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# Wyoming weeds: why are they so darn tough?



**By Brian Sebade**  
*Sustainable  
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Weeds are often on the minds of many during the warmer months of year. Weeds negatively affect people by reducing grazing potential, decreasing garden production, or negatively impacting natural resource areas. In general, it is not fully understood exactly why weeds are so successful, but there are many thoughts and ideas concerning why they are so tough to get rid of.

By definition a weed can be a native or a nonnative plant. Generally, a majority of problem weeds in northeast Wyoming were introduced to North America. These weeds may have been introduced on purpose or by accident. Not every plant that has made it to the United States from another continent is competitive enough to become a problem weed however. Weeds that are successful at colonizing and out-competing native plants usually have several factors aiding their ability to outcompete native plant communities.

One theory used to understand and explain why weeds are so competitive is the thought that weeds have traveled to a new land mass that is not host to enemies from their former native range. Meaning a weed that was negatively impacted by insects, diseases, or grazing animals at its native home is no longer affected by those predators once it reaches a new region. Scientists and land managers have introduced some of these non-native predators to compete with invasive plants. Gall flies, tiny flies that burry their eggs in the stems of



Canada thistle stem with the impact of a stem gall fly.

plants, for example have been introduced to decrease the production and spread of weeds such as Canada thistle. Others have found success with livestock (i.e. sheep and goats) to combat weedy plants. While native wildlife does not always consume plants such as leafy spurge, domestic sheep and goats are more adapted to eating this particular plant and limiting its competitive success. Raising livestock does add an increase the amount of logistics required, but many weedy plants are actually quite nutritious with high crude protein levels.

Diseases that can be used to control weeds are in the process of being studied. Research related to pathogen use for cheatgrass control is currently being conducted in many western states. Biological controls are useful for stopping the spread of weeds, but will not eradicate a species. These controls are also very difficult to get approved for use in the United States and take many years of research to reach the approval stage.

As mentioned earlier, not all introduced plants become weedy or impact native plant communities or human activities. In general, non-native plants that are a problem have a native climate that is similar to that of their new home. The Caucasus region of Eurasia is an area that has produced a large proportion of the weedy plants in Wyoming. The plants from the Caucasus are well adapted to the precipitation and temperature of Wyoming. Weeds from this region also utilize one or several growing traits to improve their success. This might include rapid shoot

growth, prolific seed production, ability to germinate seeds in a wide range of temperatures and soils, low water needs, sprouting from rhizomes (underground shoots), and many others. Without the growth regulation of native enemies, ideal temperatures and precipitation, and competitive growing traits these weeds make it very difficult to control. Understanding the biology of any weedy plant is the first step in taking control of the problem plant.

Another theory that has been discussed, yet has not been fully accepted is the idea that some weeds have the ability to use chemical weapons. Research has suggested that some highly invasive plants can produce



Russian knapweed is a common weed found in Wyoming thought to produce allelochemicals.

chemicals from their roots called allelochemicals. These chemicals interfere with the growth of other plants by sitting in the soil surrounding the plant and inhibiting the growth of desired plants. These allelochemicals are thought to be produced from plant species in the knapweed family. Sometimes these chemicals are referred to as novel weapons, because native North American plants have not evolved with these chemicals in the soil. There is still a lot of research that needs to be conducted in this area of invasive species management.

One final thought is that some of these nonnative plants are so unique that they fill a niche in Wyoming landscapes. A niche is the particular way a species uses its environment and resources. For example there are very few native annual grasses in Wyoming. Cheatgrass, an annual grass, might be dominate in part due to its ability to fill a niche or open resources.

Stepping back and taking a look at the history and biological traits of many nonnative Wyoming weeds it is easy to see reoccurring themes for why certain weeds are so dominant in Wyoming. These themes include plants with a similar home climate to that of Wyoming, competitive growth traits, a lack of native enemies, and open resources.



A map of the Caucasus region that is the native range of many problem weeds in Wyoming.

# Managing Your Boss



**By Bill Taylor**  
Community  
Development  
Education  
Educator

The relationship with your boss is probably the most important relationship you have at work. Boss management can stimulate better performance, improve your working life, job satisfaction, and workload. We should understand some principles that will enhance our working relationship with our boss.

