



Inside this issue:	
<i>Are You Keeping Up? Increasing Knowledge and Profit with Record Keeping</i>	2
<i>Educating the Consumer During A Teachable Moment</i>	3
<i>2014 Farm Bill Provides Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)</i>	3
<i>Remove the Horns and Add Some Value</i>	5
<i>Beef Reproductive Management Short Course</i>	7-8
<i>Welcome, Samantha Graf, new Ag Extension Educator in Canyon County!</i>	8

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF GRAZING MANAGEMENT

K. Scott Jensen, UI Extension Educator, Owyhee County

There are five key principles of livestock grazing management that when followed are beneficial to both the livestock and the pasture resource. These five principles apply to irrigated pastures as well as on desert rangeland although the scale and conditions of each certainly affect the specific application of the principles. There is NO silver bullet that will work under all conditions or across all ranches! With that said, the five principles are: 1) Adjust the rest period as the pasture growth rate changes; 2) Use the shortest grazing period possible; 3) Adjust the stocking rate to match the carrying capacity; 4) Use the largest herd possible; and 5) Use the highest stock density possible.



Let's discuss each principle in more detail. At first glance, the principle of **adjusting the rest periods** might seem to only apply to irrigated pastures that are expected to be grazed multiple times over the growing season. While it does apply to irrigated pastures, it also applies to rangeland pastures. The rest in a rangeland pasture might be season-long or until seed-ripe. In irrigated pastures, it should be recognized that pasture growth rates change according to moisture availability and temperature. Irrigated pastures typically grow rapidly in the spring, slow down considerably in the heat of the summer, and then pick up some in the fall as the temperatures start to cool.

Rest periods should be adjusted to allow a pasture to recover from the previous grazing event before being grazed

again. Oftentimes when individuals talk about overgrazing, they think there have been too many animals on the pasture. Overgrazing really is not a function of animal numbers. Overgrazing is a function of time. Either the animals were exposed to the pasture for too long or they are brought back to graze too quickly before the pasture has regrown and recovered. Thus, overgrazing is not too many animals on a pasture and cannot be resolved simply by reducing animal numbers.

Using the **shortest grazing period possible** can help reduce one of the causes of overgrazing. Animals should be moved frequently to avoid grazing new regrowth. Shorter grazing periods also have a positive effect on the performance of the livestock. Because animals are selective binge feeders, they eat the best forage first and often trample and foul much of the rest. The longer they remain in the same pasture, the lower the quality of feed that they are consuming. As this happens, intake falls which in turn reduces animal performance. More frequent moves will promote increased intake and improved performance.

... continued on page 4



**Owyhee
Cattlemen's
Association
Summer
Meeting
Saturday,
July 26
in Silver City**

ARE YOU KEEPING UP? INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND PROFIT WITH RECORD KEEPING

Rikki Ruiz, UI Extension Educator, Gem/Boise County

There isn't anything wrong with keeping a small memo pad in the front pocket of your shirt, but it may not be providing all the information you need to maintain a healthy, prosperous cattle herd. The good ol' days of taking a few notes on the production of your cattle are beginning to fall short in determining several aspects of herd management. That little memo pad most likely isn't determining financial analysis, it's probably not tracking sales and purchases, and it may not be well understood by others including your accountant. Embracing technology and all its perks should be on the "To-Do" list if it's not already. Technology has been re-shaping the agriculture and ranching businesses in the past decade therefore, taking full advantage of it will help increase knowledge and possibly profit on cattle operations.

Record keeping software for cattle ranchers come in all shapes and sizes. Some are a simple excel spreadsheet, while others are more complex software packages. Determining the key management information you want on your ranch will help determine what type of record keeping system you need. Many key features on livestock record keeping systems include:

- Breeding information; mating and conceptions
- Calving birth records (date, wt., sex, special conditions, etc.)
- Progeny tracking
- Carcass recording and analysis after slaughter
- Inventory on semen and embryo
- Feed monitoring
- Nutrition records
- Herd health records including vaccinations
- Recording livestock purchases and sales
- Individual and herd animal lot tracking
- Electronic Identification to make entry upload easier

