

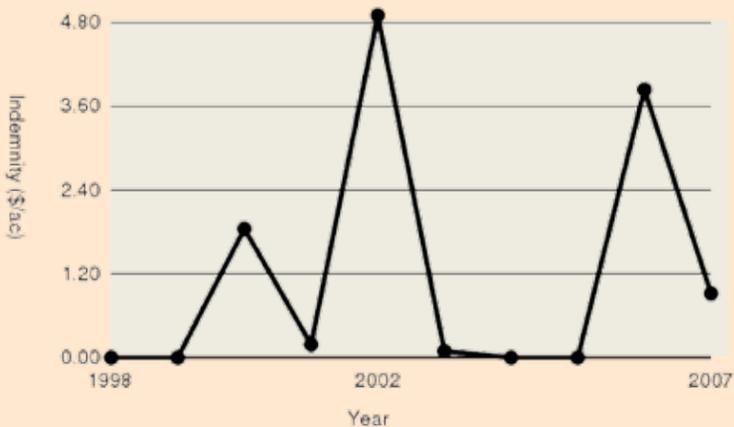


Table One. Example Ranch Per-Acre Coverage Levels (2002, Period II)

Coverage Level	Productivity Factor	Premium Cost	Total Coverage	Indemnity Value	Cost Per \$ of Coverage
70%	70%	0.10	4.00	2.46	\$0.025
70%	100%	0.15	6.00	3.69	\$0.025
70%	150%	0.19	8.00	4.91	\$0.024
80%	70%	0.14	4.00	2.65	\$0.035
80%	100%	0.21	6.00	3.97	\$0.035
80%	150%	0.36	10.00	6.62	\$0.036
90%	70%	0.25	5.00	3.50	\$0.050
90%	100%	0.36	7.00	4.90	\$0.051
90%	150%	0.56	11.00	7.70	\$0.051

Figure 1. Estimated Indemnities for Example Southeast Wyoming Ranch

Indemnity Values



pasture and forages

in insuring its 1,100 acres of summer grass for period II (July through September), especially in view of past droughts. The year 2002 was a severe drought year for this ranch and will be our example year. Entering the grid-point and county information provides the county base value of \$7.96 per acre. Entering a productivity factor of 100 percent and a 90-percent coverage level results in total coverage of \$7 per acre, an indemnity per acre of \$4 and producer premium of \$0.36 per acre. The effects of changing the productivity factor and coverage level are shown in Table 1. While this information is not indicative of future coverage, it gives an accurate picture of how this ranch might be protected in the case of a drought.

Where the ranch goal is to maximize coverage with a premium on the low side, then a lower coverage level coupled with a productivity factor of 100 percent or higher should be selected. If premium cost is not an obstacle, then both high coverage and productivity percentages should be selected.

The ranch may also view historical data available on the site to better estimate the likelihood of a loss. Using the graph function (90-percent coverage and 150-percent productivity factor) generates a chart showing the estimated indemnities from years 1998 through 2007. The chart in Figure 1, from the PRF-

VI Web site, shows that, for three of the nine years displayed, an indemnity of more than \$1/acre would have been paid. Knowing this, the operator must decide if this is an acceptable level of coverage for the cost incurred. Remember, the goal of any risk management strategy should be to provide the most effective protection and not to maximize the likelihood of a payout in the form of an indemnity.

For More Information

While PRF-VI insurance may require more decisions than the previous GRP-Rangeland product, users will find it provides more extensive coverage and can be better tailored to suit individual risk management needs.

For more information on these policies, visit a local crop insurance agent or the RMA Web site at www.rma.usda.gov. Follow the links listed above to use the interactive PRF-VI online tools. For more information on this and other risk management topics on the Web, visit the Western Risk Management Library at agecon.uwyo.edu/riskmgt.

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Grazing multi-species can rid undesirable plants, make pastures more productive

By Kellie Chichester

With interest sparking in an old practice – multi-species grazing – some ranchers in Wyoming and the West are looking at adding sheep or goats to their grazing plan.

The competition for grass in the West between cattle and sheep grazers is becoming a thing of the past as research has shown multi-species grazing can increase the efficiency of forage harvest leading to increased production.

As with any grazing plan, keep timing and intensity in mind. Sheep prefer forbs, and goats prefer browsing on brush, shrubs, and broad-leaved weeds; therefore, grazing multi-species together can decrease undesirable plants while increase the desirable plants and boost the pounds of animal gain per acre. By removing broadleaf plants, the grasses are able to thrive.



Stocking rates will depend on grazing conditions. Research has shown one ewe per cow is a general rule of thumb when adding sheep to an already established cattle herd. When adding cattle to a grazing flock, one cow per five ewes is a good starting point.

Leafy Spurge Control

Another benefit to multi-species grazing is the control of leafy spurge. This noxious weed is toxic to cattle, but sheep and goats are able to utilize its rich nutritional content. Researchers in North Dakota found the protein content of leafy spurge to be greater than 27 percent in the early season and only declining to less than 20 percent after maturity. This can be a great source of protein for young lambs and kids. With the elimination of this weed, along with others, ground



space would become available for desirables.

Leafy spurge should be grazed in the spring to remove the flowering parts of the plant. Grazing may be required in the late summer to eliminate the regrowth of the plants. This type of grazing will help eliminate the seed set possibility. Intensive grazing will work as well to control the weed by stressing the energy reserves of the plant, forcing it to regrow multiple times in a year.

A potential problem that may occur is first introducing cattle and sheep together. After a couple of days, the animals should settle and all become comfortable in the same pasture.

Fencing, Predator Considerations

Fencing differences also need to be considered. Electric fencing used for cattle may not be substantial enough for sheep and goats. If you do use electric fence with only one string of wire, consider adding at least one more wire. If another wire can't be added, an option may be to offset wires inside the fence. If you have questions about installing fence, contact your local extension educator or visit <http://barnyardstobackyards.com/Articles/portable%20fencing%20spring%202006.pdf> for information.

Predators are very often a problem. When adding sheep and/or goats to your grazing plan, you may need to be more observant of predators. Livestock guardian animals may need to be considered. During lambing, the species may need to be separated or a creep fence set up so ewes can go into a more protected area. Sheep will

bond to cattle when introduced at a young age, decreasing the incidences of predator attacks.

If water sources have been established and large, deep-sided water troughs are being used, care needs to be taken so the sheep and young lambs can reach the water. Modifications may need to be made to accommodate differences in size. Also, when administering a mineral program, keep in mind not all cattle mixes may be suitable for sheep and vice versa.

Not only can sheep add value to your pastures, they can also add flavor to your dinner table. In 2008, Wyoming ranked third nationally for total numbers of sheep and lambs with 440,000 head.

To remain sustainable, multi-species grazing may be something to consider, getting the most bang out of your pastures.

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