

LOCAL/REGIONAL NEWS

Farm Rescue founder Bill Gross announces new haying program

By SUE ROESLER
The Prairie Star

For the first time in Farm Rescue history, volunteers are cutting and baling hay to help out livestock producers.

Volunteer Clinton Lau started haying for Lila Braun who owns a sheep farm near Beulah, N.D., on Thursday, June 26.

Farm Rescue is a non-profit organization that started in 2006 in North Dakota and helped seed and later, harvest crops for farmers who suffered a major illness, injury or loss from a natural disaster, according to Bill Gross, Farm Rescue president and founder.

RDO equipment continues to provide equipment for the work. Now RDO has contributed a brand new John Deere tractor and round baler emblazoned with the Farm Rescue logo and its traditional American flag, Gross said.

"We wanted to start the haying program because we had so many requests for putting up hay from livestock producers," he said. They are cutting from 500-1,000 acres of hay for producers who have been approved.

"We are so lucky to have so many volunteers across the country coming here to help farmers. We couldn't do what we do without them. Volunteers are key to our success," he added.

Since the program started, Gross said Farm Rescue has helped 285 families in North Dakota, South Dakota, eastern Montana, western Minnesota, and Iowa.

"Most of the families are in North Dakota. That's where Farm Rescue started and that is where it continues to help the most farmers," he said.

This spring, Farm Rescue seeded acres for 32 farmers, and is now taking applications for harvest (Apply at farmrescue.org). Harvesting was also started recently, and so far, Farm Rescue has helped about 50 farmers with harvest.

Gross remembers when he started back in 2005-2006, starting to round up sponsors for Farm Rescue.

"I drove around in a little van with a sign about Farm Rescue, and I had no idea if I could find sponsors or if it would take off," Gross said, adding his goal was just to help farmers survive during crises. "I definitely never thought it would grow

the way it has and that we would have the number of sponsors that we have."

Matt Biel of Lefor, N.D., who lost one of his arms in an auger, was the first

farmer ever helped by Farm Rescue. So Farm Rescue started its seeding and haying efforts in western North Dakota.

Gross said some of their major spon-

sors who have given to them through the

**HAYING PROGRAM:
Continued on page 16**



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LOCAL/REGIONAL NEWS

First-time young volunteer an 'angel' at first-ever Farm Rescue haying job

By SUE ROESLER
The Prairie Star

BEULAH, N.D. - When first-time Farm Rescue volunteer Clinton Lau, 23, of South Dakota, went up to North Dakota to start Farm Rescue's first haying job, he had no idea he'd be doing a little extra besides running the John Deere tractor pulling the JD baler donated by RDO Equipment.

Lau was haying for Lila Braun, a sheep farmer near Beulah, N.D., who was not able to hay herself because she was at the Mayo Clinic with her daughter, Natalie, who was undergoing breast cancer treat-

ment.

Natalie had been a big part of the farm, and Lila also lost her husband, Arnold, to cancer just three months ago.

Bill Gross, Farm Rescue founder and president, said they were not helping Lila because of her husband passing away, because their rules don't allow that, but because of her daughter undergoing cancer treatment.

Lila felt like "an angel" had arrived at her ranch when Clinton arrived to help.

"I was so grateful for Farm Rescue and Clinton. He's an angel," Lila said. "It was

ANGEL: Continued on page 17

HAYING PROGRAM: Continued from page 15

years include RDO Equipment; CHS; Southwest Grain; Sun Prairie Grain in Minnesota; Dakota Banks; Bank of North Dakota; Bremer Bank; Chevy dealerships; and many local businesses provide fuel, money and assistance to their local farmer being helped; for a total of about 200 businesses.

Two new programs will greatly help Farm Rescue provide for farmers, Gross said.

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable trust this year is giving \$2 for every \$1 donated.

"One dollar turns into three, and that will really helps us," Gross said.

In addition, the Otto-Bremer Foundation is matching a dollar for every dollar donated to Farm Rescue.

