



GRASSROOTS

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SRM Award Deadline April 30th 2010

The Awards Committee for the South Dakota Section of the Society for Range Management will be accepting nominations until April 30th, 2010 for Honor Awards to be presented at the 2011 annual meeting. For more information and instruction on the nomination process, please visit the web at www.rangelands.org/awards/. Please send nomination to Tate Lantz at tate.lantz@sd.usda.gov. If you are unable to send an electronic version, please mail a hard copy to SD SRM, 7065 Townsend Street, Summerset, SD 57718. Make sure you are submitting your nominations for the appropriate category. For more information or to obtain a hard copy of the instructions, contact Tate at the above email address or call him at 605-343-1643 ext. 133.

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**HOW DOES CALVING SEASON
AFFECT COW COSTS IN
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

SWO GRAZING WORKSHOP

BY LORNE AADLAND, TRIBAL LIAISON, SISSETON

On February 24, 2010, more than 50 producers, NRCS employees and partners braved 20 degree-below-zero temperatures to listen to other successful producers and Agency people share some thoughts and experiences on grazing. The workshop was hosted by the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) at the Dakota Magic Casino and co-sponsored by Roberts Conservation District, the SD Grassland Coalition, and ND Grassland Coalition with assistance from NRCS of both SD and ND. Lorne Aadland, Tribal Liaison for NRCS working with SWO, served as emcee for workshop.

Gene Goven, a ND producer, and Jeff Printz, NRCS ND State Range Conservationist, “tag teamed” the presentation speaking on the necessity of goal setting and objectives to getting the soil into the proper condition. “Without proper soil health, all the planning in the world will not meet your objectives of raising grass and producing beef,” they explained. Gene uses cover crops for health and late season grazing along with winter grazing.

Pete Bauman of the Nature Conservancy explained how Mother Nature had used fire to maintain the health of the prairie and how we can use prescribed burning to assist in re-invigorating our native grassland. An interesting concept of patch, burn and then graze was presented as an alternative to extensive cross fencing to create a grazing management plan.

Kenny Miller, ND producer, has been utilizing cover crops for several years and showed his results from cover crops increasing crop production as opposed to commercial fertilizer. He also shared his method of rejuvenating a pasture by using cover crops to replace organic material and fertility. Winter grazing is also accomplished by bale grazing, which is the placing of bales in pasture or cropland during the fall at spaced intervals and feeding them by moving an electric fence once a week.

Jim Faulstich, Highmore SD rancher, shared his holistic approach and goal setting in managing his operation. An innovative idea of grazing standing

corn was very interesting. He combines eight rows and leaves 16 rows; then moves the electric fence when there is too much snow to allow any other form of winter grazing. In an open winter, he would harvest the standing corn in March. The last activity of the day was a discussion panel of speakers moderated by Josh Dukhart of ND. Many good questions and variety of answers by the speakers proved of interest to attendees. Discussion was held on hosting a follow-up summer workshop in the field.

How Does Calving Season Affect Cow Costs in Eastern South Dakota?

A Production and Economic Comparison of Four Calving Dates for Beef Cows in Eastern South Dakota from 2002-2008.

Eric Mousel, Range Livestock Specialist, SDSU

Introduction:

The amount of harvested and purchased feeds required to maintain a cow herd in eastern South Dakota is related in part to calving date. Cows calving during the dormant season cause lactation to occur when range and pasture forage are not available and therefore need to be fed supplemental energy and protein. The majority of the difference in total annual cow cost is in the difference in the amount of supplemental feeds fed before summer grass is available. The unknown question is, “How much does total annual cow cost vary between different calving seasons”? The objective of this research was to use the South Dakota Integrated Resource Management (IRM) Database to compare the production and economic efficiencies of the four major calving seasons that exist in eastern South Dakota.

