

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Grazing Conference Meets the Needs of Area Livestock Producers

The Situation

North Central Idaho livestock producers have many unique challenges in managing the grazing of their pasture and range lands. The spring growing season begins with a flourish of grass growth which produces an abundance of forage. This growing season is followed by the hot, dry summer which causes forages to go dormant. On occasion the fall season can produce some grass regrowth if there are timely fall rains. The winter feeding period typically is 5 to 6 months long. Winter feed costs are high and producers are at an economic disadvantage compared to those that have winter grazing opportunities.

Livestock producers were in need of educational programs aimed at helping them to optimize the utilization of grazed forages. Producers needed information on how to increase forage production and on how to improve the quality of the forage over the grazing period and extend the grazing season by one to two months.

Our Response

In the spring of 2004, a committee was formed to address the issue of improving grazing management in the region. Committee members represented the livestock industry, the Conservation Commissions, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the University of Idaho Extension System. This committee worked together to identify how to provide livestock producers and land managers education on pasture and range management. The committee decided to develop an annual conference

called the North Central Idaho Grazing Conference. The emphasis of the conference would be on managing forage production and grazing on private lands. The committee made it clear that the target audience was livestock producers and land owners. All conference topics would be aimed at providing education to this audience. Each year there would be a presentation called "A Producer's Perspective" that featured a local producer sharing grazing management practices that they used on their property.

Program Outcomes

The first conference was held in 2005 with 80 participants. In 2006, 120 people attended and in 2007, 150 people participated in the conference. The 2008 meeting held steady with 150 people attending.

A survey of conference participants was conducted at the 2008 meeting. Participants were asked if they had adopted any of the grazing management practices suggested by speakers at previous conferences, and if so, did they see improvement in their pastures or ranges and did they see increased performance of their livestock. Seventy-six percent of the respondents said they used the management practices and saw improvement in pasture quality and livestock performance.

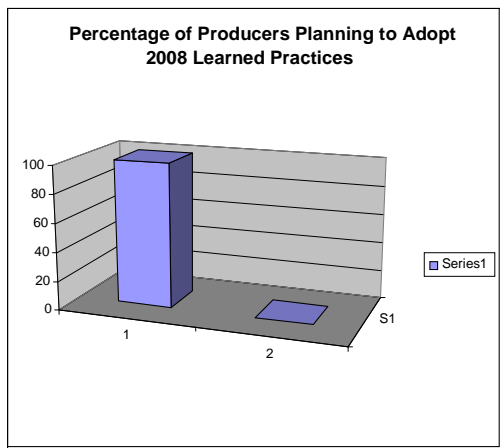
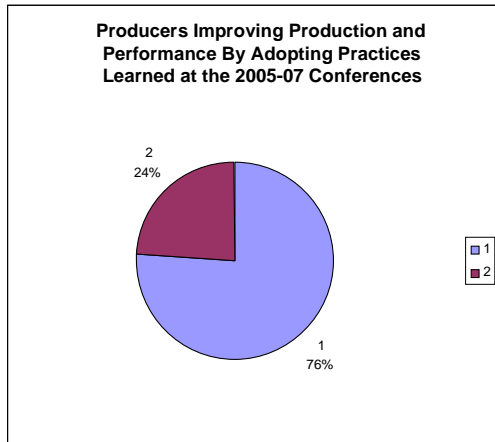
The post conference survey also asked participants if they would adopt any of the information presented at the 2008 conference during the coming year. One hundred percent of the respondents indicated they would adopt some of the management practices

presented. The top three practices to be adopted were: Nutrient Requirements and Supplementation Programs; Rotational Grazing and Stockpiling Feed for Winter Grazing.

For More Information

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The Future

The Grazing Conference is providing area livestock producers with valuable education on proper management of grazing lands in the region. Adopted practices are improving pasture and rangeland production and in turn, livestock performance. This conference will be continued as an annual event for the foreseeable future.