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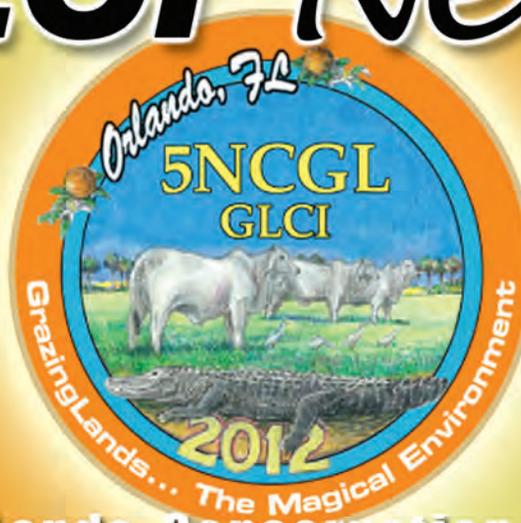
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GLCI News



Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

It's Time! Fifth National Grazing Lands Conference Heads to Orlando in December

Temple Grandin Joins Authors, Researchers and Ranchers on List of Renowned Speakers

By Kindra Gordon

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) will host its 5th national conference in Orlando, FL, from December 9-12, 2012, at the Caribe Royale Hotel and Convention Center. GLCI conference organizers expect over 1,200 ranchers, professors, land managers, researchers, public officials, ecologists and students to participate in the exchange of information on "cutting edge" grazing management technologies.

"The Nation's grazing lands perform a number of functions," says Bob Drake, GLCI Chairman. "Grazing lands provide homes for livestock and wildlife, sponges for rainfall, carbon reservoirs, hiking and bird-watching meccas, hunting and fishing grounds, and much, much more. Sustainably managing all of these roles across 600 million acres of grazing lands in this Nation is a huge balancing act, and it's also the topic of our conference," he summarizes.

This year, Temple Grandin, noted animal behavior expert, author, speaker and professor will be one of a number of featured presenters. Grandin will conduct a book signing at the conference.

The conference will continue its past format of providing information along four "tracks" that will include Eastern, Midwestern, Western and dairy grazing issues. Some of the issues to be highlighted include the value of rotational grazing and of riparian habitat, carbon sequestration, and the flexibility within grazing systems.

In addition to Grandin, noted speakers include Colorado rancher Kit Pharo, forage specialists Don Ball and Garry Lacefield, and specialists from the Noble Foundation. On Dec. 12, the Florida Grazing Lands Coalition, a division of GLCI, will provide a day-long workshop with Fred Provenza, Utah State University professor and award winning research scientist and rancher.

One thing that sets GLCI apart from other conferences is its focus on ranchers as presenters. "We know experts come from academia, government, and the non-profit world and we welcome them all, but we also look for the "cowboy expert" who has gained his—or her—expertise through long hours with livestock and first-hand exposure to all sorts of elements—natural, economic and political," says Drake.

Information on registration exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities is at www.glci.org. Full conference registration is \$365; student and one-day registrations are also available.

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Evaluate Winter Cow Management Following Drought

By Clay Wright and Jeri Donnell, Noble Foundation

Drought conditions in 2011 and 2012 have required diligent management of resources by farmers and ranchers. As you prepare for winter, consider the following management practices – especially if drought conditions persist.

Sell all open cows – Early identification and removal of open cows should be top priority. With scarce and costly pasture, feed and hay, it is not economical to maintain these females. For example, annual cow costs averaged \$450 per head in 2011 as reported by participants in the Integrity Beef Producer Alliance. This average will likely be higher for 2012. A cow that does not produce a calf in 2013 will not overcome that expense. You should also consider further culling, using a logical culling protocol.

Evaluate feeding programs and associated costs – Feed and hay prices are increasing. Whether considering hay for purchase or evaluating hay on hand, it is critical to analyze the hay for nutritive quality. As well, evaluate alternative feedstuffs available to you that will meet your animals' needs.

Winter pasture can be a very viable substitute for hay this winter, but be alert for several problems that might arise. The first is bloat. The cost of bloat preventatives, such as poloxalene blocks, can increase costs. The second problem that might arise is the fact that non-lactating cows grazing winter pasture can consume five times more crude protein than they need on a total quantity basis. Often, a common symptom of this is dietary "scours," especially when the forage is lush and actively growing. This problem may need to be addressed, but commonly subsides after several frosts have slowed plant growth and reduced moisture content. Allowing cows access to a roughage source, such as hay or standing grass, may help this situation. Third, if cows are to be grazed on winter pasture through calving, a high magnesium mineral will be needed to prevent grass tetany.

Reduce hay waste – A final management practice to stretch your dollar: if your feeding program this winter involves hay feeding, be sure to use some type of feeder to reduce hay waste. It is not uncommon to experience waste up to 50 percent when feeding round bales without hay rings or unrolling the bales. Using a hay feeder to minimize waste during feeding is recommended.

With high feed costs and scarce hay or pasture, it is imperative to evaluate all feeding options. If the fall weather cooperates, winter pasture can provide the much needed dry matter for the cow herd during winter months. In any case, only productive cows should be maintained through the winter.

Got Cornfields Nearby? Graze the stalks

With this year's historic drought and skyrocketing hay prices, many livestock producers have expressed interest in grazing cornstalks after harvest. And, it is an economical feeding option worth considering, says University of Nebraska ruminant nutritionist Aaron Stalker.

He reports that especially on irrigated cornfields cows can maintain bodyweight on the cornstalk residue that remains after combining – and no protein supplementation is needed when stocking rate is appropriate, nor is there a detrimental impact to the future yield of the field.

As testament to how well cows can do on cornstalk residue, Stalker cites one study that compared cows grazing cornstalks stocked at 1.5 AUM per acre without any supplemental feed to cows on winter range that were also being supplemented with two pounds per head per day of 32 percent crude protein range cake.

The cows performed equally, which Stalker says is an indication that cornstalks offer higher quality nutrition than winter range – and without the need for supplementation.

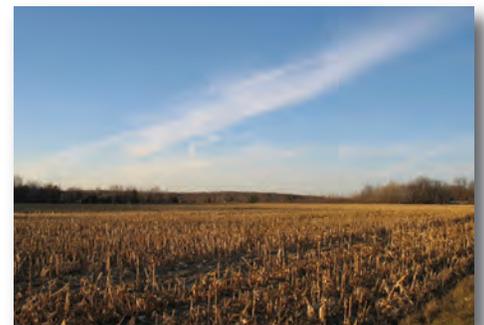
But Stalker says there are a few guidelines to follow if you plan to have your cattle graze cornstalks this fall or winter – starting with stocking rate.

He explains that the corn grain is the most nutritious part of the plant, second is the husk and third in nutrient quality is the leaf. A cow can maintain her bodyweight if a portion of these plant parts are available for grazing, according to Stalker. The cobs and stem offer the lowest nutritive value and cows will begin to lose bodyweight if that is the only part of the plant available for grazing.

Cornstalk residue available for grazing – and the appropriate stocking rate – can be determined based on the corn grain yield of the field. As a rule of thumb, Stalker says an irrigated corn plant will produce about 16 pounds (dry matter) of leaf and husk – with about half of that available after harvest for grazing.

Stalker and his colleagues with the University of Nebraska's West Central Research and Extension Center have developed an online calculator which uses corn grain yield as a factor for calculating stocking rates for grazing cornstalks.

Find the calculator at beef.unl.edu, select the "learning modules" tab and select Corn Stalk Grazing Calculator. Read more about grazing cornstalks at http://www.progressivecattle.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5080:guidelines-for-grazing-cornstalks-unl-offers-online-calculator-to-help-determine-stocking-rate&catid=93:featured-main-page



STATE SPOTLIGHTS

In Texas: Conservation at the forefront of stockman workshop

Over 150 livestock producers gathered for the Ranch Management Clinic offered in Jourdanon, Texas presented by the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). "Flexible Solutions in Any Market" was this year's theme and the message was delivered by a lineup of speakers that when combined, have over 160 years of experience in the livestock industry.

Among the speakers was Bill Armstrong who spent 32 years managing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Kerr Wildlife Management Area (KWMA). He discussed the benefits of good grazing management, prescribed burning and brush control utilized over his three decades.

"Grazing cattle will grow more deer, but you have to have a balance in place and a planned grazing system," Armstrong said. "We high fenced the ranch in 1968 and removed half the deer and by the early 1970's we started clearing the land and introducing fire again."

Armstrong slowly watched as the field dressed weight and Boone and Crockett antler score of harvested deer both increased during his tenure at the KWMA.

"Two major factors impacted the land – grazing and fire – and if you mimic those two systems you will obtain diversity," Armstrong explained.

