

Properly Curing Hay Is Crucial For Forage Quality

Weather conditions across the Dakotas have created challenges for haymaking. Properly curing hay to the correct moisture level for baling is crucial to maintaining forage quality. At baling, the moisture level should be a maximum of 20 percent for small square bales, 18 percent for round bales and 15 percent for large square bales. The larger the forage package, the lower the moisture should be at baling.

Exceeding these moisture levels can reduce dry matter and nutrient content for the hay, says James Rogers, North Dakota State University Extension forage crops production specialist. At harvest, hay naturally contains microbial content. Curing limits aerobic microbial growth to occur. Baling hay at moisture levels above 25 percent creates an environment for aerobic microbial growth to occur. These microbes are living organisms that feed off of the nutrient content of the hay and generate heat. As heat increases, a chemical bond forms between proteins and carbohydrates (maillard reaction), reducing dry matter and digestibility of the end product. Although this reaction produces a more palatable hay, the loss of energy and digestible protein lowers its quality.

Several methods exist to accelerate drying time to prevent moisture-damaged hay. First, if possible, condition the hay at cutting. Conditioning crimps the stems, which hastens moisture loss and speeds drying. Second, when cutting, spread the forage out into as wide a swath as possible. This increases the surface area exposed to sunlight. Third, hay can be inverted or flipped over, or if this is not possible, rake the hay a couple of extra times to get hay moved from the bottom of a window to the top. However, be cautious with delicate crops such as alfalfa, as mechanical handling can cause leaf loss.

Using a preservative can also accelerate the time from hay mowing to baling. Preservatives will not lower the moisture content of hay, but they will lower anaerobic microbial growth, decreasing hay heating and thus dry matter and nutrient loss. Preventatives allowed baling at a hay moisture content of 25-30 percent. Beyond 30 percent moisture, they will not be effective. Baleage is an option for hays with greater than a 30 percent moisture content. Another important point is that the effect will not last indefinitely. After about 30 days, the effect of a preservative treatment will begin to dissipate. If using a preservative, plan on feeding preserved hay early in the season and avoid storing preserved hay with untreated cured hay.

Three types of preservatives are available: organic acids, ammonia-based and microbial. Anhydrous ammonia is an effective anti-microbial preservative but requires extreme caution in handling and application to avoid personal injury. In addition, it may produce toxicity in high quality hay, potentially causing livestock death. For these reasons, treating high moisture hay with ammonia is not recommended. Microbial products are available, but their effectiveness as a preservative is not supported by research.

Organic acids are reliable, effective and time tested. Propionic acid is the most common of these, and though it is effective, it can be corrosive. Buffers can be mixed with propionic acid to reduce the corrosiveness. Read and follow label directions with propionic acid use as the rates will vary based on moisture content of the hay. Getting good distribution of propionic acid onto the hay is needed to get the most effective treatment. The solution is most often applied at the pickup prior to entering the bale chamber.

Other essential tools including a moisture tester and temperature probe. Various moisture meters are available on the market. It is advisable to check moisture meter accuracy with another method such as the microwave method. A bale temperature probe is useful for monitoring bale temperature when moisture content is suspected to be high until temperatures stabilize. Bale temperatures around 100 degrees Fahrenheit are normal, but if temperatures reach 150 degrees and remain elevated, it signals a problem. The longer a bale stays at an elevated temperature, the more damage will occur.

"Forage testing is always a good management strategy," says Rogers. "This year when hay may be baled at questionable moisture, forage testing becomes even more important. Knowing available versus unavailable protein and digestibility can make a real difference come this winter."

For more information, contact your local NDSU Extension county office.

Is Your Electric Bill Higher? Independent Analysis Says Don't Blame Clean Energy

By Mike Moen, Prairie News Service

Advancing clean energy sources can be a tricky topic in oil-producing states like North Dakota. But a nonpartisan analysis says the facts are clear about what causes electric bills to climb, and renewables aren't among them.

This month, a report from the independent think tank Energy Innovation says one third of U.S. households had to forego basic necessities to pay energy bills last year. As the nation scales up the transition to sources like wind and solar power, those opposed to clean energy rebates and other climate policies say the movement is harming consumers, with higher costs to keep the lights on.

