

## NEWS COLUMN

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### **SD Youth Encouraged to Enter Beef Ambassador Contest**

South Dakota youth interested in educating consumers and students about beef nutrition, food safety, and stewardship practices of the beef industry are encouraged to compete in the 2009 South Dakota Beef Ambassador Contest.

The annual state contest selects a top youth in three age divisions. The senior winner will receive an all-expense-paid trip to compete in the National Beef Ambassador Contest this fall in Fort Smith, AK.

The South Dakota Beef Ambassador competition will be held in Huron in conjunction with the Summer Spotlight All Breeds Cattle Show. The contest will be held Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> in Clover Hall on the SD State Fairgrounds. Registration deadline is July 10th.

The state competition is open to youth ages 10-20 as of Jan.1, 2009. Teens will compete by age in three different divisions. Contestants may enter the state competition more than once unless they are a past senior winner, but may only compete nationally one time.

On the state level, senior contestants must give a mock classroom presentation and an in-store beef promotion, while younger contestants are judged on a three-minute speech on beef. Presentations can be based on a specific idea or an overview about beef and/or the beef industry and must be based on facts provided in the information from the American National CattleWomen. All youth will also be judged on their performance while being interviewed for radio, and seniors only will be judged on a written reply to a negative news article.

By participating in the contest, youth gain knowledge about the nutritional and economic value of beef, cooking principles, safe handling and versatile use of beef, and the importance of beef as an agricultural product. Presentations should focus on the positive impact of the industry on the economy and on families as producers and consumers. The state and national competition enhances personal leadership, career opportunities, speaking skills and everlasting friendships.

Each contestant will receive a cash award, a South Dakota Beef Ambassador shirt, and other prizes. The senior winner will receive an all expense-paid trip to compete and represent South Dakota in the national competition October 9-11, 2009, as well as other monetary and special gifts.

Sponsors of the state competition include the South Dakota Beef Industry Council, the South Dakota CattleWomen, Inc., South Dakota Cattlemen's Auxiliary, and others in the beef industry.

For rules/regulations and additional information go to [www.nationalbeefambassador.org](http://www.nationalbeefambassador.org), or contact Ruth Anne Farnsworth, 28332 294<sup>th</sup> Ave., Carter, S.D. 57580-5003, 605-879-2497, [ruthf@gwtc.net](mailto:ruthf@gwtc.net).

### **Major Tree Pest Getting Closer to South Dakota**

The emerald ash borer is only one state away from South Dakota's borders, a South Dakota State University specialist said.

South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service Forestry Specialist John Ball said an infestation was found in western Wisconsin, about 20 miles south of La Crosse, near the border with Minnesota and Iowa.

The insect devastates ash tree populations. The emerald ash borer became established in southeastern Michigan in the 1990s. Foresters believe it may have arrived on ash packing materials from Asia. It has caused the loss of more than 30 million ash trees in the Upper Midwest so far.

This is the farthest west an infestation has been detected in our region, according to Ball. Considering its size and the distance from other infestations, it raises the concern that there may be, and most likely are, undetected infestations even farther west. There is a possibility that South Dakota already has an infestation though none has been detected at this time. The insect could be particularly hard on South Dakota. Ball and forestry colleagues around the state reported in a 2007 research paper that green ash trees make up 35.3 percent of the street trees in 34 South Dakota communities surveyed — very possibly a larger percentage than in any other state.

Ball states, “It is probably only a matter of time, a rather short time, perhaps a year or two, before an infestation will be detected in South Dakota. When it is found, most likely it will have been established in the general vicinity for several years or more. No one ever finds the first borer in the first tree in a state. It is critical that people be observant of pockets of dead and dying ash and report these as soon as possible.”

Although there are only limited means of preventing the insect from entering the state, foresters can at least slow its further spread once it is discovered. That buys time for producers, homeowners and communities to plant different tree species. That can reduce the impact when the beetles eventually arrive.

One common means of identifying new pockets of infested ash is to look for dead or dying ash with extensive bark injury from woodpeckers. These birds are feeding on the larvae of the insect, according to the specialist.