Why invest in a record keeping system? The answer is simple, in the end it will save time by making it easier to get the information you need to manage more effectively. Once you have set-up your initial information, you can simply update that information improving the accuracy of your records. You'll have extra time to spend outside with



your herd. You can print a list of cattle that need to be worked, instead of scouring through notepad paper trying to find your "notes" for that list of ear tags. Improving accuracy will also improve the quality of your herd. There will be fewer instances of missing a couple cows or a proce-

dures that one should have received. Additionally, the record keeping system will be better understood by others outside your operation, such as accountants, nutritionists and veterinarians. They will all appreciate organized reports. Above all the economic value of improving your record keeping system is imperative. The United States Department of Agriculture National Animal Health Monitoring System began studying effective record keeping systems of beef cow herds in 1997. Their research proves that the end result of a good record keeping system is ultimately economic. The majority of those implementing successful systems see increased profits as a result of better management.

A good record system will track changes and provide detail on the result of those management changes. An example may be, cutting some costs on harvested feed. This could cause negative effects on herd production and pasture health. If you have a record keeping system in place, you can analyze to see when production changed or slowed to determine the root cause. You can then adjust your practices or techniques to get back on track.

Those ranchers who are already on the records band wagon and are using a smart phone can be ahead of the game. There are now smart phone applications to help ranchers with herd management. One application is called Pro Cattle Breeding that helps keep the breeding and A.I. season on track. There are also seed selection tools, irrigation management and of course weather applications that are useful tools for ranching.

In an era of beef quality assurance, there is now a higher demand from consumers on documented quality and higher standards in the beef they are purchasing. In addition to that, the constant price fluctuations in feed, market prices, and land value, make it imperative to "beef" up your cattle operations record keeping system. It's okay to keep packing your memo pad, but go home and plug that information into your records or down-



load it onto your smart phone. It will not only make you a better cattle producer, but also a shrewd business owner. ♦



EDUCATING THE CONSUMER DURING A TEACHABLE MOMENT

Samantha M. Graf, UI Extension Educator, Canyon County

Many of us do not have to rely on the grocery store for our beef supply, but for those that do the refrain, "Why is beef so expensive?" has been uttered numerous times recently. When you hear that phrase, it is the perfect time to take advantage of a teachable moment and do a little consumer education.

What is a teachable moment? A teachable moment is an unplanned opportunity when a teacher has an ideal chance to offer insight to a student.

How does a person utilize a teachable moment, with a total stranger, in the grocery store? Start by introducing yourself and your profession.

"Hello, my name is John Smith and I am a cattle rancher."

"Hi John, my name is Suzy."

Some people will not want to engage in a conversation and that is okay; the important part is to try to educate the consumer. After you have taken the time to exchange introductions, it is time to restate the question the consumer wondered aloud.

"I heard you ask why beef is so expensive and I'd like to help you understand."

The numerous factors involved can be overwhelming, even to us as producers, so you can imagine what it would feel like to a person with no knowledge of the fluctuating influences of the beef industry.

"Suzy, there are a lot of reasons that beef is so expensive and it's pretty complicated, but I'll do my best to help you absorb it all."

Weather, feed and fuel costs, the sluggish economy, in addition to overall supply are the biggest factors causing fluctuation in our industry, but how do we convey all that to the basic consumer? When we take advantage of a teachable moment, as producers we need to condense and simplify as much as possible.

"Weather the past few years has been extreme and the farmers who raise the crops to feed the cattle once they're in the feedlot faced droughts, seed shortages, and increased production costs like more expensive fuel."

Weather, feed and fuel costs, the sluggish economy, in addition to overall supply are the biggest factors causing fluctuation in our industry, but how do we convey all that to the basic consumer?

"When fuel costs went up it started costing more to grow the food the cattle eat in the feedlot. This raise in costs to feed the cattle trickled down to you as the consumer."

"Finally, the total number of cattle available for processing is at historic lows because of how much it costs to feed them and the fact that when the economy got bad people couldn't afford to buy beef. The cattle industry is slowly raising its overall numbers that can be sent into the food chain, but this takes time."



While you are taking advantage of a teachable moment, producers want to do their best to encourage questions through an open and friendly expression. Questions from the consumer allow you to open a discussion, which encourages the consumer to engage in logical thinking before making a purchase.

