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GLCI News



Savory Addresses "Desertification" via Web Video

World-renowned grazing legend Allan Savory has reached a broader audience on the subject of climate change and desertification via a video circling the Internet which is helping dispel some exaggerated myths about livestock production. Savory, a soft-spoken Zimbabwean biologist, farmer and environmentalist has spent a lifetime studying and practicing techniques that combat desertification around the globe.

Savory says, livestock are a solution to climate change and an effective means by which to fight hunger, poverty and violence across much of the Third World.

Savory's speech was presented at the 2013 TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) Conference, a global set of conferences owned by the private non-profit Sapling Foundation, formed to disseminate "ideas worth spreading." Founded in 1984, TED now sponsors an annual conference in which speakers are given 18 minutes to address a wide range of topics within the research and practice of science and culture. Past presenters include Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Malcolm Gladwell, Gordon Brown and many Nobel Prize winners.

Savory's idea "worth spreading" is that removing grazing animals from an ecosystem promotes desertification. Indeed, he argues, the cause of desertification is the absence of grazing animals. To heal the land and slow climate change, he says, grazing animals must be returned to areas in peril of desertification, which may include two-thirds of the world's grasslands.

Through his comments in the short video message, Savory shares his proof, compiled over a lifetime of study and practice. You have to watch the video to fully comprehend this powerful message. Find Savory's video on YouTube by searching "How To Green The World's Deserts and Reverse Climate Change."

Savory began working on desertification in his native Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1955. He is credited with developing Holistic Management, a systems thinking approach to managing resources that builds biodiversity, improves production, generates financial strength, enhances sustainability, and improves the quality of life for those who use it.

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OnPasture.com Online Magazine Launched

This spring a new publication came online to serve graziers. *On Pasture* is brought to you by many of the same people whose articles you've read before, or who you've seen at grazing conferences. The focus of *On Pasture* is translating research and experience into grazing practices you can use now.

Kathy Voth, *On Pasture* co-editor explains, "We're taking on the job of sifting through the piles of research and grazing practices, translating them into ideas that can work, and then putting together the simple steps for getting started." With the inaugural issue, available free online at <http://onpasture.com>, readers will learn how a \$4 grazing chart gets farmers and ranchers through drought successfully, and can choose from several free, downloadable grazing charts designed for a variety of different grazing operations. Articles also cover what makes a forage palatable, what weeds we can use as forage, and how to take the drudgery out of soil testing and much more.

"Since this is an online magazine, we can also take advantage of sharing information in different ways," says co-editor Rachel Gilker. The publication includes videos, podcasts and lots of pictures. "We also want to entertain, and get folks to think outside the box from time to time, so we've included a section we call 'Consider This.'

The contributors are mainly farmers and ranchers themselves. The team includes: Greg Judy, Karen Hoffman, Jim Cropper, Ed Rayburn, Gabe Clark, Will Ameden, Dan Hudson, Morgan Hartmann, Troy Bishopp, Jenn Colby, David Kennard and Leah Ashley Esser. Others are being added as the year goes on.

"We also want to entertain, and get folks to think outside the box from time to time..."

National Steering Committee Notes

The National GLCI Steering Committee will hold its annual fall meeting in Wichita, KS, with a tour of grazinglands on Friday, Sept. 6 and a business meeting on Sept. 7. The committee is comprised of producers representing nine industry organizations. One long time member representing the sheep industry was Aggie Helle of Montana, who resigned/retired from her position this winter after over 20 years of service to both the Montana and National GLCI Steering Committees. We thank her for her dedicated service! Fellow Montanan Ben Lehfeldt is stepping in to fill Aggie's shoes. To learn more about him and other individuals serving on the national steering committee visit www.glci.org, and select "Who's Involved" on the right-hand tab.

Future Fodder: A note on interest rates

An important factor to monitor for the future will be interest rates. Is an impending rate hike on your radar screen? Many analysts are predicting this scenario on the horizon for all businesses.

One individual I visited with noted that at the pace that the Federal Reserve is printing money – more so than at any other time in history, the likelihood of having higher interest rates down the road is really high.

His advice was this: analyze your expansion plans for the next 10 to 20 years and be very cognizant that rates are low now and are likely going up. If you plan to expand, borrow all the money you want at cheap rates and absolutely have that money paid off at the end of the fixed term. Make sure you are not in a position where you need to borrow money when the rates are high – because if you have to borrow expensive money, you may end up out of business.

- By Kindra Gordon

GLCI State Spotlights

The Texas GLCI is planning its first-ever state Grazing Land Conference to be held July 16-17 in Fort Worth. The event will focus on helping producers find solutions to maintain healthy and profitable ranches.

A highlight of the event will be a producer forum featuring 16 Texas and Oklahoma ranchers who will share their knowledge, insight and experience in both cow-calf and stocker cattle sectors. The forum will have four breakout sessions focused on distinct management emphasis areas including: Profitable Grazing Management; Marketing Strategies; Risk Management; Managing Livestock & Wildlife.

Temple Grandin and Kit Pharo will also share their expertise with conference attendees. Registration is \$100. For more information contact jeff.goodwin@tx.usda.gov.

The Montana GLCI folks have been working on a grazing recordkeeping system for livestock managers. They have a hard copy version available, but now are working on an electronic format or "app" for Smartphones. Dubbed the "Graze Keeper App Project" they hope to release a useful product sometime in 2013.