But report author Brendan Pierpont (director of electricity modeling for Energy Innovation) said the facts show otherwise. "Nationally, we found big drivers of rising rates are climate change impacts, and extreme weather - and fossil fuel costs," said Pierpont, "like volatile natural gas prices, and utility investment in aging, expensive coal

plants." Governor Doug Burgum has increasingly become a staunch supporter of oil and gas production, but North Dakota has been a top ten state for wind energy generation. The report says states with significant clean energy growth have not generally experienced rate hikes above inflation. Between 2010 and 2023, North Dakota was in the middle of the pack for rate increases, but still below the national average. Those who oversee the power grid warn that the rapid push toward renewables could create reliability issues in the short term, especially with rising electricity demand from places like big data centers.

Grid improvement projects are taking shape, also affecting energy bills. But Pierpont suggested not enough of them are designed to expand transmission lines. "It's only a pretty small portion of the total transmission and distribution pie that is expanding the grid," said Pierpont, "either to meet rising demand or to integrate new resources, like wind and solar." Pierpont said those cleaner sources are becoming much cheaper, and if utilities and grid operators focus more on larger projects that get them online, they'll offset the factors pushing electricity bills higher.

In 2022, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator approved a \$10 billion transmission plan to accommodate growth in renewables. North Dakota falls under the MISO map.

HHS Awards \$598,408 To UND

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the award of \$598,408 through the Indian Health Service to the University of North Dakota (UND). The funding will be distributed to the following programs and initiatives:

- \$396,952 to the Recruitment & Retention of American Indians into Nursing (RAIN) program at UND, which provides support services to American Indian students enrolled in pre-nursing, undergraduate, and graduate nursing programs.
- \$201,483 to the Indians into Psychology Doctoral Education (INPSYDE) program at UND, which provides mental health services and professionals for Native American populations across the Midwest.

Proceedings Of The Board Of County Commissioners

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MOUNTRAIL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1. OPENING & ROLL CALL

The Board met in regular session on Tuesday, July 2, 2024 at 9:00 A.M. in the Emergency/Community Room, Mountrail County Courthouse, Stanley ND with Commissioners Trudy Ruland, Wayne Olson, Jason Rice, Joan Hollekim and John DeGroot present. State's Attorney, Wade Enget & Hunter Crowdrey, Law Student Externship were present.

Chairman Ruland called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. BUSINESS

A. AGENDA

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Olson, to review and approve the agenda as corrected. Upon roll call, all present voted yes. Motion carried.

B. MINUTES

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2024 meeting as corrected. Upon roll call, all present voted yes. Motion carried.

C. PAYROLL

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve the salary increase form for a satisfactory probationary period for Johann Freeberg with the Corrections as a Correctional Officer I to the amount of \$26,97 per hour/\$56,100 per year. Upon roll call, Rice, Olson, Hollekim, DeGroot and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to approve the salary increase form for a satisfactory probationary period for Chad Goodman with the Road & Bridge as a Road Worker II in the amount of \$32,907 per hour/\$68,448 per year. Upon roll call, Rice, Olson, DeGroot, Ruland and Hollekim voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Rice, seconded by Comm. Olson, to approve the salary increase form for a satisfactory probationary period for Kurt Myers with the Road & Bridge as a Road Worker I to the amount of \$31,262 per hour/\$65,025 per year. Upon roll call, Olson, Rice, Hollekim, DeGroot and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the regular full-time classification for Shelby Holte with the Sheriff's Department as a Deputy I in the amount of \$32,262 per hour/\$67,106 per year. Upon roll call, Olson, Hollekim, Ruland, Rice and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the temporary employee classification for Jack Wilhelm with Weed Control as a Sprayer in the amount of \$27.32 per hour shall not exceed 40 hrs. per week/988 hrs. per year from June 24 to September 30, 2024. Upon roll call, Ruland, Rice, Olson, Hollekim and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

D. TRANSFER

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the transfer for Workers Compensation from Road & Bridge Fund in the amount of \$37,226.70; County Parks Fund in the amount of \$1,099.50 and Weed Control Fund in the amount of \$3,884.95 into the General Fund totaling \$42,211.15. Upon roll call, Hollekim, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice and Olson voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve the transfer from Road & Bridge Capital Equipment Fund to the Road & Bridge Equipment Fund for a wrong account on warrant #108803 on 4-2-24 totaling \$341,000. Upon roll call, Rice, Ruland, Olson, Hollekim and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