To donate, log on to farmrescue.org or send a donation to Farm Rescue; P.O. Box 1100, Jamestown, ND 58402. *

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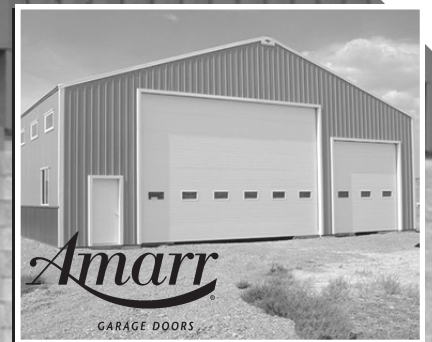
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LOCAL/REGIONAL NEWS

US wheat market loses a little wind from its sail

By **MARK CONLON**
Editor

The acreage report released from USDA on June 30 took a little wind out of the wheat market sail.

"The June 30 acreage report primarily showed a significant increase in soybean plantings from the early March estimate," said Jim Peterson, marketing director for the North Dakota Wheat Commission, adding that the soybean situation had been

somewhat of a supporting factor for other markets. "It was even higher than what analysts were expecting. In addition, USDA showed higher stocks of both old crop corn and soybeans."

Tied into bearish corn/soybean numbers in the June 30 report, the trade was also surprised by a much higher than expected spring wheat acreage estimate.

"The June survey showed spring wheat potential plantings of 12.7 million acres,

which would be up from 12 million acres in the March survey and only 11.6 million in 2013," he said.

"Most of the trade had been expecting close to the 11.9 million acre level, so it took a little bit of the support out of the spring wheat market."

Peterson pointed out, however, that the survey was taken in early June when there was still a fair amount of spring wheat planting taking place.

"There's a chance that number could be overstated a bit though," he said. "Nonetheless, it's the number the market has to work with."

In the acreage report, North Dakota acres held the same at 5.9 million while Montana went up 350,000 from the March estimate. South Dakota was up 200,000 and Minnesota was up 100,000.

"The speculation is that prices were attractive for spring wheat in May and early June so there was incentive to keep planting spring wheat," Peterson said. "Also, there was significant winter kill in parts of Montana and South Dakota for winter wheat, so there was some replacement seeded to spring wheat."

With the new acreage reports and current crop conditions it's looking like hard red spring wheat production will be higher than last year, he noted, pointing out that during most of April and May it looked like production would be lower than 2013.

"Until some crop issues develop, that will probably be the bias of the market - that we're looking at higher production," he said.

Current crop conditions put the spring wheat crop at 70 percent rated good/excellent. North Dakota is doing best at 83 percent good/excellent which is at or near historic highs. With the exception of a few pockets of excessive rains, Peterson said growing conditions have been near perfect for the most part.

Montana's spring wheat crop is rated 58 percent good/excellent while Minnesota is just 50 percent good/excellent.

"Minnesota could use more sun and dry weather, and Montana is going to need some timely rains in spring wheat areas," Peterson said.

The maturity of this year's crop is behind average in all areas except Montana. Close to a third of the U.S. crop is headed as we hit early July which is ahead of last year but behind average.

WHEAT MARKET:
Continued on page 19

ANGEL: Continued from 17

able to volunteer and pay back," Clinton said.

Now Clinton works for a corn and soybean farmer in South Dakota and absolutely loves it. He took a little vacation after National Guard training to volunteer for Farm Rescue.

Meanwhile, Lila has returned from being with her daughter. She looks over her sheep farm and the young lambs suckling their mothers, and her own herd of Great Pyrennes dogs who guard the sheep from predators at night.

"I never planned to run this farm myself, but I want to stay here on the farm and make it work. I know Jerry would have wanted it to be passed down to our kids," Lila said.

Farm Rescue will hay for three farmers in the Beulah, Hazen, Mercer area before moving on.

The first haying venture for the volunteer organization appears to be a success, according to new volunteer Clinton. ★

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