It is important to our industry to open dialogues with consumers in order to counteract those who would be detrimental to the industry. Many studies show consumers are actively searching for a relationship with the place their food originated, and taking advantage of a teachable moment not only advocates for our industry in a positive way, but creates a feeling of familiarity for that consumer about where their food is coming from. ♦

USDA 2014 Farm Bill provides Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) makes the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to October 1, 2011.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses for covered livestock on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or is planted specifically for grazing. The grazing losses must be due to a qualifying drought condition during the normal grazing period for the county.

LFP also provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses on rangeland managed by a Federal agency if the eligible livestock producer is prohibited by the Federal agency from grazing the normal permitted livestock on the managed rangeland due to a qualifying fire. The grazing losses must have occurred on or after October 1, 2011. LFP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additional information can be found at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/> or by contacting your local FSA office. ♦

Grazing Management . . . continued from page 1

It might seem easy to **adjust the stocking rate to match the carrying capacity** however if you consider that the quantity of feed available is constantly changing as well as the fact that as calves, yearlings, etc. grow their nutrient needs increase, it can be a delicate balancing act. Options to balance stocking rate and carrying capacity could include utilizing rented pasture or feeding hay if necessary. At times it could also include either purchasing or selling off animals.

Using the largest herd possible is simply the practice of putting smaller groups of livestock into fewer and larger groups. When animals are grouped together there are more pastures resting and the stock density is increased (next principle).

The final principle is that of **using the highest stock density possible**. At the University of Idaho Extension's Lost Rivers Grazing Academy, we teach that stock density is the most powerful tool in the grazer's toolbox. High stock density greatly increases grazing uniformity. Animals will be more competitive with respect to feeding and consequently less selective. A short grazing period with high stock density will provide for more uniform utilization across a pasture.



High stock density also improves nutrient distribution. Low stock density allows animals to roam over a wide area. They gather pasture nutrients as they graze and then deposit most of those nutrients where they loaf, water, and consume minerals. High stock density puts many animals on the same pasture for a shorter period of time. This typically results in manure being distributed more evenly across the pasture which can greatly aid in maintaining pasture fertility.

It should be recognized that stock density and stocking rate are not the same. A pasture could be stocked with one animal for 100 days or 100 animals for 1 day and the stocking rate would be the same. The stock density however would be quite different as would the effects on the pasture. One animal for one day would result in some very patchy grazing with some plants being overgrazed and others getting big and wolfy (undergrazed). Compare that with 100 animals for one day. Plants in that pasture will be more evenly grazed. The key here is to graze for a short period of time and move on to the next pasture or paddock.

While there is no recipe or silver bullet, these five principles are powerful tools that can improve pasture productivity and animal performance. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 26

Owyhee Cattlemen's Association Summer Meeting in Silver City

(Membership form and agenda will be mailed to the membership after the agenda is finalized at the Board of Directors meeting on July 8)



August 4-9

Owyhee County Fair & Rodeo

August 9

Owyhee County Junior Livestock Sale

September 9-12

Lost Rivers Grazing Academy Eagle Valley Ranch, Salmon, Idaho

September 25

Beef Reproductive Management Short Course

Cambridge, Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall

(registration form on page 7; contact information on page 8)

December 4

Beef Reproductive Management Short Course

Cambridge, Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall

(registration form on page 7; contact information on page 8)

This newsletter is provided as a public service to producers and others in beef industry related fields. If you do not have an interest in receiving the Cattlemen's Corner Beef Newsletter in the future, please contact the Extension Office and we will remove your name from our mailing list. Likewise, if you know of someone who would like to receive the newsletter, please let us know, 208-896-4104 or owyhee@uidaho.edu. Past editions of the newsletter are available on our website at <http://extension.uidaho.edu/owyhee>

REMOVE THE HORNS AND ADD SOME VALUE

J. Benton Glaze, Jr., Ph.D., UI Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

Fall is just around the corner, and many beef producers are beginning to consider options for marketing their animals. Each year, beef producers seek ways to increase the value of the calves they produce. Dehorning is a management practice that has been shown to have a great impact on end-product quality (bruising and injuries) and the value of feeder and stocker cattle. However, some producers may not be implementing one of the simpler management practices and capturing the resulting added value.

According to the 2007 National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) survey, 6.3% of the calves marketed in the represented states had horns. A closer look at the survey results show that 11.1% of the calves born in the western region were expected to have horns (compared to 12.4% in all states represented). Of the horned calves in the western region, 73.8% were expected to be dehorned (compared to 48.8% in all states represented). An additional measure of the number of horned cattle comes from the National Beef Quality Audits (NBQA). The 2005 NBQA reported that 22.3% of the cattle passing through the participating harvest facilities had horns. A slight increase in horned cattle was noted in the most recent NBQA. In the 2011 NBQA, 23.8% of the cattle passing through participating harvest facilities had horns. During the history of the NBQA (1991 to present) a goal of reducing horns on fed cattle to less than 5% was set. These results show that additional work is needed to reach that target.

These studies, along with several others, show that horns consistently have a negative effect on the selling price of feeder and stocker cattle.

In 1999, a study in Oklahoma including 26,608 lots of cattle (in excess of 62,000 head total) showed that horned steers and heifers received price discounts of \$2.00 to \$3.00/cwt. Two-thousand lots of feeder cattle were evaluated in Wisconsin from 2004 to 2006. Results of that study showed that prices for horned cattle were discounted by \$4.07/



cwt. Recently (2012), an Arkansas study including 38,346 lots of feeder cattle showed that prices for horned feeder cattle were discounted by \$725/cwt. These studies, along with several others, show that horns consistently have a negative effect on the selling price of feeder and stocker cattle.

So, what is the best method to dehorn cattle? In a recent Kansas State University (KSU) study, three methods of dehorning were applied to cattle entering a feedlot. The dehorning methods included mechanical removal with a keystone dehorner (placed 1/2 inch below the base of the horn), tipping with hand saw (cut made where horn diameter was 1 1/4 inches), and banding with high tension elastic rubber. Cattle in the study were observed when the dehorning treatments were applied and observations of chute behavior and vocalization were recorded. Additionally, cattle in the study were observed for approximately a month following dehorning and assessed based on depression, gait and posture, appetite, lying behavior, and wound healing.

During dehorning, vocalization scores were higher for the animals receiving the mechanical dehorning treatment. Animals whose horns were tipped had the lowest vocalization scores. Following dehorning, animal depression, gait and posture, appetite, and lying behavior scores were higher (less favorable) in the banded animals. In each of these categories, similar scores were observed for cattle dehorned mechanically or by tipping. Wound evaluations showed there was no difference in bleeding scores in the cattle regardless of the dehorning method used. However, in the third and fourth week post-dehorning, cattle that were banded bled more. This is due to the horn becoming detached later in the study.

These results indicate that using bands to dehorn cattle is not an effective alternative to the mechanical dehorning methods used in the study. Tipping resulted in less observable pain and discomfort to the animals. Tipping removes the points of the horns and usually only involves a portion of the horn that has limited blood supply and fewer nerves. However, tipping does not provide all the advantages (less bruising, injuries) of completely dehorning cattle. One of the best and most effective methods of dehorning cattle is to raise polled cattle. ♦

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Owyhee County Fair 4-H & FFA Beef Show

Thursday, August 7, 2014

8:00 a.m.

4-H & FFA Junior Livestock Sale

Saturday, August 9, 2014

Buyers Lunch at noon

Sale Immediately Following

OWYHEE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
 P.O. Box 400, Marsing, ID 83639
 (208) 896-4104

Date: _____/_____/_____



Your dues are now payable **ONLY IF** it has been a year since they were paid.
 LIFE MEMBERS are not required to pay annual dues.

Name _____ Phone # _____

MAILING Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Cow-calf operations (mother cows)	
1 to 20	\$15
21 to 100	\$25
Over 101	\$30
Over 201	\$35
Over 301	\$40
Over 401	\$45
Over 501	\$50
Over 601	\$55
Over 701	\$60
Over 801	\$65
Over 900	\$70

Dues Assessment Schedule

Feedlot operations (one time capacity)	
Up to 1000	\$25
Over 1001	\$30
Over 2001	\$35
Over 3001	\$40
Over 4001	\$45
Over 5001	\$50
Over 6001	\$55
Over 7001	\$60
Over 8001	\$65
Over 9000	\$70

Check one:

- INDIVIDUAL** \$ _____
- FAMILY** \$ _____
- CORPORATION** \$ _____
- PARTNERSHIP** \$ _____
- ADDITIONAL Family (age 18 or over), Corporation, or Partnership Member(s)**
 to be included and eligible for voting (add \$5 for each) _____ @ \$5 = \$ _____
(If these additional members would like to receive mailings, please note address(es) -- use back of form if you need additional space -- otherwise, one mailing will be sent to the address above.)

- ASSOCIATE DUES** (for businesses or individuals that do not own cattle) \$ **35.00**
- Youth Member(s) under 18** (please list below) **NO CHARGE**

- To purchase a **brand block** (\$15 to cover cost), draw the brand in the box as accurately as possible



..... \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE \$ _____

Authorizing Signature _____

Beef Reproductive Management Short Course

This hands-on short course will focus on improving reproduction of your cow herd. Three 1-Day sessions, include lunch and are offered at two locations, the UI Cummings Center outside of Salmon, Idaho and at the Washington County Fair Grounds Exhibit in Cambridge, Idaho.

Choose the location that works for you!

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 21ST**

**COST: \$40 for each Unit
Or
\$100 for all three Units**

QUESTIONS?

Dr. John Hall: jhall@uidaho.edu
or (208) 756-2749
Dr. Benton Glaze: bglaze@uidaho.edu
or (208)736-3600
Scott Jensen: scottj@uidaho.edu
or (208) 896-4104
Tyanne Freeburg: tfreeburg@uidaho.edu
or (208) 253-4279
Shannon Williams: shannonw@uidaho.edu
or (208) 756-2815 ext. 283
Sarah Baker: sdbaker@uidaho.edu
or (208) 879-2344

2014 Short Course Schedule & Registration

UNIT ONE: PREBREEDING

CAMBRIDGE: <input type="checkbox"/>	SALMON: <input type="checkbox"/>
DATE: April 1, 2014	DATE: April 3, 2014
Time: 9AM to 4PM	Time: 9AM to 4PM
Location: Fair Grounds Exhibit Hall	Location: UI Cummings Center

UNIT TWO: PREGNANCY DETECTION & FALL WORKING

CAMBRIDGE: <input type="checkbox"/>	SALMON: <input type="checkbox"/>
DATE: September 25, 2014	DATE: TBD

UNIT THREE: CALVING SCHOOL

CAMBRIDGE: <input type="checkbox"/>	SALMON: <input type="checkbox"/>
DATE: December 4, 2014	DATE: TBD

Attending: <input type="checkbox"/>	Attending: <input type="checkbox"/>	Attending: <input type="checkbox"/>
1 Unit—\$40	2 Units—\$80	3 Units—\$100

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
University of Idaho

Registration and Payment Information:

RETURN REGISTRATION FOR —

CAMBRIDGE CLASSES TO:
UI Extension, Adams County
P.O. Box 43
Council, ID 83612

SALMON CLASSES TO:
UI Nancy M Cummings REE Ctr
16 Hot Springs Rd.
Carmen, ID 83462

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Owyhee County

238 8th Ave. W., P.O. Box 400
Marsing, ID 83639
(208) 896-4104 FAX (208) 896-4105
Owyhee@uidaho.edu
<http://extension.uidaho.edu/owyhee>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MARSING, IDAHO
PERMIT NO. 11

To enrich education through diversity the University of Idaho is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educational institution.

Beef Reproductive Management Short Course

INCREASE YOUR PROFIT BY MANAGING THE REPRODUCTION OF YOUR BEEF COWS

Three Part Hands-on Course Focusing on Improving the Reproduction of Your Cow Herd

Unit 2: Pregnancy detection and fall working

Cambridge: Salmon: T/B/D at a later date
September 25, Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall

Unit 3: Calving School

Cambridge: Salmon: T/B/D at a later date
December 4, Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall

More Information:

Scott Jensen: scottj@uidaho.edu, 208-896-4104
Dr. John Hall: jbhall@uidaho.edu, 208-756-2749
Dr. Benton Glaze: bglaze@uidaho.edu, 208-736-3600
Tyanne Freeburg: tfreeburg@uidaho.edu, 208-253-4279
Shannon Williams: shannonw@uidaho.edu, 208-756-2815
Sarah Baker: sdbaker@uidaho.edu, 208-879-2344

**Registration
form
on page 5**

**WELCOME
to Samantha Graf!**
Samantha is the new Ag Extension Educator in Canyon County. Though she just came on board in the last couple of weeks and is already very busy, she took the time to contribute to this newsletter (see page 3). We're glad to have you as a part of the UI Southern District Extension Team!