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Plus

Sauk Rapids Herald | Saturday, July 1, 2023

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## The way the water goes



University of MN Extension  
by Tyler Rice

As I am driving county roads on site visits and other appointments, I am hyper aware of the perils of drought on our crops, the capacity of a variety of soil types to hold water and the true blessing of a stray rain shower.

We know evaporation of our water resources happens from the soil surface, especially when wind and high temperatures are present. A secondary loss of moisture is through necessary plant transpiration, where water moves from deep in the soil profile through the plant and out into the atmosphere. Transpiration is important because it is the basis of plant temperature and energy regulation much like a radiator in a car. It is also the driver of nutrient and water movement to the parts of the plant that need them.

Water page 3B

## Farm Rescue aids rural St. Cloud family

# Light

## during hardship

BY MAURA WENNER | STAFF WRITER

**J**udy Watercott and her children – Gracie, Noah, Faith and Henry – live on the family’s fifth-generation farm in Palmer Township.

Following a tragedy in the family this spring, Watercott was left with the mental weight and labor of not only taking care of the family but also tending to 60-head beef operation and non-tillable acreage where they grow the animals’ food.

Fortunately, a Midwest nonprofit has stepped in to help as the family finds its footing.

Farm Rescue, a North Dakota-based organization, aids farm and ranch families who have experienced injury, illness or natural disaster. The organization assists across eight states, providing planting, haying, hauling, harvesting and livestock feeding for agricultural producers in crisis.

Through the hands and knowledge of local volunteer Dave Zimmer, of Sauk Rapids, and by way of Farm Rescue’s tractor and baler, along with a tractor and mower-conditioner donated through Midwest Machinery of Sauk Rapids, roughly 60 acres of land is being mowed and baled to store for cattle feed.

Farm Rescue page 2B

PHOTO BY NATASHA BARBER  
Judy Watercott watches June 23 as volunteer Dave Zimmer and Watercott’s son, Henry, bale hay on her land in Sherburne County. The Watercott family received help from Farm Rescue this month to harvest hay for their beef operation.



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PHOTOS BY NATASHA BARBER  
The Watercotts – Faith (front, from left), Judy and Henry; (back, second from left) Noah – stand with Farm Rescue volunteers Dave Zimmer (back, from left) Kyle Serocki and Dakota McIver June 23 at the Watercott farm in rural St. Cloud. Serocki and McIver are Midwest Machinery employees who assisted Zimmer, a volunteer for Farm Rescue. Not pictured is Gracie Watercott.

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**Farm Rescue**

from page 1B

After an application for assistance, Watercott learned she would receive the help in late May.

“I felt some relief because I didn’t know how I would get hay mowed and baled this year,” said Watercott, who said the family traditionally hires a custom harvester. “I’ve been struggling finding somebody local I could hire to



bale hay. It was a relief to know they (Farm Rescue) were going to come in and at least help me get through this year until I could come up with some other plans.”

Depending on the task and whether family or neighbors are available to help, Farm Rescue will coordinate additional volunteers to assist the farm or ranch operations. A Moorhead volunteer helped mow hay before Zimmer took over at the property June 20.

“After I retired, I was looking for some volunteer work,” Zimmer said. “I liked what the criteria is for Farm Rescue offering help. From having a farm background myself, I know the majority of these people, if they could do their own work, they would be. I feel as though I’ve been blessed, and this is my way to give back.”

While Zimmer continues to be involved on his own family’s farm, now owned by his son, his time frees up in July and August.

“I call the volunteer coordinator and let her know if a case comes up, I am willing to help,” said Zimmer, who has been volunteering with Farm Rescue for 10 years. “Typically, this time of year is hay, so I

Dave Zimmer and Henry Watercott climb into a Farm Rescue tractor and round baler setup June 23 in rural St. Cloud. About 60 acres of hay was harvested on the Watercotts’ fifth-generation farm.



go help mow and bale.” Zimmer said this is the first Farm Rescue case he is aware of near St. Cloud in recent history.

