



American Legion District 5 spring meeting is March 30

▲ At the Clark American Legion Hall

The annual District 5 Spring Meeting of the South Dakota American Legion will be held Saturday, March 30, 2019 in Clark for Legionnaires from Day, Grant, Marshall, Roberts, Clark, Codington, Deuel, Hamlin and Brookings counties.

The District 5 meeting will begin with a social half hour beginning at 5:30 p.m. The meal will be served at 6:00 p.m. with the District Executive meeting slated for 7:00 p.m. the meeting and the meal will be held at the Clark American Legion Hall, in Clark. Over 100 members are expected.

Participants will elect District Commanders and District Vice Commanders for two year terms

and County Commanders and Vice Commanders in the District for one-year terms during the business meeting. Darin Lewis is the Clark County Commander and Rob McGraw is the Clark American Legion Post #60 Commander.

The session will also feature Post Americanism reports, a membership turn-in and recognition of the District 5 Legionnaire of the Year.

District Commander Matt Lagerstrom will conduct the Legion business session and Clark Post #60 will be in charge of local arrangements.

The District 5 Auxiliary will hold its district meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Ulyot Building Community Room.



John Geigle and his son Sully, 5, sometimes do chores together on the family farm north of Wall, S.D. Sully, who helped his dad break up an ice jam in a canal on a recent morning said working with cows is his favorite part of being a young ranch hand.

Photo: Bart Pfankuch

Farmers, ranchers face hard decisions as ag economy continues downward slide

Bart Pfankuch
South Dakota News Watch

A 5-year slide in the agricultural economy in South Dakota and across the Great Plains has left many producers operating at a loss and is putting some in jeopardy of losing their farms.

A major decline in most commodity prices is the primary cause of the losses, but extended drought and recent flooding combined with a lingering trade war with China and other importers have added to the financial and emotional stress on farmers and ranchers.

Producers, many of whom get paid only once a year, are increasingly facing the prospect of putting off improvements, reducing family expenses or even leaving the industry completely. Recent government reports also highlight a rise in farm bankruptcies in the Midwest, especially among dairies, and point to growing concerns over depression among farmers that can lead to suicide.

U.S. Department of Agriculture data show that cash receipts for agricultural products are down significantly in all Great Plains states from 2013 to 2017, and that net farm income has trended downward as well.

Scott VanderWal, a farmer from Volga who is president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation and a vice president of the American Farm Bureau, said farmers and ranchers in South Dakota are reeling from the slow but steady decrease in income.

"We're really in the fifth year of declining equity for farmers and ranchers," VanderWal said. "We're at the position where there isn't an ag commodity that has made any money in the past five years."

In the short term, the downward trend is exerting high stress on farmers and their families and forcing many to make tough financial choices. The overall state economy, including sales tax collections that fund most government services,

will take a hit as well, VanderWal said.

"It's going to be hard on everybody, and it will be hard on Main Street," VanderWal said. "Chemicals, feed, equipment, groceries, all the places farmers go to town to spend money, when times are bad, we don't go spend that money."

But a larger, longer-term worry hovers over the depressed farm economy.

According to VanderWal and others, if things don't bounce back, the potential long-range impacts could alter South Dakota agriculture at a fundamental level for generations years to come.

The extended downturn could cause more farmers to declare bankruptcy. Older farmers may cash out and leave the industry while they still have some land and equipment equity remaining. Younger producers with limited equity may not be able to sustain losses and could get out of farming. Potential new entrants into the industry may choose another career option if they don't see a path to profitability.

Ultimately, the potential exists that corporate or foreign interests may buy up farms and turn families that were once landowners into contract employees who farm the land but don't have the stability or commitment to stewardship that follows ownership.

"Whether it's five years or 10 years, it's very serious and we could have fewer family farms in the end," said Jerry Runia, 60, who farms and ranches near Estelline in Hamlin County. "We want to keep this a rural state, and if it changes like that, I think it affects everybody. Right now, people trust family farmers. In the future, will you trust whatever owner-investor is running it?"

Incomes fall, stresses rise

Both big-picture data sets and individual balance sheets show the depth of the economic crisis in agriculture.

Farmers, ranchers
(continued on page 7)



Twins open the 2019 baseball season tomorrow with a home game

The 2019 major league baseball season is upon us. Tomorrow, Thursday, March 28, the Minnesota Twins open the season against the Cleveland Indians, in Minneapolis.

