

# Sustainable Ranch Resource Management

## Final Report for YENC10-026

Project Type: Youth Educator

Funds awarded in 2010: \$2,000.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/2012

Region: North Central

State: Nebraska

Project Manager:

[Patrick Morgan](#)

Loup County Ag ED

## Project Information

### Summary:

#### BACKGROUND

I have been a Rancher for 6 years and have an Associate's Degree in Cow Calf Production; I am a person that grew up on the family ranch and has found his way to live and raise his family on this family ranch. In addition to this I have been a guide for Calamus Outfitters, and have done some guiding and recreational hunting ever since I was able. Also I am one of the founding members of the Gracie Creek Land Owners Association, which are monitoring, and trying to encourage Prairie Chicken population in the sand hills. As far as teaching goes, I have currently been the Agricultural Teacher at Loup County Public Schools for three years.

#### GOALS

Some of the main goals that I wanted the students to understand were, range ecology, range management in relation to grazing practices, range management in relation to wildlife, concepts of how to combine the two, and wildlife identification. The students did a very nice job learning to understand range ecology; we worked through the EC 150 book (a range judging reference) from University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and also practiced hands-on with range judging. Once we achieved an understanding of range ecology, then we went into range management for grazing (worked in the Range Management: Principles and Practices book, however I will note this book is quite advanced in terminology and a little too advanced for high school students), discussing many items such as mob grazing, continuous grazing, rest rotation grazing, rotational grazing. The students did a fine job of comprehending these ideas; many of them have seen these in action. At completion of that we started into managing the range for wildlife (using the Wildlife Ecology and Management book, again far advanced, and the Range Management books) to understand how some different techniques are useful in encouraging wildlife. With completion, we talked with some local ranchers on how they manage such, and also in the spring before we went to the Barta Bros. Field day where they spoke on such ideas.

With that behind us we turned to Wildlife Identification. We worked through habitats then into animal identification using the book Wildlife and Natural Resources

Management which is an excellent resource for high school students. While going through the wildlife identification, the students made PowerPoints on designated animals, took pictures of animals, and we visited the local fish hatchery. All in all we had a very enjoyable class for learning and being interactive with wildlife.

#### PROCESS

We went through the class in the order previously discussed. I tried to always build on and tie into the previously taught items; this way you not only learn more information, but also reinforce the earlier information. While checking for learning, encourage critical thinking; you will be surprised at the usually good ideas that come about. Also the more interactive you can make it the better; while doing the wildlife PowerPoints, part of the assignment was that they had to come up with 3-5 questions on their PowerPoint.

#### PEOPLE

We worked with Bret Brunkin at the fish hatchery and Ron Morgan at Morgan Ranch to help understand some different grazing techniques. A lot of information was gained at the field day at the Barta Brothers Ranch near Rose, NE.

#### RESULTS

The youth that were my desired audience would be those who have grown up in agriculture, and would like to come back to the family farm/ranch. Being one of those people, I have first-hand experience on just how tough it is to come home and make a living. Thus with some of my experience and some knowledge from those whom I have worked with, I tried to educate the youth on some ways that might make it possible for the younger generation to return to the farm/ranch. To measure results, you could look at the attendance I had in class. I would say that it went well because the students were on time and ready to tie into the information at hand. The way I would measure attendance would be by the amount of effort they put into their projects. In doing so I had a class that pushed each other, and played off each other's accomplishments.

#### DISCUSSION

This project has helped me learn more about the way you can have nature and livestock work together. While working on the project I have learned a lot about how different animals will interact (or not interact) with other animals and grazing management. I had not realized the diversities of interaction in wildlife. The main change I would make is to adjust the reference books; we adjusted and purchased Wildlife and Natural Resources Management and used it more than we used any other book.

#### OUTREACH

I got students to join my class by placing it in the handbook, and encouraging them to take it in some of my other classes (the Intro to Ag class during Wildlife Management section, Animal Science during Animal Behavior section).

#### PROGRAM EVALUATION

I feel that the SARE Program is incredibly valuable; as our society continues to grow and change, there are less and less people in the agricultural community so we need programs like the SARE Program to help educate the public on how agriculture works, and to encourage youth to join in the Ag Community. Joan Benjamin was my director and she was very helpful and kept me up to date on things that I would forget otherwise.

# Cooperators

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