“Knowing of the Watercott family made no difference in how I felt helping,” Zimmer said. “You meet the people, get background and find out their struggles. Soon, you just want to help them, whether it’s someone you know or not. They are almost always very appreciative.”

Watercott was relieved to receive help from Farm Rescue and comforted it was by the hands of a local, she said. Zimmer has helped Watercott make decisions on when to harvest the hay.

“It put me a little more at ease with all of this because going into this you don’t know what to expect or what is going to happen,” Watercott said. “I was involved (in the farm), but Mike kind of took over and did most of it. I know some, but now, it’s all me. I have to make all

the decisions. So, having that extra person to refer to their knowledge is helpful.”

Prior to forecast rain June 23, technicians from Midwest Machinery assisted Zimmer with setup of Farm Rescue’s new round baler and adjusted it to the land for proper harvest. Watercott’s youngest child, Henry, was willing to learn about the equipment and could be found riding with Zimmer in the tractor’s cab.

Farm Rescue’s assistance services are provided free of charge, and families are eligible to apply for help every three years. Selected families help supply necessities such as fuel and bale net wrap.

“This is a wonderful program that can step in and help when there is a time of instant need – when you don’t know where to turn,” Watercott said. “It has been a great benefit to get over that hump to what’s next. I can get through this year and deal with other issues.”

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# Cow calamities

While enjoying a bowl of ice cream recently, my step-granddaughter-to-be was surfing the net and sharing random factoids.

“Did you know cows are five times more deadly than sharks?” she said.

Well, I thought, considering I encounter cows more frequently than sharks, that’s a no-brainer. But her factoid got me thinking about some of my own minor mishaps with our bovines. Behind those large lush eyelashes and docile eyes, there lurks some danger.

This morning I was helping put our cows in their stanchions. One had snuck between two others, and as I tried to chase her out, the cow I was standing in front of bucked her head up into my ribcage which caused my head to jerk up and crash into the water pipeline. The encounter was my fault because I was in the cow’s personal bubble, and luckily, I walked away without serious injury. I should correct that – limped away.

Just the week before, a different cow stepped on my toes. In that situation, it was my fault because I wasn’t paying attention. While milking, I reached up to the pipeline to adjust the hose at the same moment the cow stepped toward me. Her hoof landed on the outside of my left foot. Fortunately, no toes were broken, but I’ve got some pretty nasty bruises.

I’ve been told that when working with cows, you need to let them know where you are because they have blind spots just like we do. That’s true. I’ve had some near-misses just by walking behind them. One time I was scraping the manure from the walk, and “whack!” I knew I had been kicked because as I reached down to my rear-left jeans pocket, I came up with a handful of poo. I got lucky because I had been at the end of her reach. If I had been 2 feet



**RUMINATIONS WITH MARY**  
MARY BARRON-TRAUT

closer, I would have received the full force of that kick.

Even while feeding the cows, a person must keep their wits about them. A few years back, part of the daily chores was to carry 5 gallon pails of ground corn into the calf yard to dump into a feeder. While pouring out a pail with my back to the calves, I felt pressure on both of my shoulders. I quickly executed a self-defense move by shooting my arms up and out thereby knocking the forelegs of the 600-pound heifer back to the ground. I

guess I smelled pretty good that day.

Sometimes the injuries received are just plain weird. My hubby had been giving a cow an injection and thought he had secured her well. He hadn’t. She jerked enough to knock his hand out of position, and he ended up with the needle in his knee. That particular mishap warranted a trip to the emergency room to see if the medication intended for the cow would affect him. He got lucky. Knock on wood.

One of the most dangerous jobs working with cattle is loading them. Nothing has happened to me ... yet, but others have had encounters. While loading heifers in a pen, one kicked my husband so hard that it knocked him over, and he had to crawl under the gate to escape. Another doctor’s visit followed.

More recently, we heard of a cousin who had also been injured while loading cattle. Several jumped over the gate, pinning him under it. He sustained a fairly serious leg injury.

As dairy month comes to a close, give a shout out to the folks who put themselves in peril several times a day not in shark-infested waters but in dairy barns filled with cows.

A calendar of area events to expand agricultural knowledge

## GROWING

your education

### Ag Conservation Field Day

A midsummer day is being set aside for producers to learn about an important resource: water.

Brian and Glen Kaschmitter are hosting an Ag Conservation Field Day from 5-7 p.m. July 13 at the Kaschmitter Farm, 4468 55th St. NE, Sauk Rapids. The event is brought to the area by the St. Cloud Watershed Collaborative and is part of We Are Water MN, which is funded in part by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and Clear Water Fund.

The program is broken into four segments. The Kaschmitters will speak about their farm, irrigation and the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program, and Anna Brieger, vice president of Irrigators Association of Minnesota and producer at Prairie Farms, will present. Two demonstrations – rainfall simulator and slake test – will take place, and nitrate testing, a center pivot irrigator model and strip till equipment will be on-site.

A hot dog meal will be provided. Those planning to attend the free event should register at [renee.thell@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:renee.thell@mn.nacdnet.net) or 320-968-5300, ext. 3.

### Small Grain Tours

The University of Minnesota Extension will host free programs about managing wheat, barley, rye, triticale and oats in July.

At three events, farmers will be able to view over 150 varieties of small grains in fields and learn through hands-on demonstrations and through discussion with extension experts. Presenters will answer how small grains can reduce risk on farms, what advantages there are to planting winter cereals and questions regarding variety selection and pest management.

Participants are encouraged to bring field samples for diagnosis and conversation.

Registration is not required. For more information, visit [z.umn.edu/SGfielddays](http://z.umn.edu/SGfielddays) or contact Jochum Wiersma at 218-281-8629 or [wiers002@umn.edu](mailto:wiers002@umn.edu).

- The three dates and locations are:
- Wednesday, July 5, 5-8 p.m. – Lee’s Seed Farm, 670 50th Ave. NE, Benson. A grilled meal will be served following the field plot tour at 7 p.m.
  - Thursday, July 6, noon to 3 p.m. – Lawler Farm, 930 70th Ave. NE, Eyota. Lunch will be served at noon prior to a plot tour at 1 p.m.
  - Tuesday, July 11, noon to 3 p.m. – Ruth Hoefs and Ron Pomije Farm, 20676 340th St., Le Center. Lunch will be served at noon prior to a plot tour at 1 p.m.

## Water

from page 1B

When there is a drought, changes in evaporation and transpiration depend on the availability of water resources at the very beginning of the drought, the severe nature of the drought and the duration of the drought.

It turns out that this area of the country had the fifth driest month of May in the last 129 years of recorded history following 1 in 29 of the wettest winter seasons, albeit frozen, in the last 129 years.

Fitting to the drought discussion is debate about the value of a cover crop in the system and what it can or cannot do in terms of robbing, regulating and/or conserving soil moisture. True

to form, the unpredictability of weather for agricultural purposes has dealt its hand for some interesting case studies in the curse or benefit of a continuous cover this season so far. I wonder if a closer look at the root causes (pun may be intended) of success or failure in these cases may be helpful in perfecting the art ... and the science.

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# Ag Connection: Area State FFA Degree recipients

The following area students from Foley, Mora, Rocori, Royalton and Sauk Rapids-Rice high schools were awarded a State FFA Degree at the Minnesota State FFA Convention April 23-

25. Awarded but failing to return a response by press deadline are Lauryn Showers, of Mora, and Daniel Kiffmeyer, of Rocori.

Enjoy the 4th of July weekend!

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**Erika Brenny**

Parents: Jerry and Christine Brenny  
Sauk Rapids-Rice High School FFA Chapter

**What does earning a State FFA Degree mean to you?** I get recognized for all the hard work and time I put into FFA and my work.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** I served a lot of time in my chapter. I was the president one year and then the reporter/historian. As an officer, we put in a lot of time planning for events. I tried to be at most events and help with anything we needed. My SAE was my job at Sunrise Ag Cooperative. I worked there before school for my work release and on Saturdays. I learned a lot by working with all of the farmers and learning the different things they use.

**What skills has FFA helped develop in you?** FFA has helped me grow in every way. I've learned communication skills which will benefit me for the rest of my life. It really broke me out of my shell and taught me to talk to new people and not be afraid.



**Lauren Schelske**

Parents: Joshua Schelske and Kristi Schelske  
Sauk Rapids-Rice High School FFA Chapter

**What does earning a State FFA Degree mean to you?** Earning my state degree meant showing how much FFA truly means to me.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** I volunteered at the humane society and a group home for adults with disabilities. My SAE included caring for rabbits, evaluating and breeding, learning and predicting color patterns through genetics, and managing diets due to size and needs.

**What skills has FFA helped develop in you?** FFA has helped me develop better people skills and to be more open about doing things I enjoy. Being in FFA has also helped develop skills I hope to use in a future for a career in conservation.

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BA26-1B-BL





## Joseph Achen

**Parents:** Craig and Cindy Achen  
**Royalton High School FFA Chapter**

### What does earning the State FFA Degree mean

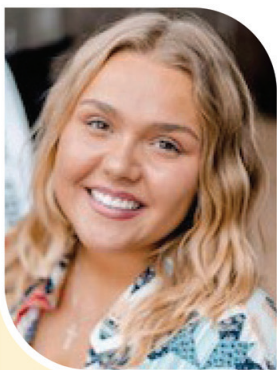
**to you?** Earning my State FFA Degree means seeing my hard work, dedication and consistency recognized at the state level. Combined, these three qualities allow me to accomplish my goals and dreams. Hard work through my own chapter, as well as my supervised agriculture experience, has prepared me for my future and propelled myself in my career aspirations. I have dedicated countless hours in my chapter: planning activities, conducting meetings and working in a team to accomplish our goals of being a student-led organization. Lastly, consistency is what made my dream of accomplishing this degree possible. Through consistently showing up for others, I have been able to grow myself. These attributes are what it means to earn this degree.

### Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.

Being a leader in my chapter has helped me achieve this high honor. Through planning and partaking in service activities that involve our whole student body and community, I have advocated for agriculture and grown as a leader tremendously. This, along with my SAE, has helped me attain my degree the most. My SAE is a dairy entrepreneurship. Through this experience, I managed my family's registered Milking Shorthorn herd. Through managing, I learned many new skills and made many valuable connections with industry professionals. I focused much of my time in my SAE on utilizing embryo transfer to enhance our herd's genetics.

### What skills have you developed due to your involvement in FFA?

FFA has developed countless skills in me that I will use for the rest of my life. However, the most valuable skills I have gained through FFA would have to be the importance of working in a team and contributing while in a team. Being a part of an officer team takes the dedication of everyone. I have held numerous officer positions and understand how much more fun it is to work in a team that truly wants the best for its members and will put in the effort to do so. Additionally, getting the best out of fellow officers and members through being a leader is a skill that has come in handy while being in FFA. These skills will help me in my future endeavors.



## Heidi Montag

**Parents:** Brian and Christa Montag  
**Sauk Rapids-Rice FFA Chapter**

**What does earning the State FFA Degree mean to you?** Earning my state degree means I have received recognition for my efforts in FFA and hard work on my parents' dairy farm.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** To achieve the Minnesota State FFA Degree, one of the requirements is to participate in a minimum of 10 events above the chapter level throughout all of ones' years in the agricultural education program. In my last two years of high school, I was determined to participate in as many FFA events as possible, so I attended just about everything I could. My SAE was unpaid placement on my parents' dairy

farm, Montag Dairy. I put in far more hours than required for my State FFA Degree by milking cows, feeding calves, doing fieldwork and other miscellaneous farm chores.

