

Converse County producers learn benefits of range monitoring, grazing plan implementation

Situation:

Grazing plans and rangeland monitoring are essential for livestock producers and are often required by state and federal agencies when grazing livestock on public land. Three workshops in Converse County taught land managers different techniques to use when developing grazing plans, including range monitoring.

The carbon credit program attracted participants to the first workshop. The carbon credit program is open to all ranchers who own their land. Ranchers are able to sell carbon credits to the Chicago Climate Exchange to enhance ranch income. To qualify, ranchers must show proof of having a grazing plan in place. Workshop participants discussed the carbon credit program, grass growth basics, range monitoring tools, and grazing system alternatives, and participated in hands-on learning about range monitoring techniques and grazing plan development through the use of field and group activities.

The second workshop was a field day for women in agriculture. Participants learned how to successfully execute two range monitoring methods and identify common rangeland plants.

The third workshop targeted small-acreage landowners. They learned to use a grazing response index and different grazing distribution techniques, such as water placement and electrical fencing.

University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service area educators and specialists partnered with the Converse County Conservation District, Southeast Wyoming Research, Conservation, and Development, and the U.S. Forest Service to conduct the classes.

Impacts:

Forty individuals participated in the three workshops. Attendees evaluated the carbon credit workshop, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The overall score was 4.6. When asked through a written evaluation if they would use this information to change how they manage their property, participants replied with a very enthusiastic yes. A sample of comments included:

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- “I will revise my grazing management plan to incorporate some of the techniques learned here.”
- “I can’t wait to use some of the spreadsheets provided.”
- “I plan on implementing photo monitoring and the grazing response index measurements.”
- “I will start resting a pasture for a full 12 months.”
- “I am going to develop a grazing plan and enroll in the carbon credit program.”

The Women in Agriculture field day was evaluated through observation. Each participant increased their knowledge in plant identification and rangeland monitoring. Participants commented on taking what they learned back home to implement on their properties.

Small-acreage workshop attendees were asked to evaluate the workshop, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. When asked the overall score, participants rated it a 4.2. Knowledge of topics discussed increased for every topic with most knowledge gained from discussions about plant response to grazing and use of electrical fencing. One participant stated, “I will change the way I graze my livestock and the way I use the grass resource [because of this workshop].”

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