Before the stadium was cleared of all the snow, it probably looked much like Dakota Style Field in Dickinson Park. Snow is melting and with three feet, at least, of snow on the ground as of a week ago, one hopes it is a slow melt.

Flooding is predicted for much of eastern South Dakota, especially the

river basins of the Big Sioux, Skunk, James and Missouri River valley basins.

When one reads this, the snow melt will have taken this level down significantly. It has been a fairly slow melt to this time, but there is quite a bit of snow to melt.

According to the official weather accounts, in Clark, the snow depth for the winter is 39.1". There was 2.27" of moisture thus far this month, with 9.9" of new snow in March.

Above average snowfall increases flooding potential

"A total of 800,000 acres of winter wheat were planted last fall in South Dakota," noted SDSU Extension Agronomy field specialist David Karki who works out of the Watertown Regional Extension Center.

"In this area we went into fall last year with a good moisture content and a good soil profile," continued Karki. "Most of our winter wheat in the state is in the central part of the state which was drier than normal last year, so the extra snowfall this winter really helped the soils there."

The benefit of more snow on the ground this past winter has insulated the ground also which is a benefit to the dormant wheat crop in the ground.

Dormancy in cooler temps may survive the water logged soils this

time of year and it was noted that the depletion of oxygen in water at cooler temperatures is slower than in warmer temperatures. So that's good.

"Gradually melting with the cooler temps now is better than a very sudden melting on top of frozen ground. A nice gradual melt insures more water going into the ground versus flowing over the top of frozen ground.

With warm temperatures in the forecast, flooding is expected in the area.

iGrow changes

Karki explained that this spring the iGrow, the South Dakota Ag Extension website, link's url has been changed. "So now one may go to extension.sdstate.edu for their

information. For now it will automatically change over from an iGrow request to the new extension website location, but we don't know how long that will be in effect."

"Currently a red 'flood' bar is located at the top of the site for ease in accessing the flood information and articles."

The climate outlook predicts cool temperatures will linger into spring and stated that there was a probability of flooding in eastern South Dakota.

More rain is predicted as well according to the SDSU Extension Climatologist Laura Edwards and NOAA's April climate outlook as of March 21, 2019.

"This is not the outlook that many wanted to hear," said Edwards. "The risk of major flooding

is not over. Now is the time to act."

Across the state Edwards said snow pack is above average for this time of the year, increasing potential.

Flooding potential (continued on page 2)

WEATHER

Robert Cole - Official
Weather Observer

	HI	LO	PR
Mar. 19.....	36	18	0
Mar. 20.....	38	23	0
Mar. 21.....	39	22	0
Mar. 22.....	42	22	0
Mar. 23.....	42	23	0
Mar. 24.....	50	30	.06
Mar. 25.....	39	27	0
2019 precipitation to date	4.48		
2018 precipitation to date	0.97		



Clark middle school students in the fifth and sixth grade are putting on the musical 'The Lion King Kids'. One show only will be presented to the public on Friday evening - March 29 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school gym.

Practicing with some of the props recently were the 'wildebeests' from left to right, Trayton 'TJ' Ambrose, Zane Werdel, Julian McElhone, Atticus Stiefel, Lincoln Reidburn, Rustin Hansen and Damian Severson.

The Lion King Kids is this Friday

"It's been a few years since we've done a musical, so we thought we'd give it a shot," said first year middle school play director and Clark School's K-12 vocal music director Amy Nelson.

"It's actually a dinner theatre and all of those tickets have sold out already but there is plenty of room for those wanting to come and see the

play at 7:00," invited Mrs. Nelson.

She stated that 'The Lion King Kids' is a play put out by Music Theatre International made for middle school students. It's a mix of the story line from the Disney movie - The Lion King and the Broadway version of the movie.

It has a couple new songs that are not sung in the movie but are

familiar such as 'He Lives in You' and 'One by One', along with the traditional Lion King songs.

Having the Lion King story on stage involves masks and props and Jessica Lenzen, who is Scar's (Blake Lenzen's) mom - is lending her talents to create the elaborate masks for the lions. Giraffes, wildebeests, lions, hyenas, a warthog and

a meerkat are among the animals in the Lion King story.

For those who don't know the story - it is about a young lion who grows up in the jungle under different circumstances and who finally takes his place in the circle of life.

The play is a shorter version of

Lion King Kids
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