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Dakota Feeder Calf Show: Celebrating 20 years

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

When he volunteered to help with Turtle Lake's Dakota Feeder Calf Show in 1998, Darwin Chesrown never envisioned that organizers had created such a popular one-of-a-kind event.

Now celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Dakota Feeder Calf Show draws livestock producers from throughout North Dakota and surrounding states.

In addition, local buyers – as well as people from throughout the region – purchase other sale calves, putting themselves in the running for some nice prize money if their calf packs on the pounds in nutritional weight gain over the winter.

The Dakota Feeder Calf Show is more than an opportunity for producers to show and sell their steer calves. It's also a celebration of rural life.

Held the third Saturday in October – this year it's on Oct. 20, perhaps an appropriate date for the 20th anniversary – the show and sale calves are then transported to North Dakota State University (NDSU) Carrington Research Extension Center.

There, the calves are part of an ongoing cattle nutrition research program. Calves are weighed monthly and buyers and producers alike can track their progress via the Extension Center's website.

Buyers and producers are encouraged to visit the Carrington facility throughout the winter and spring to see their calves and producers can also participate in a February bus tour of the research center.

It's a win-win combination for the research facility, producers and buyers. Even though producers purchase the feed, they don't have feeding labor over the winter. Plus, producers retain ownership of their show calves. The research center doesn't have to purchase calves for

20th Annual

Dakota Feeder Calf Show

The Best Commercial
Cattleman's Steer Show!

Turtle Lake, North Dakota
Saturday, Oct. 20, 2018

\$2,500
Total
Prize
Money!



BANQUET

The 2017 Dakota Feeder Calf Show awarded \$2,500 in prize money. This year's show – the 20th annual – is slated for Oct. 20 at the Turtle Lake Weigh Station. Activities are also held at the Turtle Lake Farmers Union and Turtle Lake-Mercer School. The evening awards banquet begins at 5:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall.

its research program. Sale buyers receive the sale price for their calf, while both show and sale calves with the top weight gains also garner prizes and trophies for the producer and buyer.

The exact number of calves won't be known until show day, Chesrown said, but volunteers always plan for extra. Typically, about 150 calves go to Carrington following the show and sale.

"We had 200 calves one year. Calves come from the (local) area, Pollock, S.D., Grand Forks, Granville. We've had calves from Montana," added committee member, Jim Bieber.

With the 2017 drought, the number of calves was down to 142 last year, Chesrown said, but they're anticipating more this year with better rangeland conditions.

Each calf goes through the cattle chute, receives shots and is weighed.

Three or four calves are placed in pens at the Turtle Lake Weigh Station next to Farmers Union Oil and judged on criteria such as overall structure, feed capacity and overall evenness of the pens.

There are two divisions: lightweight for calves between 500 and 600 pounds and heavyweight for those tipping the scales between 600 and 700 pounds. Producers retain ownership of the show steer calves and receive the sale price when the Carrington research center sells them the following spring.

However, producers bring additional calves, which are sold after the judging. Area business owners often buy those calves, Feeder Calf Show Treasurer Shirley Herman explained. Both producers and auction calf buyers are in a contest with top weights earning prizes. Several Garrison area buyers usually have a friendly contest among themselves as they track their calf's weight gain throughout the winter, she added.

Purebred red angus producer Troy Presser, Turtle Lake, knows firsthand the benefit the Feeder Calf Show offers participating livestock producers. "It reflects in the customers that come to my bull sale," he explained. Producers learn from the nutritional research done on their calves, which help them improve their operations, rate of gain, and overall health of the cow, herd and pastures. "They get information ... real world value," Presser continued.

Presser also serves on McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC), Central Power Electric Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative's board of directors. McLean Electric is one of several Feeder Calf Show sponsors in large part because many cooperative members show calves at the event, he explained.

Supporting the Dakota Feeder Calf Show serves as another example of McLean Electric's commitment to

the seven core cooperative principles, which includes "commitment to community." When members benefit, whether through the information they glean, the prize and sale money, or as one of the participants in other events at the show, the entire area benefits, Presser added.

The Dakota Feeder Calf Show is more than cows and calves, though, with an array of other activities throughout the day:

A craft, vendor and health fair takes place at the Turtle Lake-Mercer Public School. "The Lions are there collecting glasses," Herman described. Northland Community Clinic provides free blood pressure checks and a massage therapist and chiropractor attend. "The hospital association will serve knoephla with sauerkraut and sausage at the school," she added. About 25 vendors had booths at the craft and vendor fair during the 2017 event. This year's event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A blacksmith sets up shop in Farmers Union Oil's parking lot, Herman continued, and is always popular among attendees. In addition, the Farmers Union hosts a free luncheon.

The Turtle Lake Farmers Union annual tire sale coincides with the event, Presser said. "I think it's a good day for the community," he added.

The evening concludes with a 5:30 p.m. social and awards banquet at the American Legion Hall in Turtle Lake, followed by entertainment by the Dakota Drifters.

Chesrown, Herman and Bieber all credit the Feeder Calf Show success to two things – strong sponsor support and volunteers. "Without our sponsors, we wouldn't have a show," Chesrown explained, because of its associated costs.

In addition, at least 20 volunteers help on Friday evening prior to the show as well as the day of the event itself. Volunteers also drive the success of the craft and health fair.

Another reason the Dakota Feeder Calf Show is so successful, Chesrown feels, is "it's different. We're the only organization that does it, I believe." Someone from Kentucky contacted him for information because of interest in starting a similar event.

Calves were finished at a feedlot near Hebron following the first Feeder Calf Show, followed by a Pingree feedlot the second year, Chesrown said. But in the last 18 years, the partnership with the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center has created an informational and entertaining component to the Dakota Feeder Calf Show that sets it apart. ■



ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT IS NEVER IN SEASON!

HUNTING SAFETY TIPS:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and fire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any type of firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction – and a serious hazard – to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.

As various North Dakota hunting seasons approach, please remember that electrical insulators, conductors and electrical equipment are NOT on the hunting season list.

McLean Electric Cooperative encourages hunters to be aware of electrical equipment while enjoying the great outdoors this season.

Hunters and other gun owners should not shoot near or toward power lines, power poles and substations. A stray bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter, and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Be aware of what's behind that big buck or it might cost big bucks. Repairs can be costly and damages cause outages to our members. As a nonprofit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

We recognize the majority of hunters practice safe hunting and understand the potential risks when discharging a firearm. We encourage experienced hunters who are familiar with the area to identify the locations of utility properties and equipment to young or new hunters in their group and remind them to avoid shooting toward these facilities. Enjoy the great outdoors. Just be sure to hunt only what's in season.



Austin Dillard joins MEC staff

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Austin Dillard joined McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) in April as its new GIS/computer systems coordinator.

Many of his duties include updating and computerizing the cooperative's mapping system, as well as filling the cooperative's IT computer and technology needs, he described. Dillard works closely with staking engineers Cara Bauer and Les Larson.

Dillard and his wife, Kaitlin, moved to Garrison in August 2017 when she joined the staff of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency McLean County office.

A University of Jamestown graduate with majors in computer science and IT, Austin is from Fargo, while Kaitlin grew up on a farm in North Dakota. He admits they enjoy "your typical North Dakota stuff," including riding bike, hunting and fishing. "And campfires," he added. One of the things that drew the couple to McLean County and the Garrison area is its array of activities.

The couple is expecting their first child in November.

As Austin settles into his new position with McLean Electric, he expressed his appreciation for the warm and welcoming people he has met and his co-workers as he and Kaitlin join the community. ■

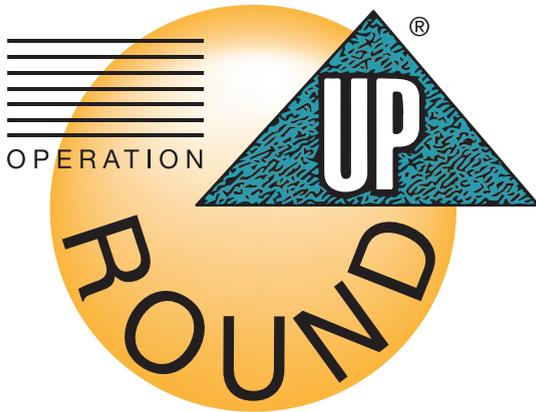
Austin Dillard is McLean Electric Cooperative's new GIS/computer systems coordinator, joining the cooperative in April.



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Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig

Know what's below. Visit 811.com for more information.



Operation Round Up Applications Due Sept. 30

Operation Round up is a program funded by and from the McLean Electric Cooperatives Members who voluntarily "round up" their monthly electric bills to the next dollar. Those living within the boundaries of the MEC service territory are eligible recipients of the funds generated from the program. The funds go to individuals or families in times of need or worthy projects in our service area that are either not funded or under-funded. To apply for a donation please complete an application. Applications are due by April 30 and September 30 of each year. Applications can be found on our website at mcleanelectric.com

Guidelines for funding application from "Operation Round Up"

1. Funds shall be disbursed in the general service area of MEC solely for charitable, education, scientific, health or safety purposes.
2. Organizations must be exempt from Federal Income Taxation under s501(a) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future Unites States Internal Revenue Code as a corporation described in s501(c)(3) of the Code.
3. No funds of the TRUST shall in any fashion be used to support any candidate for political office or for any political purpose.
4. Not more than \$2500 will be given annually to any family unit, group, organization, charity, or like organization. Annual individual medical expense grants will not exceed \$2,500 and have a lifetime maximum of \$5,000. Funding of other agencies annual operating budgets and funding of school trips are not eligible for a grant from this trust.
5. The Board will not meet less than semiannually to evaluate applications.
6. One of the TRUST activities will be tied to the Annual Membership Meeting each June.
7. The Board reserves the right to carry over applications to a later meeting depending on fund availability and other factors.
8. The board will disperse funds equitably throughout the MEC service area as practical.

If you have any questions, please call Sonja at the MEC office at-1-800-263-4922 or a board member listed below:

Jude Iverson	President	701-337-5823
Wanda Giedd	Vice President	701-462-3310
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Steve Haakenson	Director	701-743-4532
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Lena Volochenko	Director	701-626-7315



A trapshooter takes aim at a clay target while others await their turn at the Turtle Lake Wildlife Club. League members shoot Wednesday and Sunday evenings during summer months.

Turtle Lake Wildlife Club – a community staple

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Several members of the Turtle Lake Wildlife Club already have a leg up on their shotgun skills as another waterfowl and upland game bird hunting season approaches.

Every Wednesday and Sunday evening, members participate in league trapshooting, a great way to practice shooting skills or simply enjoy some shotgunning and camaraderie with friends and neighbors.

The club, located about a mile east of Turtle Lake, is near Lightning Lake, the McClusky Canal, Brekken-Holmes Lake and its adjacent recreation area, all on land owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Garrison Diversion and McClusky Canal system.

The grounds of the original club, the Turtle Lake Rod and Gun Club, had to be relocated with the creation of the canal and a clubhouse was built at its current location in 1981, described longtime member and club officer Steve Seeger.

The early target throwing system was upgraded with mechanical throwers and the club expanded to five shooting huts and stations when



Troy Presser, left, and Steve Seeger are longtime members and officers with the Turtle Lake Wildlife Club. Seeger is a North Dakota hunter education instructor, having logged 41 years as a volunteer. The course has been held at the Turtle Lake Wildlife Club more than 30 years.

it relocated.

McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) provides electricity to the clubhouse so the trap huts can use electric throwers as well as heat the building in the winter so it's available for year-round use.

The club has been a fixture in Turtle Lake even before it moved to its present location. "It's not just about the wildlife club, it's part of the community," described club officer Troy Presser, who is also a

McLean Electric director.

And it's been an important part of the Turtle Lake area community for decades since it was the original Rod and Gun Club. "My dad was a member, my grandpa was a member," Presser said. The club, its weekly trapshooting league, and its activities have been a family affair, Seeger added.

The club hosted numerous N.D. Game and Fish Department public advisory meetings, Presser described.

People can rent the building for special events, he continued, even hosting class reunions and other activities.

An important part of its commitment to community lies in the fact that the wildlife club sponsors and hosts hunter education classes each year for anyone 11 years of age and older wanting to learn firearm safety and basic hunting information.

North Dakota requires hunter education certification for all hunters born after Dec. 31, 1961.

