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**A voluntary  
partnership  
with private  
landowners**

# GLCI News



**Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative**

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 2NCGL Conference

The Second National Conference on Grazing Lands (2NCGL) is Dec. 7-10 in Nashville and will offer presentations centered on practical grazing management strategies.

### GLCI in Maryland

This state uses grazing demonstration sites to teach producers.

### Spotlight on NCBA

Meet the two Steering Committee members representing NCBA.

### The Chair's Corner

Chairman Bob Drake tells about available resources for assistance in dealing with drought.

### Cover Photo

The skyline of Nashville is a visual reminder of the Second National Conference (2NCGL) that will be held December 7-10 in Nashville, Tennessee. Photo by Kevin DeBusk, Director of Communications for the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association.



## Graziers Going To Nashville

Nashville, Tennessee will be buzzing with grazing management technologies, strategies and policy ideas Dec. 7-10 when Music City USA hosts the Second National Conference on Grazing Lands (2NCGL). The conference is an effort of the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) with the objective of increasing awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of private grazing lands among producers, land owners and the public.

The format for the conference includes nearly 100 presentations about grazing management topics by academia, farmers and ranchers, and agency personnel.

"The strength of this conference is that it offers a cross-section of grazing topics and presenters from across the country. Many share practical experiences from their own operations," says John Peterson, the 2NCGL program and conference manager.

Presentations will center on four categories: 1) The building of partnerships between agricultural, grazing, and urban communities; 2) Successful cutting edge management technologies for grazing practices; 3) Economic and public policy implications of grazing; and 4) the optimizing of grazing land health for environmental and social benefits. Trade show exhibitors and technical poster presentations are also part of the four-day conference.

Several key political figures are expected to headline the conference. Montana Senator Conrad Burns, who is a member of the Appropriations Committee and a longtime supporter of agriculture and GLCI, has been invited as keynote speaker at the opening session. The mayor of Nashville, the Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture, and U.S. Representative William Jenkins (TN), who serves on the Agriculture Committee, are also expected to be in attendance for the opening session.

U.S. Representative Frank Lucas (OK) has been invited to speak during the conference. Lucas chairs the House Ag Subcommittee on Conservation Credit, Rural Development and Research. He championed the Watershed Rehabilitation Bill in 2000 and has been supportive of garnering funding for technical grazing assistance.

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## Graziers Going To Nashville

(Continued from page 1)

An agency panel discussion is being arranged with leadership from Washington, D.C. People expected to participate include Bruce Knight, Natural Resources Conservation Service chief; Dale Bosworth, U.S. Forest Service chief; Kathleen Clarke, director of the Bureau of Land Management; Colien Hefferan, Cooperative States Research Education and Extension Service administrator; and Ed Knipling, Agricultural Research Service acting director.

A second panel discussion will be held with representatives from the media. These guests will discuss with the audience the best ways to discuss ag-related issues with the media. Ag media personality Orion Samuelson has also been invited to speak.

Nearly 2,000 participants are expected to attend the 2NCGL, with six to ten concurrent sessions being held simultaneously for attendees to choose from. Time will also be dedicated during the program for attendees to network with trade show exhibitors and poster presenters.

Nashville also offers sight-seeing opportunities with the Grand Ole Opry, Music Row, Ryman Auditorium, Country Music Hall of Fame, and the NFL Tennessee Titans, and the NHL Nashville Predators.

For 2NCGL registration information visit [www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org) and click on "grazing conference."

## Grazing Sites are Outdoor Classrooms In Maryland

By Kindra Gordon

*By establishing several grazing demonstration sites around the state of Maryland, producers are learning firsthand about grassland management.*

As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing," and that's just what the State of Maryland has tried to offer livestock producers when it comes to grazing management.

Through funding for the national Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), about 40 grazing demonstration sites have been established across the state over the last three years. The sites, which feature practices such as rotational grazing methods or planting trials of improved forage species, offer livestock producers a chance to see firsthand how grazing management can work on their farm, says Elmer Dengler, who serves as the GLCI coordinator for Maryland.

"We've always had grazing issues within the state, but there's been a lack of information for our producers," says Dengler.

