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**A voluntary
partnership
with private
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Staying Focused

Reminders of management factors to review.

Source: Iowa Beef Center

It's been a roller coaster ride for the overall economy, and the livestock industry throughout 2009. Despite the challenges, there are some opportunities to be had for those who can adapt to the changing environment.

Looking ahead to the New Year, specialists at the Iowa Beef Center have developed a list of resolutions for farmers and ranchers to consider. While you may already be doing some of these management things, they offer good reminders of areas that should continually be re-evaluated.

1. **Identify improvements that will have the most impact on your organization.** It's important to keep your resolutions focused and identify where your farm or ranch business needs the most improvement and which steps will have the greatest impact on profits.
2. **Build more flexibility into your operation.** What are you doing differently to survive in this time of tight margins and high inputs? With the cost of feed and fuel ever in flux, and a host of other uncertainties plaguing livestock producers, it's important that you have the ability to change how you operate, so rapid changes in the industry don't leave you behind.
3. **Better understand how to market your livestock timely and wisely.** A rapid climb in livestock production costs, including a dramatic increase in feed prices, has changed the name of the game for those marketing livestock. It might no longer be profitable to market your livestock in the same manner as years before.
4. **Improve your recordkeeping skills and organize documentation.** With the implementation of country-of-origin labeling and consumers showing more interest in source and age verification, documentation has become increasingly important for all livestock producers.
5. **Become a better steward of the land.** Make sure you understand your impact on the land on and near your operation, and educate yourself on possible measurements you can enact, from utilizing rotational grazing to proper nutrient-management tools.
6. **Better understand your livestock's health needs and likely ailments.** Although it's not possible to keep your herd completely free of health problems, working with your veterinarian on a health plan that suits your particular needs will ensure your animals

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Staying Focused

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have the best possible protection from potential problems. Your veterinarian will also point out areas of your facility that may promote illness.

7. **Further reduce your feed costs by managing feed losses.** With escalating feed costs impacting your operation's profitability, it's important to reduce the amount of feed lost through storing and feeding. Introducing new storage methods and feeding equipment can reduce the amount of feed lost, giving you a break on your rising feed costs.
8. **Develop cheaper feed rations that will still serve nutrition needs.** Look into feed alternatives that might be cheaper than what you're currently using. However, the feed ration you develop must still meet your animals' nutritional needs, or the decrease in quality of your final product won't be worth the savings.
9. **Better manage your manure to get the most value from it.** Manure is a highly valuable resource if it's captured properly and used where it's needed the most.
10. **Improve your livestock's comfort for more productive animals.** Livestock that are handled properly in a low-stress environment will yield a better end product.

For more information from the Iowa Beef Center, visit their website at www.iowabeefcenter.org.

7 Ranches Recognized for Stewardship

Seven ranches from across the nation were recognized as regional winners by the 2009 National Environmental Stewardship Award Selection Committee

Of the winners, the committee said: "These operations have successfully conducted stewardship practices that serve as exemplary models for all cattle producers. They are actively working to protect and improve the environment and have proven that stewardship and good business can go hand-in-hand."

The national winner will be announced during the Annual Cattle Industry Convention to be held in late January 2010 in San Antonio, TX.

The 2009 Regional Environmental Stewardship Award Winners are:

Region I: Young's Cattle Co., Rick and Jayne Young, Belmont, OH
Region II: Greenview Polled Hereford Farms, Inc., Jonathan (Jonny) Harris and Family, Screven, GA

Region III: Eckenfels Farm, Bob Eckenfels, Sainte Genevieve, MO
Region IV: Stoney Point AgriCorp, Mark Quinn and Family, Melissa, TX
Region V: Pape Ranches Inc, Norm & Barbara Pape, Fred & Michelle Pape, and David Pape, Daniel, WY

Region VI: Leavitt Lake Ranches, Darrell, Callie, Ramsey and Dallice Wood, Vina, CA

Region VII: Daybreak Ranch, Jim & Carol Faulstich, Adam & Jacquie Roth, Highmore, SD

2009 marked the 19th year of the Environmental Stewardship Award. Dow AgroSciences LCC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have served as the primary sponsors of the award program.

