

Opportunities Abound for Women in North Dakota Agriculture

Generational shifts, markets, interest in regenerative practices drive shift

By Michael Standaert
North Dakota News Cooperative

While a little over a century ago women obtained the right to vote in North Dakota, it took decades more to be treated as equals at traditionally male occupations like agriculture.

Today, around one-third of agriculture operations in the US are operated by women. Opportunities to lead agribusinesses and farming operations continue to grow, particularly as Baby Boomer farmers retire or pass away.

More than half of graduates of agricultural science programs are now women, a shift starting over a decade ago. At many programs now, more than 60% of graduates are female.

Jill Vigesaa, 65, raised on a farm near Lakota, and recent winner of the first ever Legacy of the Land Award created by the North Dakota Farm Bureau Foundation, has seen those changes.

When growing up, it was traditionally her brothers who would drive the tractors.

That changed after they grew bored of the monotonous back-and-forth and paid her a bit out of their hourly wage if she would ride along to keep them company.

"Well, pretty soon it was like, 'You can drive it, why are you just sitting here?'" she said.

That began her own farming journey, even if her father was a little embarrassed because of neighbors gawking.

"They would literally sit at the end of the field and watch me, and not watch any of the guys," Vigesaa said of neighboring farmers. "They weren't unkind, but it was like women aren't supposed to be out here doing this kind of stuff."

That's changed dramatically, and interest and opportunity abound in North Dakota and across the Midwest.

The United Nations declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer as well as the Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, highlighting how integral women are to both agricultural operations and as land stewards.

For Trish Feiring, who ranches with her husband Donnie just north of Beach near the Montana border, it took years to buy land rather than lease it.

The partners now run a successful Angus ranch on nearly 2,000 acres, raising cattle, selling grass-fed-and-finished beef across the Western part of the state and operating a vacation rental on the property.

Feiring said there are many opportunities for young people to get into agriculture, particularly if they're creative and flexible with what presents itself.

"I hate to say this, but you can't just be a rancher," Feiring said. "You have to be a busi-



Ashley Bruner, manager of Dakota Angus near Drake, displays a cut of beef from the ranch she operates with her family. (provided)

ness person, and you have to be willing to open your mind to different opportunities."

While growing up on a farm where her own mother took a very active role, and seeing her own operation as a 50/50 partnership with her husband, she did say she felt women are becoming more well received in ranching.

"Independent women who want to start their own operations, there's more of them all the time, so kudos to them," Feiring said.

Ashley Bruner, manager of Dakota Angus near Drake, said one of the reasons she and her husband Travis started the company was to potentially provide a future career pathway to some of their four children, three of whom are girls.

"We know that for all four to come back to the farm is not realistic in today's world," said Bruner, who sees her oldest daughter has the most interest in potentially working in the operation long-term.

"She loves being outside, being with the animals, she likes learning alongside her dad," Bruner said.

Active on the board of the North Dakota Angus Association, Bruner said she has seen more women taking on leading roles in operations during the past several years and is amazed at the work they do.

"There are some women who are the main breeders in their operation, it's not their husband," Bruner said. "I'm just in awe and think it is so great that they're the ones who came back to the ranch to take over from the previous generation and continue building that legacy for their future."

Many of the recent interns coming through the association internship program have been young women, she said.



Please Have
Cake and Ice Cream
with

HERBY

Powers Lake Senior Center

Sunday, May 17
from 2:00-4:00

It's his **95th**
and please no gifts

Movie Review Michael

The story of "King of Pop" Michael Jackson. From his childhood as the star of the Jackson 5, through times of abuse by his father Joe Jackson, to breaking away and making the hit album Thriller and claiming his independence as a solo artist.

This drama and historical film is rated PG-13 for thematic material, language and smoking. The film is 2 hours and 7 minutes.

Michael is playing at the Kenmare Theatre on May 15-17. Show times are Friday and Saturday at 7:00 and 9:15 p.m. and Sunday at 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Card of Thanks

Thank you to the Powers Lake Dollars for Scholars for the Medora Musical trip we won.

Earl & Shirley Weinmann

PUBLIC NOTICES

A public notice is information informing citizens of government activities that may affect the citizens' everyday lives. Public notices have been printed in local newspapers, the trusted sources for community information, for more than 200 years.

North Dakota newspapers also post public notices that are printed in newspapers on www.ndpublicnotices.com at no additional charge to units of government.

Vacancy

Burke County Planning and Zoning Commission

The Burke County Planning and Zoning Commission is a seven-member board formed for the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals, public convenience, general prosperity, and public welfare of the County. Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the Third Tuesday of each month with occasional hearings and work sessions scheduled during weekdays and evenings.

A vacancy exists on the Commission and expressions of interest are invited. Please send your resume to Stephanie Black, Burke County Planning and Zoning, PO Box 310 Bowbells, ND. 58721 or by email to sabblack@nd.gov by Thursday May 28th.

If you have any questions regarding the position, please call (701) 377-6242 Monday - Thursday during normal business hours.

May 6 & 13, 2026

Notice of Public Hearing for Zoning Change

Notice is hereby given that the Burke County Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, May 19th, 2026 at 8:05 a.m. in the Commissioners' Room of the Burke County Courthouse, Main Street, Bowbells ND at which time and place all interested persons will be heard on the request of Alex Thompson with Central Specialties

Review of Central Specialties conditional use permit

Legal description of property Parcel ID 01724000; SW ¼ of S25 T160N R92W

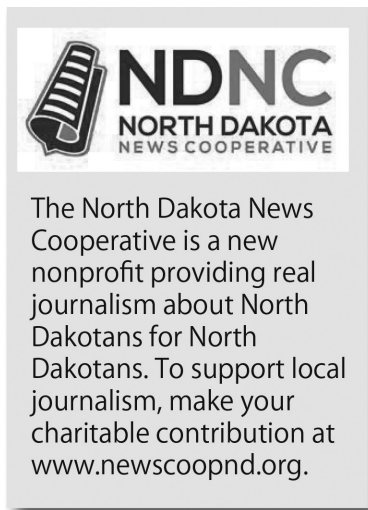
Cleary Township Lucy Township

This proposal is available to the public for inspection and copying at the Burke County Planning & Zoning Office, Burke County Courthouse, Main Street, Bowbells ND, Monday - Thursday during normal working hours. Any special accommodations required, please contact our office in advance.

Stephanie Black
Burke County Planning and Zoning Commission
Date: 05/07/2026
May 13, 2026

(More Legals on Page 6)

NEWS TIP?
377-2626



The North Dakota News Cooperative is a new nonprofit providing real journalism about North Dakotans. To support local journalism, make your charitable contribution at www.newscoopnd.org.

"They're not afraid to do the work that's out there, they're not afraid to learn, they want to be involved," Bruner said. "Thirty, forty years ago, that wasn't a woman's job."

Amber Smith, co-executive director for the nonprofit Women in Ranching, who ranches in Eastern Montana, helped form the organization as part of an effort to provide skill-building programs and resources to new women ranchers, who make up about 60% of those they serve.

The organization came out of having been in other meetings with women farmers and ranchers 19 to 70 years old who were forward-facing or leading agricultural operations, but were voicing limiting beliefs about their own value.

"What women continue to articulate is we want more hands-on skill building, we want more opportunities to learn from one another, we want more opportunities to gather, we want more women ranching to be much bigger," Smith said.

The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization providing reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. The organization increases the public's access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state. For more information about NDNC or to make a charitable contribution, please visit newscoopnd.org.

VOTE KURT KOPPELSLOEN
Burke County Commissioner District 2
I would appreciate your vote on June 9.
paid for by Kurt Koppelsloen

Bowbells

Thursday, Hazel Herman and Mike were in Crosby for Deklan Pulvermacher's spring concert.

