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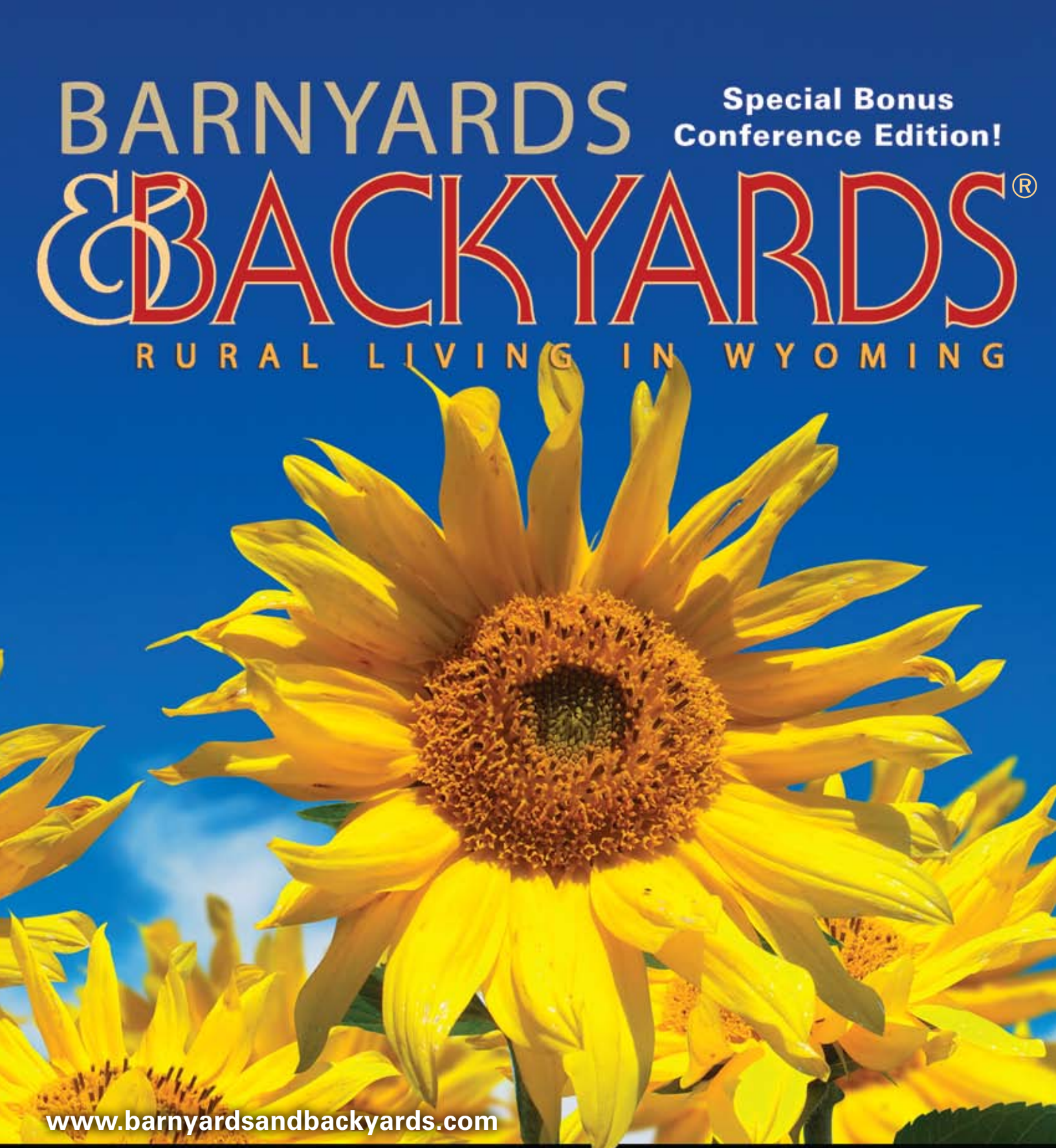
Special Bonus Conference Edition!

RURAL LIVING IN WYOMING



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BARNYARDS & BACKYARDS
RURAL LIVING IN WYOMING

Special Conference Edition
Summer 2007

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This is a special edition of *Barnyards & Backyards* published in conjunction with the Living and Working on the Land conference. *Barnyards & Backyards* is published quarterly by the Small Acreage Issue Team, a cooperative team of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Historic Trails Resource Conservation and Development Council, Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Audubon Wyoming, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Montana State University Extension, Wyoming Weed and Pest Council, and Wyoming State Forestry Division.

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RMA
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Offering ways to improve your acreage

Living and Working on the Land conference

This special issue of *Barnyards & Backyards* offers information from speakers featured August 27-29, 2007, at **Living and Working on the Land: The Building Blocks of Success** in Riverton, Wyoming. The conference (BlocksofSuccess.org) was designed to bring rural Wyomingites together, particularly American Indians, women managers of agricultural operations, livestock and alternative crop producers, small and beginning operators, and small-acreage landowners. Those attending had the opportunity to learn about methods for improving management skills and a chance to interact with others interested in rural living.

Featured speakers included Joel Salatin, noted alternative farmer and author of *Holy Cows and Hog Heaven: A Food Buyer's Guide to Farm Friendly Food and Family Friendly Farming,* and the popular and humorous speaker Jolene Brown. They and 21 other speakers offered hands-on information. Sessions covered topics such as

- Managing grazing animals on a few acres
- Developing strategies to strengthen small-farm economies
- Water-wise landscaping
- Management issues in American Indian country
- Leaving a legacy: Estate planning
- Improving personal relationships

If you missed the conference, you'll find useful information provided by the presenters in this special publication. You also will find more great information from the conference by visiting BlocksofSuccess.org. To find information on future great events for small-acreage landowners, such as this one, visit us at www.barnyardsandbackyards.com and click on "Events."

Controlling weeds in horse pastures

Weeds are a common problem for landowners with both large and small acreages throughout Wyoming. While many people consider weeds an agricultural problem, the reality is weeds also have serious impacts on rangelands, roadsides, and suburban areas.

For small-acreage landowners, weed problems are often at higher levels due to increased land disturbance and heavy grazing pressure. If not properly managed, even a few animals kept in a small area can be a recipe for disaster. Grazing animals will selectively feed on the most desirable grasses and forbs while leaving the bitter, coarse, spiny, and generally unpalatable plants untouched. While most desirable grasses and forbs are adapted to some grazing, overuse eventually weakens them to the point of decline and even death, giving weeds the chance they need to get well established. Weeds also can affect the nutrition and health of livestock, especially horses.

Educating yourself to proper pasture management, weed identification, and how weeds spread will not only help keep your horse healthy, but it will also increase the aesthetic view of the range or acreage. There are 25 weeds in Wyoming considered "noxious" by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. Weeds designated as noxious are the responsibility of the landowner to control, according to state law. There are weed and pest offices located in all counties that offer advice on controlling these weeds.

The first step to control is to correctly identify the weeds in a pasture. Weeds can be controlled by using chemical, biological, or mechanical methods. The final step in controlling weeds is having a healthy pasture. This can be accomplished by proper grazing management, use of competitive grasses, and proper irrigation methods.

There are several sources of information concerning weeds and weed management available to Wyoming residents. Local University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) offices and weed and pest district offices can provide advice and resources for understanding weeds and developing effective weed-management strategies. A list of UW CES offices can be found at http://ces.uwyo.edu/Counties.asp. Contact information for weed and pest offices is at http://www.wyoweed.org/wp_dist.html.

Publications that can help include *Weeds of the West* at http://ces.uwyo.edu/wyoweed/wyoweed.htm, and the *Weed Management Handbook for Montana, Utah, and Wyoming* at http://ces.uwyo.edu/pubs.asp.

Web sites offering weed information include the Wyoming Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey at www.uwyo.edu/capsweb, the Wyoming Weed and Pest Council at wyoweed.org, the Weed Science Society of America at www.wssa.net, and the Center for Invasive Plant Management at www.weedcenter.org.

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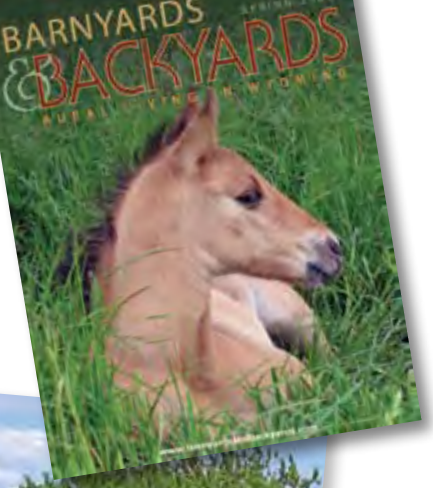


Outreach project

exists to serve small-acreage landowners

Land use in Wyoming and the western United States has shifted rapidly. As changes occur in the demographics, small-acreage parcels have proliferated and the number of landowners is growing.

To meet the educational needs of these landowners and land managers in Wyoming, a cross-organizational issue team has developed a collaborative, multi-pronged approach to land management education – the Small Acreage Outreach Project.

The project is the work of the Small Acreage Issue Team, which consists of members from University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, Wyoming natural resource and conservation districts, Resource Conservation and Development councils, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wyoming State Forestry Division, Audubon Wyoming, weed and pest control districts, and others.

The purpose is to provide Wyoming landowners with information to sustainably manage their land. We strive to help landowners maintain or improve the quality of life in Wyoming by raising healthier crops, landscapes, and animals, while protecting their natural resources, such as water, soil, and plants.

Working in cooperation with landowners, this project includes a series of activities: landowner outreach in pilot areas of the state, surveys of landowner needs, publication of the *Barnyards & Backyards* magazine, and informational workshops.

Magazine

Barnyards & Backyards (www.barnyardsandbackyards.com) is a quarterly, informational magazine containing articles by natural resource experts on topics such as feeding animals, grazing and maintaining pastures, landscaping, windbreaks, irrigation, maintaining quality drinking water, weed control, and septic system maintenance. Each issue also features landowners who practice good land management. The landowners

discuss the challenges they have faced in Wyoming and the strategies used to overcome them. The magazine is intended to be attractive, engaging, concise, practical, and informative.

Landowner Visits

Landowner visits were conducted in the Casper, Wheatland/Cheyenne, and Gillette areas by project interns in summer 2006 and this year. These visits serve several purposes. One is to inform landowners of the many land management resources available to them and to discuss any particular needs they have. The second is to allow the project to better understand landowners' educational needs. The visits also provide interns the opportunity to learn more about Wyoming's natural

resources and to provide them with important work skills.

Workshops

Another aspect of this project is informational workshops. These workshops are an opportunity for landowners to gather and talk about problems they have encountered and to attend expert-led sessions to learn about different land management topics. Feedback gained from these workshops helps the project team improve future programming. A list of past and future workshops can be found by visiting www.barnyardsandbackyards.com and clicking on "Events".

Surveys

To better understand landowners and serve their educational needs, a large mail survey effort of

Wyoming landowners has been conducted in collaboration with the Wyoming National Agricultural Statistics Service. This survey was sent to 4,800 landowners in six counties. With a high return rate, data from this survey will lead to a better understanding of small-acreage landowners and help us create targeted, informative, and effective outreach efforts.

Support

Major support for the project is provided by a 319 Information and Education grant from the Nonpoint Source Task Force administered through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. The team has also received grants from the Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team in addition to partner organization contributions.

For more information about the project, visit www.barnyardsandbackyards.com, or contact Jennifer Jones, small acreage coordinator, at jsjones@uwyo.edu.

Sponsors of the project include:

- UW Cooperative Extension Service
- Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
- Historic Trails Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Wyoming State Forestry Division
- Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team
- Audubon Wyoming
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Wyoming Weed and Pest Council
- Nonpoint Source Task Force, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, (319 grant)
- Wyoming Business Council (survey support)
- Wyoming National Agricultural Statistics Service (survey support)
- Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (survey support)

What if we had a DROUGHT and landscape plants didn't KNOW IT

Let's be blunt. Six in 10 years Wyoming experiences a drought. Yet, our societal norm is to fabricate a water-loving landscape out-of-place in Wyoming's dry environment.

Take all the long, hot showers you want – the amount of water pales in comparison to what is supplied to personal landscapes. Fifty to 70 percent of all home water usage in towns such as Casper, Riverton, and Rock Springs goes to irrigate the landscape for the entire year – even considering the Wyoming gardening season at best is for only six months and most folks bathe at least once a day throughout the year.

Blue velvet honeysuckle

Some Wyomingites are seeking change. Since 2000, Wyoming has been in severe drought, and the horticulture industry and homeowners are taking note. There is renewed interest in bringing beautiful native and adapted plant materials to market that fit Wyoming conditions. One can literally buy plants that have originated from the globe's most extreme environments – from the high elevations of Chile, China, South America, and Afghanistan, to ancient ruins of Greece. But there is another extreme environment – Wyoming and the interior Mountain West, whose outstanding native plants are making their way to market. Once established, many of these plants will not only live on our annual average precipitation of 12 inches but will thrive on once- to twice-a-month watering during dry periods!

One of my favorites is the ornamental grass little bluestem, a native to the eastern plains of Wyoming. It will grow to be about 1 to 2 feet tall and in autumn will change in color from light greenish-blue to a brilliant reddish-orange to reddish-brown. The color will persist that way until spring, making it a standout through our long winters.

Another grass native to much of Wyoming is blue grama. This is a warm-season, short grass (6 to 12 inches tall) with wonderful seed heads that look like human eyelashes as they dance in the wind. Blue grama can be used for a low-maintenance, drought-tolerant lawn in sunny areas.

A number of penstemon varieties are native to Wyoming, and these plants with tubular shaped flowers don't like amended garden soil! Consider Bridges' penstemon and pineneedle penstemon as good choices. Both produce brilliant red to scarlet flowers with a bloom time of early to mid-summer.

For groundcovers, consider almost all of the thymes, but a standout groundcover brought to market recently is the veronica 'Crystal Rivers.' It grows to about 18 inches wide and is about 2 inches tall. It has very dark green, thick leaves and in early summer will produce remarkably intense, tiny cobalt blue flowers.

For shrubs, consider the New Mexico privet and blue velvet honeysuckle as superior windbreak specimens that deer and rabbits rarely feast on. They both have dense

canopies from head to toe and will provide protection from Wyoming's winds.

For trees, consider the newly introduced 'Hot Wings' tartarian maple (*Acer tataricum* 'GarAnn'). Its origins are the Asian Steppe. In early summer, the "helicopter" seeds of this maple turn a brilliant hot pink to red against the dark green leaves – imagine a Christmas tree in June! In autumn, expect brilliant red to orange fall colors as the leaves turn.

There are literally hundreds more plants to choose from that will handle dramatically reduced water requirements!

How does one find out about these plants?

Consider these options as starters for excellent reference books on the subject of plants and their landscape (water) requirements:

Xeriscape Plant Guide: 100 Water-Wise Plants for Gardens and Landscapes developed by Denver Water and the American Water Works Association, Fulcrum Publishing ISBN 1-55591-322-9

Water Wise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes, 2003, Wendy Mee et. al, Utah State University Press. ISBN 0-87421-561-7

Next, Web search "xeriscape plants for the Rocky Mountain region." A plethora of individual fact sheets on a vast array of plants from groundcovers, perennial flowers, grasses, and trees and shrubs that fit our conditions are available.

An excellent Web site is www.plantselect.org. Plant Select® is a cooperative research project between the Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University, and the

Tartarian maple

western horticulture industry. Its mission is to research the "very best" plants suitable to the Rocky Mountain region. After intensive research from many locations across the West, the research is compiled and those plants that have done the best are given a Plant Select label.

The Web site provides plant information on how best to grow these gems.

Lastly, consider local experts. Many nursery personnel are very fond of low-water plants and can give great information and guidance. They are often in the know of other gardeners who have followed xeric footsteps. UW CES at http://ces.uwyo.edu/PUBS/Horticulture/Horticulture_Publications_Main.htm has several horticulture bulletins that focus on trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, and other subjects for Wyoming. They include *Landscaping: Water-Wise Wyoming Gardens,* B-1143, and WyoScape: *Landscaping for the Wyoming Climate*, B-1139.

Most gardeners are delighted to show off their gardens, so take advantage of this to check out what will grow well in your area. With a little bit of persistence, your efforts will be rewarded!

Pineneedle penstemon

Tom Heald is a University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educator with expertise in horticulture. Heald serves Converse, Natrona, and Niobrara counties and can be reached at (307) 235-9400 or theald@natronacounty-wy.gov.

Ranch on Navajo Nation

The Totsonii Ranch just outside of Chinle, Arizona, on the Navajo Nation was started about 15 years ago with an educational program for students and special visitors from the eastern United States as its main activity.

In 1996, Lee Bigwater officially restructured the ranch business into a commercial trail riding business. He invested in some hardy and agile mustang horses, which are the basis for its day-to-day operations. A barn and pen, and the buildup of inventory in the form of saddles, overnight camping gear, and other items, also required considerable investments.

The ranch (www.totsoniiranch.com) is situated on both Navajo ancestral and customary use land next to Canyon de Chelly National Monument. This combination of unique natural resources and cultural history allows for considerable flexibility in the operation's horse riding activity while at the same time fully respecting the area's constraints and limitations of water, vegetation, land use, culture, and protected prehistoric sites.

Three types of trail rides are offered: rides of a few hours, half-day rides, and all-day rides extended to include overnight campouts.

Totsonii Ranch's human resources consist mainly of a strong family team with great involvement. Bigwater, his sons, mother, uncles, and other relatives – each with their defined roles and responsibilities – provide the foundation for a family-friendly operation. The ranch also employs four or so hired helpers who have their roots in the local area and are all familiar with the history, culture, and customs of the Navajo Nation.

There are many expenses related to operating the ranch. Great attention must be paid to daily care of the horses plus their feeding and breeding regimes, all representing significant operational costs. There are considerable expenses to hiring tour guides and cooks and purchasing supplies for the trail rides and overnight events. Trucks must be maintained and repaired and kept fueled. Insurance premiums are high; advertising costs, including maintenance of the ranch Web site, also factor in the expenditure budget. Other costs include fees for the use of national parks and for conducting business on the Navajo Nation.

develops trail riding business

The Bigwater family has recognized the importance of a strong business plan to guide its "production," keep tight control on costs, and allow for further evolution of the business. In 2001, Christian Bigwater, Lee's son and a graduate in business marketing, established a specific business plan for the Totsonii Ranch as the basis for a new and innovative approach for the family. This plan has been the key to considerations about the ranch's future. Elements of the plan include diversifying (providing guest accommodations and offering other visitor draws such as rug weaving), joining a larger advertising association, and ensuring water supplies to the ranch.

A distinct feature of ranch management is that each individual has a well-defined role under the venture – clear and without question. Efforts to ensure optimal customer relations are given high priority. The family wants visitors to go home feeling satisfied and itching to tell others about their adventure. The family members, the hired guides, and others involved practice professionalism daily.

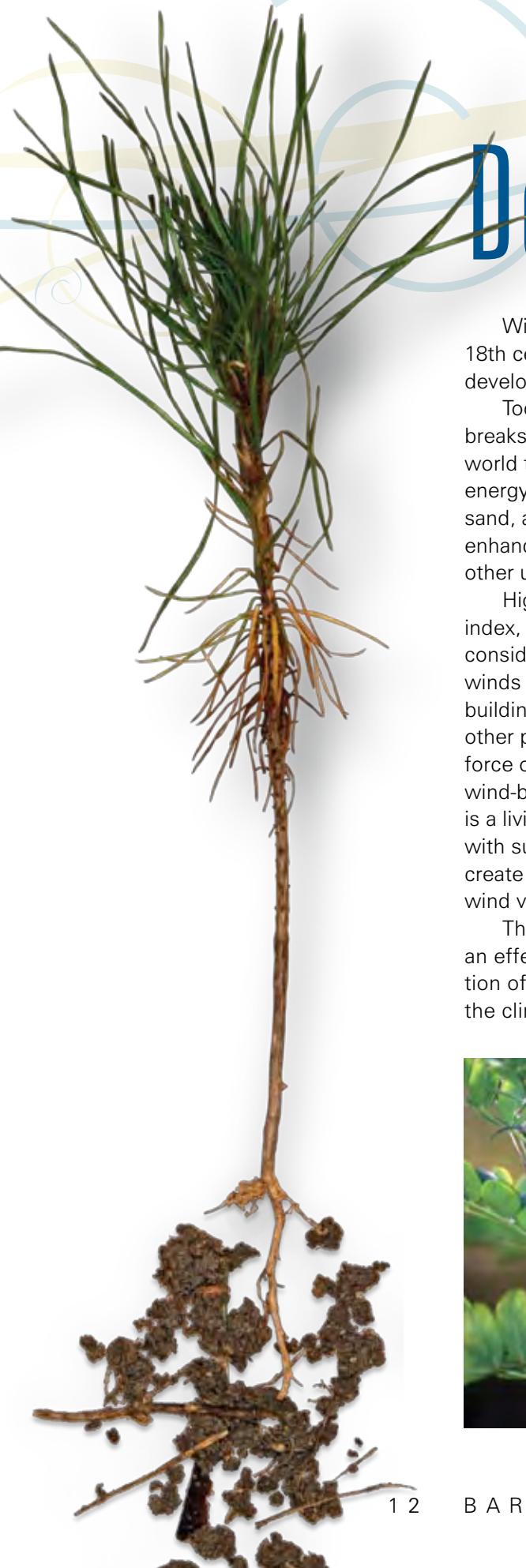
The marketing side of the ranch is very active using a variety of tools. The Web site for this Navajo-owned business has a well-developed, user-friendly design that is a great promotional means for reaching new and repeat customers. With enticing pictures of Canyon de Chelly, trail rides, horses, personnel, and activities at the ranch, the site also links to outside articles and stories that reflect well on the Totsonii operation.

Totsonii Ranch is a great example of an enterprise taking stock of what it has to offer and building on those strengths. It has developed and now follows a business plan. It works within the traditions and limitations of its location to offer activities that draw visitors. It makes use of family members and local residents as a team with clearly defined duties and a commitment to professionalism. It markets its services well, and it is looking toward the future using its plan as a roadmap. As the Navajo people say: "You can do it if you believe in it, and it will be up to you; no one else will determine your fate."

If interested in opportunities like this, some resources for information include:

1. "Western Profiles of Innovative Agricultural Marketing: Examples from Direct Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Enterprises" downloadable at http://cals.arizona.edu/AREC/wemc/westernprofiles.html
2. "Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises." The 88-page document cost is $8 and is available for order at www.nraes.org/. Use the search function.
3. "Agricultural Business Planning Templates and Resources: Business and Marketing Resource List" available at http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/agriculture_planning.html. The site's main page is www.attra.ncat.org/

Prunell Charley is a former member of Arizona Cooperative Extension and an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. Russ Tronstad is a professor and extension economist in the department and can be reached at (520) 621-2425 or tronstad@ag.arizona.edu. Trent Teegerstrom is an associate specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Arizona. He can be reached at (520) 621-6245 or tteegers@ag.arizona.edu.



Developing a plan for

Windbreaks were first used by 18th century Scottish farmers in the development of marginal lands.

Today, various types of windbreaks are used throughout the world to reduce wind velocities and energy costs, control drifting snow, sand, and soil, protect livestock, and enhance wildlife habitat, among many other uses.

High winds increase the windchill index, making temperatures seem considerably colder. In addition, winds cause structural damage to buildings, fences, vehicles, and other property from both the physical force of the wind and abrasion from wind-borne particles. A windbreak is a living barrier of trees and shrubs with sufficient height and density to create a "wind shadow" of reduced wind velocities.

The most appreciated benefit of an effective windbreak is the reduction of wind velocity, thus modifying the climate to reduce heat gains in the summer and heat losses in the winter**.** The correct arrangement of trees and shrubs in a windbreak can reduce wind velocities as much as 75 percent; however, located improperly, a windbreak can actually increase problems for a landowner. Plantings too close to the area requiring protection is common. This can result in snow drifting in and around structures and driving areas making the planting a liability to the landowner.

On the other hand, windbreaks too far away will reduce the benefits. Understanding how wind barriers function, whether structural or living, is important to achieve the desired result.

The effectiveness of any windbreak is determined by three characteristics associated with the planting: height, density, and length.

Height works in tandem with density and will determine the distance downwind the windbreak will be effective. If the planting is about 50 percent dense (open space equals closed space), the planting will reduce wind velocities downwind for approximately 30 times the height of the tallest tree row. An extremely dense windbreak (more than 70 percent) will result in wind velocity reductions on both sides of the planting (leeward and windward) out to a distance of 10-12 times the height of the tallest tree row. The effects of height and density are important to understand as landowners tailor their plantings to address a specific need.

windbreak has future payoff

Length is obviously important. Often, windbreaks are planted to the length of the area in need of protection. Upon establishment of the trees, the landowner soon realizes the planting has actually created more problems than it has solved. Wind becomes compressed as it strikes a barrier, and velocities are actually increased at both ends of the planting and sweep around the barrier and inward at about a 45-degree angle. This phenomenon, termed "end effect," will result in higher wind velocities within the desired protection zone. Thus, plantings must be considerably longer on both ends to account for end effect – 100 feet on each end is generally recommended.

Other factors to consider are how many rows are needed and spacing between rows and between each tree and shrub within the row. The answer to these questions will vary depending upon the intended use of the planting, species involved, and the size of the area that can be dedicated to the planting.

Once design work is done, select the tree and or shrub species that will result in the desired density and survive in the soils and moisture conditions. A soil test is generally recommended. The information provided helps narrow down the species that will work. From there, choices are a matter of personal preference regarding color, form, fruit production, etc. Soil testing is available through the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture's Soil Testing Laboratory. Information is at http://ces.uwyo.edu/Soil_Main.asp, or call the lab at (307) 766-2135.

Windbreaks can certainly be an asset. Properly designed, these plantings result in improved quality of life, resource protection, increased property values, energy savings, etc.; however, like most other endeavors, properly planning a windbreak is the key to success.

Jim Arnold is the forestry stewardship coordinator for the Wyoming State Forestry Division and can be contacted by phone at (307) 777-6680 or by e-mail at JARNOL@state.wy.us.

Sustainable agriculture

farmer/rancher grants available

Have you been mulling over a great idea for improving farm or ranch production, but you just don't have the money to give it a whirl? There is a grant program looking for you!

The Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE) is a competitive grants program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that supports economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible agricultural systems.

Several types of competitive grants are available.

One is the Farmer/Rancher Grant, which allows recipients to conduct **research and/or on-farm demonstrations and educational outreach in areas of sustainable agriculture.**

WSARE is particularly interested in projects that help meet its program goals, which are to:

1. Promote good stewardship of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, regional, and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs and maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
2. Enhance the quality of life of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.
3. Protect the health and safety of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production and optimizing on-farm resources and

integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.

4. Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise diversification.

5. Examine regional, economic, social, and environmental implications of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

The amount that can be requested for a Farmer/Rancher Grant is $15,000 for one producer or a total of $30,000 for a project involving three or more producers.

What should a producer consider when contemplating applying for a Farmer/Rancher Grant?

- The WSARE Web site (http://wsare.usu.edu/grants/) offers general information about its programs and applying for grants. Take a look at the information provided for Farmer/Rancher Grants. Determine if your idea is one WSARE might fund and if you are willing to take on all the responsibilities and time commitments such grants require. Make sure you can meet any requirements outlined. Information for the upcoming application period (2008) is on the WSARE Web page. Deadline for applications is December 7.

- Next, write down the goals of the proposed project and how you would go about carrying it out. What are the resources needed in the areas of time, equipment, personnel, supplies, etc., to pull it off?

- After those have been outlined, find an agricultural or natural resource professional who might be interested in collaborating in this project, since these grants require such a professional to serve as a technical adviser. Bounce the idea off these professionals to see if they'd like to join the proposed project in this capacity. They might have some additional ideas that could refine the project and/or the proposal. Often times these folks are local Cooperative Extension Service educators, specialists, or Natural Resources Conservation Service employees.

- Set aside a block of time to write the proposal and have it ready to be submitted before the December deadline. (Read it ahead of time to prepare and then sit down and do it – it's only a couple pages long.)

What do reviewers look for when reading a proposal?

- Did the applicant follow directions in the Request For Applications (RFA)? (Basically did you give them the information they requested in the format they requested it in? If not, the application may be thrown out without further review.)

- Did the applicant think the project out thoroughly and create a clear plan of action, and was it all clearly communicated to the reviewers? Don't assume reviewers will understand or know things they aren't told.

- Does the project address WSARE's goals?

- Is the idea creative, and could it, if successful, be used by other farmers and ranchers?

- Does it seem feasible? (Can it be pulled off with the resources requested?)

- Does the applicant have a plan to communicate results of the project to others?

Grant programs such as this one provide great opportunities for possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to test ideas; however, they also require good planning and commitment of substantial amounts of time and effort.

Read the RFA very carefully, give it intensive consideration, and then decide whether to give it a whirl. For more information, visit the WSARE Web page, call the WSARE office at Utah State University at (435) 797-2257, or e-mail wsare@ext.usu.edu.

Jim Freeburn is regional training coordinator for Western SARE and can be reached at (307) 837-2000 or freeburn@uwyo.edu.

Necessary personal skills for dealing with AGRI-TOURISM VISITORS

A review of regional attractions, local environment, your farm resources, and careful budgeting may indicate engaging in agri-tourism activities could add to the farm family income.

Taking an extra close look at the farm's human resources is very important before making final decisions. Unlike most traditional ranch and farm production, the agri-tourism "production" involves direct personal contact with visitors/customers. Even if much can be learned about proper ways of interaction, every person – the farmer, family members, and possible employees – should possess those basic personal qualities and attitudes that can make a good host, instructor, guide, sales person, or provider of services. Everybody must be willing to learn and to hone their skills to provide the service, guidance, and support, which farm visitors appreciate.

Dealing explicitly with the human-relation aspects in the planning process will substantially increase the chances of making an agri-tourism project a success.

Customers will visit a farm or ranch for a special experience. If you have ever had a good time on a vacation or while visiting someone else's farm, you may have an idea of what it takes to provide good attractions for your guests.

Direct your attention to the best ways of making visitors/customers feel welcome and comfortable. You want them to return as well as to tell others about your operation. Remember – one of your best promotion tools is word of mouth.

Orientation of family and other staff members

Adequate training of staff – be it the farmer, members of his or her family, or employees – who will be occupied with the agri-tourism activities is an essential component in ensuring a high level of customer satisfaction.

Staff must be knowledgeable about the operation and its services and products as well as the amenities available in the local area. Familiarity with area attractions, local

restaurants, and accommodations is mandatory. Also, staff should be easily identified by their dress and nametags.

The staff should be able to answer questions tourists most frequently ask about the community and the surrounding area. Here are some typical questions:

- Are there any museums or historical sites in the community?
- What kinds of lodging accommodations are available?
- Can you recommend a good place to eat?
- Are there any local activities or special events occurring in the coming days?
- Where can I have my vehicle serviced?
- Where will I find tourist information?
- Where are the local parks, and what are their recreational activities?
- Are guided local tours available?
- Where are the local retail stores located?
- What is it like living in this community?

Welcoming visitors

Welcome each customer with enthusiasm and a smile. For example, say "Hi, my name is_____. Welcome to _____." Ask how you can assist them. Say, "How may I help you? May I direct you to_____?" Be pleasant, courteous, and sincere.

Explain what your facility offers, for example, "The

produce stand featuring our own ____ is here, the tour meets over there, and the bathrooms are around the corner." Always have time for your customers.

Retail sales

Be sure to post prices for products and services easily visible to customers. Use simple per-item or per-pound charges. If selling by weight, make sure to state the return check policy. Vary product quantities and sizes. Indicate whether you provide recipes, recommendations for preserving the product for long drives, and whether you ship your products.

Educate your customers. Assist them in selecting the best product for their needs, and explain what qualities are more desirable for different purposes. Answer questions about how the product was grown and processed. Explain what makes your product better or different than others on the market.

Place smaller sale items on higher shelves making these items more difficult to reach/shoplift. Popular items should be placed in constant view of the cashier.

Recipes and handouts

Check with a commodity board for recipes and handouts. Some commodity boards also have promotion posters to add to a display. Work with a local chef to develop and offer recipes for the commodity being sold or promoted. Search the Web for recipes.

U-Pick

U-Pick operations need signs designating which area of the field is available to pick, how to pick without damaging plants, and where to walk between the plants to cause as little damage as possible.

You may want to post a sign about over-picking that says, "Only pick what you intend to buy; however, if you discover you picked a little extra, please bring the extra produce to us. Please do not throw it on the ground."

Customer mailing list

Consider using a guest book so visitors can add their names and postal and e-mail addresses to a mailing list. The mailing list can later be used to send a newsletter or reminder notices.

Monitoring customer behavior

Organize your store, facility or U-Pick operation so there is only one entrance and one exit to monitor. For a U-Pick, this may mean temporary fencing or ropes around the field with the entrance/exit near the parking area. Eliminate the opportunity for customers to walk directly from the picking area to their cars.

If you suspect a customer has shoplifted, immediately contact local authorities and provide the vehicle license number, make, model, and a description of the person. **Do not** try to stop the person yourself. This only upsets you and the customer and may result in an argument – or worse – in front of other customers.

To reduce the risk of vehicle theft or break in, employee parking should be separate and away from the public parking area.

Dealing with customer concerns

Visitors are sometimes in search of empathy and a solution to their own problems. If they have complaints or concerns, listen to their problems or frustrations without interruption. Ease the situation by remaining calm and attempting to completely understand the problem. Calmly ask questions to ensure everyone understands the situation. Suggest several options, and give the visitor the courtesy of making his or her own decision.

Reference

This section is based on the work of Desmond Jolly, cooperative extension agricultural economist and director, UC Small Farm Program, a program of the University of California, Davis, and Denise Skidmore, member of the University of California's Ag and Nature Tourism Workgroup. See www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheet2_p.html.

Recommended reading: Michigan State University Extension Bulletin E-2064, 1987.

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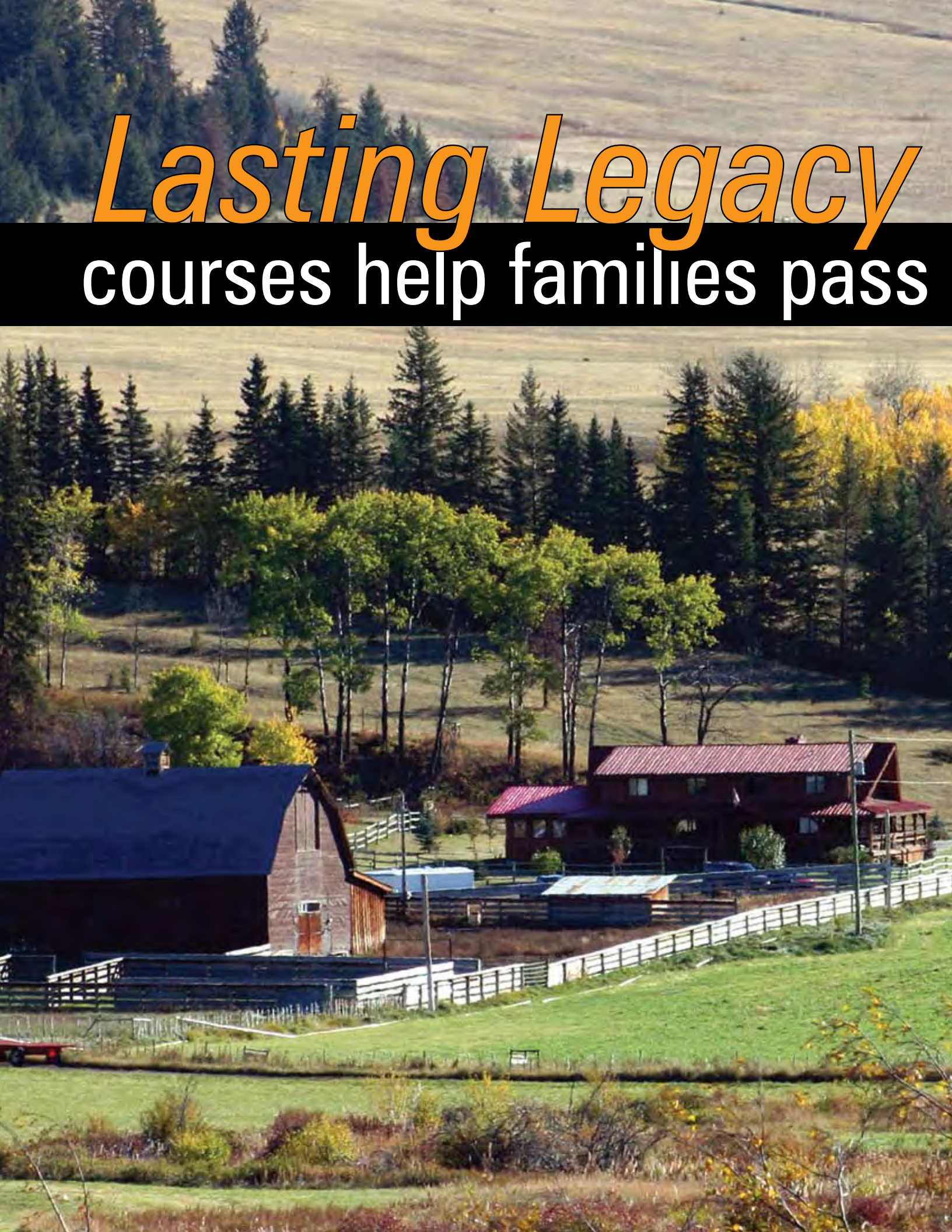
Lasting Legacy

courses help families pass



baton to future generations

Are "estate planning" and "inheritance" scary, dry terms?

Do they imply the sum total of one's life can be coldly calculated in dollars and cents and legal hairsplitting overseen by people waiting in line for you to die?

A Lasting Legacy presents an alternative approach to end-of-life planning that suggests a road map for the future, embracing the meaning of your life. In historical terms, a legacy is something handed down from one generation to the next. An individual's legacy is a summation of a lifetime of achievement and the context in which that lifetime will be remembered. A legacy is not just money but your reputation, what you have done, impacts made in the world, and the people you touched.

Leaving a legacy everyone can love depends on elders and adult children being able to bridge the communication gap. Communication between generations is more vital than ever to ensure the needs of elders and heirs align. Talking about legacy can be an emotionally satisfying experience for both parents and children. Comprehensive communication gives elders and their heirs an opportunity to share their most important beliefs, wishes and directives, and lessons learned throughout their lifetime.

Legacy planning should include talking about all four components of a true legacy: values and life lessons, personal possessions of emotional value, fulfilling final wishes and instructions, and financial assets and real estate. If conversations between a parent and child do not cover all four components, the legacy transfer is not complete.

The two-CD *A Lasting Legacy* has two courses designed to create an easy-to-use process to help families pass on a true legacy to younger generations following a hands-on approach.

A Lasting Legacy captures all facets of an individual's life. Course 1 guides interested participants through 1) Methods and tools for improving intergenerational relationships, 2) Sharing values and life lessons, and 3) Passing on personal possessions of emotional value. Course 2 addresses key legacy components: preparing instructions and wishes to be fulfilled, and distributing financial assets and real estate.

Clarifying plans and explaining intentions can make otherwise contentious decisions understandable and can help avoid lasting resentments. When legacy decisions are made and then communicated to the family, research shows family members are more likely to accept the outcomes. Family members will also benefit from the special memories and stories shared in the process.

The *Lasting Legacy* courses were developed by members of the RightRisk Team, a group of risk-management educators from eight Western universities, specializing in interactive risk-management education products for agricultural producers.

Future presentations and more information about RightRisk courses are available at RightRisk.org. Requests for additional information may be e-mailed to Information@RightRisk.org.

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BROCCOLI

Grazing management is making sure your animals

Do your horses, livestock, and other animals eat their broccoli, or do they just eat the ice cream?

What the heck does this have to do with grazing management?

If landowners have a few animals and a few acres, they are grazing managers charged with the health of their property. Is a goal for a property to be healthy and productive or a weed patch with large areas of exposed soil lost to wind and water erosion each year?

Most landowners want property that is healthy, beautiful, and productive and also provides a quality source of feed for their grazing animals. Here are a few simple principles that, if followed, will help maintain or restore property to a healthy and productive state.

This is an example of a badly overgrazed area. This horse needs to be in a corral and this pasture reseeded and not grazed for one to two years.

'Tis the Season

Repeatedly grazing grasses and forbs at the critical time year after year will severely damage or kill those grasses and forbs. Plants in the Rocky Mountain region have a short season to complete their reproductive processes. The combination of available moisture and cooler temperatures are required for cool-season grasses – the dominant and most productive grasses – to grow and produce seed. Since the most dependable moisture is received in the spring months, the grasses have evolved to take advantage of early season moisture and complete their life cycle fairly early in the summer; however, when grasses are trying to complete that cycle, they are very susceptible to grazing. Repeated grazing during that critical window will severely damage or kill the grass plant, opening a patch of soil to weeds and other undesirable plants.

If there is not enough acreage to support livestock year-round, consider removing grazing pressure during this critical window to allow grasses time to produce seed and restore energy reserves in their roots they use to survive Wyoming's long, cold, windy, and generally dry winters.

When is this critical window? Depending upon elevation and seasonal temperatures, the critical window can begin as early as late March and usually ends early to mid-June. When the majority of cool-season grasses have produced a seed head and the seed head can be seen blowing in the wind (elongation has completed), the critical window is over and grazing will be far less detrimental.

It is important to delay turning out livestock to graze until mid-summer! The stored hay will have to last longer, but your pasture will thank you. If lucky enough to have sufficient acreage to sup-

port animals year-round, be sure not to graze the same place in subsequent years during this critical window.

Leave Some for the Soil Gods

The old timers say "graze half, leave half." It isn't quite that simple, but they understood the concept. Don't graze every blade of grass down to the dirt. A key component of the factory that produces grass on land is the soil. If some "residual" forage is not left to protect the soil during the winter, the factory's ability to produce forage long into the future will be severely hampered. When livestock have grazed the pasture to a level where they are starting to consume plants trying to regrow, it is time to remove the animals from that pasture.

It is best each grass plant receives no more than one defoliation (grazing or some other type) per season, unless there is irrigation water available or it is an exceptionally wet year and the plants recover substantially.

This rule is even more important if the grazing happens during the critical window described earlier. Even though one might think he or she is wasting usable forage by not grazing every bit, think of it as an investment in future productive potential of the pasture.

Making Them Eat Their Broccoli

Think of it this way: If one football player walks up to the buffet at a local cafeteria and no one else is around, he will take his time filling his plate with exactly what he wants to eat. Conversely, if the entire football team is given just a few boxes of pizza, players will grab whatever they can, knowing if they don't act fast, they will get nothing.

This is an example of selective grazing. This horse is avoiding the taller grasses and regrazing plants that have already been grazed this season. This pasture needs to be smaller to decrease selective grazing.

To get livestock to select the least desirable plants in addition to more desirable ones, grazing has to be concentrated to smaller areas. Concentration is usually accomplished by dividing pastures into smaller units and/or grouping livestock into larger groups, then reducing the amount of time any one pasture is used.

This allows pastures to have a rest and recovery period after being grazed, permitting grasses to regrow if moisture levels and temperatures are right, or reducing the number of plants that are grazed during their

ICE CREAM

eat their vegetables along with their sweets

When given the opportunity, most grazing animals will select the most palatable (tasty) and nutrient-dense plants – the ice cream – and graze those plants repeatedly, leaving the less palatable plants – the broccoli – for last.

critical window. When given the opportunity, most grazing animals will select the most palatable (tasty) and nutrient-dense plants – the ice cream – and graze those plants repeatedly, leaving the less palatable plants – the broccoli – for last. This simple principle is one underlying cause of many over-grazed properties and the reason that, when grazing animals are given free reign of the property, the most desirable plants are grazed to extinction while the least desirable plants (often weeds) proliferate and eventually dominate.

The photo of the horse on page 21 shows a pasture full of green, high-quality feed, but notice where the horse has chosen to graze. It is not eating the tall Garrison grass in the foreground but is grazing smaller regrowth grass plants. Those plants are likely to eventually die from the continuous grazing pressure, and weeds will take their place while the taller grass does not get grazed.

Start watching livestock graze and see what plants they select. You will start to appreciate the power of plant selection. If some plants are being grazed more heavily than others and a property owner wants to leave the livestock out longer so they start using those plants that have not been grazed, that is a sign to decrease animal selection by increasing concentration and shortening the grazing period.

Managing grazing on your land is your responsibility. Remember the reasons you purchased the land and the reason you enjoy country living. A properly managed pasture will produce more forage and raise healthier livestock than an overgrazed weed patch. Remember the **Season, the Soil Gods, and the Broccoli** as you plan and implement a grazing program.

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