



# GRASSROOTS

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## **Spring Time is Getting Closer, Things are Getting Busy**

As everyone has probably noticed, the weather is starting to warm up, snow is melting, and spring is quickly approaching. I have been enjoying the few days of sunshine we get and am looking forward to summer. I am also looking forward to all of the exciting activities the South Dakota Grassland Coalition has planned for the year. This time of the year, we have been busy planning all of these activities and I want to take a moment to tell everyone what is planned to date. Many of you attended the HRM Workshops which we completed this month. This spring we are going to have the bird tour again. This year the location will be in the northeast part of the state on Darwin Peckham's ranch. The date that we have set for this is June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. In August we are going to have another bus tour. We are planning on going to Bismarck, ND, to visit Gabe Brown's Ranch on August 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Then next fall we are going to host the Grazing School in Ocoma. We are moving the location of where we set up the paddocks, however the classroom will be at Al's Oasis again. The grazing school will be held September 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>. I will continue to keep all of you informed of these activities as the dates get closer.

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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>.

### **Get to Know Your Board Members: Lavern Koch**

Lavern Koch, the chairman of the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, has been with the coalition for a long time. He was one of the founding board members and has been involved ever since. He ranches east of New Underwood, not far from where my family ranches. I visited him last winter during the blizzard just before Christmas. It was comical when I showed up at Lavern's door he asked me, "What are you doing here, there is a blizzard going on?" Well, I survived the blizzard and made it home after a cup of coffee and a good visit with Lavern, but we did not get a chance to look at his place. He did show some of the awards he has won, including his Excellence in Range Stewardship he received in the mid nineties from the Society of Range Management. He is an excellent producer and runs a great operation. One of the biggest problems he faces in his area is water. There are no rural water systems in his area and he is forced to rely on his well. Lavern is a great range manager and an excellent chairman for the SDGC.



### **Grazing Workshops Featuring HRM Certified Instructor Terry Gompert**

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition sponsored three HRM workshops across the state again. This year the speaker is Terry Gompert. Terry is with the Nebraska Extension and is also a certified Holistic Resource Management instructor. We had our first workshop in Watertown on February 25. There was an excellent turnout with over ninety people in attendance. Terry gave his presentation entitled "Grazing to Enhance Synergy between Land and Cattle". Rick Bednarek, of the NRCS, also gave a short presentation on cover crops as well. The Lake Poinsett Watershed Project, the Upper Big Sioux Watershed Project, and the Northern Prairie Land Trust all assisted in sponsoring this workshop. Terry presented again in Platte on March 13 and Parkston on March 14. Rick Bednarek and Jim Millar also presented some information on cover crops at these workshops. Additional sponsors of these workshops include Randall RC&D Charles Mix Conservation District, Douglas County Extension, Lower James RC&D Hutchinson Conservation District, Hutchinson County Extension and the NRCS. We had a great turnout at these two workshops as well. Forty-four people attended

the Platte workshop and fifty-two people attended the Parkston workshop.

Attendees enjoyed a free meal at all three workshops and had the opportunity to talk one on one with Terry, Jim and Rick. This summer we also plan to have a couple of pasture walks with Terry in the Western part of the state. For more information on any of these workshops, please contact Kyle Schell at (605) 688-6623.



Terry Gompert talking at an HRM Workshop in Watertown with over 90 people in attendance

### **National Ag Day In Sioux Falls**

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition will be setting up a booth at the National Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. As part of the observance of the National Agriculture Week, the Washington Pavilion is organizing a Science and Agriculture event called Ag day. Ag day will be held at the Pavilion on Saturday, March 29, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor lobbies. This free event will show the public the relationship

between science and agriculture with hands-on exhibits the entire family can enjoy. It usually draws more than 1000 families for a fun, interactive exploration of the agriculture industry. The South Dakota Grassland Coalition is assembling a booth with various activities. We will also have several publications to hand out that emphasizes the importance of grasslands in South Dakota. Hopefully, we can sign up a few more members while we are there, too. I encourage anyone who is going to be in the area on March 29 to stop in and check our booth.

### **Day County Conservation District Summer Plans**

The Day County Conservation District has several grazing/grassland information events planned for this spring and summer. They are planning a meeting with Jim Millar, NRCS Soil Scientist, to discuss the use of cover crops following small grain harvest on March 19 2008. Using cover crops is a great way to lower nitrogen costs, increase grazing forage, increase water infiltration rates, and take care of any salinity concerns one might have. On June 26 they are planning an evening pasture walk where Carl Pulvermacher grazes cattle south of Webster. You will see fencing options and grass response to grazing, as well as discuss grazing turnips and

easement considerations. The 2008 Day County Grazing tour will be at Gene and Kathy Ausland's the afternoon of July 31. The Auslands were the recipients of a 2007 SRM Award. SDSU educators and NRCS specialists will be on hand to discuss pros and cons of management intensive rotational grazing. Also on August 14<sup>th</sup>, the Day County Conservation District is planning another evening 'pasture/native hay prairie walk'. The site for this event will be on tribal land that Don Rumpca grazes 1 ½ mile north of Waubay on Day County Highway 1. Mark all of these dates on your calendars as we hope to see you at them. For more information on any of these events contact the Day County Conservation District at 605-345-4661.

### **Thanks for Membership Renewal**

I would like to send out a sincere thank you to everyone who renewed their membership to South Dakota Grassland Coalition following our membership drive last fall. We currently have more than 160 members and the number continues to grow. Thank you for your continued support of this fine organization, and please continue to tell others about what the South Dakota Grassland Coalition is doing and encourage them to

become members as well. Thanks Again!

### **Board of Directors Monthly Minutes Update**

Below is a summary of the March minutes from the Board of Directors meeting. If anyone would like a complete copy of the Minutes contact Kyle Schell.

Cheryl Warren and Chris Hesla from the South Dakota Grassland Wilderness Coalition presented some information on the goals and objectives of their organization. Dave Steffen presented an update of the state technical meeting. Kyle Schell and Judge Jessop presented an update on the bus tour, Grazing School and HRM workshops committee meetings. Dave Steffen presented an update on the Bird Tour Planning Committee Meeting. New business included Tim Olsen presenting some information on a CREP proposal from the SDGF&P. Stan Boltz is working on a response to a SRM paper entitled "Rotational Grazing on Rangelands: Reconciliation of Perception and Experimental Evidence". Also, Dan Uresk has joined the USFS National Rangeland Management Staff.



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**Calendar of events:**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
Cover Crop Meeting	March 19	Webster	Darrel DuVall	605-345-4661
Bird Tour	June 6-7	Bristol	Dave Steffen	605-775-9112
Evening Pasture Walk	June 26	Webster	Darrel DuVall	605-345-4661
Day County Grazing Tour	July 31	Webster	Darrel DuVall	605-345-4661
Bus Tour	Aug.12-13	Bismarck ND	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
Evening Pasture Walk	Aug. 14	Waubay	Darrel DuVall	605-345-4661
Grazing School	Sep. 8-10	Oacoma SD	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
SD & NE Joint SRM Meeting	Oct 7-8	Valentine NE	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](mailto:kyle.schell@sdstate.edu), (605) 688-6623