28



**Helene Duhamel**  
District 32



**Curt Voight**  
District 33

Not Pictured: Brandon Wipf, District 22

## House of Representatives Ag & Natural Resources Committee



**Marty Overweg**  
District 21  
Committee Chair



**Spencer Gosch**  
District 23  
Committee Vice Chair



**Kadyn Wittman**  
District 15



**Julie Auch**  
District 18



**Drew Peterson**  
District 19



**Tim Goodwin**  
District 30



**Trish Ladner**  
District 30



**Jana Hunt**  
District 28A



**Kaley Nolz**  
District 20



**Kathy Rice**  
District 29



**Kevin Van Diepen**  
District 22



**Travis Ismay**  
District 28B

Not Pictured: John Shubbeck, District 16

# Get Involved in Session

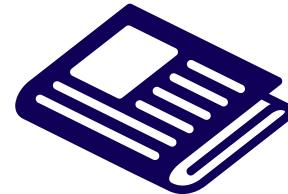
In grassroots policy organizations like the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, members work to create policy and set the tone of the organization. When January rolls around, it may be tempting to leave the legislative work to the lobbyists or the Board of Directors, but the role individual members play in the process is just as important -- if not more important -- to accomplishing the organization's goals.

Here are a few ways you can be involved and make a difference during session:



## Attend Local Events

Cracker barrels and legislative coffee events that take place throughout session give you an opportunity to meet your elected leaders, hear what initiatives are important to them, and discuss what is important to you and the organizations you support.



## Stay Informed

The SDCA legislative update is a weekly newsletter during session to keep you informed about the bills that have been filed, which bills and issues SDCA will take a position on, and how you can support those efforts.



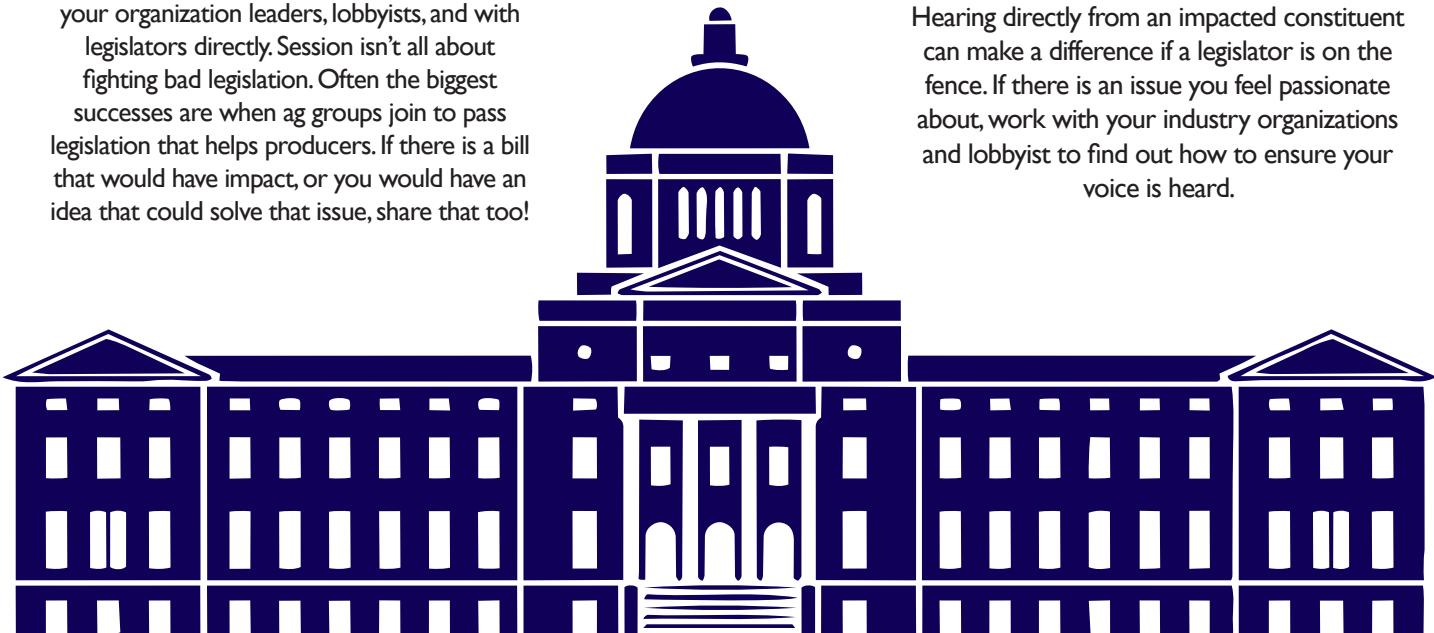
## Tell Your Story

Often times, a bill sounds good on paper, but there are unintended consequences. If there is a bill that would negatively impact you, your operation, or your community, it's important to share that perspective with your organization leaders, lobbyists, and with legislators directly. Session isn't all about fighting bad legislation. Often the biggest successes are when ag groups join to pass legislation that helps producers. If there is a bill that would have impact, or you would have an idea that could solve that issue, share that too!



## Attend a Committee Meeting

The committee hearing allows legislators to hear testimony both for and against a bill. Hearing directly from an impacted constituent can make a difference if a legislator is on the fence. If there is an issue you feel passionate about, work with your industry organizations and lobbyist to find out how to ensure your voice is heard.





**SENATOR**

*Brandon Wipf*

**District 22**

Raised just south of Doland, the newest senator representing District 22 brings a producer's mindset and an engineer's discipline to the South Dakota Legislature. After earning an engineering degree, he returned home to farm alongside his parents, an operation he has now helped run for 17 years. He and his wife enjoy the pace of small-town life, often accompanied by their dog, Sarge.

The family farm is primarily row crops and wheat, with diversification into hay production over the last decade. That hay supports horse operations across the country and feeds beef and dairy cattle closer to home. Stewardship guides his management decisions. Over time, he has taken marginal acres out of traditional crop production and transitioned them into more sustainable uses. That same conservation ethic shapes how he approaches public service.



His interest in public service began early. Childhood visits to the Capitol left a lasting impression, and he followed political issues closely as a young adult. While he always thought he would serve later in life, the opportunity to fill a vacant Senate seat created a sense of urgency he could not ignore. Having already advocated for farmers and ranchers at both the state and national levels, he viewed the appointment as a continuation of that work and a chance to maintain the strong representation District 22 has enjoyed for many years.

District 22 remains deeply rooted in agriculture with opportunity for future growth. Rural communities and production agriculture define both the district's history and its economic potential. He points to opportunities in animal agriculture production and processing, noting the turkey processing plant in Huron as an example of how agriculture can sustain and strengthen a community. The plant's integration into the town, along with the workforce it has attracted, gives him confidence in agriculture's ability to drive rural vitality.

Too often lawmakers think about the short-term political points they can score on an issue, with little concern for the long-term and unintended consequences. But for Wipf, a long-term perspective anchors his legislative philosophy. Agriculture demands that mindset, as producers make decisions with consequences that span decades. The success of his own farming operation, built on the sacrifices and foresight of earlier generations, reinforces his commitment to make decisions that benefit South Dakotans well into the future. In Pierre, he intends to be a steady voice urging colleagues to consider lasting impacts and unintended consequences.

Partnerships with organizations like the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association play a critical role in effective policymaking. He values the approach of building relationships rather than drawing adversarial lines. In his view, progress comes from framing challenges as shared problems, not competing interests. There are issues that impact ALL south Dakotans and we much continue to work together on things like workforce retention, rural infrastructure, and access to health care.

Looking ahead to the 2026 legislative session, restraint ranks high among his priorities. His guiding principle is simple: first, do no harm. Each bill should address a real problem that properly belongs before the Legislature. He remains wary of top-down solutions that undermine local control and of policies that elevate one landowner's preferences at the expense of long-standing agricultural operations. With a limited number of legislative days, he believes lawmakers must focus on what has made South Dakota a strong place to live and work.

Ultimately, his goal is to earn and keep the trust of the agricultural community that shaped him. By applying a producer's perspective and a long-range view, he aims to serve District 22 and South Dakota with the same care he brings to the land he farms.



## REPRESENTATIVE *John Shubeck*

District 16

**R**epresentative John Shubeck of Centerville has built his life around service. He spent more than twenty years in the Marine Corps in both active duty and reserve components and retired at the rank of Major after serving as an enlisted Marine and later as an officer. That commitment to service now guides his work in his home community and in Pierre.

Shubeck and his wife are raising four children on their diversified farming operation near Centerville, where they grow corn, soybeans, hay, and occasional small grains and maintain a cattle herd. In addition to farming, Shubeck serves as the head track and field coach at Centerville Middle and High School. He also helped plant a new church in the community and continues to serve as an elder, reflecting the importance of faith in his life.

Faith, family, community, and country guide Shubeck in every decision. He describes himself as a Christian first and he uses that foundation to guide how he will serve the people of District 16. When Representative Richard Vasgaard, a close family friend, passed away in a farm accident, community members urged Shubeck to apply for the legislative vacancy. He felt honored to continue Vasgaard's work and accepted the governor's appointment. "Service is part of who I am," he says. "I see problems, and I want to do something about them."

District 16 is one of the most productive agricultural regions in South Dakota, among the state's top producers in corn, soybean, cattle, hog, and dairy production. The district has seen strong growth during the past twenty-five years. Producers added three ethanol plants, more than 30,000 dairy cows, and created nearly one billion dollars in economic impact. Shubeck believes that agricultural diversity has helped maintain strong and stable communities.

Shubeck brings firsthand agricultural experience to his role in the Legislature. He focuses on advocating for farmers and ranchers and ranks protecting food production as the top priority among the many competing interests that rely on South Dakota's natural resources. "I will always fight for the rights of farmers," he explains. "I want to find new ways to expand economic opportunities for all South Dakota farmers and ranchers."

He stresses the importance of agriculture to the entire state. Agriculture is the major driver of South Dakota's economy. Shubeck believes that strong rural communities are essential to South Dakota's long-term success. He highlights animal agriculture as a central part of that strength because livestock production multiplies the value of every acre of grain and hay raised in the state. Expanding animal agriculture remains one of his priorities.

Looking to the 2026 legislative session, Shubeck focused on three key areas. First, he wants to increase opportunities for locally grown meat and food products. He sees rising consumer demand for local food and believes South Dakota can meet that demand by improving access and reducing obstacles for producers. Second, he plans to support further growth in animal agriculture. Third, he intends to protect the state's water resources. His district relies heavily on irrigation, and he wants to ensure agricultural water use has a strong voice in future water policy discussions.

For Representative John Shubeck, serving in the Legislature continues a lifetime of commitment to faith, family, community, and country. As District 16 grows, he remains focused on ensuring that farmers and ranchers have the support and opportunities they need to thrive for generations to come.

# SOUTH DAKOTA BEEF CHE

Jon Dilworth | South Dakota Beef

## SOUTH DAKOTA CATTLEMEN'S CONVENTION RECAP

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) proudly attended the South Dakota Cattlemen's Convention and Trade Show in Deadwood, SD, December 2–3. With nearly 200 producers in attendance, the event provided an excellent opportunity to network, connect, and share insights about the Beef Checkoff.

Throughout the convention, producers engaged in meaningful conversations and asked thoughtful questions about the program. On December 3, during the breakfast session, Jon Dilworth, SDBIC Executive Director, and Sarah Metzler, Senior Director of Organizational Communications for the Cattlemen's Beef Board, took the stage. Together, they delivered an in-depth presentation on the history, facts, and goals of the Beef Checkoff, leaving many attendees both enlightened and impressed.

The convention, hosted by the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA), was a resounding success. SDBIC is grateful for the opportunity to participate and looks forward to continuing these valuable conversations thought the year!

## JR. BEEF AMBASSADORS

On November 15, the South Dakota Jr. Beef Ambassadors launched their 2026 season in Pierre, SD with a day full of learning, laughter, and connection. With 22 ambassadors joined by parents and siblings, the crowd swelled to 48 participants making it a true family affair.

### BEHIND THE SCENES AT MAIER MEATS

The morning began at Maier Meats Locker in Ft. Pierre, where ambassadors got a rare behind-the-scenes look at the meat locker. The team explained the “why” behind their process and wowed the group with a live demonstration, breaking down a carcass into primal sections and retail cuts. To top it off, lunch



was catered from their storefront, The Hangout, giving everyone a taste of local flavor.

### BUILDING BONDS & BIG PLANS

The afternoon was all about resources, events, and relationships. Ambassadors dove into materials, discussed upcoming opportunities, and spent time getting to know one another. The event set the stage for a year filled with advocacy, leadership, and fun.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR JR. BEEFERS

The Jr. Beef Ambassadors program is more than just meetings, it's about educating, advocating, and inspiring. Here's what's on the horizon:

- Statewide appearances: Ambassadors will represent beef producers at conventions, fairs, and expos.
- Consumer outreach: Sharing beef's story including nutrition, sustainability, and tradition with communities across South Dakota.
- Leadership growth: Workshops and hands-on experiences to build confidence and communication skills.
- Community impact: From school visits to local events, ambassadors will showcase beef's role in everyday life.



## SDBIC BRINGS FLAVOR TO KELOLAND LIVING

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) is serving up something special on Keloland Living, a monthly cooking segment called Beef Up Your Kitchen. Airing every second Tuesday of the month, the series invites viewers to discover new recipes, cooking tips, and the many ways beef can bring people together.

# CKOFF DOLLARS AT WORK

## Industry Council Executive Director

### A FESTIVE FIRST EPISODE

The premiere episode aired on December 9, featuring Holly Swee of Beef Logic. Holly spotlighted the timeless tradition of holiday beef roasts, reminding viewers that:

**They're flavorful and festive.**

**They feed a crowd with ease.**

**There's a roast to fit every budget.**

She showcased different cuts, shared recipe inspiration, and demonstrated how simple it is to prepare a sirloin cap roast a dish that's as impressive as it is approachable.

### WHAT'S COOKING NEXT

The excitement continues with the next episode airing January 13 at 10 AM CST. Expect more mouthwatering recipes, practical cooking methods, and fresh ideas to keep beef at the center of your kitchen.

### RETURN OF RANCH SIGNS

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) has announced that its popular ranch signs are once again available for order, featuring a fresh new design for 2026.

The signs, made from durable 1/8inch thick metal, are offered in both singlesided and doublesided options. Orders are currently being accepted, with delivery scheduled between February and March 2026.

To place an order, customers can access a form submission link through the SDBIC's official Facebook page (South Dakota Beef Industry Council) or on the organization's website, sdbeef.org.

For additional information or questions, contact the SDBIC office at (605)224-4722 or email Executive Director Jon Dilworth at [jdilworth@sdbeef.org](mailto:jdilworth@sdbeef.org).



**SCAN TO ORDER**

**Ranch Name**

**BEEF. IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER.**



PROTEIN-PACKED RECIPE COLLECTION

**Fuel your year with Beef.**



### FLAVOR, TRADITION, AND INSPIRATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Looking for fresh ideas to bring excitement to your table? The South Dakota Beef Industry Council invites you to discover mouthwatering beef recipes, cooking tips, and meal inspiration that make every meal memorable.

Explore more at [SDBEEF.org](http://SDBEEF.org) or [BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com](http://BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com)

To learn more about the Checkoff, visit [DrivingDemandForBeef.com](http://DrivingDemandForBeef.com) or contact the South Dakota Beef Industry Council.

Cattlemen's Beef Board | 303-220-9890



Taya Runyan, SDCA Executive Director

## CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

The 77th Annual Convention was a success thanks to our sponsors, vendors, attendees, speakers, committees, and members! Making sure things went smoothly behind the scenes was a dedicated team who put in long hours before, during, and after the event to ensure things went off without a hitch- a big thank you to our interns Olivia, Isabelle, Jordan, Abby, and Ella!

## *Cattlemen's LAND & LEGACY*

Year two of the Land & Legacy programming provided important information for producers as they implement conservation minded practices into their operations. As this program grows, we will connect producers with technical assistance and resources at events across the state.

The President's auction was once again a success! The event raised \$23,000 to offset the cost of sending officers to national events throughout the year.

## POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Policy resolutions are reviewed every five years to see if they are still relevant. This past fall, the policy committee chairs met in Pierre to review policy and selected speakers for the meetings at convention. In October, SDCA hosted a series of virtual meetings open to members to discuss current policy, proposed new policy, and hot topics related to each committee area.

These meetings provided an opportunity to suggest substantive and style and form edits, contemplate industry issues the organization lacked policy to address, and identify topics to discuss at convention. At the annual

meeting, one resolution was allowed to expire, most remain important and were renewed without changes. A handful of resolutions needed updating and were amended. There were also several new policies or significantly amended resolutions adopted by the membership. The full 2026 Policy book was mailed to voting members in January and is also available online at [sdcattlemen.org](http://sdcattlemen.org).

## JANUARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next regular board meeting of the SDCA will be in Ft. Pierre on January 28th. Please reach out to SDCA at [office@sdcattlemen.org](mailto:office@sdcattlemen.org) if you have an issue to place on the agenda.

## SDCA DAY AT THE CAPITOL & LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GRADUATION

Following the board meeting, SDCA is hosting a legislative social at Drifters Event Center where SDCA leaders will be able to meet in a relaxed setting and talk about issues important to cattle producers and discuss how other bills before the legislature will impact them. The Class I graduates of the Cattlemen's Leadership Academy will be recognized at the event, marking the end of their yearlong program. All SDCA members are welcome to attend.

The next day, the new graduates will join the board and policy chairs for SDCA Day at the Capitol. The day starts



bright and early with committee hearings, after which the group will have the opportunity to meet with cabinet and agency leaders and learn more about the legislative process.

## 2026 CATTLECON

SDCA leaders and staff are preparing to attend CattleCon in Nashville, TN February 3-5. With SDCA grassroots policy in hand, they will be advocating for SD Cattlemen and addressing policy at the national level.



## GENERAL PERMIT

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) officially began the process to reissue the state water pollution control general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations and a proposed water pollution control general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations using DANR's delegated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) authority.

The SDCA has filed a notice of intent to intervene in the contested hearing that will take place later this spring. Todd Wilkinson has been retained as legal counsel to represent the interests of SDCA.

## NCBA STAFF UPDATE

Welcome Abby Melnikoff, the new NCBA Manager of Membership and Affiliate Services. Many of you had the opportunity to meet Abby at our recent convention and she is an excellent addition to the team!

Originally from Bertrand, Nebraska, Abby grew up on a small cow-calf operation and was actively involved in 4-H and FFA, where she enjoyed showing both cattle and sheep. She began her college career at Northeastern Junior College, earning an associate degree in Agricultural Business while competing on the livestock judging team. Abby then transferred to West Texas A&M University to pursue a degree Agricultural Media and Communication. While at WT, she was a member of the livestock judging team and earned Academic All-American honors. During her time there, she also launched her own podcast, Limitless with Abby Scholz.

Abby will be working closely with South Dakota and other state affiliates, supporting their efforts and strengthening engagement across the membership network.

Welcome Abby!

## *Updates from Capitol Hill*

### WOTUS RULES

The EPA published its updated Waters of the U.S. definition [Read more about the rule on page 31]. The timeline for this rulemaking will range from six months to one year, with the updated definition likely going into effect by the end of 2026.

The goal for the updated rule is for any landowner, not just an attorney or a hydrologist, to effectively make a preliminary determination as to whether a water feature on their property is subject to federal permitting requirements. Accomplishing this goal will eliminate "gotcha" enforcement actions from the EPA and ultimately maximize regulatory certainty for cattle producers.

### EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

The Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) was created to make it easier and more affordable for Americans to redress the federal government, but when Congress discontinued reporting requirements in 1995, environmental NGOs abused the law by filing frivolous challenges to halt agency work and be reimbursed by the American taxpayer.

These environmental groups have been successful in using EAJA to place more burdensome regulations and delays on cattle producers while straining already tight agency budgets that could be used for other purposes. SDCA member and NCBA past president Todd Wilkinson recent testified before Congress to stop this abuse of financial and political gain by improving reporting requirements, establishing financial limitations on tax-exempt organizations, and capping the legal fees paid to these groups under EAJA.



SDCA congratulates Dr. Mendel Miller, who has been named the State Veterinarian and Executive Animal Industry Board Secretary for the State

Animal Industry Board. Dr. Miller, a native of O'Neil, NE received his Veterinary Medicine degree from Kansas State University. Dr. Miller is a familiar face to many of our members, as he previously served as the assistant state veterinarian before taking the lead role at SDAIB and has been actively involved in animal health issues, working closely with the industry over the years.

**Congratulations Dr. Miller!**



# COW PROLAPSES – A REAL PAIN IN THE REAR END

**Russ Daly, DVM, MS, DACVMP**

South Dakota State University Extension Veterinarian

A talent of experienced veterinary clinic phone-answerers is the ability to distinguish between situations that are true emergencies that require immediate veterinary intervention and ones that can wait. Accomplishing this requires a unique blend of people skills, interrogation, and knowledge of bovine anatomy and physiology!

A great example is the difference between what may seem like two similar bovine maladies: uterine prolapses and vaginal prolapses. Both are readily recognized as problems, each characterized by large pink masses that have plopped out of the back end of a cow – so bizarre and obviously abnormal that even city folk driving by the pasture would recognize something's wrong. But one's just a medical urgency while the other is a medical emergency.

## **PROLAPSES FOLLOWING CALVING: SPORADIC BUT LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES**

It's the uterine version that's the emergency, necessitating immediate fixing in order to save the cow's productivity and sometimes its life. These can be differentiated from a less urgent vaginal prolapse by producers and vet clinic phone-answerers by considering the answer to a simple question: "Did the cow just have a calf?" Uterine prolapses occur immediately after the cow delivers her calf (and are much more sizable than the volleyball-sized vaginal prolapse). Confusion isn't unexpected: neither version occurs very often within a given herd.

The bovine uterus acts like a big muscle at calving time, contracting to deliver the newborn into the world. That contraction continues after the uterus is emptied, expelling placenta and fluid as it begins its shrinkage to its pre-pregnancy state.

In certain conditions, however, that "muscle" becomes weak and flabby, choosing to passively follow the calf out of the pelvis after a residual push or two. In beef cows, the most common reason for this flabbiness is pure exhaustion of the muscle cells after a difficult prolonged delivery of a large calf. Promptly encouraging the cow to stand up after a difficult calving will reduce straining and help the uterus fall back to its normal position, preventing such prolapses. In dairy cows, low blood calcium post-calving ("milk fever") contributes to this weakness of the uterine muscle cells just as it does to the cow's other muscle cells.

Of course, the uterus is not meant to spend time outside the cow. The prolapsed organ swells up due to compromised circulation and becomes prone to contamination and damage, decreasing its ability to maintain the cow's next pregnancy.

Even worse, however, is that the large blood vessels supplying the uterus are anatomically not meant to stretch in this new

direction. As the weighty uterus drops farther and farther from the pelvis, they can stretch to the breaking point, resulting in a rapid fatal shock from blood loss. This blood vessel rupture is the most frequent cause of death for a cow suffering from a uterine prolapse.

When faced with a prolapsed cow, perhaps the most important thing a cattle producer can do is to keep the cow calm and confined so the uterus doesn't fall further out of the pelvis. More than once I've felt my heart sink witnessing an agitated prolapsed cow trot around a pen, watching her uterus drop closer and closer to the ground, the result of which was a broken artery, collapse, and death.

Replacing the heavy, swollen, bloody prolapsed uterus is an ordeal in itself, likened to putting toothpaste back in the tube. Veterinarians have learned tricks to help accomplish this task, but one common theme applies: the sooner it's done, the easier. Special attention needs to be paid to getting the entire organ completely everted back inside: failure to do so means the cow will continue to strain, with the real possibility of a repeat prolapse.

If there's a good thing about a uterine prolapse, its that the cow is not likely to do it again. Unlike pre-calving vaginal prolapses, there is no recognized heritability.

When it comes to uterine prolapses, promptness is the key: both prompt recognition of the problem and prompt replacement before it gets worse. If these happen, there's a good chance the cow can remain a productive member of the herd.

## **REAR-END PROBLEMS BEFORE CALVING: VAGINAL PROLAPSES**

The second version of rear-end cow displacement may appear similar, but is a vastly different condition in a number of ways is the vaginal prolapse.

This dislocation comes from the lining of the birth canal and, in contrast to the uterine prolapse, occurs before calving. Leading up to calving, the ring-shaped muscle around the cow's vulva naturally starts to relax. Add to that increased abdominal pressure from the growing fetus and a rumen filling up with hay during the winter months, and you have a situation where the vaginal lining begins to pooch out. This is visible to the rancher as a spherical pink mass of tissue ranging in size from a tennis ball to a basketball.

When the prolapse is small, it reveals itself intermittently when the cow strains or lies down. These non-persistent vaginal prolapses can often be managed without intense intervention. A

commonly successful approach is to prevent the cow from tanking up on hay, thereby reducing her rumen fill. This is feasible as long as the prolapse can return to its normal location on its own.

But the more time this mass of tissue stays outside the pelvis, becoming irritated by exposure to cold air, manure, and bedding, the more likely it is to swell up enough that it can't go back in by itself. This irritation adds to the cow's desire to strain, making things worse. In some cases, the straining causes the cow's bladder to flip up into this mass of tissue. This clamps off the cow's ability to urinate, resulting in even more straining.

At this point we need to do something. Fortunately, a vaginal prolapse isn't as life-threateningly severe as a uterine prolapse. But it still needs to be tended to: the displaced mass of tissue provides an insurmountable obstacle for the calf to enter the outside world. Like a uterine prolapse, it's much easier to deal with earlier rather than later.

Treatment of a vaginal prolapse requires its replacement into the pelvis. The veterinarian will give the cow an epidural anesthetic to reduce her straining and make her more comfortable during the process. The prolapse is cleaned up, lubricated, and pushed back inside the pelvic canal. If the bladder is incorporated into the prolapse, it might need to be emptied first by lifting the mass and letting urine escape. Once replaced, swelling and irritation will subside.

Unlike a properly replaced uterine prolapse, a vaginal prolapse will likely recur unless steps are taken to keep it in its normal

position. This is usually done by placing a heavy purse-string retaining suture around the vulva.

This method is effective but it has a major drawback – the suture keeps the prolapse from coming out, but also prevents the calf from coming out when that time arrives! For this reason, the most important part of my prolapse-repair visits involved counseling the cow owner how and when to cut the suture out. This requires the cow to be kept close and watched vigilantly for the onset of labor – easier said than done on some operations.

In response to these challenges, devices such as the “Johnson Button” were developed: a big toggle pin that secures the prolapse from inside the pelvis. These allow the calf to pass through the birth canal without cutting a suture first. They're not without complications, frequently requiring antibiotic treatment to prevent infection.

The effect on the cow's reproductive future is another difference between uterine and vaginal prolapses. While uterine prolapses are not likely to recur next calving season, vaginal prolapses practically always will; therefore these cows should eventually be culled from the herd. There is also strong evidence of a genetic predisposition to vaginal prolapses, so heifer calves from these cows should not be retained in the herd.

Here's hoping your calving seasons will be “prolapse-free!” If that doesn't happen, though, prompt attention to either type will help ensure as good an outcome as possible.

**BIG 810 AM Ranch Radio KBHB 105.5 FM**

[www.KBHBradio.com](http://www.KBHBradio.com)



## YOUR ADVANTAGE

POWERED BY ANGUS

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL MANAGER TO

LOCATE ANGUS GENETICS

SELECT MARKETING OPTIONS  
TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS

ACCESS AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION®  
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

BUY THE ADVANTAGE. BUY THE POWER.  
BUY REGISTERED ANGUS GENETICS.

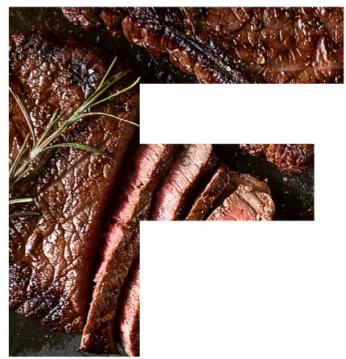
[angus.org/angus-advantage](http://angus.org/angus-advantage)



Andrew Swanson, *Regional Manager*  
507-829-4133  
[aswanson@angus.org](mailto:aswanson@angus.org)  
Minnesota | North Dakota | South Dakota



# ARE YOU IN THE



**BUSINESS?**

I don't know if it is human nature or just how our society has evolved, but it seems like we want to label people and groups. This is certainly happening in the cattle industry, mostly as a marketing ploy of some industry associations. They differentiate themselves by saying they are in the cattle business and not the beef business. Okay, so their members are saying they are selling cattle on the hoof and not beef on the plate. That led me to think, who is our customer? Who are we raising cattle for? Is it the order buyer sitting in the sale barn bidding on your cattle? Or maybe the feedlot that he is filling orders from? Or is it the person that purchases the steak and is sitting down to what we hope will be a positive eating experience? It is important that we consider who our customer is. The genetic decisions that we make, the nutrition and mineral program that we choose, the care that we give our cattle during the year, and the health program that we are on all effect the quality of the animal that we sell.

You may consider your customer is the order buyer at the sale barn, but he is buying cattle that fit a certain type and quality the feedlot or stocker has asked for. The feedlot is ordering that type because they want a finished animal that fits the criteria of the packer. The packer is looking for an animal that will grade highly and offer the best return for their investment. The consumer that purchases the steak is doing so with the expectation that the eating experience will be worth the premium price they are currently paying right now.

The end consumer is who our customer is. It doesn't matter who we sell our cattle to or how many times they are sold before they hit the plate, the final customer is the one who needs to be satisfied. They are the ones that we need to create a wholesome, tender, juicy satisfying protein source for. If we are not raising cattle with them in mind, we are doing a disservice to our industry and will not continue to out compete the other protein sources.

I am in the beef business. I raise cattle with the end consumer in mind. My genetic choices, nutrition program, health decisions, and husbandry practices are done with the end consumer in mind. Because I am in the beef business, the checkoff has benefited me through promotion, developing new cuts of beef, and funding studies that have shown the nutritional benefits of beef.

Through my industry association involvement, I advocate for policy that will benefit the entire industry, not just one segment. For us to continue to be successful, we must support our entire industry.

*Eric Jennings, SDCA past president, Vice Chair NCBA Ag & Food Policy Committee, and proud BEEF producer.*



# FOR THE **CATTLEKIDS!** Legislative Edition

Find the hidden words!

## Did you know?

The legislature is a group of people who are elected by the voters to make laws for a state.

South Dakota's state legislature is made up of two parts; the Senate and the House of Representatives.

There are 105 members who make up the South Dakota Legislature.

L	P	M	Z	P	V	S	V	V	T
D	C	O	M	M	I	T	T	E	E
H	S	B	E	U	B	I	L	L	P
O	L	E	E	P	K	E	O	J	L
U	F	S	N	B	T	T	J	N	A
S	I	H	C	A	I	B	B	U	W
E	S	L	N	P	T	I	Y	A	S
W	O	E	A	W	E	O	F	Q	A
K	S	C	T	L	J	Q	R	S	T
W	L	G	O	V	E	R	N	O	R

LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE  
GOVERNOR  
CAPITOL  
SENATOR  
SENATE  
HOUSE  
BILL  
LAWS

Answers on page 3

# *your operations* **BULL SALE** **HEADQUARTERS**

Maverick 105.5 FM is your go-to source for bull sale information in Northeast SD and Southeast ND. We promote upcoming sales across the Tri-state area, with a focus on reaching potential buyers in our agricultural region. We also highlight the convenience of online viewing and bidding, maximizing exposure for your sale. Let us help you attract more buyers and achieve success—our proven approach has supported many sales and continues to drive results!

*-Dakota Broadcasting*



**ACT NOW!**

Phone:

**605-725-5551**

Email:

[sales@dakotabroadcasting.com](mailto:sales@dakotabroadcasting.com)





# Grow Where You're Planted: *A Story of Starting from Scratch*



Dawn and Matt Butzer's dream of running cows of their own became a reality, but not without some unexpected learning along the way. The Butzer family does not have a traditional story when it comes to their role and story in production agriculture.

Dawn and Matt first crossed paths at a packing plant in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota where they both worked as cattle buyers.

Matt, originally from Ohio, and Dawn, who grew up in Southeast Iowa both came from generational farming and cattle operations. There was not an opportunity for either of them to return to their family's operations, they decided to settle where they were planted on an operation of their own and now call Alcester, South Dakota home.

What began as the purchase of a small feedlot has expanded into a livestock hauling and cow/calf operation in addition to the feedlot. Today, Matt continues to work as a cattle buyer and runs a trucking company, Butzer & Sons LLC – the primary piece to their operation. Dawn fills in across the operation wherever needed.

A family friend offered the Butzer family the opportunity to take over their Red Angus herd several years ago. The spring calving cow herd summers along Brule Creek. The calves are retained for 60 days following weaning then sold through a local sale barn. They enroll all their calves in the Angus Access program, which the Red Angus Association previously called the FCCP. This feeder calf certification program serves a genetic, age, and source verification program. They also Igenity DNA test their heifers to visualize the genetic merit and cattle performance traits allowing Butzer's to consider genetic factors when selecting replacement females.

Their operation is a family affair where their sons, Barrett and Beau, play an integral role. Barrett can often be found in the tractor feeding cows or hauling manure and Beau enjoys caring for baby calves. Recently, Dawn's parents relocated to South Dakota and are always willing to lend a hand and keep the crew fed. Butzer's also have a hired hand who is an asset to their team.

A few years ago, Dawn and Matt looked to add additional pasture to their operation as it was their goal to eventually run cows, and it proved to be a daunting task. When pasture came up for sale it was either not close to home or considered wet ground which was a concern for Dawn because if it were to flood, they didn't have additional hands to help get cows moved in a timely fashion. Butzer's overcame this obstacle by purchasing farm ground close to home and putting it back to pasture.

For Dawn to confidently work to plant farm ground back to pasture, she needed to increase her knowledge in that area. In the summer of 2024, she attended a grazing school hosted by the South Dakota Grassland Coalition (SDGC). "It was three days of drinking from a fire hose, but it was revolutionary," stated Dawn when reflecting on her time spent at the grazing school. The school provided Dawn with



a base to understand her needs when it came to reverting pasture.

Individuals and organizations have assisted Dawn with the planning and implementation of conservation practices. NRCS and Pete Bauman with SDSU Extension assisted when creating a native prairie seed mix, choosing and developing the automatic waterer layout, and low water crossing layouts. When it came time to implement a rotational grazing system, grazing consultants with the SDGC helped the Butzer's develop a plan. Dawn has also learned more about cost share programs available through organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and Game Fish & Parks.

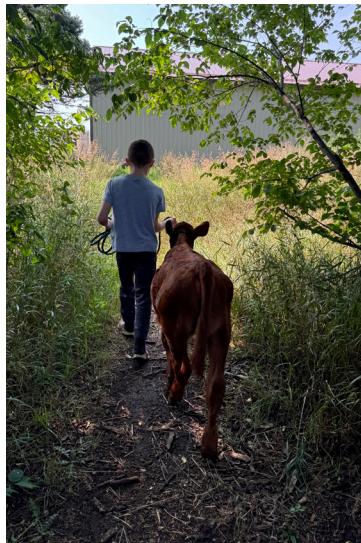
The biggest challenge for the Butzer's was learning enough to make informed decisions and hope everything pans out in the long run. Those decisions included what percentage of cool season versus warm season grasses to plant, how much forbs to include, and the benefits of individual waterers versus large tire tanks. The team spent a year planning and completed the implementation in about three weeks.

**THE ECOLOGY WILL BE MY GRADING SYSTEM;  
IMPROVING THE SOIL HUMUS, HAPPY PLANTS  
WITH PLANT DIVERSITY, THE PRESENCE OF  
BUGS AND BIRDS, AND FINALLY THE CHERRY  
ON TOP – SHINY, HEALTHY RED COWS.**

*- Dawn Butzer*

Advice Dawn offers to the next generation of producers is to never stop learning. Dawn also credits their family friend for guiding them when beginning to run cows on Brule Creek and implementing the management practices she learned from her dad and grandpa. Another piece of advice she offers is always be reading to expand your knowledge and become a better person. Finally, she encourages new producers to surround yourself with those who are successful and who you admire and ask lots of questions.

Dawn and Matt are grateful for the opportunity they had to return farm ground to pasture, and for the assistance from others from building their operation from the ground up. "Our faith got us here," exclaimed Dawn.



# SOME EXPANSION PLANS

**Matthew Diersen, PhD**

Griffith Chair in Agricultural Finance at South Dakota State University

While the early expectations for 2026 are for a continued decline in beef production, there are some indications that expansion may occur. A smaller supply of something is usually tied to a higher price level. Beef and cattle markets both look to have smaller supplies in 2026 compared to in 2025. The smaller number of cattle on feed would be a strong leading indicator of that occurring. As for prices, the extremely high prices for much of 2025 will be difficult to exceed. The volatility in both the live cattle and feeder cattle futures markets have also increased in recent months, limiting the ability to obtain favorable floor prices.

The December World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) and USDA's preliminary baseline estimates have lower beef production projected for 2026. Higher slaughter weights are not enough to overcome smaller calf crops. The WASDE price projections give a smoother pattern for fed cattle than what was observed during 2025. The baseline numbers, which need the forthcoming narrative for context, suggest that beef cow inventory levels will reach a cycle low in 2026. The indication would be that more heifers would be held back in 2026, finally giving more calves in 2027. The baseline includes annual prices for fed cattle, feeder cattle, and calves at the U.S. level. The national calf price tends to be highly correlated with the calf price or light-weight feeder price in South Dakota.

An on-going disruption would be the closed border with Mexico. Imports of feeder cattle from Mexico were around 100,000 head a month before disease concerns. The monthly totals can be quite variable and have fluctuated in the past with droughts, U.S.



prices, etc. However, the closure generally explains the smaller U.S. cattle on feed numbers for much of 2025. The lack of those supplies also made U.S. calves more valuable this past fall. A potential cost of the continued closure would be that beef price may become so high that consumers seek alternatives. The closure has also lasted long enough to partially show up in beef trade flows. Mexico had been exporting cattle to the U.S. After finishing, the U.S. was exporting beef to Mexico. Those exports are lower but swamped by the U.S. seeking beef imports to satisfy consumer demand.

The Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) also expects lower beef production in 2026 compared to in 2025. They also forecast the average or range of fed cattle, feeder cattle and calf prices to be higher in 2026 compared to in 2025, but with more nuance quarter to quarter (see table 1). Their price forecast for live steers, the 5-Area price, is \$235-245 per cwt for 2026, after averaging \$220-222 per cwt in 2025. For 2027 the forecast is \$242-257 per cwt. They see feeder cattle prices (for the southern plains) remaining high, but not higher than briefly observed in the fall of 2025. The price for heavier feeders is forecasted at \$345-355 per cwt for 2026, which would be \$15-25 per cwt higher than during 2025. For 2027, the forecast is \$352-367 per cwt. The price for lighter feeders is forecasted at \$410-420 per cwt for 2026, which would only be \$10-20 per cwt higher than in 2025. The modest increases continue into 2027 with prices forecasted at \$415-430 per cwt. Note that lighter feeder cattle often trade at \$5-10 per cwt higher in South Dakota compared to in the southern plains.

Table 1. Quarterly Cattle Price Projections (\$/cwt).

Year - Quarter	Live Steers 5-Area	Feeder Steers 7-800#	Feeder Steers 5-600#
2026 - I	234-328	344-348	411-415
2026 - II	238-243	346-351	412-417
2026 - III	240-244	351-357	417-423
2026 - IV	236-243	348-355	410-420

Source: Livestock Marketing Information Center as of 12/08/2025

Throughout late October and early November of 2025 in South Dakota, there were several weeks where replacement heifers at USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reported locations traded at a premium to steer calves of the same grade and weight. Other heifers traded at a more typical discount to steers, reflecting steers' typical better rate of gain and higher finish weight. Such premiums for replacements usually only happen when the cattle cycle is shifting into an expansion phase. Similar instances also happened in neighboring states, just not with the same consistency.

The premium paid for replacement heifers may be a normal response by those willing and able to expand. However, it also happened during a period of extremely high prices. The calves from those heifers will need to be quite valuable for the returns to be positive. Another oddity was the trading of lighter-weight beef calves. There were more 2-300# and 3-400# calves with prices, but the overall volume of head traded would need to be quantified to draw strong conclusions. Anecdotally, high prices worked to pull calves forward. Continued higher returns for the cow-calf sector are needed for sustained, widespread expansion.



## Water Quality, Stewardship, and Common Sense

Revised Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rules published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a national level and calls for additional regulations for agricultural operations on a state level have spurred many conversations about water quality and environmental regulations. There is often an unfair picture painted of the very people who live closest to these landscapes: South Dakotan farmers and ranchers. Concerns are raised that farmers and ranchers are eager to drain wetlands or pollute streams unless there are financial incentives or strict regulations. That's simply not true.

There is nobody that cares more about the health of our land, water, and wildlife than the people whose livelihoods depend on it. Farmers and ranchers are not just landowners; we are land stewards. We drink the same water, we raise our families here, and we depend on healthy ecosystems to raise cattle and grow crops to feed our neighbors.

### **WOTUS RULES**

The EPA's proposed WOTUS rules are not a threat to wetlands, rather it's a long overdue clarification for farmers and ranchers. For years, producers have operated under vague, shifting definitions of what constitutes a federally regulated body of water. The proposed rule provides clarity and consistency that we need to responsibly manage our land without fear of regulatory whiplash or unintended violations.

The revised WOTUS rule doesn't eliminate protections but rather refines them. It recognizes that not every puddle or stock pond should be subject to federal permitting. It empowers states and local communities to take the lead in conservation, while still protecting navigable waters and connected wetlands.

### **WATER QUALITY**

South Dakota farmers and ranchers are already actively protecting water quality through proven, on-the-ground practices. Cattle producers routinely implement rotational and managed grazing systems that maintain ground cover, reduce erosion, and improve water infiltration. Many fence cattle out of creeks and wetlands, install off-stream water sources, and maintain vegetated buffers along waterways to protect streambanks and filter runoff. These voluntary choices are made by people who understand that healthy land is productive and working land. Farmers and ranchers support clean water and healthy habitats not because a rule tells us to, but because it's the right thing to do.

We welcome dialogue about water quality and wetland protection. But let's not frame this as a battle between regulation and destruction. South Dakota's producers will continue doing what we have done for generations: protecting the land that sustains our operations and our communities.

*Warren Symens, Marshall County farmer & rancher, is the past president of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association.*



## FAREWELL FROM THE CATTLE PEN

### Warren Symens, SDCA Past President

Over several generations, things have evolved and changed on our family's ranch. I recall my dad and his brothers saying how livestock never left the place "unfinished" when they were kids. My grandpa believed he could capture the most value - whether it was cattle, hogs, sheep, or chickens - if he fed at least part of the crop, raised them, and sold a finished product. By the 1940s, he discovered how many more pounds he could get out of a three-way cross bred calf, which also meant more meat to feed his family of nine kids. He was a heckuva cattleman and a heckuva beef producer.

When my dad and uncles began looking for a way to keep four families on the operation, they turned to the seedstock business. My dad built an 800 head finishing operation at his place. With that finished animal in mind, they looked at the different continental breeds entering North America, and grandpa's three-way cross cow became the base for both recips and breeding up their herd of Limousin cattle.

In the 1980's, my dad began selling beef out of a walk-in freezer off the farm. One year, he moved 100 head through that freezer. He also sent cattle to regional plants and shipped reefer loads of swinging beef to Chicago, Detroit, and the West Coast capturing as much value as he could from the finished product. Meanwhile, his brothers focused on breeding beef bulls to create more of that final product. They were all, and a couple still are, tremendous cattlemen and tremendous beef producers.

When I returned to the operation in 1999, we had already produced a niche product for a natural beef entity for years. We received individual carcass data back on every finished animal, many of them bought from bull customers. By combining that data with a constant eye on phenotype, we were able to raise not only better cattle, but better beef. Our family profited from both and continues to look to what is next on the horizon. I hope to continue the tradition of being both a cattleman and a beef producer!

This openness to evolving as the industry and consumer demand changes is what first drew me to the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association. SDCA members are always finding ways to be better cattlemen and produce the beef that drives demand today. But it goes deeper than that. The

association not only responds to unforeseen state, national, and global events, but also puts proactive measures in place to ensure those responses are accurate, rapid, and grounded in integrity. Our board members have worked tirelessly to craft a plan for the brand board's future productivity. The cattle feeder committee serves as our members' voice on permitting and environmental issues as well as providing education and resources. Board members and volunteers cook and serve beef at events across the state and have turned Cattlemen's Cookouts into profitable ventures for the association. Region Roundups, launched several years ago, continue to grow and be important events for connection among members. Our days spent in Pierre and Washington, D.C. are met with open doors and cooperation as we advance the interests of members.

Much like our own operations, SDCA will continue to give as much as we put into it. SDCA is as diverse as its members, who all have something to contribute to the organization whether we raise one or one hundred head. Some of us are cow/calf producers, others run a stocking operation, some run finishing lots, and others are seedstock producers. There are those who beef direct to consumer and others who don't. Some dabble in all the above, while others make a successful operation from just one aspect of the industry. Together our producer members, board members, policy chair holders, and student members are poised to grow and continue to be the voice of cattle and beef producers across South Dakota.

### THANK YOU

On a personal note, as my presidency has come to an end, I know I can't possibly thank everyone by name. A few stand out: Eric Jennings, for his friendship, guidance, and willingness to answer questions; Craig Bieber, for his drive and determination; all the board members past and present I've served alongside; and special recognition to Todd Wilkinson and the late Myron Williams, two men I learned so much from at national events during my tenure. Thanks also to Taya and the staff, who gave us the tools to succeed. Most of all, thank you to the membership for allowing me to serve and giving me the direction to do so on your behalf.



# SYMENS BROTHERS

## 46th Annual MUSCLE UP FOR PROFIT SALE

Thursday, February 26, 2026 • 1 PM  
At the Farm - Amherst, South Dakota

### SELLING 110 HEAD

90 YEARLING BULLS

10 OPEN HEIFERS • 10 BRED HEIFERS

Purebred & Lim-Flex • All Polled • Red & Black



**SYES 156N**  
4/13/25 • PB • HP/Red • BW: 84 • WW: 752  
**S:** TREF Lone Ranger 577L  
**D:** Miss SYES Easy Going 56H  
CE: 14 BW: 1.6 WW: 71 YW: 107  
MK: 27 CM: 8 SC: 0.62 DC: 15 YG: -0.45  
CW: 37 RE: 1.20 MB: -0.23 \$TPI: 117



**SYES 902N ET**  
2/21/25 • PB • HP/Blk • BW: 78 • WW: 683  
**S:** RUNL Justified 364J  
**D:** Miss SYES Worktime 66B  
CE: 15 BW: 0.2 WW: 73 YW: 114  
MK: 26 CM: 7 SC: 0.50 DC: 14 YG: -0.35  
CW: 43 RE: 0.92 MB: 0.09 \$TPI: 136



**SYES 915N ET**  
2/25/25 • PB • HP/Blk • BW: 78 • WW: 738  
**S:** RUNL Justified 364J  
**D:** Miss SYES Worktime 66B  
CE: 12 BW: 1.7 WW: 85 YW: 132  
MK: 26 CM: 6 SC: 0.50 DC: 16 YG: -0.40  
CW: 39 RE: 1.01 MB: -0.07 \$TPI: 112



**SYES 96N ET**  
3/27/25 • PB • HP/Red • BW: 98 • WW: 750  
**S:** Wulfs Kactus 4841K  
**D:** Miss SYES Worktime 66B  
CE: 7 BW: 3.8 WW: 80 YW: 123  
MK: 30 CM: 2 SC: 0.85 DC: 16 YG: -0.41  
CW: 29 RE: 0.96 MB: -0.19 \$TPI: 84



**SYES 651N**  
3/25/25 • PB • HP/Red • BW: 98 • WW: 775  
**S:** SYES Knockout 23K  
**D:** Miss Beamer Worktime 650D  
CE: 7 BW: 4.5 WW: 75 YW: 119  
MK: 27 CM: 4 SC: 0.70 DC: 11 YG: -0.57  
CW: 31 RE: 1.39 MB: -0.22 \$TPI: 97



**SYES 195N**  
3/26/25 • PB • HP/Blk • BW: 98 • WW: 706  
**S:** SYES Knockout 23K  
**D:** Miss SYES Devils Lake 695G  
CE: 4 BW: 5.5 WW: 86 YW: 130  
MK: 22 CM: 4 SC: 0.84 DC: 18 YG: -0.42  
CW: 42 RE: 1.20 MB: -0.13 \$TPI: 115

**Symens**  
**SYES** Brothers  
Your Guarantee of Predictable Genetics

### SALE TEAM:

#### AUCTIONEER:

Chisum Peterson - 605/730-4214

#### SALE MANAGEMENT:

MC Marketing

Kiley - 580/581-7652

Wiley - 320/287-0751

#### LODGING:

Hampton Inn - 605/262-2600  
Aberdeen, SD

Catalog & Videos - BID ONLINE

**DVAuction**  
Broadcasting Real-Time Auctions

ALL CATTLE FULLY GUARANTEED.  
FREE DELIVERY WITHIN 400 MILES.  
CALL FOR A SALE CATALOG.

# SDCA AFFILIATE CONTACTS

Black Hills: Britton Blair, Vale • 605-347-0426 •  
britton.blair@yahoo.com

Central: Derek Chase, Huron • 605-354-3695 •  
derekchase07@gmail.com

Clark Hamlin: Chance Popham, Hayti • 605-880-2717 •  
P4cattleco@gmail.com

Davison-Hanson: Calli Williams, Letcher • 605-695-1990 •  
callicwilliams@gmail.com

East Central: Andy Dupraz, White • 605-693-3191 •  
adupraz@itctel.com

Kingsbury: Nick Wilkinson, Lake Preston • 605-203-0711 •  
wilkinson77@gmail.com

McCook-Miner-Lake: Pete Hanson, Fedora • 605-421-8251 •  
hansenrancher@gmail.com

Northeast: Nancy Johnson, Milbank • 605-432-5600 •  
michaelnancy06257@gmail.com

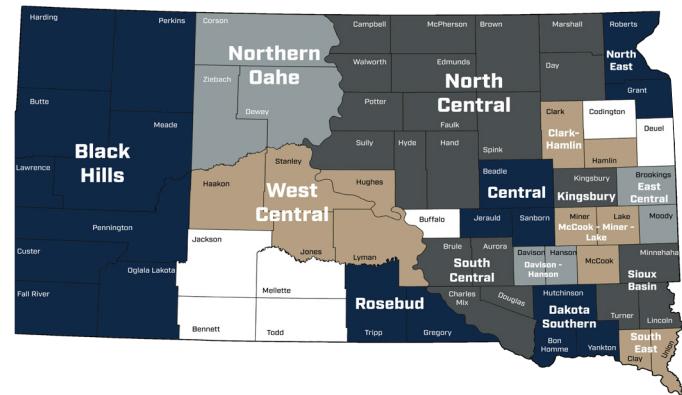
North Central: Bryan Gill, Timber Lake • 701-730-0134 •  
bigdreddgenetics@hotmail.com

Northern Oahe: Jay Jones, Trail City • 605-845-3082 •  
jones@westriv.com

Sioux Basin: Carl Johnson, Dell Rapids • 605-651-5064 •  
cjohnsonfarm@outlook.com

South Central: Kent Geppert, Kimball • 605-778-6227 •  
geppert@midstatesd.net

West Central: Matt Jones, Midland • 605-843-2066 •  
ropeonthecorner@yahoo.com



When **timing** is everything,  
**Breakdowns** are costly and  
**Customer service** is priceless.

Commercial Beef & Dairy Sales & Service • New & Used Equipment

SALES & SERVICE TO THE INDUSTRY FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS!



Central City, Nebraska  
(308) 946-3068

Lexington, Nebraska  
(308) 324-7409

Brush, Colorado  
(970) 842-5165

[BillsVolume.com](http://BillsVolume.com)



# In it for the long haul

Agriculture has been in our blood since we first opened our doors in 1872. And through every growing season since, we've been helping farmers and ranchers thrive in this unpredictable industry.

**How can we help your operation today?**





# Cattlemen's EDUCATION Day

February 19, 2026 | Brookings, SD  
Cow/Calf Unit, South Dakota State University

*Free Event!*

Learn how yield is calculated, what impacts maturity, and how grades are determined in the plant. Plus, get up to speed on the latest cattle implant rules and explore the benefits of soybeans as a high-quality feed.

## TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 8:00 AM - Registration
- 9:00 AM - Meat Lab Tour
- 10:15 AM - Soybeans & Feeder Cattle
- Noon - Lunch
- 1:00 PM - Implants: Rules & Updates
- 2:00 PM - Carcass Quality & Grade
- 3:00 PM - Open Discussion

Learn more & register  
at [sdcattlemen.org](http://sdcattlemen.org)

