Absarokee rancher receives special award

Theo Yanzick was astounded when her name was announced as the MFBF Distinguished Service Award during the Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention November 14-17 in Missoula.

The 40-year Farm Bureau veteran said she was “very surprised” to hear her name called as the DSA recipient.

Yanzick has been involved in production agriculture from a young age. She and her husband, Bruce (deceased), began their journey together in eastern Montana, finally settling in Absarokee where they raised cattle and sheep for more than 40 years. When Bruce passed away in 2019, Theo continued to ranch, irrigate and work with her neighbors.

The 82-year-old has been a Montana Farm Bureau member for more than 40 years, and has served on the MFBF Sheep and Goat Committee for many consecutive years, having been selected on this committee by four MFBF presidents. She has served as a voting delegate, representing her county at Montana Farm Bureau Conventions.

She is a member of the Valley Watershed Council where her passion for fighting noxious weeds is always at the forefront.

MFBF President Cyndi Johnson, who presented the award, said, “I am beyond thrilled to present this award to Theo Yanzick who has ranched in the valleys of south-central Montana for over 40 years and who remains a stalwart member of her agricultural communities.”

“I am very honored,” said Yanzick. “Farm Bureau is an outstanding organization that includes everyone in agriculture. Farm Bureau takes care of all of us.”
MSU Extension working on mental health survey

Andee Baker, a Park City resident, undergraduate student at MSU and MFBF convention intern, is currently working with MSU Extension on their USDA-funded farm stress project that seeks to develop and disseminate mental wellness information and programming to those working in Montana agriculture.

Baker would like farmers and ranchers to share the survey link with anyone across the state who works on a farm or ranch (seasonal, migrant, full time or part-time), as MSU Extension is currently collecting data from farm/ranch workers as to their stressors, and perhaps more importantly, which stress management topics they would be most interested in learning about.

After data analysis, the plan is to create free education and outreach programs for farm and ranch workers to help them manage their stress and improve their mental well-being. MSU Extension has been in the forefront for addressing mental health issues for farmers and ranchers.

The survey takes an average of twelve minutes and can be found at: https://farmstress.us/ag-worker-survey/. If a paper copy is preferred, Baker can mail copies to those who inquire.

Questions? Contact Andee Baker, andeebaker721@gmail.com, (406) 860-4078.

Boyd wins Discussion Meet

Mark Boyd, a young cattle rancher from Alder, topped three other competitors to win the Montana Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Discussion Meet. He received the keys to a Polaris Ranger and will be eligible to compete in the national competition which will be held during the American Farm Bureau Convention in January in Puerto Rico.

The MFBF Discussion Meet was held November 15 during the 103rd Montana Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Missoula.

“I want to give a big thank you to the participating Montana Polaris dealers, Montana Farm Bureau and all of the competitors for making the Discussion Meet possible,” said Boyd. “I look forward to the national competition.”

The three other contestants in the Final Four were Morgan Kuntz from Dillon, Gwynn Simeniuk from Glasgow and Nick Courville from Charlo.

The 2022 Discussion Meet winner, Mark Boyd, receives the key to a Polaris Ranger.
The U.S. Department of Agriculture is conducting the 2022 Census of Agriculture to provide a complete picture of all U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Collected once every five years, census data inform decisions that affect ranches, their community and the industry.

Watch for the Ag Census form in the mail. Everyone who receives the Ag Census is required by law to respond by February 6, 2023.

Senate bill protects farmers from the SEC

Farm Bureau is strongly supporting the “Protect Farmers from the SEC Act” introduced by U.S. Senator John Boozman (R-AR), ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and committee member Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN).

The legislation would protect family farmers and ranchers from burdensome greenhouse gas emissions reporting rules proposed by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

“This appears to be an example of overreach by the Securities and Exchange Commission,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “Farmers and ranchers are already heavily regulated by multiple agencies at the local, state and the federal level. New SEC reporting requirements will no doubt make an already complicated patchwork of regulations even more cumbersome.”