The program is administered by the National Cattlemen's Foundation and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Nominations for the annual Environmental Stewardship Awards are now open for 2010. The award recognizes producers at the regional and national level who demonstrate outstanding stewardship practices and wildlife habitat improvement, while maintaining profitable cattle operations. Nominations made on behalf of U.S. beef producers are due Feb. 24, 2010. Visit www.environmentalstewardship.org for information.

SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL MEETING IS FEB. 8-11 IN DENVER

US Interior Secretary Ken Salazar will address attendees

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar is expected to address the upcoming joint annual meeting of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and the Society for Range Management (SRM). Scheduled for February 8 through 11 in Denver, the event is open to landowners, scientists, students, educators and professionals interested in sustainable weed management practices and the conservation of natural resources.

Additional scheduled keynote speakers include:

- John Fielder, a nationally renowned nature photographer, publisher, teacher and preservationist who will present "A Tour of Sustainable Landscapes in Colorado."
- Richard Mack, professor in the School of Biological Sciences at Washington State University who will speak on "Weeds in the Western Landscape."
- Elliott West, alumni distinguished professor of history at the University of Arkansas, who will speak on "History of the Development of the West."

Joint conference symposia will focus on topics that impact the nation's "working landscapes" used to raise crops and livestock - from biocontrol agents and weed physiology to GPS technology for the precision application of herbicides, as well as management of open spaces in both urban and suburban environments.

This is the 50th Annual Meeting for WSSA and the 63rd Annual Meeting for SRM. For further information or to register, visit www.wssa.net or www.rangelands.org.

A Winning Hand: 4NCGL in Reno

*Speaker line-up offers “full-house”
of grazing expertise.*

The schedule is set and enthusiasm is high for the Fourth National Conference on Grazing Lands to be held Dec. 13-16 at the Nugget Casino Resort in Reno-Sparks, NV. The event, which is sponsored by the Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative (GLCI) along with the Society for Range Management, will feature presentations from producers and grazing management experts for all species of livestock from across the country.

The conference will get underway Sunday, Dec. 13 with regional GLCI meetings in the afternoon and an Exhibitor's Trade Show reception that evening.

Monday, Dec. 14, National GLCI Chair Bob Drake will offer introductory remarks and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar have both been invited to address the conference.

Concurrent workshop sessions will then be held throughout Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday morning Dec. 16. Speaker highlights include

- Missouri grazer and author Greg Judy, discussing “The benefits of holistic, high density grazing;”
- University of Nebraska holistic grazing management specialist Terry Gompert, discussing “The power of stock density;”
- Don Ball and Garry Lacefield, both University forage specialists, discussing “Forage management that beats the odds;”
- Animal behavior specialist Darrell Emmick discussing “Foraging behavior and diet selection in the grazing dairy cow;”
- Additionally, presentations on grazing with goats, focusing on legumes, rotational grazing management and much more are on the schedule.

An evening banquet will be held Monday, Dec. 14, featuring cowboy entertainer, Dave Stamey. *Cowboys and Indians Magazine* has called him “the Charley Russell of Western Music.” Stamey has been a cowboy, a mule packer, a dude wrangler, and is now one of the most popular Western entertainers working today. Tickets for the event can be purchased when registering for 4NCGL.

For more information or to register for the conference visit www.glci.org. The event is sponsored by the Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative along with the Society for Range Management.



UPCOMING GRAZING EVENTS

Dec. 1-3 – Range Beef Cow Symposium, Casper, WY. For information contact University of Wyoming's Steve Paisley at (307)-837-2000 or spaisley@uwyo.edu.

Dec. 10 – Alabama Forage Conference, Livingston, AL. For more information visit: http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/about/so_sect/tech/graz/forg_grassland_conf_12-10-09.html

Dec. 13-16 – Fourth National Conference On Grazing Lands, Reno, NV. Presented by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. Visit www.glci.org.

Jan. 22-23, 2010 – 14th annual Vermont Grazing and Livestock Conference, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT. Keynote speaker Brian Moyer of Rural Vermont. Preconference workshops on business planning, winter animal management and weed control with Kathy Voth. Over 30 workshops on sustainable livestock production, with topics such as pasture-based research, grazing season extension, soil fertility & productivity, local beef marketing, high quality hay production, transitioning dairy farms to rotational grazing, small ruminant parasite management, swine, poultry and more. For more information, visit www.uvm.edu/pasture

Jan. 27-30, 2010 – Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show, San Antonio, TX. See www.beef.org for information.

Jan. 29-30, 2010 – Second Annual Winter Green-up Grass-fed Conference, Latham, NY. Speakers will include Allen Williams, Terry Gompert, Troy Bishopp, Mark DeBoo and Ken Jaffee. For information visit www.diamonddangus.com.

Feb. 2, 2010 – Animal Grazing Behavior workshop, featuring Fred Provenza, Lusk, WY. Early registration deadline needed by Dec. 1. For more information call Niobrara Conservation District 307-334-2953 or e-mail lshaw@wyoming.com.

Feb. 7-11, 2010 – 63rd Annual Society for Range Management Annual Meeting, Denver, CO. Visit www.rangelands.org for information.

Submit your upcoming grazing events for the Jan/Feb. issue to office@gordonresources.com.

Keys to Revitalizing Pasture and Rangeland

With rising feed costs, many producers may consider revitalizing underutilized pasture and rangeland. Renovating this valuable land can help reduce input costs and slow spread of invasive weeds.

According to Larry Redmon, state forage specialist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and Paul Baumann, state weed specialist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, three key steps are required when establishing and promoting growth of forage plants.

1. **Select the right forage.** “New stands of forage, whether annual or perennial, require careful attention to species selection, site, fertility and early weed management,” says Redmon.

“If you don't choose the right forage, you're starting off in a hole,” Baumann explains. “Planting forage that will thrive in your soil gives it an edge on weed competition.”

2. **Nail the timing.** A soil sample should be obtained prior to the establishment date, Redmon advises. This allows time to make limestone applications, if needed, and time to apply and incorporate phosphorous and potassium applications into the seedbed prior to establishment.

“Timely rainfall is essential to establishing forages since rain is the key to releasing nutrients in the soil,” explains Baumann. “If you can plant before a period of rain, you'll provide your seeds or sprigs the boost they'll need to get firmly established.”

Nitrogen fertilizer should be applied only after it is clear the establishment will be successful; otherwise early fertilizer applications may only serve to increase the growth of unwanted weeds, says Redmon.

3. **Control weeds early.** The earlier you begin controlling weeds, the faster you'll establish your stand, adds Baumann. “The best defense against weeds is an aggressively growing forage that crowds out the competition, so using best fertility practices at establishment and beyond is essential.”

Baumann recommends using a targeted herbicide to control weeds before they become a problem. If weeds have surfaced, the key, he explains, is to attack them when they're small - four to six inches tall - so control can be achieved with less herbicide. “It's best to control weeds at a time of year such as late spring or early summer when you're still getting beneficial rainfall so the forage can respond and take the best advantage of the weed removal,” Baumann adds.

To have your GLCI activities or upcoming events highlighted in this newsletter, contact Kindra Gordon at phone 605-722-7699 or kindras@gordonresources.com.

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

Contact these affiliated organizations:
American Farm Bureau Federation (202) 484-3608
American Forage and Grassland Council (800) 944-2342
American Sheep Industry (303) 771-3500
Dairy Industry (517) 323-6575
National Association of Conservation Districts (202) 547-6233
National Cattlemen's Beef Association (202) 347-0228
National Farmers Union (202) 554-1600
Society for Range Management (303) 986-3309
Soil and Water Conservation Society (515) 289-2331, ext 13