But Dengler says the demonstration sites, which are established with grant money on interested producers' farms, have helped solve that challenge. "Over the last three years we've seen more awareness and interest in proper grazing among producers and our district conservation offices and Extension staff. If people can touch it, see it and smell it, then they are willing to try it," he says.

### How It Works

For producers to establish a demonstration site on their farm, they must work with their local conservation district and

## Grassfed Beef Featured

Grassfed beef has recently been in the spotlight, thanks to the California Farm Bureau Federation. An article in their March/April magazine profiled Western Grasslands Beef, a coalition of California ranchers raising the meat for up-scale restaurants and retail. The lean beef has a distinctive flavor and appeals to nutrition-conscious consumers because it contains high levels of heart-healthy Omega 3 fatty acids.

Currently, eight California ranchers raise grassfed beef for Western Grasslands. The group hopes to add more ranchers and expand to national distribution in the near future.

The grassfed group has even earned some TV time. The story of Western Grasslands was featured on the weekly television program, *California Country*, which is also produced by the California Farm Bureau Federation. And, Public Television's *Chefs A' Field*, a series that explores the origins of food through documentaries, also featured the ranchers producing Western Grasslands beef and their conservation-minded practices.

Ceci Dale-Cesmat, a rangeland management specialist with NRCS in California, reports that several of the ranchers involved with Western Grasslands have worked closely with NRCS on EQIP, WHIP and other land improvement projects for their ranching operations.



submit a proposal for the type of project they are interested in. Producers must also be willing to host field days and tours for others to learn about the project.

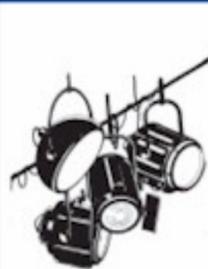
"Our early emphasis was on establishing warm season grasses to determine which forages would be productive during our summer grazing slump," says Dengler. He says those forages really stood out as the only grazable acres during the major drought in the state last year.

Today he reports that a variety of projects are represented including grazing demonstration sites for horses, beef, bison, longhorns, dairy and even pasture poultry. The well-known University of Maryland's Wye Angus herd is also participating with one of the demonstrations.

In addition to the educational workshops and pasture walks on the sites, Dengler is also working to develop a web site and fact sheets offering information about the findings from each project. He also has plans to add more demonstration sites in the future, provided that funding is still available.

Dengler attributes much of this program's success to the fact that the state GLCI organization has worked with University Extension and the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council to present a unified effort.

Looking ahead, Dengler is optimistic that grass-based entities will also bolster small farms, including old tobacco farms. He reports that local economic development groups are also working with the Maryland GLCI and the Maryland Delaware Forage Council to promote such opportunities through educational workshops. "We have a strong market to sell organic and locally-raised products within our region. I hope to see grazing used to develop some of these value-added products, like grassfed beef. There's a big potential for that in the Northeast," he says. [For more about the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, visit [www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org).]



# GLCI SPOTLIGHT

## National Cattlemen's Beef Association

By Kindra Gordon



Jack Cutshall  
Glenmora, Louisiana

Initiated in 1898, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is the marketing and trade organization representing America's one million cattle producers. With offices in Denver and Washington, D.C., NCBA is a consumer-focused, producer-directed organization that works to advance the economic, political and social interests of the U.S. cattle business, as well as the wise stewardship of natural resources.

Currently, beef producers Jack Cutshall of Glenmora, Louisiana and Bob Drake from Davis, Oklahoma serve as the NCBA representatives on the national GLCI steering committee. Drake has chaired the committee since 1998. Here, both men share their background and philosophy on the importance of GLCI:

### Louisiana Cattleman

Having retired from the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) as Louisiana's State Range Conservationist, Jack Cutshall has a long-standing history with conservation efforts on the land. In addition, he has operated a cow/calf herd on his Rafter J Ranch under an intensive grazing system for over 20 years.

Despite his retirement, he still has a lengthy list of activities including being involved in his state's cattlemen's association and beef industry council. He was named the Louisiana Cattleman of the Year in 2001. And, Cutshall currently chairs the Private Lands Environment Committee in Louisiana and on the national level for NCBA. He is also a life member of the Society for Range Management.