The Protect Farmers from the SEC Act will exempt family farmers and ranchers from these reporting requirements, ensuring they are not required to track and disclose granular on-farm data regarding individual operations and day-to-day activities in order to stay compliant with the companies that purchase their products.

Montana Farm Bureau urges its members to contact Senator Steve Daines and Senator Jon Tester to support of this legislation.

A companion bill was introduced in the House earlier this year.

FB praises averted rail strike

The Montana Farm Bureau expresses gratitude to the bi-partisan effort by Congress to avert a disastrous rail strike. More than 2,000 Farm Bureau members nationwide submitted comments to their Congressional delegations, voicing strong concerns on how a rail strike would harm the economy across the country.

“The strike would have been devastating to farmers,” said MFBF President Cyndi Johnson, a grain farmer from Conrad. “The disruptions in this critical rail service would have had ripple effects that would have hurt farmers and our buyers. Many grain buyers, who purchase millions of bushels of grain from Montana, would have been stymied, thus negatively affecting the entire economy of our state. We are thankful our elected officials were able to prevent that from happening.”

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall added, “AFBF applauds Congress and President Biden for working together to avert a rail strike. High diesel prices, a truck driver shortage, and low water levels on the Mississippi River have already made shipping conditions difficult. A rail strike would have had a devastating effect on the American economy, especially as families grapple with higher prices caused by inflation.

“Farmers rely on trains to transport food and feed, and they also depend on the rails to bring important supplies like fertilizer back to the farm, which is why AFBF urged Congress and the president to find a solution to the rail worker impasse,” Duvall said. “Their bipartisan efforts will help ensure farmers can continue delivering food from their farms to families across the country.”

MFBF board sets 2023 priority issues

The Montana Farm Bureau Board of Directors voted to approve the organization’s priority issues for 2023 following the Delegate Session at the MFBF Annual Convention in mid-November. Issues fall under two headings: Preserving and Protecting Property Rights and Traditional Land Uses and Promoting Sustainable and Profitable Family Farm and Ranch Businesses.

Preserving and Protecting Property Rights includes policies that prevent federal overreach, protect senior water rights and support incentivizing programs to keep agricultural land in production.

Promoting Sustainable and Profitable Family Farm and Ranch Businesses covers supporting tax reform, awarding productivity, providing a strong safety net for farmers and ranchers in the 2023 Farm Bill, reforming regulations that impede agricultural production, increasing marketing opportunities, and improving infrastructure.

MFBF President Cyndi Johnson said, “Thank you to our members for surfacing these critical issues. We look forward to keeping these issues in the forefront as we enter a legislative year in Montana and continue to work with our representatives and senators in Washington.”
Counties receive President’s Awards at Convention

During the MFBF Annual Convention November 14-17 in Missoula, County Farm Bureaus received Silver and Golden Windmill Awards for their programs. The best-of-the-best received President’s Awards for Group 1 (117 voting members or less) and Group 2 (118 voting members or more). A county Farm Bureau had to make membership quota or achieve voting member gain to be considered for the President’s Awards. Presenting the awards were MFBF Vice President Gary Heibertshausen and President Cyndi Johnson.

**Group 1 - Powder River County**
Membership Development and Public Relations
County President J.J. McDowell

**Group 2 - Cascade County**
Public Policy
County board member Marjorie Pribyl and President Merrill McKamey

**Group 2 - Southwest Counties**
Public Relations
District 2 Director Rhonda Boyd

**Group 2 - Northwest Counties**
Leadership Development
County President Josh Senecal

**Lewis & Clark - Group 2**
Ag Promotion & Education
County President Karl Christians

**Phillips County - Group 1**
Leadership Development, Ag Promotion & Education and Public Policy
County Secretary Joy DePuydt

**Group 2 - Yellowstone**
Membership Development
Yellowstone County Board Members