Smithsonian

Smithsonian Seeks Ag Artifacts

New exhibit will feature “American Enterprise,” including farming, ranching and rural life stories.

By Kindra Gordon

Plans are underway for a new exhibit at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History – and agriculture will be a featured component. Titled “American Enterprise,” the 8,000 square foot exhibit – which is set to open in the spring of 2015 – will trace the development of the U.S. from a small, dependent nation to one of the world’s most vibrant and trend-setting economies.

The multimedia exhibit will highlight agriculture for its integral part of the growth of American enterprise, explains Smithsonian curator Peter Leibhold. Farmers and ranchers are being asked to share their stories for the exhibit as well.

Leibhold notes that traditionally ag museums feature historical tractors and other antiquated equipment, but he says, “We don’t want that. We want to feature America’s growth and development. Agriculture is present in all of that... agriculture isn’t just part of the past.”

He adds that in the past 70 years the ag industry has undergone tremendous change which has affected not just farmers but “every American and the American experience in general.”

The Smithsonian recognizes that the story of agriculture is complex, noting that in Jefferson’s time, 96 percent of Americans were farmers; today, that number is less than 2 percent. Despite this drop, productivity has skyrocketed and agriculture has evolved into a technology-driven profession with the cab of a tractor akin to a traditional CEO’s office, explains Leibhold.

He states, “We’re producing more food with fewer people and less land than ever before.”

Chronological Display

“American Enterprise” will tell the story of the nation’s business, centering on themes of opportunity, innovation, competition and common good with examples drawn from five areas: agriculture, consumer finance, information technology/communication, manufacturing and retail/service.

The chronological display will be divided into four periods:

- 1770s to 1860s - rise of the market economy
- 1860 to 1960s - the beginning of the population move from rural to urban areas
- 1930s to 1970s - rise of the consumer economy, which includes the green revolution
- 1970s to 2010s - the global period

As examples, the exhibition will showcase the development of American agriculture through objects such as Eli Whitney’s cotton gin, a 1920s Fordson tractor, Barbara McClintock’s microscope and Stanley Cohen’s recombinant DNA research notebook.

Even though the Smithsonian exhibit won’t open until 2015, the museum is turning to the farm and ranch community to seek their stories for consideration and inclusion in the exhibit. The museum has launched a Web portal where the public can upload stories about technologies and innovation that have changed their work lives; environment concerns and issues, competition, food safety, animals agriculture, water issues and farm labor are examples being sought. For details, visit <http://americanenterprise.si.edu>.

Leibhold notes that the American Enterprise exhibit will be on display for at least 20 years, and the exhibit will be updated as needed to make sure the most current information remains relevant.

Of the exhibit, he puts the 8,000 square foot space into perspective, saying, “I know it’s not much space in agriculture, hardly enough to turn a combine around in, but for us it’s a major undertaking.” The exhibit is expected to be viewed by 4.6 million visitors every year. Leibhold concludes, “The goal is to raise the visibility of agriculture, and we’d like today’s farmers and ranchers to help tell the story.”

For more information, visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu>.



NEB. GRAZING CONFERENCE AUG. 13-14 IN KEARNEY

Sharing expertise on topics related to grazing animals and stewardship of grazinglands is the focus of the 13th annual Nebraska Grazing Conference to be held at the Kearney Holiday Inn on Aug. 13-14, 2013.

Burke Teichert, former Rex Ranch manager, will kick-off the event sharing what he calls “key indicators of ranch efficiencies.” He will address the group with a second presentation and discuss resource management and monitoring.

Highmore, South Dakota rancher Jim Faulstich will also make two presentations to participants. His first comments will focus on managing grassland for multiple uses: making the pieces fit; he will then give a second presentation on how to fit hunting into the rest of a grazing operation.

Additional presentations will include:

- Grazing plan – historical and where they are now, Bob Price, daughter Lindsey Smith and their consultant Terry DeGroff, Burwell, NE;
- Dung beetles, Sean Whipple, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Panhandle Research & Extension Center, Scottsbluff, NE;
- Managing three billion gallons of water, Lyle Perman, Lowry, SD;
- Fitting grazing strategies to your environment, Nebraska producer panel: Doug Olson, Harrisburg; Jeff Pribbeno, Imperial; and Dan Stelling, Pierce;
- Semi-arid range: how to make it work, Grady Grissom, Rancher in CO;
- Management practices of 2012 Leopold Conservation Award winner, Buell family, Rose, NE;
- Grassland management aspect of Calamus Outfitters for grazing and ecotourism business, Sarah Sortum, Burwell, NE;
- Cover crop and fall annual forage grazing, Karla Jenkins, UNL Panhandle Research & Extension Center, Scottsbluff, NE and Jerry Volesky, UNL West Central Research & Extension Center, North Platte, NE.

Registration is \$80 if postmarked by Aug. 1 and \$95 afterward. One-day registrations are also available, and walk-ins are welcome. Reduced registration fees are offered for students. More information is available at <http://nebraskagrazingconference.unl.edu>, or from the UNL Center for Grassland Studies at (402) 472-4101, e-mail grassland@unl.edu.

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>

- 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

Contact these affiliated organizations: