

Drought

mer’s windy, dry conditions and lack of irrigation water made it difficult to grow hay, which is used to feed the cattle over the winter.

Brown said “I put up a fraction of the hay I normally put up. If you don’t get moisture in April and May, you don’t get a good hay crop.”

Longwell agreed that hay was an issue; they only put up a quarter of the hay they usually do, leaving them and many others to buy hay this year.

Even though Axtell said they had a good hay crop by irrigating from the river, they will still be buying some hay. As the talk of buying hay comes up, most say they saw the drought coming and have already bought hay. For those that haven’t, the price goes up almost daily. Some local hay seems high priced because you can find cheap hay out of state but then you ending up paying a lot on the freight for getting it trucked here, so you’re not saving anything. Along with hay many are also supplementing the feed with protein tubs, beet pulp, barley hay.

Grasshoppers

Earlier this Spring, University of Wyoming Extension entomologist Scott Schell warned that parts of Wyoming could see an outbreak of pestilent grasshoppers this year, based on population surveys in the summer 2019.

“This proved especially true for the upper end of Owl Creek as well as other sporadic areas around the county,” stated Barton Stam, the UW Extension range specialist. “We are hoping that with the early frost and snow on Sept. 8, some of the grasshopper eggs will have frozen, thus reducing the number of hatchlings next Spring.”

Other experts have said that grasshopper populations thrive when winters are milder, such was the case last winter.

Schell stated that grasshoppers can easily outcompete livestock and other wildlife for forage. Being small is an advantage for the grasshoppers. They can clip down forage and then eat the grass as it grows from the crown. This prevents the forage from getting tall enough for larger grass-eating animals to grasp with their teeth. Pest grasshoppers, when their preferred food plants are gone, will then start feeding on shrubs like sagebrush and mountain

mahogany. These shrubs are what other wildlife, such as sage grouse and mule deer, depend on for winter browse. In drought years, when there is little regrowth of grasses and forbs, pest grasshoppers will migrate to find food, thus causing problems where they usually don’t.

Livestock Health Considerations

Water needs for livestock may increase substantially during a drought due to above-average daytime temperatures and low-quality feedstuffs. Because of the high importance to metabolic functions, failure to provide enough water will reduce animal performance more quickly and severely than any other nutrient. Drought conditions will also force cattle to graze on shorter and shorter forage, increasing the risk of picking up the soil-borne pathogens. Dry, hot weather can leave pastures thin and short. Occasionally, this may entice cattle to browse on weeds they wouldn’t typically eat with adequate forage available. Some weeds can be very toxic to cattle and other livestock.

Local veterinarian Dr. Kevin Dickey can attest to the fact that nutritional deficiencies also have an adverse effect on cattle conception rates during a drought. Conception rates will first decline in lactating first-calf heifers because they still need nutrients for growth, in contrast to mature cows. Lactation increases cow nutrient requirements substantially. Continued nursing further delays a cow’s return to estrus when nutritional deficiencies occur.

Fall is when Dr. Dickey usually books up with pregnancy testing cows for ranchers. Already he has seen the effects of the drought with many young cows coming up open (not pregnant).

“During a drought it is not unusual for cows to go into nutritional anestrus; basically they quit cycling and can’t conceive. A cow has to be nutritionally sound; they need to be on the gain, not losing body condition. The first thing that goes is the cow’s ability to cycle,” said Dickey “Leaving ranchers with cows that aren’t producing calves.”

Destocking

As ranchers are facing lack of feed in pastures and skyrocketing hay prices, one of

the options is destocking or selling off cattle. This time of year, they usually wean and sell the calves. More ranchers are weaning earlier than usual in order to get the calves off the cows so the cows aren’t being “dragged down” and lose any more body condition. Early weaning is not a decision that’s made lightly. It means the calves won’t grow as large, which means less income this year.

As ranchers pregnancy test their cows all open cows should be culled as a first priority, since they will not contribute income to the ranch. Aged cows are next in line to be sold. When body condition score is kept high, age may not affect reproductive performance, but age can reduce the ability of a cow to hold a high body condition score.

One study (Bourdon and Brinks 1987) showed that a cow’s feed intake begins to decline at age eight. The study also found that milk production in range cattle begins to decline at the same time. Teeth health is also a factor to consider. Cows should be “mouthed” during pregnancy testing. Cows with missing teeth, called “broken mouths,” can be easily identified and culled. Broken-mouth cattle have more difficulty consuming forage, particularly in short feed years.

Waiting too late to destock can be an issue in itself, not only because sale prices will be abnormally low, but also because the land will take longer to recover from overgrazing. Sometimes ranchers focus too much on producing pounds of beef and not enough on their soil and forage resources.

Ranchers have to consider ecological management, the health of the land during and after a drought important. The earlier they can destock the more time the land has time to recover and be available for future use.

Federal Assistance

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) serves farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through many agricultural programs. They offer a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs.

In April, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) in

which farmers and ranchers whose operation had been directly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic could apply for assistance. Then on Sept. 18 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced they would continue with CFAP2.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is using funds being made available from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act and CARES Act to support row crops, livestock, specialty crops, dairy, aquaculture and many additional commodities. USDA has incorporated improvements in CFAP 2 based from stakeholder engagement and public feedback to better meet the needs of impacted farmers and ranchers.

Producers can apply for CFAP 2 at USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices.

Applications are open until Dec. 11.

Other FSA programs that can potentially offer funding and assistance are:

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland and conservation structures damaged by natural disasters and implement emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. This can help with waterlines, well drilling, stock tanks and solar panels. Applications open until Oct. 23.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides payments to eligible livestock owners and contract growers who have covered livestock and who are also producers of grazed forage crop acreage (native and improved pasture land with permanent vegetative cover or certain crops planted specifically for grazing) that have suffered a loss of grazed forage due to a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Applications open until Jan. 30, 2021.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters, such as drought, that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting. Applications open until Dec. 1.

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards, drought and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs. This can help with instances when the producer has to haul water to livestock. Applications open until January 30, 2021.

Washakie County Farm Service Agency’s Executive Director, Lisa Bower encourages residents to participate in the National Drought Mitigation Center’s Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR). Citizens can report drought-related conditions and impacts within the U.S. It is a nation-wide service based at the University of Nebraska, in partnership with the National Integrated Drought Information System. Information submitted by using this form appears on the drought condition observer map and becomes part of a permanent public record. It is important for Wyoming residents to report on local conditions. While it doesn’t determine drought conditions, it can call attention to the area conditions and then trigger further investigations that can result in federal programs being offered in that area. The report is easy to submit, asking for location or address, with categories to report impacts and a section to upload relevant photos. CMOR recommends that you submit a photo each month or each season, to provide an ongoing comparison of wet, dry and normal conditions. Find the website at <https://droughtimpacts.unl.edu/Condition-MonitoringObservations.aspx>

More information about FSA programs, services and to locate the local FSA service center can be found on the FSA website at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Wyoming>

Tax Relief

Federal tax structure can sometimes impede rapid response to drought. If a producer destocks early and sells all or part of the herd, the income is treated as a capital gain that is heavily taxed. This, in turn, can lead to a shift in income tax bracket, making it more diffi-

cult to retain the cash needed to restock when the drought is over.

In a news release dated Sept. 22 from the Internal Revenue Service, there is an extension of replacement period for livestock sold on account of drought. Drought-stricken farmers and ranchers have more time to replace livestock. Farmers and ranchers who were forced to sell livestock due to drought may have an additional year to replace the livestock and defer tax on any gains from the forced sales, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

To qualify for relief, the farm or ranch must be in an applicable region. The Wyoming counties included in this designation are Albany, Big Horn, Campbell, Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Goshen, Hot Springs, Johnson, Laramie, Natrona, Niobrara, Platte, Sheridan, Sweetwater, Uinta, and Washakie. Details, including an example of how this provision works, can be found in Notice 2006-82, available at IRS.gov.

Surviving the Drought

Rebuilding after a drought can take years and have a lasting impact on an operation’s financial viability. The choices faced by producers in this condition are often complicated by the nature of the cattle production and personal values. Producers often have many years of careful breeding involved in producing a specific type of animal and are reluctant to lose the fruits of their efforts. Many ranchers are part of a family legacy and view ranching not so much as business but as a life style and heritage, and it becomes difficult to make some of the tough decisions that seem to threaten that life. Ranchers in Hot Springs and neighboring counties will be making difficult choices this next month as they head into winter.

Brown, Axtell and Longwell all agreed that there are many decisions to make this year including how many cows to sell, what federal assistance programs they qualify for and did they buy enough hay to make it through the winter with the cows they did keep.

The ranchers silver lining: When they restock and rebuild the herd, it will be the perfect time to improve herd genetics!

Public notices

STATE OF)
WYOMING)
) ss.

COUNTY OF)
HOT SPRINGS)

IN THE MATTER OF)
THE ESTATE OF)

WILLIAM FRANCIS CASTLE, JR.,)
also known as WILLIAM F. CASTLE,)
also known as WILLIAM CASTLE,)
also known as BILL CASTLE,)

Deceased.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
FOR DECREE

TO THE PUBLIC AND ALL PERSONS
INTERESTED IN SAID PROPERTY:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an
Application for Decree of Ownership of Real
Property pursuant to W.S. §2-1-201 & 2-1-
205, for the real property described below
has been filed in the Fifth Judicial District
Court in Thermopolis, Hot Springs County,
Wyoming, where Robert Castle claims to be
the sole heir under the Last Will and Testa-
ment of William F. Castle who died in Ther-
mopolis, Hot Springs County, Wyoming, on
July 28, 2020. In said application Robert
Castle claims he is entitled to the real prop-
erty further described as follows:

Being a tract of land situate in the
NE1/4SE1/4 of Section 31, Township
44 North, Range 94 West, 6th P.M.,
Hot Springs County, Wyoming, and
being more particularly described as
follows: Beginning at a point on the
east line of the SE1/4 of said Section
31 from which the northeast corner of
the SE1/4 of said Section 31 bears
N. 0°27'00" E., 511.16 feet distance;
thence S. 0°27'00" W., 480.00 feet;
thence N. 89°59'32" W., 780.29 feet;
thence N. 8°54'20" E., 271.29 feet;
thence S. 89°59'32" E., 437.25 feet;
thence N. 0°27'00" E., 229.42 feet;

IN THE
DISTRICT COURT

Probate No. P2020-21

thence S. 86°44'00" E., 303.49 feet to
the point of beginning;

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that
pursuant to W.S. §2-1-205(d) an objection to
the Application shall be filed with the Court
before the expiration of the later of twenty
(20) days after the mailing if the Notice is
mailed to a recipient, or thirty (30) days af-
ter the date of first publication of this No-
tice, and if such objection is not filed, it will
be forever barred.

Direct Inquiries To: Jerry D. Williams
Williams Law Office
339 Arapahoe
Thermopolis, WY
82443
307-864-2517

Pub. Oct. 8 & 15, 2020

No. 8841

STATE OF)
WYOMING)
) ss.

COUNTY OF)
HOT SPRINGS)

Probate No. P2020-20

IN THE MATTER OF)
THE ESTATE OF)
BRUCE A. ADAMS)

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR
DECREE OF DISTRIBUTION

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Tan-
ner O. Adams, Garrett D. Adams, Heather
Adams Peterson and Hailey Adams Rogers
filed an Application for Decree of Distribu-
tion on September 14, 2020, asking that the
following described real property be set over
to them from the Estate of Bruce A. Adams:

Lot 11 of the Miller-Schmidt
Subdivision to be commonly known as
Crimson View Estates, according to
the official plat filed June 26, 2015 in
Plat Cabinet A, at page 181 and in
Micro Book 168 at page 256, Hot

Springs County, Wyoming.

THE COURT shall consider this Appli-
cation after November 11, 2020. Any per-
son objecting to this Decree of Distribution
shall file their objections by November 11,
2020 with the Hot Springs County Clerk of
District Court.

DATED this 21st day of September, 2020.

Bobbi Overfield
District Court Judge

Pub. Oct. 8 & 15, 2020

No. 8840

U.S. Postal Service
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
The Thermopolis Independent Record,
USPS Publication No. 627-300. Filed Sept.
26, 2019, for edition Sept. 24, 2020. Fre-
quency of issue: Weekly. Number of issues
published annually: 52. Annual subscrip-
tion price: \$38. Address of publication and
headquarters: P.O. Box 31, Thermopolis,
WY 82443-0031.
Publisher: Lara Love, P.O. Box 31, Ther-
mopolis, WY 82443-0031. Owner: Thomas
R. Mullen, 33 Maxville Rd., Phillipsburg,
MT 59858.
Known bondholders, mortgagees and
other security holders owning or holding
one percent or more of the total amounts of
bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.
Average number of copies each issue
during preceding 12 months: Total num-
ber copies (net press run), 1,799 plus. Paid
or requested circulations through dealers
and carriers, street vendors and counter
circulation 601, through mail subscription
793. Total paid and requested circulations,
1,404. Free distribution by mail carrier, or
other means (samples, complimentary or
other free copies), 84. Total distribution,
1,488. Copies not distributed (office use,
left over, unaccounted, spoiled after print-
ing), 311. Total, 1,799.
Actual number of copies of single issue
published nearest to filing date: Total num-
ber copies (net press run), 1,800 plus. Paid
or requested circulations through dealers

and carriers, street vendors and counter
circulation 601, through mail subscription
794. Total paid and requested circulations,
1,405. Free distribution by mail carrier,
or other means (samples, complimentary
or other free copies), 84. Total distribu-
tion, 1,489. Copies not distributed (office
use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after
printing), 311. Total, 1,800.
Online only subscriptions, 148.

I certify that the statements made by
me above are correct and complete.

/s/ Lara Love
Publisher

Pub. Oct. 8, 2020

No.8841

NOTICE OF FINAL PAYMENT
The District Manager of the Hot Springs
Conservation District, acting as agent for
the Hot Springs Conservation District, has
accepted all work as complete according to
the Project Agreement set forth in the writ-
ten Agreement between Don McCumber and
the Hot Springs Conservation District dated
the 1st of October, 2020 for the MSM Pipe-
line/McCumber Conveyance Projects. Don
McCumber is entitled to the final payment
therefore, and on the 41st day after the first
publication of this notice final payment of
the full amount due under the Agreement
will be made. Nothing in this notice shall
be construed as relieving the Contractor
and the Sureties on its bond from any claim
or claims for the work or labor done or ma-
terials or supplies furnished in the execu-
tion of the Agreement. All persons having
claims for labor and materials furnished
by the Contractor shall present a verified
statement of the amount due and unpaid on
account of the same to the District prior to
the day specified for final payment. Fail-
ure on the part of the claimant to file such
a statement will relieve the District from
any and all liability on such claim.

Sponsor: Hot Springs Conservation District
By: Dara Culp, District Manager

Pub. Oct. 8 & 22, 2020

No.8841