- 1. Decisions:** If you do not want a “no” or procrastination, give him/her a hand. It is easiest to say “no.”
  - Remind them of where you left it last time you met;
  - Remind them of the objective rather than rushing to the 'what' and 'how';
  - Remind them of past problems encountered because a decision was not made;
  - Quickly summarize the options considered, your criteria for selecting one option -- the one you are presenting;
  - Tell them what you expect from them: simply to inform, to decide jointly, to share the risk, to add one criterion, to re-examine the option;
  - Focus on the points where you need their help;
  - Be prepared with facts and data for potential disagreements. Help them out with graphics and visuals so that the situation is grasped faster;
  - After your meeting, summarize for them the decision in writing to make sure of the understanding;
  - And finally, once a decision has been made, your way, their way or no way, do not criticize it externally. You have become the best defender; the best ambassador of what was decided.
- 2. Manage their time:** You may represent only 1% of their problems, don't make it as if it is 100%.
  - The more simple the problem or issue at hand is, the less time you should have them spend on it: prepare,

- summarize, and synthesize information and options.
  - Book him or her for several meetings in advance.
- 3. An opinion:** If you ask for their opinion, they will always have one. So, if you don't want your boss's opinion then don't ask for it.
    - If you present an issue at the wrong moment, the chances are she or he will procrastinate.
    - Prepare for your meeting: first because the advantage is to the one who is prepared, second because the preparation helps you reduce the time taken to come to the central issue.
  - 4. Information:** It is not data. So be selective; be visual; group the data; bring out what is essential.
    - Don't give them only the bad news: also give good news. If you keep bringing only bad news, little by little you become the bad news yourself.
    - Make sure they do not get the information from others too often.
    - Participate in and contribute to their informal network: every manager, hopefully, does not rely solely on formal information given in internal documents and reports. Some people use informal networks. Why not volunteer part of your network?
  - 5. Problems:** Don't just come with problems, come also with solutions. Good bosses hate two kinds of behavior. The courtesan who always comes to tell them how great they are and the pyromaniac or fireman who comes to tell them, "There is a huge problem" and then says, "But don't worry, I will solve it!" There is also a third kind, the monkey transferor. She or he has a problem and puts it on the boss's shoulders, rather than bringing a solution or at least some options.





**6. Assumptions:** Do not assume your boss knows as much as you do, but assume they can understand; so educate them. If you need their perspective, it is because it is broader; they have a better sense for inter-relationships with other parts of the organization. You have two options.

You need to educate them by simplifying, using easy to understand language, feeding them with articles, examples, best practices, summaries that help them see a perspective.

**7. Delegations:** Constantly test the waters. It's not always easy to define what is delegated to a person. Some companies prefer to use the principle of subsidiary rather than the principle of delegation: the principle of subsidiary stipulates that you can do everything except the following list, whereas in the principle of delegation you stipulate, "you cannot do anything except..."

Whichever is used, there will always be some doubt whether you have or do not have the delegation. You have two options: either you play it safe by always asking your boss's opinion; or you assume too much, make decisions and learn after the fact that it was not your's to decide. In between, there is the 'test the waters' strategy especially for things or areas, domains or steps that are unprecedented.

**8. Promises:** Do not promise what you cannot deliver, and avoid surprises, trust is at stake. You also want to avoid being seen as unreliable by not delivering on what you promise or surprising them with bad news without forewarning.

If you see that too much is asked of you, sit down and re-discuss priorities before proceeding, rather than becoming a bottleneck yourself. Involve your boss in the process, so it becomes a common priority. Avoid bad surprises. If your job is to be in charge of a particular area, then it is also to be in charge of bad results and improving them.

Involve your boss in discussing and evaluating the risks, agreeing on key lead indicators that you will both share, so that neither you nor he or she will be surprised.

**9. Differences:** Manage differences in culture. To simplify, four main types of profiles are:

- People who like to 'control things' and introduce processes, develop more the 'now';
- People who are more concerned with people, develop more the impact on people;
- People who are more concerned with getting things done, start with key actions;
- People who are more concerned with ideas, frame proposals in concepts.

Of course, in managing your boss you should know their personal inclination, as well as your personal bias. If you are process oriented, you will tend to present issues in a systematic and orderly fashion, with pros and cons, chronology of tasks, etc.

If your boss is the action type, they could be bored with that approach. So an executive summary, emphasizing the key actions and results would be a handy starting point.

**10. Trust:** Don't be sloppy in your documentation. By not finalizing your facts, arguments, memos, spelling, supporting documents, etc., you can be sure some things will get changed, mistakes corrected. And soon you will be asked to show more facts and figures, and you will see more changes, more amendments. Soon all the delegation you had will be gone.



So, remember there are correct and incorrect ways to manage your boss. Learn how to help them help you.

*Taken from an article by Jacques Horovitz in the BoardSource newsletter.*

# Heart Healthy Shopping

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**By Vicki Hayman**  
Nutrition and  
Food Safety  
Educator

All the requirements and recommendations for nutrients and food components can make achieving a heart-healthy diet seem like an impossible task. However, take heart: making your diet healthier can be done with just a few rules to keep in mind when shopping for food and making meal choices. Although changing the way you eat can be a big challenge, the stakes are high: eating an unhealthy Western-style diet increases a woman's risk of developing heart disease by 46%.

A heart-healthy diet is the key in reducing your risk of heart attack or stroke. The health of your heart has a lot to do with the foods you eat. It is generally agreed that a healthy diet should include a variety of fruits and vegetables, grains (particularly whole grains), low-fat dairy products, fish, legumes, poultry, and lean meats. This type of diet meets recommendations by the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, and the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Here are grocery-shopping tips to help you shop smart for your heart.

- **Stock up on fresh produce:** The produce aisle is bursting with color, essential nutrients, textures and many opportunities to create healthy snacks and meals. Buy in season, if possible, and choose a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- **Buy frozen fruits and vegetables:** Frozen fruits and vegetables have more nutrients and authentic flavor than their canned counterparts and don't have added sodium. If you do buy canned, read the label and select the brands with the least sodium. With canned

fruit, be sure to choose brands packed in water or light syrup as opposed to heavy syrup.

- **Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy:** Reduced-fat dairy foods offer creamy texture, protein, calcium and other nutrients without the amount of saturated fats found in full-fat products.
- **Select lean meats:** Choosing leaner cuts can provide you with adequate protein and other nutrients without all the fat.
- **Go fish:** Aim to have a serving of fish (3-4 ounces) twice a week and be sure to grill, broil, bake, steam or poach.
- **Include meat substitutes:** To decrease your intake of saturated fat, eat a meatless meal containing protein-rich nuts, seeds, beans, peas, lentils, tofu or tempeh. You will be boosting your vitamin and mineral intake as well as increasing your dietary fiber.
- **Grab the whole-grains:** Choose whole-grain, high-fiber breads, rolls, pita, and tortillas as well as whole-grain cereal, brown rice, quinoa, wild rice, oats and popcorn. Limit your intake of commercially baked or fried foods, which contain trans fat and added sugar.



- **Cut the fat:** Use fats and oils in limited amounts and always select those lowest in saturated, trans fats and cholesterol when cooking. In addition, use nonstick vegetable spray or a nonstick skillet for cooking.

There are four eating plans that can help you choose heart-healthy foods:

The *MyPlate* eating plan is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. It was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help people lower their risk of serious diseases linked to diet, including heart disease. (<http://myplate.gov>)

The *Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)* eating plan was developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) to help people with hypertension lower their blood pressure. It can also be used to help prevent heart disease. ([http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf))

The *Heart Healthy Diet* was developed by NHLBI to help people keep their blood levels of total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol ("lousy" cholesterol) low. (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/downloads/>)

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/html/hhh/aim-healthy-weight.htm>)

The *Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)* diet was developed by NHLBI to help people with unhealthy blood cholesterol levels. (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/cgi-bin/chd/step2intro.cgi>)

These eating plans have interactive web sites to help you choose foods that meet their guidelines by keying in your age, sex, height, weight, and activity level. Based on this information the web sites give you tips on what types of foods to eat and how much of each type.



Knowing how to shop in the supermarket can ensure your cart is filled with heart-healthy fare!

(Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; U. S. Department of Agriculture)

## Cent\$ible Nutrition News from Trish



**By Trish Pena**  
Cent\$ible Nutrition  
Educator

Good nutrition is the key for good health. Oftentimes single adults who don't have to cook for a family might opt to graze for their meals. Eating out from time to time, or enjoying canned soup or cereal for dinner is okay sometimes. These options should not become your norm. **"Eating for You or Two"** is a free course with the *Centsible Nutrition Program* encouraging adults to re-examine easy, nutritious meals for one or two. Persons qualifying for this course will receive a cookbook and other kitchen incentives.

Senior citizens, make this class a fun social gathering and organize a group to take the course together. You may even receive a large print cookbook.

**"Eating for You or Two"** is a one hour session offered once a week. Each session includes hands on food sampling. Don't miss out on these fun, informal gatherings.

The *Cent\$ible Nutrition Program* is offered by the University of Wyoming Extension in Crook and Weston Counties.

For information and class dates please call 746-3531, or 283-1192.



# Mindless Eating

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**By Kentz Willis**  
Nutrition and Food  
Safety  
Educator

How many food decisions do you think you make each day? Ten, twenty, maybe thirty? Most people will guess about fifteen, but research has demonstrated that the average person makes nearly two hundred fifty decisions on food daily! This means we're making over 200 food-related decisions each day *without even realizing it*.

The outcome of these 'mindless' decisions has the potential to greatly impact our health and happiness and is heavily influenced by our environment.

Consider the size of your plates, bowls, and serving utensils. Did you realize that we will serve ourselves about 30% more food when given a larger plate or bowl, and upwards of 50% more food when the serving utensil is bigger as well? The size of our dishes has increased nearly 25% in the last 50 years, leading us to serve, and ultimately eat larger portions to match our plates.

The amount that we eat, however, is not the only challenge. The types of foods that we choose to eat could use a mindless makeover as well. Effort is the largest factor in most of our food decisions—we are hardwired for convenience. In the days when food was hard to come by this was certainly a positive trait. Now that food is so abundant this trait can often work against us.

Many industry-designed convenience foods are less-than-desirable choices. Thankfully, Mother Nature has designed some great convenience foods just for us...fruits and vegetables! Many positive choices from the produce aisle can be kept on-hand for snacking with little to no preparation required. The trick is making these the first choice: store

your produce where it is visible and readily available—on your table or counter-top or easily accessible in your refrigerator (make sure to do any necessary prep work ahead). If any of those fatty, sugary, salty snacks happen to get into your house make them a bit more work to get to by placing them in the back of a tall cupboard.

The food environment in any given household is usually controlled by one person: the Nutrition Gatekeeper. (Hint: if you're reading this column it is probably you). The Gatekeeper is the individual that does most of the food shopping and meal preparation. These two tasks allow the Gatekeeper to dictate about 72% of what their families eat! By making the positive choices more appealing the Gatekeeper can greatly improve the health of their partner – and set the stage for their children to continue making these positive choices into adulthood.

By engineering your environment for success you can ensure that more of your mindless decisions will be the right ones. Considering we make about 200 of these each day even minor shifts have the potential to greatly affect our health. By 'mindlessly' avoiding 100 calories each day you could lose (instead of gain) 10 pounds in the next year! For further information I recommend the book 'Mindless Eating' by Brian Wansink or feel free to browse some of the tips and tools on his website [www.mindlesseating.org](http://www.mindlesseating.org).



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# Season Extenders



**By Scott Hininger**  
*Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Educator*

One of the challenges of living in Wyoming is the late frost in the spring and the early frost in the fall, which really shortens our growing season for vegetables unless we can provide some protection. Several techniques will lengthen the growing season, making it possible to begin earlier in the spring and end later in the fall. These techniques are cold frames and hot beds, hoop houses, cloches, and floating row covers.

One common method is a cold frame, a simple structure that provides warmth from the sun and blocks the wind. The sun's rays enter through a transparent cover. This creates a greenhouse effect that heats the interior of the cold frame.



Cold frames are handy for gardeners without large spaces.

The most common use of cold frames is to expand the growing season several months. Many gardeners use cold frames to harden off transplants, but another good use is raising cool season vegetables. Alternatively, in the fall

these same crops may be grown in the cold frame through November. A disadvantage can be the small size, unless you only have a small space.

On a sunny day, air in cold frames can get too hot for plants, therefore the lid should be propped open so cool air may enter the frame. Some mail order garden catalogs offer temperature controlled cold frame hinges that automatically open and close to vent the frame.



Cold frames need to be propped open on sunny days to allow cool air in.

In general, cold frames should be located against a south or west wall near the building foundation to take advantage of its heat. Portable cold frames built of lightweight material allow the gardener to move the frame to different sun exposures as seasons and plants change. Heating cables can be added to the soil to encourage root growth early and late in the year along with adding some heat to the cold frame

Frequently used for tomatoes or peppers, cloches and hot caps add three to four weeks to the spring growing season. There are many variations on cloches, but generally they are any transparent "house" that covers a single plant. The most common cloches are empty gallon milk jugs with the bottom cut out, one commercial product is the "Walls of Water". Another inexpensive cloche is made by covering a tomato cage with clear polyethylene. Like cold frames and hoop houses, cloches should have some



type of opening to allow hot air to escape on sunny days. Floating row covers are made of spun polyester or polypropylene and look like fabric. They are permeable to light, water, and air.



Hot caps are a great way to protect your delicate plants.

Floating row covers have multiple uses in the garden. Row covers keep plants 5-10 degrees warmer than the surrounding air and provide frost protection to a low of 28 degrees. They protect tender plants from wind and hail



Floating row covers are a versatile way to protect your plants.

damage. In addition, row covers are an excellent barrier to insects. This material is my favorite since it offers so many possibilities and accommodates many different situations.

A hoop house is similar to a cold frame, only larger. Metal or plastic pipes are bent into a series of hoops that are stuck into the ground or attached to a raised bed. The hoops are covered with polyethylene, (milky plastic) and it is not heated nor have growing lights (green house). Gardeners can expect an additional month or two of growing time inside a hoop house in the spring and fall. Like cold frames, hoop houses must be ventilated on warm days.



Hoop houses allow for a much longer growing season in Wyoming.

The advantage of a hoop house is you can walk inside and the larger area provides more heat in the early spring or late fall. The other advantage is in watering, picking, and other management tasks, since you do not have to take the covering off to perform these tasks. In Wyoming, we can gain from April until December in a hoop house, which in most cases is over double the growing season.

The real advantage of any of these systems is the added growing season and to replant cool season vegetables in the spring and plant them again at least once more in the fall. This allows harvesting three to four times the amount of vegetables from the same area of land. With any system there will be a little more management involved, however the benefits can outweigh the time and the cost of these systems is minimal.

# Getting a Leg Up On Spring Calving



**By Chance Marshall**  
*Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Educator*

Busy days and long nights are on the horizon for many cow-calf producers across Wyoming. Believe it or not, it is time to start thinking about and preparing for calving season as many producers have already started or plan to start soon. Developing your own personal pre-calving check list can be beneficial to your operation and alleviate some of the stresses associated with this crucial time of the year. The following practices and reminders are great to consider as

you begin preparing for calving season and find that routine that works for your operation.

## 1. *Building an effective calving team will make for smoother days and nights.*

- A high priority is to ensure that you will have enough quality help to ration out calving duties.
- Make sure that everyone involved has experience in calving situations.
  - ⇒ Be approachable for questions.
  - ⇒ Ensure proper training of all employees before the first calf hits the ground.
- Provide written expectations of duties to employees.
  - ⇒ Job description
  - ⇒ Task routines
  - ⇒ Performance objectives
- Consult with your veterinarian in advance about



availability.

- Be prepared to take quality records .



## 2. *Inspect calving facilities: preparing a healthy environment will yield healthier calves and dams.*

- Don't wait to set up until calving begins. Start now!
- Facilities should be cleaned, well ventilated, disinfected, and rebedded.
- Clean water should be available to every pen/ animal in the facility.
- Eliminate wet or muddy spots within calving area.
- Prevent overcrowding.
  - ⇒ Consider splitting areas into individual segments.
- Make sure there is enough room for calvers at all times.
  - ⇒ Is there a backup plan for alternative housing in case there is an overflow of calvers?
- Make sure head catch in calving facility is in working order.

## 3. *Setting time aside to prepare equipment/calving inventory prior to calving will be well worth it. It will save you time (unexpected trips to town), money, and stress on you and your cattle.*

- Keep plenty of calf bedding on hand and stock up

early if you need to.

- Check supply of gloves, lubricant, soap, disinfectant, navel dip etc.
- Check your calf jacks and chains.
  - ⇒ Make sure they are in working order and are clean.
- Are your ear taggers and tag supplies ready?
- Keep colostrum replacer, electrolytes, weigh tapes, bottles and nipples on hand.
- Re-stock your supply of needles, syringes, oxytocin, antibiotics, and uterine boluses.
- Check the use dates on drugs and electrolytes left-



over from last season.

4. *Late gestation nutrition is vital for a successful breeding program. Again, healthy mothers equals healthy calves equals successful program.*

- Cows should calve at least at a BCS 5 (Moderate condition.)
- Heifers should calve at about a BCS 6 (Good condition.)
  - ⇒ Females under these standards may be weak/underdeveloped and are more likely to experience difficulty.
  - ⇒ Females substantially over these standards may also experience calving difficulty due to fat build up in the birth canal.
  - ⇒ Improper BCS is associated with milk production and performance/immunity of the calf.
- Ensure the diet meets protein and energy requirements for late gestation.
  - ⇒ Underfeeding protein/energy will leave fe-

males weak and may hinder a smooth delivery.

⇒ Improper diet may cause an increase in post partum interval and negatively affect conception rates in the following breeding season.

- Research suggests that some exercise has been known to cause increased muscle tone which may



also decrease calving difficulty.

There are many intricate details that build into the formation of a successful calving season. A producer's ability to do their homework and be prepared is essential for maximizing success. If stressful situations are minimized, producers are more likely enjoy calving season. A positive calving season for producers can bring excitement and optimism toward future operations and programs. I wish all of you the best of luck and am looking forward to seeing this





# Getting SMART with your SMART Devices



**By Stacy Madden**  
4-H/Youth  
Development  
Educator

These days families are getting connected, not only with faster and better computers but also with smartphones, ipads, tablets, and a number of other smart devices that continue to flood our lives. All the social networking sites and a variety of smartphone apps are making it much easier to stay connected with everyone on a daily basis.

These tools are useful and handy for staying in the loop, however, they also present a number of dangers for parents and youth alike as we begin to use them more. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat, Instagram, Vine, and other social networks have become an integral part of our online lives and while they are a great way to stay connected with others, you should be wary about how much personal information you post.



Keep these pointers from [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org) in mind as you and your family explore and use social networks.

- ⇒ **Privacy and security settings exist for a reason:** Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks. They are there to help you control who sees what you post and manage your online experience in a positive way.
- ⇒ **Once posted, always posted:** Protect your reputation on social networks. What you post online stays online. Think twice before posting pictures you wouldn't want your parents or future employers to see. Recent research (<http://www.microsoft.com/privacy/dpd/research.aspx>) found that 70% of job recruiters rejected candidates based on information they found online.

- ⇒ **Your online reputation can be a good thing:** Recent research (<http://www.microsoft.com/privacy/dpd/research.aspx>) also found that recruiters respond to a strong, positive personal brand online. So show your smarts, thoughtfulness, and mastery of the environment by posting intelligent, positive, and value-conscious items online.
- ⇒ **Keep personal info personal:** Be cautious about how much personal information you provide on social networking sites. The more information you post, the easier it may be for a hacker or someone else to use that information to steal your identity, access your data, or commit other crimes such as stalking.
- ⇒ **Know and manage your friends:** Social networks can be used for a variety of purposes. Some of the fun is creating a large pool of friends from many aspects of your life. That doesn't mean all friends are created equal. Use tools to manage the information you share with friends in different groups or even have multiple online pages. If you're trying to create a public persona as a blogger or expert, create an open profile or a "fan" page that encourages broad participation and limits personal information. Use your personal profile to keep your real friends (the ones you know and trust) more synched up with your daily life.



- ⇒ **Be honest if you're uncomfortable:** If a friend posts something about you that makes you uncomfortable or you think is inappropriate, let them know. Likewise, stay open-minded if a friend approaches you because something you've posted makes him or her uncomfortable. People have different tolerances for how much the world knows about them, remember to respect those differences.
- ⇒ **Know what action to take:** If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friends list, block them, and report them to the site administrator.



Not only do we need to be aware of our online safety, we also need to ensure our personal information is safe when we use our smartphones. There are many different apps available for download that make our life easier, for example, you might download an app that helps you identify wild flowers you encounter on a hike or an app to help you organize your closet. There are a number of social media apps that provide a

fun way for you to stay connected with friends, just as the internet sites do!

Make sure you keep safety in mind as you utilize those apps just like the internet, once you post it, its permanent. Some apps can be problematic, particularly for children and teens, sharing too much of your personal information. Try to avoid these apps if possible, and if you do allow your children to use them, make sure they understand your rules about safety and appropriate use:

- ⇒ **Snapchat:** This app allows the user to send pictures that only appear for 10 seconds, then disappear. Teens and youth may not remember that even though the pictures disappear, they are still published on the internet forever. Many youth have had troubles with inappropriate photos that have not disappeared.
- ⇒ **Instagram:** This app allows you to post and share photos, and while plenty of the images are fine, there are many nude photos and disturbing images. If your account isn't blocked, anyone can follow you or your child and steal their pictures.

- ⇒ **Vine:** Similar to Instagram, this app allows you to publish and share videos. While you and your children may be smart and post only appropriate and fun videos, you cannot control what others post and what your children see. Of course, like others, once it's out there, anyone can see it, so be careful what you post!
- ⇒ **Kik Messenger:** This app, like a mini social network, allows users to chat, send photos, videos, and greeting cards, along with many other functions. This has proven to be fitful for parents of teens who may choose to use it in inappropriate ways, almost like a dating service. Remember to make sure children know that there is no way to prove the identity of people online, so this is a prime place for stalkers.
- ⇒ **9GAG:** This app is primarily for uploading images with captions and text. Like others mentioned above, there is potential for misuse and many inappropriate posts. This site has also been proven as a place to spread degrading or hurtful pictures, so make sure kids know how damaging this can be if allowed to use this app.
- ⇒ **ifunny:** This app gives users the ability to create, publish, and share comic strips. Although seemingly harmless, this app has been used for degrading comments and bullying as well as provide humor you do not find appropriate for your family. Additionally, comics that have been created cannot be deleted, so what you publish can be shared to anyone.



In the end, social media and apps can be fun and helpful, but they also can create an unsafe online arena for you and your family. Don't be scared of utilizing the internet and social networks to stay in touch, just make sure you are staying safe and using them to your advantage!

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## **Northeast Extension Connection**

*A quarterly newsletter from Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan  
and Weston County Extension*

**Campbell County** 307-682-7281: *Chance Marshall - Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture;  
Hannah Hopp - Horticulture; Jessica Gladson and Kim Bell - 4-H/Youth; Lori Jones, Cent\$ible Nutrition*

**Crook County** 307-283-1192: *Brian Sebade - Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources;  
Sara Fleenor - 4-H/Youth; Trish Peña, Cent\$ible Nutrition*

**Johnson County** 307-684-7522: *Blaine Horn - Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources;  
Rachel Vardiman - 4-H/Youth*

**Sheridan County** 307-674-2980: *Scott Hininger - Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture;  
Kentz Willis - Nutrition and Food Safety; Sandra Koltiska - Cent\$ible Nutrition*

**Weston County** 307-746-3531: *Bill Taylor, Community Development Education;  
Vicki Hayman, Nutrition & Food Safety; Stacy Madden - 4-H/Youth; Trish Peña, Cent\$ible Nutrition*

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Glen Whipple, director, University of Wyoming Extension, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.*

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