E. OPIOID SETTLEMENT SPEND PLAN

Stephanie A. Pappa, Auditor discussed the email received from Javayne Oyloce with Upper Missouri District Health Unit. Javayne Oyloce wanted to know about the spending plan for the Opioid settlements with Mountrail County. Wade Enget, State's Attorney discussed utilizing funds for counseling and substance abuse evaluations. Laurie Johnson, Correctional Administrator stated both Orvin Lommen and Bob Hayes Addiction Services will continue to be used for evaluating the inmates.

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve utilizing the Opioid Settlement funds for counseling and substance abuse evaluations. A new fund will be set up for the Opioid Settlement funds. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice, Olson and Hollekim voted yes. Motion carried.

F. CITY OF STANLEY LETTER/STORM SHELTER

The Board discussed the City of Stanley letter requesting an Emergency Management Plan for a Natural Disaster Location with the City of Stanley that qualifies as a storm shelter. Warren Bogert, Disaster Emergency Services Coordinator, will do some research on qualifying storm shelters. The Board requested that Mr. Bogert assist the City of Stanley with their request.

G. CHANGE ORDER

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to approve the change order for NorthStar Steel Inc in the amount of \$62,278 for the County Shop Project to include a paved road west of the Courthouse. Upon roll call, Olson, DeGroot, Ruland, Hollekim and Rice voted yes. Motion carried.

H. MCMC INMATE HEALTH SERVICES CONTRACT

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve signing the agreement with the Mountrail County Medical Center for Providing Inmate Health Services in the Mountrail County

Correctional Facility. Upon roll call, Ruland, Olson, Rice, DeGroot and Hollekim voted yes. Motion carried.

I. BILLS

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Olson, to approve the bills totaling \$996,377.71 and June 9 through June 22 payroll, checks #17786-17804 and direct deposits #21717-21890 totaling \$602,628.16. Upon roll call, Olson, DeGroot, Hollekim, Rice and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried. (A complete list of bills is posted on a regular basis on the Mountrail County website @ www.co.mountrail.nd.us under the County Commissioner heading and/or are available for review in the Auditor's Office during normal business hours).

J. BOARD CONCERNS

Discussion was held on the chairs and tables for the Memorial Building.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve the amount of \$10,000 for the purchase of tables and chairs for the Memorial Building. Upon roll call, Hollekim, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice and Olson voted yes. Motion carried.

3. APPOINTMENT SCHEDULED

9:15 A.M.

Lori Hanson, Tax Director met with the board to discuss abatements, request to close the office during the Tax Director's conference and updated the board on the acreage utilized for oil pads etc.

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve the abatement on parcel #61-0093951 for tax year 2022 for qualifying for Disabled Veterans Credit as per the recommendation of Tax Director Hanson. Upon roll call, Ruland, Hollekim, DeGroot, Olson and Rice voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the abatement on parcel #61-0093951 for tax year 2023 for qualifying for Disabled Veterans Credit as per the recommendation of Tax Director Hanson. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice, Olson and Hollekim voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the abatement on parcel #09-9000100 for the tax year 2024 as the mobile home was destroyed by fire as per the recommendation of Tax Director Hanson. Upon roll call, Ruland, Rice, Olson, Hollekim and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. Rice, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the abatement on parcel #20-9000800 for tax year 2024 as the mobile home was removed as per the recommendation of Tax Director Hanson. Upon roll call, Olson, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice and Hollekim voted yes. Motion carried.

Tax Director Hanson discussed closing the Tax Director's office on August 12-15 for the State Board of Equalization and continued education in Bismarck. The Recorder's and Treasurer's office will answer the phones while out. The board expressed no objections to the August 12-15 closure.

Rory Porth, Assessor supplied the board with the land in Mountrail County that has been used for Oil & Gas well sites & salt water disposal sites.

The board expressed appreciation for the beneficial data and information supplied by the Tax Director's office.

9:25 A.M.

