

AROUND THE TABLE

News and Notes on Solving Hunger in South Dakota

FEEDING
SOUTH DAKOTA



Buffalo Strong: A Rancher's Story

Closing the rural food access gap

Despite producing much of our country's food supply, many rural communities experience very limited access to fresh, affordable foods. Grocery stores are sometimes non-existent. People living there are said to be in a "food desert."

This harsh reality affects many South Dakotans, but ranchers like Zane are making the most of the too few resources they have at hand.

With a *cowboy-can-do attitude*, Zane is a self-employed rancher. Fittingly, he raises buffalo in Buffalo, S.D. This small town of just 346 people lies some 70 miles northwest of Belle Fourche. Zane jokes, "And east of us is the town of Bison. There is only one spot in the world that has a road sign that says *Buffalo and Bison*."

Zane runs an 80-head buffalo herd — enough to get him through the year, along with occasional side jobs. Like the beef cattle market, buffalo markets can vary from year to year.

Referring to ranchers raising beef, Zane said, "Those boys are getting a bit better money than we are. There are a lot of years when buffalo is a lot better than beef. It evens out over the years." Much of the financial success of cattle and buffalo ranchers depends on supply and demand, wholesale and retail prices, overall market trends, and ranch operational costs.

The livestock business can be demanding, requiring care for farm animals seven days a week.

Through it all, American ranchers remain strong and resilient, ready to charge ahead like a buffalo that runs directly into the storm.

"Right now, it's tough. Small-town grocery stores have to make a profit to make it work."

To help him fill in the gaps when business is slow, Zane visits Feeding South Dakota's monthly mobile food



"This helps my pocketbook immensely — this saves me food-wise."

— Zane

distribution at Buffalo's Old Gym on US Hwy 85 — a year-round offering generously supported by donor gifts.

"This helps my pocketbook immensely — this saves me food-wise," Zane says. "Some of the stuff I get, I share with a neighbor who has kids. None of it gets thrown away around here. Last month, we got a boatload of grapes; they were everywhere!"

With conversations that often drift from the ranch to the community, Zane is a reminder that when neighbors look out for one another, everyone is stronger.

Thank you for keeping Feeding South Dakota high on your list of worthy charities to support this summer!



AROUND THE TABLE

WITH LORI DYKSTRA, CEO

A Message From The CEO

Dear Friend,

When school is out, access to consistent meals becomes more uncertain for children and families – especially those who rely on school meals. That’s why, as the ground begins to thaw in South Dakota, we’re ramping up for the next season of fighting hunger.

This issue of our newsletter stresses why the work you make possible through Feeding South Dakota matters so deeply. Your support allows us to consistently tackle challenges like distance, rising food costs, and limited resources so that families don’t have to stretch meals — or go without.

From a rancher in a remote community who relies on our mobile distribution to an agency partner that uses Feeding South Dakota to deliver a program that keeps kids fed through the summer — our work meets families where they are. These stories are reminders that hunger looks different in communities across our state, and that access matters just as much as availability.

We also have the privilege to acknowledge the leadership of our Board of Directors. Their dedication strengthens our mission, and I’m grateful for their guidance that helps strengthen our ability to serve children and families statewide.

This summer, the generosity of donors like you means that kids can focus on being kids instead of worrying about empty plates.

With gratitude,

Feeding Hope ... One Child at a Time

In the Yankton School District, 1 in 3 students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches — an indicator of the ongoing need for reliable access to food. *Yankton Food for Thought* exists to ensure that no child in the district goes hungry.

Program Coordinator Deb Overseth has been involved for more than seven years. “*My heart is connected to it,*” she says. “*It is really important to feed the kids.*”

Supported by donor gifts to Feeding South Dakota, the weekend “Sack Pack” program provides a variety of shelf-stable foods for students to take home, helping families bridge the gap when school meals aren’t available.

Deb recalls that one mother routinely sent Sack Packs with her children when they went to visit their dad on weekends. The food provided for some extra special moments together. In another case, a family would split one Sack Pack among multiple children. “If families are having that much trouble, they need another resource,” Deb says.

This is why *Yankton Food for Thought* also operates a monthly School Food Pantry offering fresh produce, bread, frozen meat, and other essentials to nourish the district’s children and ease parents’ worry. The pantry began as a pilot program through Feeding South Dakota and now operates independently.





Calvary Church donated the space for the pantry, creating a small grocery store-style experience that gives families the dignity of choosing their own food.

The work is not without challenges. Rising food costs have led organizers to work hard to find resources to meet growing demand. Donor support for Feeding South Dakota helps our partners like Yankton Food for Thought by keeping food affordable, allowing them to stretch their budgets a little further to serve more neighbors in their communities.

Yankton Food for Thought distributes 450 Sack Packs each week. Between those and the School Food Pantry, some 700 individuals receive food every month. Collaborative partnerships with various local organizations provide families with additional help like Spanish translation services and educational resources. Together, you and Feeding South Dakota are helping ensure that the school district's communities are nourishing tomorrow's generation and building a stronger future.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Children need healthy meals to learn and grow. A hungry child often struggles to focus and do well in the classroom. Students who experience food insecurity consistently score lower than their peers and are more likely to experience:

- Anxiety
- Poor behavior
- Impacts physical development and mental health

Feeding South Dakota is proud to fund priority programs that combat childhood hunger.



HOST A SUMMER FOOD DRIVE

Are you planning a summertime get-together with friends and family? Consider hosting an event with the added purpose of serving neighbors across the state!

Help Feeding South Dakota stock our shelves in June, July, and August! Donations received through community food drives have a direct impact on hunger in our state by supporting School Pantries, Wellness Pantries, and Agency Partners. Hosting a food drive is a fun and fulfilling way to raise

awareness of hunger in your community while uniting friends and family to make a life-changing difference for someone facing hunger.

Check out our online page where you can learn more and register your event. Remember, adding an online fund drive can maximize your impact.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/4380wT4>.



JOIN SOUTH DAKOTA CATTLEMEN'S FOUNDATION 13TH ANNUAL PRIME TIME GALA SATURDAY, JUNE 20 | SIOUX FALLS, SD

RESERVE YOUR PLACE! PURCHASE A TABLE! BUY A RAFFLE TICKET!

This premier event provides an unforgettable evening of food and music while raising essential funds for Feeding South Dakota. Since its inception, the Gala, held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center, has raised more than \$3 million for Feeding South Dakota, allowing for nearly 1.7 million pounds of beef to reach South Dakotans across all 66 counties of the state who are at risk of hunger.



Each **gala table seats 10** and includes tickets to this year's concert at the Denny Sanford Premier Center featuring Dierks Bentley with special guests Muscadine Bloodline & Elizabeth Jo.
Reserve your table today.

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://bit.ly/4bedtPK>



Can't attend the gala, but want to support the event?

Concert tickets are open to the public, and a portion of proceeds from every ticket benefit Feeding South Dakota

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://bit.ly/3NrvNvp>



Raffle Tickets for a chance to win a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 Duramax Crew Cab 4WD LT* are on sale now.

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://bit.ly/4rAc0bh>

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