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Grazing School Highlights

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition recently held its annual grazing school at Al's Oasis, in Oacoma, and the Lower Brule Trust Land. The school was a great success with 26 people attending the school. Participants came from all over the state, and also from both Nebraska and North Dakota. Below is a group picture of the participants.



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Grazing School Highlights (cont'd)

The grazing school had an all-star line-up of instructors including Terry Gompert, Ray Banister, Alvaro Garcia, and Kristel Bakker, as well as SDGC board members Jim Faulstich and Dan Rasmussen. Participants had the opportunity to hear different philosophies and ideas from various producers which helped them to understand that grazing management plans are different for everyone and every location. Participants also had some hands-on experience by doing actual forage estimates on a rangeland and then building a paddock the proper size in order to feed a small group of cattle overnight. This experience was invaluable and, in many cases, is the first opportunity for some of the participants to properly allocate a pasture based on the available resources.



Participants of the Grazing School estimating forage production

This year there were a couple of new items added to the agenda. First of all, we had an alumni presentation

featuring Ray Banister as the key speaker.



Ray Banister presenting his Boom-Bust Theory at the Alumni Presentation

Ray is from Wibaux MT and has a different type of grazing system that you do not often see. He severely overgrazes his pastures and then rests them for two years before he uses them again. He calls this theory Boom-Bust grazing system; boom being the two years of rest and bust being the severe grazing. As I said earlier, this presentation was open to anyone who had completed the grazing school in the past. There were also some vendors from throughout the state selling things from electric fencers to grass seed to watering systems. The second new event at this year's school was using the Lower Brule Trust Land. This was an excellent location for the school and assisted in facilitating the events. It is located closer Oacoma, so it cut down travel time down immensely. It also had a place where the students could sit down while eating their lunches. There also was a plant identification

portion on-site where diversity of plants was ideal. A big thanks goes out to the Lower Brule Indian Tribe as well as everyone else who assisted in making this grazing school a huge success.

GLCI News Release

The National GLCI Steering Committee held their fall meeting September 5 and 6 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This was their fall meeting where they discussed current issues and are now planning on a Fourth National Grazing Conference.

The Pennsylvania GLCI hosted a tour for the National Committee and other local groups on Friday Sept. 5. Three grazing dairy farms were toured in the Harrisburg area. The first farm is owned by Ted and Melissa Miller and consists of a seasonal dairy and confinement swine operation. The manure from this facility is utilized to fertilize the dairy cattle pastures and crop fields. Their herd runs about 100 cows that they manage on a seasonal basis. He utilizes a New Zealand style swing 12 milking parlor. One person milks the cows in one hour. His cows are dried off for two months in January and February and then calf and start to milk again in time for spring grass.

Farm #2 was the Moo Echo Farms owned and operated by the Hertzler Family. Duane and June, together with their son, Neil and wife Kilah operate this 667 acre dairy farm. They milk 260 cows and raise 225 head of young stock. They have planted a large amount of their land to forage for grazing and haying in addition to installing a manure separator to reduce the amount of storage needed for their manure. The Hertzlers have preserved their land in the Farm and Ranch Land Preservation program and have contracts for their conservation stewardship through the USDA Conservation Security Program.

Farm #3 was a tour of the Masonic Village and farm. This is a completed retirement facility for members of the Pennsylvania Masonic Lodge. At one time this farm was totally self sufficient with their gardens, dairy, creamery, cannery, butcher shop, orchards etc.. Today they raised shorthorn cattle and still operate a truck crop patch and orchard. They have developed intensive cattle breeding program and intensive grazing system on the farm.

The National GLCI Steering Committee is sponsoring the Fourth National Grazing Conference December 13-16, 2009 in Reno, Nevada. This

conference will also be co-sponsored by numerous conservation groups from California. Put this meeting on your calendar and it will be a great opportunity to hear more about the current issues on rangeland and pastureland. Also, if you have an interesting speech you would like to present, contact me.

Rod Baumberger,

SWCS representative to the National GLCI Steering Committee

Annual Meeting Announcement

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition will be having its annual meeting on December 2, 2008 at the Cedar Shores Resort in Oacoma. This year's guest speaker will be Jim Gerrish. Jim Gerrish was originally from Missouri where he operated a ranch and has recently moved to a new ranch in Idaho. He will discuss the challenges that he has faced since the move. Also during this meeting there are some discussion items including some changes that were made to the SDGC by-laws. For more information regarding the annual meeting, contact Judge Jessop at 605-280-0127 or at jljessop@kennebectelephone.com.

Joint Meeting with the Nebraska GLCI

The Board of Directors of the South Dakota Grassland Coalition recently meet with the Board of Directors of the Nebraska Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI) at the SD/NE Joint SRM meeting in Valentine Nebraska. It was a great opportunity for the two coalitions to get together and exchange ideas. The Nebraska GLCI was very impressed with the SDGC and wanted to get some ideas for various projects that they are working on. They also gave the SDGC some interesting ideas as well. Overall, the meeting was great, giving the directors an excellent opportunity to obtain new ideas for the future.

Meeting with a Grazing Expert – Kirk Gadzia

The SDGC has scheduled a meeting with Kirk Gadzia for January 6, 2009. Kirk is a grazing expert from New Mexico and is greatly involved with the Quivera Coalition. The meeting will be held at the Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma. I will have more information about this meeting in the next newsletter.



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Calendar of events:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
Annual Meeting	Dec 2	Oacoma	Judge Jessop	605-280-0127
Kirk Gadzia	Jan 6	Oacoma	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623

Please remit any comments, suggestions, or topics deemed necessary for further review to: Kyle Schell, SDSU Box 2170, Brookings SD 57007, kyle.schell@sdstate.edu, (605) 688-6623