**What skills have you developed due to your involvement in FFA?** In FFA, I have developed teamwork and coordination skills while working with my various career development event teams and the officer team; I served as the chapter vice president my senior year. FFA, alongside of being a Benton County dairy princess/ambassador, has taught me communication skills. I can speak effectively in front of groups of people or one on one. FFA has also strengthened the work ethic I have learned growing up on a farm.



## Travis Boyle

**Parents:** Jeannie Boyle and the late Joseph Boyle  
**Foley High School FFA Chapter**

**What does earning a State FFA Degree mean to you?** Earning my state degree was a huge accomplishment as only the top 3% of FFA members receive them. Receiving that degree showed me that the countless hours and dedication I had spent toward my supervised agricultural experience of goat production, where I managed and record data of a goat herd of my own, actually paid off and was worth something in the end.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** Through FFA, I participated in as many career development events as possible, but the one that helped me most was livestock evaluation. Throughout the years of participating in this

CDE, I have learned more about myself and my passions than ever before. This CDE helped me decide my future career path and hobbies. My freshman year of high school, I started my own Boer goat herd of two breeding does and one breeding buck. Now, there are 12 breeding does and two breeding bucks in my barn. Through the process of growing and developing my herd, I have experienced struggles and growths with economic problems, administered medication and kept record of breeding averages within my herd.

**What skills has FFA helped develop in you?** This organization has taught me some of the most valuable skills, such as leadership, public speaking and facilitation. With these skills, I will better be able to lead and teach others in and outside of the work field, all while making it worth their time. Gaining the skills of public speaking and leadership will better enable me to talk in front of co-workers and challenging crowds.



## Kaitlin Reitmeier

**Parents:** Craig and Laura Reitmeier  
**Rocori High School FFA Chapter**

### What does earning the State FFA Degree mean to you?

Earning a state degree is a recognition of hard work and achievement. It was not easy to accomplish all of the requirements, and I feel a sense of pride knowing I accomplished an FFA goal I have had since I first heard about degrees.

### Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.

In order to receive the degree, I completed community service, attended at least 10 events above the chapter level, took many agriculture classes, had a very established SAE and showed knowledge of parliamentary procedure. I used a combination of two SAE projects to fulfill the requirements. These two projects were a beef entrepreneurship SAE, in which I bought my own bull calves and raised them as market steers, and a food service SAE, in which I worked to sell food during hockey games at the ice arena.

**What skills have you developed due to your involvement in FFA?** FFA has helped me to become a more confident speaker and more knowledgeable in parliamentary procedure. I have also learned more about different animals that I do not see on a daily basis. The agricultural sales career development events have helped me to better my skills working with people.

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# COVER CROP OF THE MONTH



## RAPESEED

Producers may know that cover crops benefit the soil and agricultural operations, but do they know the benefits of each species? Each month a different cover crop species will be highlighted to provide producers with information needed to successfully grow cover crops or alternative forages on their operation.

Rapeseed is a member of the brassica family and is believed to originate from south Europe or north Africa. Rapeseed is commonly known for its group of rapeseeds known as canola that is widely used for oil production. This species not only can be used for oil production, but it can be a great addition to a field as a cover crop.

Rapeseed can be seeded earlier in the year than other cover crops and planted later than other brassicas. This brassica will often overwinter and have to be terminated in the spring via herbicide or careful mechanic control with the right timing. Through the life span, rapeseed will provide the soil with many benefits including breaking up compaction with its taproot and the fibrous roots and nutrient scavenging deeper in the soil profile.

Rapeseed has a great establishment rate if it is drilled, aerial seeded and broadcast. Seeding rates will vary based on seeding method and if rapeseed is in a mix or a standalone stand. Rapeseed should be seeded at a rate of least 4 pounds an acre and a depth of a quarter of an inch when drilled. Aerial and broadcast seeding methods will increase the seeding rates to a maximum of 10 pounds per acre. This species should be planted when ground temperatures reach at least 40 degrees and have a minimum germination temperature of 41 degrees. Rapeseed should be planted no later than Sept. 15 to maximize the growth before winter and ensure it will be hardy through the cold temperatures.

Information provided by the Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation District.

# USDA announces corrections to Emergency Relief Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is updating the Emergency Relief Program Phase 2 to provide a method for valuing losses and accessing program benefits to eligible producers of certain crops, including grapes grown and used by the same producer for wine production or forage that is grown, stored and fed to livestock, that do not generate revenue directly from the sale of the crop.

These updates ensure ERP benefits are more reflective of these producers' actual crop losses resulting from 2020 and 2021 natural disaster events. USDA's Farm Service Agency will begin accepting ERP Phase 2 applications from eligible wine grape and forage producers once this technical correction to ERP is published in the Federal Register and becomes effective. The deadline to submit applications for ERP Phase Two is July 14.

In January, FSA announced ERP Phase 2, designed to wrap-up and fill remaining gaps in previous natural disaster assistance for 2020 and 2021.

To be eligible for ERP Phase 2, producers must have suffered a decrease in allowable gross revenue in 2020 or 2021 due to necessary expenses related to losses of eligible crops from a qualifying natural disaster event. Assistance is primarily for producers of crops that were not covered by Federal Crop Insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program since crops covered by Federal Crop Insurance and NAP were included in the assistance under ERP Phase 1 administered in 2022.

Producers of certain crops now have a method for including crop value in their allowable gross revenue for the purpose of determining ERP Phase 2 benefits.

The value of the eligible crop intended for



**Farm Service Agency News**  
by Ryan Brunn,  
executive director  
for Benton and  
Mille Lacs counties

on-farm use will be based on the producer's actual production of the crop and a price for the crop as determined by FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs based on the best available data for each crop such as published crop price data or the average price obtained by other producers in the area. Acceptable, published sources including but are not limited to Federal Crop Insurance Corporation established prices, FSA established National Crop Table prices and National Agricultural Statistical Service prices.

Revenue and pricing guidelines for expected revenue for wine grapes and on-farm forage is available online for producer reference and convenience when applying for ERP Phase 2.

Wine grape and forage producers who have already submitted their ERP Phase 2 applications to FSA have the option of revising the application and updating their allowable gross revenue to include crop value if applicable.

Producers of crops grown for on-farm use other than wine grapes and forage may request consideration to use a crop's value in their allowable gross revenue. Submit requests to RA.FSA.DCWA2.ppb@wdc.usda.gov. FSA's Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs will review submitted requests.

Producers should contact their FSA office to make an appointment to apply for ERP Phase 2. Producers should also keep in mind that July 15 is a major deadline to complete acreage reports for most crops. FSA encourages producers to complete the ERP Phase 2 application and acreage report during the same office visit. Applications for the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program, a revenue-based program for losses resulting from the pandemic, can also be completed.

# Lenz awarded agricultural scholarship

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** — Helena Agri-Enterprises is awarding Marizza Lenz, of Royalton, with the Homegrown Scholarship worth \$1,000 to pursue a higher education in agriculture. Lenz attends Royalton High School and is entering Ridgewater College in Willmar to become a

veterinary technician. Helena's Homegrown Scholarship is open to graduating high school seniors from 14 states who are majoring in an agriculture-related program. For several years, the Homegrown Scholarship has been an important part of Helena's commitment to developing the future

of ag professionals. Requirements include an essay with a maximum of 300 words on the applicant's positive impact in their community and an essay with a maximum of 500 words on the applicant's passion for agriculture and their plan to contribute to the industry. Winners

are chosen by Helena location management across the region. Applications for the Homegrown Scholarship will be available again in early 2024 through ag teachers and local FFA chapters in participating states and counties. In addition to scholarships, Helena offers internships to college students across the Midwest every summer. Internship opportunities will be advertised this fall.

For more information about Helena, visit [helenaagri.com](http://helenaagri.com).

