

Smile, Help, and Think Outside the Box

BY QUADE PALM,
WyFB YF&R STATE CHAIR

January in Wyoming, a time of year that brings with it snow, cold, and innumerable miles of bad roads across our state, changing at a moment's notice. This January also brought many of us to balmy Pinedale, where we enjoyed highs in the low teens as we gathered for the 2023 Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer and Rancher Conference. Roughly 45 young people from across Wyoming ventured out to hear from 8 different speakers or panels on topics faced by agriculturalists across the nation.

This year our committee did a wonderful job of gathering speakers and presenters, a group that one would be hard pressed to find anywhere else. Conferences like this one are a true testament to the opportunities given through Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation (WyFB), and through the WyFB Young Farmer and Rancher Committee. One of the more interesting topics, in my mind, was Jason Wrich's topic of Beef and Bitcoin, and his story of accepting Bitcoin as payment for beef to appeal to a niche market. While an unconventional idea in traditional cattle operations, this satisfied one very traditional craving; not one for beef, but one of a tax-free sale. While I'm still not sold on Bitcoin, I think it's just this kind of adaptations to our thinking that can benefit producers young and old alike.

Another topic discussed in a morning session was the importance of mental



Quade Palm. PHOTO BY JESS SALYER.

health and making it a priority. Darla Tyler-McSherry shared an impassioned personal story of tragedy and loss, and the warning signs that accompanied it that were all too easily overlooked at the time, when her elderly father took his own life. Clearly not the topic to start the day off bright and cheerful, but exactly the topic to be a reminder that life's not always pretty, and it's up to all of us to look out for one another. Agriculture is an inherently dangerous industry but is the most dangerous in terms of mental health. Mental health is a constantly evolving issue that is faced more often than we know. Most all of us would rather go rounds with that mean mamma cow in the corral before we'd be so bold as to ask a friend, family member, or neighbor if they're okay. As difficult as it can be to ask, talk, or even think about mental health, a simple conversation can be the difference between a good or bad day, or more extreme, the difference between

life and death for someone. We humans are a complex bunch, but a handshake or a phone call can sure bring the sunshine back into someone's day.

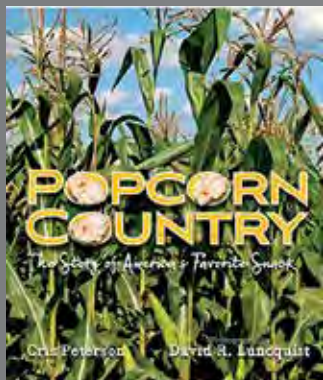
Driving home from these conferences is always a bit bittersweet, but it's often a great time to remember how lucky we are to live in our wonderful state and to be members in this organization. Who else is going to drive through the wind, snow, and ice for a day and a half to learn and improve themselves and others? I know who this year was, and I sure hope to have the opportunity to see even more next year at our 2024 conference. In the meantime, don't forget to smile, help someone out, and think outside the box. The future is bright and spring is out there somewhere! ■

From Carbon County, Palm is a the WyFB YF&R State Chair. Palm is a sixth generation Wyoming rancher. He works on his family's ranch near Medicine Bow.

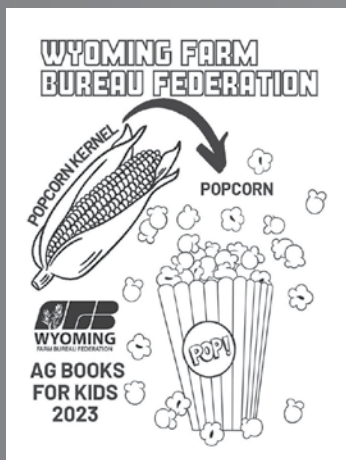
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