

# IMPACT



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## North-Central Idaho Residents Learn Pastures from the Ground Up

### *The Situation*

North-Central Idaho is a beautiful land of rivers, prairies and mountains. People are attracted to the area for its abundant natural resources. New rural residents include retirees, urbanites looking for a less stressful lifestyle, and others relocating to rural locations for a variety of reasons. Many smaller acreage landowners suddenly find themselves with new natural resource management responsibilities, often including pasture, without the knowledge needed to make good decisions. Other landowners have managed pasture resources for years but recognize the need to be better stewards of their pastures, and to increase production for their grazing needs.

### *Our Response*

Extension Educators in North-Central Idaho formed a team to offer a workshop called "Pasture Management for Smaller Acreages." The team included Extension Educators from the University of Idaho and a representative from the Clearwater County Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). We adapted and revised a curriculum developed for southeastern Idaho.

The purpose of the six-hour, two-night workshop and half-day tour was to give people practical and locally appropriate management tools for their pastures.



Both soil fundamentals and fertility guidelines were covered. Other topics included riparian establishment and maintenance, weed control, pasture renovation, and variety selection. Pasture planning and budgeting gave participants the tools to tie their pasture management objectives into a cohesive and affordable plan.

Workshops were offered in 2004 at Lewiston and Orofino. A tour of pasture sites was conducted in Lewiston and Asotin, WA. Thirty-four individuals attended the two workshops, filling the classrooms to near capacity. Eight participants who completed the workshops attended the field tour.

Twenty-nine participants own pasture land while others were involved in pasture management with government agencies or private consulting. Acreage

under management of the participants ranged from  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre to 1200 acres. The average was 120 acres. When the four pastures over 100 acres were not considered, the average for the majority of the participants dropped to 48 acres.

## ***Program Outcomes***

The program attendance exceeded our expectations. Participants rated their pasture management knowledge before the class at an average of 2.3 and after the class at 3.7 (on a scale of 1 to 5). This represents a sizeable impact in knowledge gained from the workshop.

The participants were evaluated for the impact the workshop made on their anticipated future actions and decisions. A five-point Likard scale was used with 1=No, 2=Probably not, 3=Not sure, 4=Probably, and 5=Yes. On average, the class indicated that they would probably pursue additional information on pasture management.

When asked about the likelihood that they would implement concepts and principles learned in the class, using the same scale from above, on average the following was indicated:

Pasture Planning and Budgets	Probably (4.1)
Soil testing/fertilizers	Probably (4.2)
Riparian management	Not sure (3.2)
Weed Management	Yes (4.7)
Grass variety/renovation	Probably (4.3)
Grazing systems	Probably (4.2)

## **The Future**

2004 was an excellent beginning for “Pasture Management for Smaller Acreages.” The plan for the future includes fine-tuning the curriculum and offering two workshops a year at various locations across North-Central Idaho. We will conduct a pasture tour at each location offering the workshop. The team may consider broadening the classroom contact time from six to eight or nine hours.

## ***For More Information***

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