However, Turtle Lake already offered voluntary firearm safety classes and Seeger taught those classes even before North Dakota's Legislature made the course mandatory in the late 1970s. He credits the Game and Fish Department's first hunter education coordinator for encouraging him to become a certified instructor for the new hunter education program.

He's been at it ever since, now logging 41 years as a volunteer instructor. One reason Seeger enjoys teaching is that it also helps him become a safer hunter, even though he has years of field experience. Teaching hunter education each year helps him reinforce the basic rules of firearm safety when he's afield, Seeger described.

Casey Anderson, Turtle Lake, has taught with Seeger for 15 years. After teaching more than four decades, though, Seeger has passed the leadership baton to Anderson.

While Seeger admits he doesn't want to fully retire from teaching hunter education, he wants to encourage young instructors to become involved so the program continues well into the future. It also helps young instructors in relating to students and parents alike.

Every March, Seeger and Anderson have anywhere from

eight to 25 students gathering in the clubhouse to learn firearm safety, basic wildlife information, gain an understanding of the different types of firearms, archery, and hands-on firearm handling among other related topics.

The beauty of having classes at the wildlife club is that students and instructors can head outside when the weather cooperates to practice firearm handling. "It's important to have hands-on activities," Seeger emphasized. "I've taught here (at the club's facility) so long that I can't imagine teaching anywhere else. ... We'll shoot the muzzleloader outside," he described.

One of the biggest challenges is reinforcing in students, regardless of their age, that firearms and firearm handling involves real life decision-making. It's not a video game and, once fired, a bullet or shotgun shell can't be taken back.

That's why instructors like Seeger and Anderson continually stress the core fundamentals of firearm safety, such as never point a firearm at something you don't intend to shoot, always control a firearm's muzzle, and know what is beyond your target, among other safety points.

Not all students are young boys wanting to become hunters. "One of the best things I've seen in recent years is the increase in girls and parents (taking the course). Mothers with their daughters," he added. Hunter education isn't just for wanna-be hunters.

It's for anyone wanting to gain an understanding of firearms, firearms safety, and, yes, hunting basics whether or not they hunt or possess a firearm.

The club hosts a field day so students have the option to experience shotguns, .22-caliber rifles and archery. The best thing

about when participants opt to shoot is they learn not to be afraid of a firearm because they learn how to properly hold it so its recoil doesn't hurt, Seeger explained.

The Turtle Lake Wildlife Club is open for anyone to join and participate. An integral, historic part of the Turtle Lake community, club members like Seeger and Presser hope it remains that way for future generations, just as it was for family members that came before them.

Equally as important, Seeger hopes hunter education will continue at the clubhouse for years to come, teaching young and old alike about firearms and firearm safety, as well as introducing them to something that has long been part of North Dakota's heritage – hunting. ■



Gun racks embellished with "TLWC" outside of the Turtle Lake Wildlife Club shooting facility are at rest until their owners take to their first stand to shoot. The racks provide a safe place to rest shotguns until it's time for a trapshooter to test his or her skill at another round of trap. The target is a round, flat clay "pigeon." The goal is to shoot 25 for 25.



Pie and ice cream an October co-op tradition

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Pie and ice cream socials are woven into the fabric of American tradition, a way to gather, visit with friends and neighbors, and share good times.

For McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) and other cooperatives, it's also a way to celebrate the tradition of National Co-op Month each October.

McLean Electric, along with Farmers Union–Garrison, CHS–Garrison, Great River Energy and RTC (Reservation Telephone Cooperative), host their annual Pie and Ice Cream Social as a way to express “thanks” to their community members and celebrate Co-op Month.

Officially established in 1964, National Co-op Month embraces and celebrates the cooperative business model.

It is the cooperative business model that brought electricity and communications in the early form of telephones to rural America, including McLean County.

Nowadays, cooperatives are electricity and so much more. Some cooperative statistics from (the National Co-op Month website, www.coopmonth.coop):

- One in every three Americans is a member of some type of cooperative.
- 2,106 agricultural cooperatives exist in the United States comprised of more than 2 million owner-members.
- Consumer cooperatives, such as McLean Electric, have a membership base of more than 343 million people.

Everyone is invited to enjoy free pie – two kinds – and ice cream from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 16 at the Garrison City Auditorium. It's a way to share a slice of Americana and celebrate National Co-op Month at the same time. ■

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