



Summer is upon us!

Summer reminds us why we live where we do.

We are blessed in Wyoming with opportunities to keep in touch with the natural world around us, see the results of our labors, and to give our children or grandchildren the opportunities a rural life can offer. However, sometimes kids aren't as tuned in to these opportunities. Our story "**Kick the kids outside this summer**" can help bring about a change. This article offers ways to get them away from screens and out into the fresh air.

Our state is also one of variable weather – after last year's abundant snowpack and rainfall, we have entered a year with low snowpack and scarce rainfall – leaving most of the state abnormally dry or entering drought as I write this. Due to Wyoming's semi-arid nature, our flora and fauna have adapted to these times of drought. One way or another, we also must adapt to these variable conditions.

Painful as it can be, drought provides an opportunity to reflect and make changes that help us live with these natural cycles. If you have livestock, take some time to read the article "**Drought is here again!**" and think about your management plan and what you can do to give the land the best chance for a quick recovery when moisture returns. If your pasture wasn't in the best of shape even before the dry weather set in, read "**To seed or not to seed**" for practical information to help decide if seeding is a good bet or if changes in management, patience, and some future moisture will be enough to get pastures headed back in the right direction.

As you look at your yard, consider if a bit of work could make it more drought resistant. Each year brings us a better selection of native or well-adapted landscape plants. We have many great resources on barnyardsandbackyards.com that can help work a little change into your landscape.

With the dry weather and beetle-killed trees across the state, wildfire is on our minds. Please check out our resources at barnyardsandbackyards.com on creating defensible space and read "**Survive the unthinkable if wildfire threatens your home**" for reminders about the steps to take if a wildfire breaks out in your area. After reading the material, contact local officials to make sure you know what methods of communication they'll use to alert you should the need arise.

Dry or not, summer is still a time of growth, warm sunshine, fresh air, and working toward goals. If a change in your irrigation system is a goal, see the article on page 24 for options. If you dream of fresh honey and farm-fresh eggs, our articles "**There's a buzz about beekeeping in Wyoming**" and "**Raising chickens with altitude**" provide helpful information that can help you decide if or how to take the plunge.

As always, we hope this issue provides practical information and a bit of inspiration to fuel you in this active time of year.



Jennifer Thompson



Check out our ever-growing collection of useful video clips on YouTube.