Materials and Methods:

Data collected from cow-calf producers in eastern South Dakota who participated in the SDSU-IRM-SPA program were used in this study. Additional data was collected through individual consultation. Data were collected for the 2002 through 2008 calendar years; data were from the cow-calf enterprise only. All production data, regardless of source, were collected using the SPA system, in accordance with the SPA guidelines, developed by the IRM Coordinating Committee of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

Financial data was collected using the SPA system, in accordance with SPA guidelines; information was collected from IRS Schedule F to calculate Operating Expense Ratio (OER). The OER is defined as the proportion of gross revenue used to cover operating expenses. The ratio was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Operating Expense Ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Operating Exp.} - \text{Interest Exp.} - \text{Depreciation Exp.}}{\text{Value of Farm Production}}$$

Where Value of Farm Production is defined as Gross Income minus the value of purchased feeder livestock and purchased feed.

Calf cost breakeven was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Calf Cost Breakeven} = \frac{\text{Total Cow Cost}}{\text{Pounds of Calf Weaned per Cow Exposed}}$$

Return on Assets (ROA) was calculated as follows:

$$\text{ROA} = \frac{\text{Net Farm Income} + \text{Interest Paid} - \text{Labor and Management} + \text{Capital Gains}}{\text{Total Farm Assets}}$$

All participants completed the production data however, not every participant reported financial data. Each herd represented one observation which resulted in a final database of 178 production and financial observations. Calving dates were categorized as 1) January-February (49 observations), 2) March-April (71 observations), 3) May-June (30 observations), and 4) August and September (29 observations). Producers who were involved with the program more than one year may be included multiple times. Operations ranged from 47 to 1,125 cows.

Results and Discussion Points:

Weaning weight

- Calves born in JAN-FEB were 7% heavier than calves born in MAR-APR.
- Calves born in MAR-APR were 24% heavier than calves born in MAY-JUN.
- Calves born in AUG-SEP were 15% heavier than calves born in MAY-JUN.

Total Cow Cost

- Total Cow Cost was lowest for the MAY-JUN calving cows.
- Total Cow Cost for MAY-JUN calving cows was 30% lower than JAN-FEB, 23% lower than MAR-APR, and 29% lower than AUG-SEP.

Cow Feed Cost and Percent Feed Cost

- MAY-JUN calving cows had the lowest Cow Feed Cost and the lowest percent feed cost.
- AUG-SEP calving cows had the highest Cow Feed Cost and the highest percent feed cost.

Calf Cost Breakeven

- Calf Cost Breakeven for MAY-JUN calving cows was 9.1% lower than JAN-FEB, 3.2% lower than MAR-APR, and 16.8% lower than AUG-SEP.

Return on Assets

- Return on Assets was for MAY-JUN calving cows were 44% higher than JAN-FEB, 29% higher than MAR-APR, and 66% higher than AUG-SEP.

	Preg %	Wean %	Wean Wt	Avg Days to Wean	Lbs. Calf Weaned/ Cow Exposed	Cow Feed Cost	Total Cow Cost	Percent Calf Breakeven	Percent Feed Cost	OER %	ROA
JAN-FEB	93.79	90.3	603	269	536	374.53	513.06	0.98	0.73	0.8	4.7
MAR-APR	94.57	91.46	565	198	512	310.28	463.11	0.92	0.67	0.73	6
MAY-JUN	94.86	92.94	456	166	412	216.02	354.13	0.89	0.61	0.64	8.46
AUG-SEP	92.15	89.85	524	219	471	395.74	500.93	1.07	0.79	0.83	2.91



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Calendar of events:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
SRM Award Nomination	April 30		Tate Lantz	605-716-3436
Bird Tour	June 11-12	Wessington SD	Judge Jessop	605-280-0127
Ian Mitchell-Innes Workshop	June 15-17	Chamberlain SD	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
Deuel County Pasture Walk	July 13	Clear Lake SD	Rebecca Schafer	605-874-2681
McPherson Co. Range Day	July 15	Leola SD	Lanette Butler	605-439-3331
Grazing School	Sept 13-17	Chamberlain SD	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