Asked about the accomplishments of GLCI efforts, he says, "GLCI has made the American public more aware of the benefits provided by properly-managed grazing lands. It has also given private grazing land owners an information forum and an opportunity to exchange ideas."

On the legislative front, Cutshall says GLCI efforts have also demonstrated to Congress and the Department of Agriculture that private land owners can and will do a great job of private lands conservation on a voluntary basis if they have the technical assistance to direct them. "The great thing is the land owner effort is all voluntary," he emphasizes.

"GLCI represents the first time all of these producer organizations are going to Congress as one voice on behalf of private grazing lands, and because of that we have made a difference," Cutshall says.

### Oklahoma Enthusiast

Davis, Oklahoma cattleman Bob Drake agrees. Of the national GLCI steering committee he says, "We have a great committee. It's made up of a very strong, powerful group of people representing the nine industry organizations that support the GLCI effort. These people are dedicated to bringing grazing assistance and education activities to private land owners. They regularly visit with legislators and travel to Washington, D.C. to help garner funding for GLCI efforts."

Drake, who has chaired the national GLCI steering committee for the past five years, is well-qualified for the job as he has a long list of leadership accomplishments within the industry – including serving as the National Cattlemen's Association (now NCBA) president in 1995.

Drake grew up on a cattle ranch that was originally formed by his father in 1943. After his father's death, Drake, his brother Tom, and mother formed Drake Farms in 1964, and over the years it has included a registered Angus herd, a commercial herd, a feeding operation and farming. In recent years, the cattle herds have been dispersed and much of the land sold to the Chickasaw Indian Nation. However, Bob and Tom have retained some land and remain in the cattle business. Both continue to serve in leadership roles in the beef industry. In addition to his GLCI duties, Bob is actively involved in the Oklahoma Farm Bureau and NCBA activities.

Drake and his wife of 43 years, Kay, have two adult children, a son who is involved in Drake Farms and a daughter who is a lawyer in California.

Drake says one of the biggest GLCI accomplishments has been putting people on the ground. "We've had some successes in making sure NRCS has the staff to offer technical grazing assistance to the farmers and ranchers they work with." He hopes GLCI efforts continue in that vein in the future and also create additional opportunities in the areas of grazing education and research.

Another notable success by GLCI is the national grazing conference, says Drake. The first was held in Las Vegas three years ago with nearly 900 in attendance. The second is being planned for Nashville this December and Drake says he anticipates 2,000 participants. "This could very well be the largest gathering of its kind for grazing lands," Drake says.

Bob McCan, Victoria, Texas serves as an alternate representing NCBA on the national GLCI steering committee. For more information about NCBA visit [www.beef.org](http://www.beef.org).



Bob Drake  
Davis, Oklahoma



**Mark your calendars for the Second National Conference on Grazing Lands - December 7-10, 2003 Nashville, Tenn. For more information [www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org).**

# THE CHAIR'S CORNER

Summer and the grazing season are in full swing. Spring rains across the Northern and Southern plains have been spotty – which have helped to ease, but not end the drought. In the drought areas, grazing deferment along with additional rainfall is needed for the native grasses to build up root reserves.

For more information about the drought, visit the National Drought Monitor website at <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html> or the NRCS Drought website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/drought.html>.

In May, several producer organizations from Tennessee met to organize a grassland coalition. Congratulations to Bud Guinn who will serve as interim chairman of this newest state effort. December 7-10, 2003, Nashville, TN, will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Grazing Conference – so start making your plans to attend.

**Bob Drake, Chairman**  
*National GLCI Steering Committee*

## MORE DROUGHT AID

USDA has several programs in the works to assist producers affected by drought.

- A newly created **Drought Coordinating Council** will monitor drought conditions, educate producers about drought preparedness and help with timely distribution of resources.
- Under the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003, the **Livestock Assistance Program (LAP)** begins in July. It will make \$250 million available to reimburse producers for grazing losses that were not covered under the previous Livestock Compensation Program. Eligible producers have a choice of receiving payments for 2001 or 2002 losses.
- USDA's Farm Service Agency also operates **HayNet** [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet/) to help producers identify available hay supplies.

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Visit the GLCI homepage at <http://www.glci.org>

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