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# The benefits of rotational grazing

BY EMERSON ROY  
University of MN Extension  
agriculture intern

Have you thought about grazing your cattle? Are you already grazing but want to improve forage production, manure spread and weed control? Then it is time to look into rotational grazing.

The benefits of rotational grazing are significant. Rotational grazing is a system in which the livestock are fenced into one section or paddock at a time and moved around the pasture as new grazing area becomes necessary. There are pros and cons to this system.

The first advantage rotational grazing offers a farmer is an increase of 20% to 50% in forage production. This depends on how many paddocks are used for grazing throughout the growing season. Moving cattle to a new pasture before the current one becomes overgrazed (grazed to the point of detriment to the soil and pasture) will allow the area to rest, opening the door for faster regrowth. This can lead to longer grazing seasons which will save money on feed. Consistent movement of cattle will also create a more even spread of manure across the paddocks. Rotational grazing is also great for controlling the growth and spread of weeds and brush. Another benefit of this system is, many times, it can be done on marginal land or land not suitable for growing row crops.

However, there are initial drawbacks to moving into rotational grazing. First, there is the cost of fencing and water distribution systems. It is also necessary to make sure each of the pasture's paddocks are of good quality. For the herd manager, it is expected there will be an adjustment period toward the more hands-on management style of rotational grazing. The trick to rotational

grazing is finding the delicate balance between under or overgrazing in each paddock.

Practices that go into maintaining a good pasture are using fertilizers to boost the nitrogen and spreading manure over the pasture. Interseeding can also be an effective way to help keep a pasture healthy. This can be done by using no-till drills to place the seeds directly into the pasture. Although these machines are expensive, they are great for pastureland as they allow immediate seed to soil contact and minimal damage to the soil all while allowing the farmer to control nearly every aspect of the planting. This technique should be done after close grazing or mowing of the area to allow the seeds to take hold and limit competition.

A different approach can be taken if you are trying to improve pasture quality. If the pasture is over-grazed, rotational grazing is the best way to rehabilitate pasture as it will give the different paddocks a chance to grow back and recover. Similarly, under-grazed pasture can be fixed by increasing the stocking density and allowing the animals to graze the area to nearly 100%. This can be done by creating smaller paddocks based on the number of animals grazing or increasing the time spent in each paddock.

Rotational grazing may have initial cost early in the adoption of these practices, but the return of higher quality pasture and lower annual feed costs means that, if done right, rotational grazing is largely beneficial.

For more information or with any questions contact Emerson Roy, at emers296@umn.edu or 320-247-6152. Information for this article was obtained from the University of Minnesota Extension.



## Brandi Wellnitz

Parents: Tony and Nan Wellnitz  
Mora High School FFA Chapter

**What does earning the State FFA Degree mean to you?** Earning this degree meant that all my hard work was being rewarded and recognized.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** I have two SAEs. One of them is diverse livestock. I keep records of my animals that I take care of and show. The second SAE is agricultural communication. I write reports on what my chapter has been doing and what has been happening within the classroom, and I send the reports to our local newspaper. I do this because I want to inform the public and community that our chapter is active and that students and community members are benefiting from resources that are available.

**What skills have you developed due to your involvement in FFA?** Going to different leadership conferences and workshops, I was able to build my leadership such as public speaking, facilitating skills and communication skills, etc.



## Brooklynn Niemi

Parents: John and Kristen Niemi  
Rocori High School FFA Chapter

**What does earning the State FFA Degree mean to you?** Earning a State FFA Degree recognizes the hard work put forth by an individual to achieve this accomplishment.

**Tell us about FFA participation that has helped you achieve this honor as well as details of your supervised agricultural experience.** In achieving this goal, I was involved in activities that served the community in which I live. I participated in ditch cleanup, garden maintenance and other various activities throughout the year. I have two ongoing SAE projects. One project is about chicken breeds, egg production and care. The other project is about my job as a certified nursing assistant.

**What skills have you developed due to your involvement in FFA?** FFA has helped me develop skills in public speaking, organization, patience, time management, communication, team development and leadership.

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