Marksmen and markswomen aimed for targets between 425 to 1,000 yards away across the canyon in Kenny Ham's pasture Sunday, Nov. 4. Most used old Buffalo guns, replicas of those made in the 1870s and 1880s and were tested by a light breeze throughout the day.

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Sunday, Nov. 4 approximately 30 shooters from Sidney to Phillipsburg, Kan., gathered at Kenny Ham's pasture east of Wauneta for a friendly shooting competition.

Local shooters included Ham, Jerry Rowley of Imperial and Jeff Steinke of Palisade.

These men and women are not part of any official shooters group, they come together for the love of the sport.

After one talks to the participants it becomes obvious they have a love for history as well. The marksmen and women use old buffalo guns, copies of guns made in the 1870s and 1880s, during the shoot.

Ham explained, “guns were making advances like computers are today–they were advancing so fast that the minute they were manufactured they were already out of date.”

Most of the guns shot on the 4th were black powder cartridge guns, which are loaded from the breech with a cartridge.

The guns are very long and heavy–as much as 16 pounds or more, according to Ham.

Targets were set up in a canyon within Ham’s pasture. The closest target was 425 yards away and the furthest was 1,000 yards away, so far that it would take as long as six seconds for the bullet to get to the target and the sound to return to the shooter, explained Ham.

The only aid most shooters took advantage of were a set of cross sticks to rest the gun barrel on while taking aim and shooting.

Most shooters did not use scopes to help them make aim, but those that did used period scopes which were made to similar speculations as those in the 1860s or 1870s.

Ham explained that an informal group of shooters will be making a trip to Alliance, a yearly occurance. In Alliance they will compete against 100 to 120 shooters.

Next year, some of the shooters who competed in the Ham shoot will travel to Forsyth, Mont., to participate in the Matthew Quigley Buffalo Rifle Match in June 2013. At the Quigley shoot they will compete amongst upwards of 600 shooters.