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)
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, layouts, 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.

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.
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.

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

Contact these affiliated organizations:

American Farm Bureau Federation
Herb Maring
(605) 396-4205

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 Tooze
(405) 359-8011

National Cattlemen's Beef Association
John Pendleton
(202) 347-0226

Society for Range Management
Craig Whittaker
(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

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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.
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.

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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