



## Wyoming MASTER WOOL GROWER PROGRAM bolsters sustainability

### SITUATION

The number of sheep producers in Wyoming is under continual downward pressure. Many factors contribute to this decline such as drought, market pressure, and trade. Many can be mitigated with proper risk management strategies. Many producers attending the Wyoming Master Cattleman program also have sheep operations. These producers indicated the need for a similar program focused on sheep and wool production. The Wyoming Wool Growers Association also indicated the need for a similar program at an advisory input meeting for agricultural organizations hosted by the president of the University of Wyoming.

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The objective was to promote the sustainability of Wyoming woolgrowers using comprehensive production strategy and risk assessment programs. Producers receive training on goal setting, insurance options, risk management strategies, and financial enterprise analysis. Producers also receive information on marketing and innovative herd management strategies. To reinforce the tools taught, participants practice risk assessment and partial budgeting at the end of each production strategy session. The Western Center for Risk Management Education contributed \$11,500 in partial funding to assist with development and delivery of the information.

The project was accomplished through five, 4-hour workshop sessions at two Wyoming locations. Eighteen participants completed the program with at least 15 at each session. Additionally, three sessions were presented at the November 2012 Tri-State Wool Growers meeting. More than 50 participants from Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming were taught in these three sessions.

## IMPACTS

Participants who completed programs in the two Wyoming locations evaluated the program. They rated each of the eight total topics taught with the following scale: 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent.

\* The average score for all eight classes was 4.26. The lowest-rated class received a 3.93, and the highest-rated class received a 4.73.

- Participants were asked if they had used tools or concepts taught in the program to make decisions on their ranches. Ninety-three percent indicated they had.
- Participants were asked to estimate the value created from attending this program. All indicated value was created, and 60 percent indicated more than \$5,000 in value gained.
- Finally, participants were asked if they would recommend this program to other producers. One hundred percent indicated they would.

### Individual Examples of Success:

One of the producers in the program was considering increasing the number of livestock on his ranch but was having trouble deciding if he should enlarge the size of his sheep herd or his cow herd. He brought real numbers and data from his ranch to class. With the information, the group worked through a partial budget to help him make a more informed decision.

After attending the program, one producer found himself considering an alternative cull ewe strategy. He sought help from the project director to complete a full partial budget analysis on the strategy. The analysis showed a clear benefit to the new strategy.



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