Madison Rodgers, Clerk of Court met with the board to discuss a budget amendment to change the part-time position to a full-time position within the Clerk of Court 2024 budget. Clerk of Court Rodgers also requested to promote Abby Wing to the full-time position. The Board agreed to advertise for the part-time employee position that is currently in the 2024 budget. The board requested the data showing the increase in work from Clerk of Court Rodgers before making the decision of the full-time position.

9:30 A.M.

Corey Bristol, Sheriff met with the board to discuss the county auction that will have to be done by written bids, bismanonline.com or a rummage sale. Sheriff Bristol stated the Auctioneer stated there was not enough items to hold a public auction.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Rice, to approve holding a rummage sale for the county items & the higher priced items to be listed on bismanonline.com. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Rice, Olson, Hollekim and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

Sheriff Bristol also supplied vehicle quotes.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Olson, to approve the purchase of 1 new 2024 Silverado Crew Cab pickup with Chevrolet Mandan totaling \$28,190 with trade in. Upon roll call, Rice, Olson, Hollekim, Ruland and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

Sheriff Bristol also requested a cart to assist with the election machines in order to help make things easier for delivering and picking up from precincts.

Moved by Comm. Hollekim, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve the purchase of 9 carts for the precincts totaling \$2,600 per cart plus shipping from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Ruland, Rice, Hollekim and Olson voted yes. Motion carried.

9:45 A.M.

The next item on the agenda is the pending litigation in the matter entitled Franklin D. Martens and Rosemary Martens and Gary Martens and Steven Martens, Durable Power of Attorney for Franklin D. Martens and Rosemary Martens v. Mountrail County. This item may be discussed in an executive session. The legal authority for closing this portion of the meeting is North Dakota Code section(s) 44-04-19.1(5). The

Campaigns Ramp Up Messaging For ND Property Tax Question

By Mike Moen, Prairie News Service

Signatures are expected to be submitted for a potential fall ballot question which would largely do away with property taxes in North Dakota.

The Secretary of State will review the signatures sent in by petition organizers, who said property owners are in big need of tax relief. A coalition opposing the idea is intensifying efforts to lay out the consequences.

Chad Oban, executive director of the teacher's union North Dakota United, echoed what other skeptics pointed out: The plan does not explain how the lost revenue would be replaced. In addition to key services funded by local property taxes, such as schools and emergency response, Oban warned of other harm.

"People who have money are buying up property all over the country and turning it into rental property or Airbnbs and that kind of thing," Oban pointed out. "That's going to happen here. I mean, if you're an investor, why not buy property in a place where you're not going to pay property taxes?"

He added it could unfold as North Dakota grapples with an affordable housing shortage. An independent analysis by the Legislative Council estimated a statewide revenue loss

of \$1.3 billion if the proposal becomes reality. Supporters contended North Dakota government consistently overspends and the Legislature should have no problem cover the losses.

Oban emphasized communities would essentially lose local control in setting their budgets. As for asking the state to help out, he argued smaller communities would have a tougher time seeking funds to buy equipment like a fire truck.

"You're in a rural area and you can't levy property taxes, so you have to go to Bismarck and ask the Legislature to pay for the fire truck," Oban stressed. "Well, Fargo might be asking for a fire truck, too."

He added Fargo has plenty of representatives to request those funds, while smaller communities do not.

Jason Bohrer, president of the coal industry's Lignite Energy Council, which is among the other 60-plus groups to join the opposition campaign, worries about the loss of school funding, saying it would make it harder to attract workers. He warned of another workforce side effect.

"Not only do you not get potentially the person working at the power plant, you also don't get that person's spouse working at the local gym or as a teacher in the local school," Bohrer cautioned.



OIL & GAS LEASE ONLINE AUCTION

The Board of University and School Lands will conduct an online oil and gas lease auction for three hundred fifteen (315) tracts in Billings, Burke, Cavalier, Divide, Dunn, Golden Valley, McKenzie, McLean, Mountrail, Stark, and Williams Counties, ND. Bidding will commence August 6, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. CT and end August 13, 2024. The link to view the tracts and participate in the auction is: https://www.energynet.com/govt_listing.pl A 3% convenience fee will be assessed. Anyone needing auxiliary aids and services should call Lynn at

(701) 328-1921 by July 30, 2024
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/s/ Joseph A. Heringer, Commissioner

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