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New Year's Resolutions

I would first like to take the time to wish everyone a happy and safe 2008. Along with the New Year come New Year's resolutions. Well I was thinking about what people might wish for with the coming of the New Year. More specifically, I started thinking about what range managers and cattle producers might wish for. Of course there are the traditional resolutions of losing weight or quitting smoking, but does anybody make resolutions for how they manage their grasslands? I decided to brainstorm on this subject and see what I could come up with. One possible resolution might be to increase production from your rangeland. Or perhaps you would just like to learn more about range management in South Dakota. Perhaps you would like to try to make your place a sustainable ranch or at least practice some money-saving ideas to lower the costs of ranching. The SDGLC can help achieve all of these goals. We sponsor the grazing school and bus tours every year. These are great resources to learn about range management and also for getting ideas for your own place. So possibly the best resolution for a range manager would be to attend at least one event sponsored by the SDGLC like the grazing school. It is something to think about. Happy New Year!

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For more information or other events the **SOUTH DAKOTA GRASSLAND COALITION** is involved with, please feel free to contact Kyle Schell or visit the website: <http://sdgrass.org>.

Gabe Brown Presentation Summary

Gabe Brown was sponsored by the SD Grassland Coalition to speak at the SD Cattleman's Association Annual Meeting. The meeting was held at the Ramkota in Watertown on November 28th and 29th. Gabe Brown is from Bismarck North Dakota, where he ranches. People come from all over the country to observe his operation. Much of his presentation is based on actual experiences at his place. Some of the things he discussed were rotational grazing, using no till on the range, and the use of cover crops on the range. He is easy to understand and relate to which makes him a very captivating speaker. His presentation was videotaped and posted on the coalition website at www.sdgrass.org; click on the Gabe Brown Presentation link. His slides are also posted on the website because you cannot see them very well in the video.

High speed internet is necessary to download the presentation. I realize that many coalition members only have access to dial up internet. If you are unable to receive this presentation, please contact me or Judge Jessop and we will send you a CD copy of the presentation.

Gabe also wanted to invite all SDGLC members to come to the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District's Soil Health Workshop in Bismarck, ND, on January 23 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. Some topics to be discussed are no-till cropping systems, grazing systems, and cover crops. For more info contact Kyle Schell at 605-688-6623.

Get to Know Your Board Members: Dan Rasmussen

Recently, I visited Dan Rasmussen at the 33 Ranch south of Belvidere. He ranches on the east end of the Badlands in a partnership with his brother-in-law.



Dan Rasmussen's Ranch (33 Ranch) located on the east end of the Badlands

Their ranch is a family ranch that Dan's grandfather started. Dan's family has been involved with the coalition since it homesteaded. His father was one of the founding members of the coalition, so Dan is a second generation board member. Dan manages his operation holistically; his goal is to obtain a completely sustainable ranch. He puts up very little hay and grazes his cows year round. He also keeps his calves on the cows

through most of the winter. He weans them in the early spring and then calves again in May. He attempts to keep his input costs to a minimum and he has been successful. Everything that goes into his calves comes from the ranch. He is also working towards producing organic beef. In producing organic beef, there are several restrictions on what can be supplemented to your cattle. Below is a picture of Dan mixing flaxseed, acceptable by the organic guidelines, in his range mineral.



Dan Rasmussen mixing flax seed in with his mineral

Fred Provenza Workshop Recap

Brule Buffalo Lyman (BBL) Bootstraps, along with the SD Grassland Coalition sponsored a Fred Provenza Workshop at Oacoma on December 4th 2007. Fred is a professor from Utah State University and is doing research on foraging behavior of animals and how to use this behavior in a grazing system. The all-day meeting was attended by nearly eighty

rancher and agency personnel. All of the students received a DVD and a booklet discussing more on the topic. It was a very interesting topic and Fred was entertaining. Fred sent the slides from his presentation which is posted on the coalition website. If you would like to view them, go to www.sdgrass.org and click on Fred Provenza PowerPoint Presentation link.

Strip Grazing

Strip grazing is a winter management strategy where the producer moves a fence, usually on a daily basis, to give the livestock the amount of feed they will need for that day, or grazing period. This type of management can be used on nearly any kind of field. I discussed the grazing method with two producers, one who strip grazes corn and one who strip grazes windrows of hay that he cut in the summer.

Gaylord Haroldson, from Bruce, SD, was the producer I visited with about strip grazing corn. He strip grazes his corn with yearlings from the first of August until October. He also has an oat field that he hays and then replants turnips on it, which he strip grazes as well. He rotates the yearlings back and forth from the corn to the turnips as the livestock needs. He has nearly forty acres of corn that he strip grazes and his yearlings don't graze it

all. After he markets his yearlings, he strip grazes the rest of the field with his cows. He also told me that he was trying his young calves that he weaned this fall in the strip grazing system. When I asked Gaylord what the advantages are to strip grazing, he said the cattle do all the work for you. You do not have to harvest, feed nor spread manure on your fields. The fences do have to be moved. Gaylord moves his fence twice a day. He told me that he can move a quarter mile of fence in fifteen minutes. It would take that long to feed it no matter what form it was in, whether it be silage or as corn. Some disadvantages he said is that when there is snow on the ground, the electric fence may not work as well. The snow acts as an insulator and a ground wire may need to be added. Gaylord also said that when the ground is wet, the cattle can tear up your fields and waste a little of the feed.

Larry Wagner is the producer I talked to about strip grazing windrows that he cuts in the summer time. Larry has three different fields on his place that he strip grazes. He will strip graze only one of them a year and put up hay on the other two. Then he rotates which one is strip grazed to minimize the chances of damaging the fields. Larry believes that the strip grazing is much cheaper

than putting up the hay, mainly because of the fuel costs. He does have the cost of laying the hay down, but after that all he has to do is use his four-wheeler and move his fence once a day. He eliminates all the costs associated with baling, hauling, staking and feeding hay. One of my concerns was if he lost any of the feed quality, but he informed me that the protein was testing the same as the hay he put up this summer. Another important aspect to stripe grazing, according to Larry, was that when fences are moved, they should be reset right on top of the windrows. This will prevent the cattle from walking on some the feed and increase utilization.



When strip grazing windrows place fences right on top of windrows

When I asked these producers what they would suggest to someone wanting to try strip grazing, they told me it has to be managed effectively. Use trial and error and you can make it work in your operation too.



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Calendar of events:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
SDGLC Board Meeting	Feb 20	Pierre	Judge Jessop	605-280-0127
Soil Health Workshop	Jan 23	Bismarck, ND	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
HRM Workshops			Kyle Schell	605-688-6623

Please remit any comments, suggestions, or topics deemed necessary for further review to: Kyle Schell, SDSU Box 2170, Brookings SD 57007, kyle.schell@sdstate.edu, (605) 688-6623