Diana and Wayne Jacobson visited Janette Peterson and Pauline Jacobson Friday and Saturday. Later in the day Eric and Amy Anderson, Eli, Ayla, Emet and Anly visited after a track meet. Sunday helping celebrate Mother's Day were Janelle and Jerome Hoheisel, Shelley and Craig Ellsworth and John Peterson.

Clara Olson and Melanie Skar had lunch on Friday at the Prairie Bistro and Gardens.

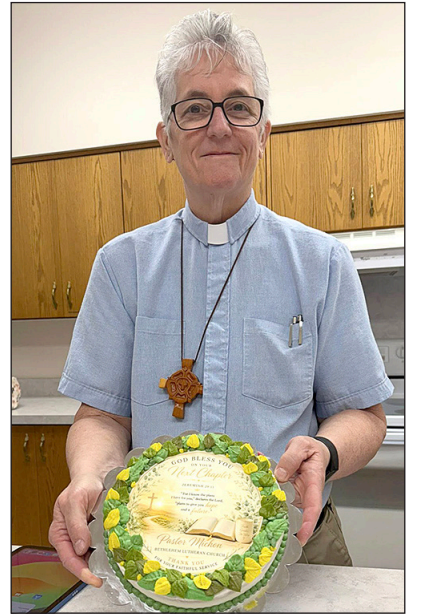
Tim and Kari Rasmusson stopped at Ardelle McIntyre's Sunday for Mother's Day and delivered a hanging basket.

Sunday, Aliza and Liam Pulvermacher, Emil and Anja Frandsen were confirmed in Columbus at Faith Lutheran. Hazel Herman and Mike attended.

Bonnie Nielsen and Mary Stepheny went on a three week adventure. First stop was Boise, ID, visiting Mary's friends for a week and a half. Then they drove to Yellowstone, Old Faithful, The Tetons, Mount Rushmore and Deadwood.

They had wonderful weather the entire time and had a great time sight seeing.

Sunday evening for Mother's Day, Gen Aufforth enjoyed supper made and delivered by



Bethlehem Lutheran Church members honored Pastor Michon at her last worship service on Sunday.

her son, JR.

Sunday several people gathered at Pastor Michon Weingartner's and helped load her moving van as she is taking a new adventure to Camp of the Cross at Garrison.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church celebrated the First Communion of Josephine Cerise, Cora Ross, Elliot Rick and Brielle Watterud.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church members held a lunch following worship service on Sunday to thank Pastor Michon for her 13 years of service to their congregation and wish her the best on her next journey at Camp of the Cross.

Senior Citizens Menus

POWERS LAKE

Call 464-5630 by 8:00 a.m. the day of the meal

Friday, May 15: Taco salad.

Monday, May 18: Meatloaf.

Wednesday, May 20: Cheeseburgers.

LIGNITE/COLUMBUS

Call 385-4364 or 818-3116 if interested in getting meals

Friday, May 15: Beef roast, gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, banana split dessert.

Monday, May 18: Creamed chicken with rice, peas & carrots, fruit juice, banana in pudding, bun.

Wednesday, May 20:

Seasoned pork loin, roasted red potatoes, brussel sprouts, cranberry fruit salad.

BOWBELLS

Anyone over 60 who would like a meal delivered please call 377-2376

meals subject to change
Friday, May 15: Spaghetti supreme, lettuce salad, garlic toast, apple.

Monday, May 18: Meatballs, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, fruit, dinner bun.

Wednesday, May 20: Polish sausage on a bun, hash-browns, lettuce salad, mandarin orange poke cake.

Burke County Tribune Office
CLOSED
Friday AM- May 15

GREATER NORTHWEST CORNER MARKET
Advertising appears in Six area newspapers
Bowbells, Crosby, Kenmare, Mohall, Stanley, Westhope
PUBLISHED EVERY 1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY
For more information contact
Burke County Tribune
377-2626