West Point, Mississippi native Mark Hazard also shared management principles utilized by the Hazard family stocker operation – which has been described as one of the most consistently profitable agricultural ventures in the United States or abroad. Widely respected cattleman Gordon "Doc" Hazard started the operation in the 1940's and has successfully brought his son, Mark, and the rest of the family into the business.

"There is nothing we can do about the market, but stocker management is something we can control," Hazard said.

"Besides buying cattle at the right time, conditioning, disease control, and forward contracts will all help in delivering a calf with minimal input," Hazard told the crowd.

Also among the speakers was sixth generation rancher, Vance Mitchell. Mitchell's operation is located just outside of Edna in Lolita, Texas. He has closely studied and applied "Ranching for Profit" and "Bud Williams Marketing and Handling" principles to his livestock business for years. Mitchell explained how he stays flexible and profitable in the livestock business by operating both cow/calf and stocker operations on his ranch.

In closing, CattleFax representative Troy Applehans covered the latest in global beef industry research, analysis and information.

This event was made possible by numerous sponsors. For more information about upcoming events or additional grazing land management please visit www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov.



Vance Mitchell who operates both a cow/calf and stocker operation in Lolita, Texas, spoke to over 150 livestock producers during the GLCI Ranch Management Clinic.

In New York: Online courses; January conference offered

• Small Farms Courses Online

Whether you are a seasoned, new, or aspiring farmer, there's something for you in the 2012-2013 line-up of online courses presented by the Cornell Small Farms Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension. View all 12 courses at <http://nebeginningfarmers.org/online-courses>. Courses cover commercial production topics like raising veggies, berries, and poultry, as well as management of a successful farm, including business planning, holistic financial planning, marketing, and getting started in farming. Most courses are 6 weeks long and cost \$200 each.

For more small farm services, visit www.smallfarms.cornell.edu

• 5th Anniversary Winter Green-Up Grazing Conference is January 25- 26, 2013

The featured speaker will be Steve Kenyon, a Holistic Management Educator/practitioner from Saskatchewan, Canada who will discuss, in two separate sessions, the business and the practice of custom grazing cattle for profit. Additionally, Steve will touch upon winter management techniques that will have direct application to the cold climate of the Northeast. Also on the agenda is Jerry Brunetti, founder of Agri-Dynamics and a dairy nutritionist and expert in human nutrition too. He will discuss animal and human health. Jerry will explain in amazing but accessible detail how plant/animal/human interactions have direct and measurable impact on our health. For more information contact Gale Kohler at CCE Albany County by phone at (518) 765-3500 or gek4@cornell.edu or Morgan Hartman at blackqueenangus@yahoo.com. The event will be held at the Century House in Latham, NY (Albany County).

For more information on grazing events in the Northeast, follow the GLCI Grazette online at: http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/pasture_grazing/grazette/index.html.

2012 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS NAMED



During the Cattle Industry Summer Conference, seven regional Environmental Stewardship Awards were presented by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Those honored included: Sparrowk Livestock (Clements, Calif.); Circle Square Ranch (Ocala, Fla.); Funk Farms Trust (Shirley, Ill.); Bold Ranch (Winifred, Mont.); Slovek Ranch (Philip, S.D.); 77 Ranch (Blooming Grove, Texas); and Glenowen Farm (Round Hill, Va.).

A national award winner will be recognized during the 2013 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show that will be held Feb. 6-9 in Tampa, Florida.

Now in its 22nd year, ESAP was created to recognize beef producers who make environmental stewardship a priority on their farms and ranches while they also improve production and profitability. The award program is sponsored by Dow AgroSciences, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

COLORADO TO HOST GRAZING SYMPOSIUM

The Society for Range Management and Colorado GLCI will host a symposium Nov. 29-30 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. The event will focus on Strategic Grazing Management for Complex Adaptive Systems.

Participants will learn how to improve grazing land stewardship and capacity by managing the intensity and distribution of livestock grazing across time, space, and plant species. Featured speakers include Fred Provenza, Pat Shaver, Marshall Frasier, Poncho Ortega, Tim Steffens, Grady Grissom, Ben Norton, Matt Barnes, Rick Danvir, and Doug Peterson.

The event will also include a trade show, ranch tour, social, awards dinner, and entertainment. For more information visit www.rangelands.org/strategicgrazing.

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.glici.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: