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A voluntary partnership with private landowners

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**Cover photograph:** Dave Schmidt (Rangeland Management Specialist with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Huron, SD) explains that maintaining a mixture of desirable forage plants throughout the grazing season will optimize livestock performance. Management decisions must be based on the needs of the livestock and the vegetation as well as the producer's objectives.

# Ag Lenders/Appraisers Experience Hands-On Training

"There's nothing else like it," says Dave Schriever, First Dakota National Bank, Yankton, South Dakota. About 35 ag lenders, appraisers and realtors from across South Dakota and Wyoming took part in a three-day camp that focused on techniques to better evaluate the grass resource. "We started with learning about the grass resource and looking at ranching from the operator's perspective," says Schriever.

Hosted by the Stanley County Conservation District, the participants camped out at the Cow Pasture Campground, 47 miles northwest of Fort Pierre, South Dakota. Camp sponsors wanted to help lenders understand trends in natural resource management. The session had a well-rounded agenda to help broaden the lenders' understanding of natural resources on private lands. "This is a unique opportunity for hands-on training about grassland management strategies that optimize production while maintaining productivity," explains Dave Steffen, rangeland management specialist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Burke, South Dakota.

Among other topics, the ag lenders and appraisers were exposed to different range improvement practices and the economics of implementing those practices. One panel discussion

*(Continued on next page)*

*"The camp is an excellent setting for interaction between groups...because we are all working to meet the needs of the ranching customer."*
Ron Ensz
Farm Credit Services
Belle Fourche, South Dakota

*"One goal of the camp was to help ag lenders and appraisers recognize the potential production of a pasture and gain more knowledge to explore management options with their ranching customers."*
Boyd Waara
First National Bank
Philip, South Dakota

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offered a look at ranching complementary enterprises such as buffalo and wildlife management and selling seeds of native plants.

"It's important for lenders to understand that improving productivity and maximizing the benefits of rangeland is a slow process that requires long-term planning and goals. Lenders need to be aware of the short-term cash-flow difficulties involved in range improvement," says camp participant Ann MacKaben, rancher and Farm Service Agency credit officer, Dupree, South Dakota.

Over 2 1/2 inches of rain fell during the first portion of the camp, but it did not dampen the campers' eagerness. Boyd Waara says, "The experience was very educational and the value of the program really shows with the participants' enthusiasm for next year's camp which will be held in the Black Hills area."

The camp was co-sponsored by NRCS, South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service, South Dakota Grassland Coalition, South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management, and South Dakota Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils under the direction of a group of South Dakota bankers.

**Grasslands are complex ecosystems. The introductory part of the program emphasizes plant identification, how plants grow, and the ability of range sites to support different plant communities.**

# Camp participants learned:

- **Diversity in the plant community provides a higher quality of forage for livestock.**
- **Maintaining a mixture of desirable forage plants throughout the grazing season will optimize livestock performance.**
- **Management is a key factor in successful grazing because management must become more intensive as the system becomes more complex.**
- **Management decisions are based on the needs of the grassland resource, the livestock, and the producer's objectives.**

## Ohio Grazing Lands Activities

- The Bruce and Lisa Rickard farm near Fredericktown was the site of a technical tour for livestock producers on July 18. The featured attraction was the Rickards' rotational grazing system. It includes a 300-head ewe flock, a cow/calf herd, and contract grazing of replacement dairy heifers.
- Ohio hosted the American Forage and Grassland Council Affiliate Council Conference July 30-August 1, 1997.
- The Hartzler and Art Riggenbach dairy farms were toured on August 27. Both of these dairy operations are forage-based and featured rotational grazing systems.
- Employees of the Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts are scheduled to receive hands-on training in the field on materials, design, layout, and installation of fencing and livestock water systems on September 16.
- The Jim Rogers farm near Logan will be the site of a tour and field day on the subject of "extending the grazing season" on September 26.
- The Great Lakes Grazing Conference will be held in Wooster, Ohio on February 15 and 16, 1999. Mark your calendars now!

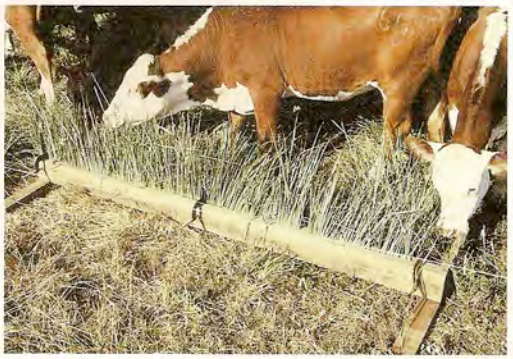
*For information on any of these activities, contact Bob Hendershot, NRCS Grassland Management Systems Conservationist, at (740) 653-1559.*

# Seasonal Grazing of Warm Season Native Grass in SW Georgia

The NRCS Plant Materials Center at Americus, Georgia is demonstrating rotational grazing of Eastern Gamagrass, and is working toward demonstration of rotational grazing of Switchgrass and Indiangrass (photo 1). Warm season, native, tall-grass forages are not in widespread use in the Southeast, but interest is growing. The project uses single strand power fences, and portable water that is made available in each of the ten paddocks. Growing age cattle are grazed in spring and summer, cycling through the ten small paddocks in twenty-seven to thirty-one and one-half days.

When calves are going to be moved into areas where the forage species has never had been consumed by the animals, Plant Materials Center manager, Mike Owsley, introduces the forage in advance. At the NRCS National Employment Development Center training course in "Plant-Herbivore Interaction," Owsley learned techniques like the one depicted in photo 2 to maintain forage intake rates when moving cattle onto "novel forage" pastures.

Cattle grazing on warm season grass in SW Georgia.



The Plant/ Herbivore Interaction Course teaches innovative techniques like this one to maintain forage intake rates.

# Heads Up Notice!

## WANTED - New GLCI Logo:

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) National Steering Committee is conducting a national contest to select a new design for the GLCI logo. In our next issue, *GLCI News* will provide more information on this national competition. Contest details will also be available on the GLCI homepage (http://www.glci.org).

A panel of judges from the GLCI National Steering Committee will select the winning entry, and prizes will be awarded to finalists in the competition. This is your early notice to get your creative juices flowing. Be ready to submit your entry.

*The GLCI logo should be a symbol to represent the diversity, importance, and multiple benefits of our grazing land resources and reflect the stewardship of those who own and manage grazing lands.*

## Are You Interested in Receiving More Information on the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative?

*Contact these affiliated organizations:*

**American Farm Bureau Federation**
Herb Maning
(605) 386-4205

**American Forage and Grassland Council**
Dana Tucker
1-800-944-2342

**American Sheep Industry**
Tom McDonnell
(303) 771-3500

**Dairy Industry**
John Roberts
(802) 462-2252

**National Association of Conservation Districts**
Robert Toole
(405) 359-9011

**National Cattlemen's Beef Association**
John Pemderton
(202) 347-0228

**Society for Range Management**
Craig Whittekiend
(303) 355-7070

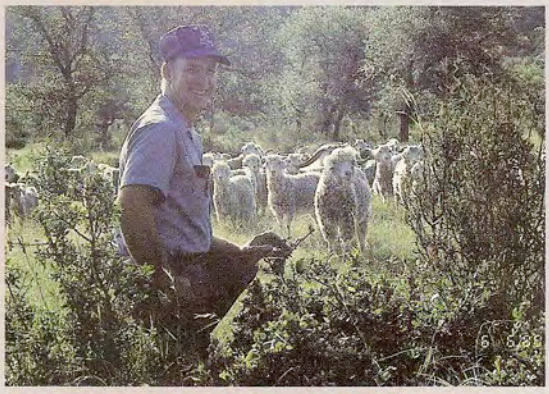
**Soil and Water Conservation Society**
Craig Cox
(515) 289-2331, ext. 13

**USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service**
Gary Westmoreland
(254) 742-9948

# NUTBAL Videos Available

The Grazing Land Technology Institute in cooperation with the Grazingland Animal Nutrition Lab at Texas A&M University developed and is releasing two videos and CDs. The first video, entitled "Introduction to the NUTBAL System," is about 20 minutes long. It explains the use of livestock fecal sampling to monitor livestock nutritional status. The second video, entitled "Using the NUTBAL Computer System," is about 15 minutes long. It describes the use of the NUTBAL (Nutritional Balance Analyzer) computer decision support system to monitor animal well-being and the producer's performance goals. Both videos contain valuable information for livestock producers and their technical advisors.

The videos were previewed at the recent National Range and Pasture Handbook Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. They are available for distribution. For more information contact your state grazingland specialists or Arnold Norman at (817) 509-3214.



Angora goats in the Texas Hill Country.

Pronghorns in the Texas Trans-Pecos.

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**GLCI on the Web**

***Visit the GLCI homepage for more news and information about the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. Our web address is: http://www.glci.org***