

Livestock

Montana livestock researcher honored

By T.J. BURNHAM

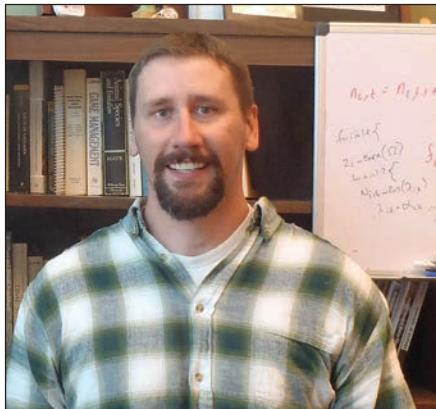
ASK Lance McNew if there are any prairie chickens in our part of the West, and he is quick to explain that while the species is common in neighboring Kansas and Nebraska, they don't range into the eight-state readership region of *Western Farmer-Stockman* (Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho and Washington).

But the new Montana State University Department of Animal and Range Sciences faculty member is closely acquainted with the chickens as a result of his earlier jobs.

McNew, who was honored late last month in Pittsburgh at the 21st annual conference of The Wildlife Society for his work with the prairie chickens, probed the impact on the birds from various forms of rangeland management, providing some insights for farmers in Kansas and Nebraska on how to preserve the populations.

McNew was the lead author in an article selected as the 2014 outstanding article in wildlife publications. It ran in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, describing findings about greater prairie chickens, an indicator species for tallgrass prairie wildlife in North America.

When McNew and his fellow researchers evaluated the prairie chickens as an indicator species of how range management practices impacted various wildlife species, "we found that sometimes



ARTICLE WINS: Lance McNew, an MSU instructor, was the lead author in an award-winning article on wildlife.

by removing too much grass to benefit regrowth for livestock, younger prairie chicken populations were adversely affected," he says.

"Hopefully, we provide some information to ranchers that will help them manage range grasses and continue to provide habitat for this species."

Peer review

The Wildlife Society publishes more than 200 articles each year in its three peer-reviewed wildlife ecology journals. It then selects one of those as the year's outstanding article. The article must show originality of research or thought, and a high scholastic

standard in its presentation. The article must have been published within the last three years.

The society is an international interest group, planning to co-sponsor a fifth International Wildlife Congress in Sapporo, Japan, next July, and annually sponsoring a Wildlife Society Leadership Institute teaching lessons on how to solve wildlife protection problems.

McNew wrote his article with three co-authors from Kansas State University. The paper, titled "Demography of Greater Prairie-Chickens: Regional Variation in Vital Rates, Sensitivity Values and Population Dynamics," summarized a four-year study in east-central Kansas. The research is complete, McNew says, but the team is finishing up some analyses this fall.

The paper being honored is part of his doctoral research at Kansas State University, where he was a Ph.D. student from 2006 to 2010, and a postdoctoral researcher from 2010 to 2012.

He wrote a description of his study in the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism publication, "Kansas Wildlife & Parks," in the March/April issue. For more information on the magazine, go to kdwpt.state.ks.us/services/publications/magazine.

McNew was notified of the award when working for the U.S. Geological Survey in Alaska in August, after which he came to Montana State University to work.

He was employed by the U.S. Geological Survey from 2012 until this August, when he began his MSU job.

His research interests at MSU involve wildlife habitat ecology with a focus on attempting to improve the functionality of wildlife habitats in agricultural systems.

"What we want producers to know is that management strategy can have a very profound impact on wildlife," says McNew. "Nest survival is a consideration if we want to keep the prairie chickens intact."

Livestock Briefs

Stevens County cattlemen support ranch youth

The Stevens County (Washington) Cattlemen's Association recently awarded three \$200 scholarships to local ranch youth. To apply, students needed to be SCCA members or a child or grandchild of a member and submit an application and essay. SCCA President Scott Nielsen said the organization is carrying on a multiyear tradition of supporting local students and emphasizes that encouraging ranch youth in their pursuits is an important focus of SCCA. The 2014 recipients were Hannah Smith, Colin Axtell and Kurtis McDowell.



2015 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards Program seeks nominations

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is now accepting nominations for the 2015 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards. The awards recognize outstanding dairy farms, businesses and partnerships for socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound practices.

Nominations are open to all segments of the U.S. dairy value chain — from farm to table.

The deadline for applications is Nov. 7, 2014. There is no fee to enter. For more information, visit usdairy.com/sustainability/awards.

Idaho increases milk production

Idaho is on track to surpass New York state as the nation's third-largest milk producer after California and Wisconsin, generating 37 million pounds each day.

Since January 2014, Idaho has outpaced New York in milk production and exported \$213 million in cheese, dry milk, whey, butter and lactose. This is a 52% increase from previous years, according to the latest state numbers.

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