

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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Youth Horse Group Organized

In one of my columns early last summer I mentioned there was an effort by some parents to organize a 4-H youth group which would focus its studies and activities around horses. I am happy to report such a group has been formally organized. Currently, it involves approximately a dozen young, enthusiastic boys and girls who reside in areas from Ray to Williston. Judging from the first two meetings, the young members are very eager to learn about the care and training of horses.

As with any youth development venture, adults are needed to give guidance and leadership. Often times this adult involvement is the biggest obstacle to establishment of the formal youth ventures. In this instance, the group is very fortunate to have Dave Smithberg and Tana Conlin offer their time to coordinate learning activities of the club. With their leadership and involvement of many of the moms and dads, this group has a great start on the journey to learn a lot about those things necessary for a good relationship between man and horse.

Unusable Pesticides Collected Through Project Safe Send

Each summer I call attention to project Safe Send, a program whereby the North Dakota Department of Agriculture travels across the state to collect unusable pesticides. This past July one of the twelve stops was Williston.

Agriculture Commissioner, Doug Goehring, reports more than 380 people brought in a total of 189,996 pounds of potentially dangerous pesticides. Included in this year's collection were products such as DDT, arsenic, strychnine and mercury compounds. Veolia Environmental Services, Blaine, MN, collected, repackaged and transported all of the pesticides to out-of-state incinerators.

Since 1992, more than 7,700 people have used Project Safe Send to get rid of their unusable pesticides, almost three million pounds. Project Safe Send is funded by fees paid by pesticide manufacturers to register their products in North Dakota. Public involvement and support has helped maintain the program's strong, bipartisan backing in the North Dakota Legislature.

Details of a 2012 Project Safe Send have yet to be announced. It is a safe bet the Ag Department will conduct a collection but the pick-up point for this area will likely be at another nearby community.

Mountrail Durum Ranks High

The 2011 Research Report contains performance data of all the crops and their varieties grown in this region. Because durum is the number one crop in acreage for this area, I am always interested in how the varieties compare in yields. A quick glance at the 2011 yields shows a lot of variability, usually depending on location. For instance, yields at New Town and Crosby were unusually low while the data obtained from the Powers Lake and Ray off-station sites were nothing to write home about.

So, I studied the 3 – year averages. There is data for about 15-20 varieties. Often, all of the numbers lead to indecision, anyway for me. However, there is one durum variety that always seems to be at the top or very near the top. It is Mountrail. Over the three years, 2009-2011, Mountrail is at the top of the list at Crosby and Ray and comes in second at the Powers Lake and New Town locations.

Copies of the research report are available free of charge. I encourage growers to study this data as you make variety decisions for 2012.