

Minnesota Wildlifers,

Welcome to the July 2021 edition of the Prairie/Farmland Newsletter. Enjoy!

Remember - we'd love for you to share any relevant content with us for inclusion in the next edition. Please send those items to either Jake (jcnelson8487@gmail.com) or Nicole (ndavros@gmail.com). And if you have any issues you'd like to investigate further with the committee, let Jake know.

Grassland/Farmland Wildlife, Habitat, Farming, Soil Health, & Federal Conservation Programs

- [USDA Announces Dates for Conservation Reserve Program General and Grasslands Signups](#) - "We are excited to roll out our new and improved CRP General and Grasslands signups," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "Bottom line, CRP now makes more financial sense for producers while also providing a bigger return on investment in terms of natural resource benefits.
- [Drought now covers 75 percent of Minnesota; rain chances limited](#) - Recent rains have not been enough to turn around Minnesota's worsening drought conditions. Despite chances for rain through the weekend, including a severe weather risk Thursday, the expected rainfall is unlikely to turn the situation around.
- ['There isn't a healthier place for cows than out on the grass'](#) - Mike and Joan Gilles, who milk about 110 cows and have 100 acres of open ground for pasture grass with another 150 acres of land they rent for growing forages, hosted a pasture walk on June 15 sponsored by the Sustainable Farming Association and the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship.
- [North Dakota rancher, congressional delegation urge USDA action on haying CRP for drought relief](#) - On June 15, North Dakota's congressional delegation, Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer and Rep. Kelly Armstrong, wrote a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow emergency haying and grazing of CRP acres in the state before Aug. 1.
- [Conservationists drive Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, a model for other states](#) - Farmers dedicated to conservation like Joan Heim-Welch and direct assistance from local conservation offices have put the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program in the spotlight as one of the best of its kind in the country.
- [Minnesota crops showing drought stress at a crucial time](#) - "I've got probably the poorest corn stand I've ever had. It's just the kernels never got enough moisture to sprout, beans are kind of the same way," said Hanson, who farms near Gary. I've got some wheat that's heading out, or trying to head out, that's only 6 inches tall because of the drought." The damage is already done to wheat, an early season crop. Hanson's corn and soybeans could still recover if sufficient rain falls soon.
- [No easy solution on fixing cattle markets](#) - If you talk to anyone in the cattle business, you've heard the complaints: The packers are making all the money and the cattle producer has no power to change anything. Senate Ag hearing reveals mixed views on how cattle market got where it is and what is needed to offer cattle producers relief going forward.

Pollinators and Insects

- [Grow Native Plants to Help Pollinators, But Here's Why You Should Think Twice About Nativars](#) - Experts agree that growing native plants in your yard can help out pollinators and other beneficial wildlife. You also may come across "nativars" that offer variations in color, size, and other characteristics. But are they as good for pollinators, and should you plant them?
- [For the Butterflies — and the Rest of Us \[Stop Using Pesticides\]](#) - “But if you ask someone with a mosquito company’s sign in their yard why they are killing all their lightning bugs, why they are killing all their bumblebees and butterflies, they will look at you blankly. They don’t know they’re killing every invertebrate in their yard and starving out all the animals — birds and amphibians and reptiles and many mammals — who depend on insects for food. They never gave it any thought at all.”

Pesticides and Invasive Species

- [Dead Bees, Sick Residents from Pesticide Pollution in Nebraska](#) - The AltEn plant in the village of Mead has made ethanol from corn coated with pesticides for years. The results have been a disaster for residents and nearby farms.
- [Palmer amaranth from sunflower screenings could cost North Dakota cattleman \\$30K per year](#) - A Barnes County, N.D., rancher wonders why the North Dakota Department of Agriculture couldn't stop a Fargo, N.D., source of sunflower "screenings" as a feed product when they knew it had been partially banned in Minnesota for excessive Palmer amaranth weed seeds.

Webinars, Podcasts, Videos, Social Media, & Other Events

- [PF's Train the Trainer Events](#) (PDF) - Join Pheasants Forever Staff and partners on some unique field training opportunities throughout the state of Minnesota this 2021 season. These trainings are open to all NRCS, SWCD, and FSA staff within the state of Minnesota. To comply with COVID protocols, space in each session is capped at 20 participants.
- [Celebrating Pollinator Week: Featuring Scott Glup With USFWS](#) [Video] - The USFWS has been a long supporter of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, along with supporting our pollinator habitat outreach program. With pollinator numbers declining, this habitat is becoming increasingly critical. Watch to learn why the USFWS cares about pollinators, what they do to impact pollinator habitat, and what we believe you can do to make a lasting difference.
- July is Grassland Month and what better way to celebrate than with the **first episode of season 4 of the Prairie Pod!** [The Prairie Pod](#) is a podcast that communicates the science surrounding prairie conservation, restoration/reconstruction, and management. New episodes are available weekly Starting July 6th. Listen on iTunes, Google Play or Spotify.

Other Topics (including those outside of our prairie region)

- [Heard on repeat: Where are all the bluebirds this year?](#) - Where are all the bluebirds? Many that return to Minnesota spend winter in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Unseasonably severe winter cold in February through parts of the Central Plains and a swath of Southern states is believed to have killed untold numbers of bluebirds, some of which starved or froze to death.
- [South Dakota farmer builds bin control for \\$100 instead of \\$80K](#) - A western South Dakota farmer wanted a bin aeration control system he could operate from his smartphone. When he learned it would cost \$80,000 he used his tech savvy to build his own — for \$100.