



GRASSROOTS

KYLE SCHELL, EDITOR • SDSU • BOX 2170 • BROOKINGS, SD 57007 • kyle.schell@sdstate.edu • (605) 688-6623

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(605) 344-2250

Larry Wagner

26314 350th Avenue
Chamberlain, SD 57325
(605) 894-4448

Darwin Peckham

41557 147th Street
Bristol, SD 57219
(605) 380-4465

SD Grazing School – September 14-16

The 2009 South Dakota Grazing School is scheduled for September 14 – 16, in Oacoma, SD. Titled *Let the Animals be the Harvesting Machines*, the grazing school features topics on grazing concepts, holistic grazing, balancing rations and animal nutrition. The intensive three-day course is designed to educate producers on efficient and effective range management. The event will be held at Al's Oasis and on Lower Brule Trust Land near Oacoma.

Participants of the school will benefit from hands-on training in the field and from lectures in the classroom. Presenters from state and federal agencies, universities, as well as local producers, will share their expertise about various topics relating to grazing techniques and grassland management. (continued page 2)

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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>

SD Grazing School – September 14-16 (continued)

“The grazing school will provide information about proper pasture allocation and the principles of grassland productivity”, said Kyle Schell, Range Management Outreach Coordinator for the South Dakota Grassland Coalition. “Participants will gain a better understanding of how to determine if they are getting the most from their grazing lands and providing optimal nutrition for their livestock.”

For more information about the South Dakota Grazing School, or to register, contact Kyle Schell, (605) 688-6623 or kyle.schell@sdstate.edu.

The cost to participate is \$150 per person, and \$75 for each additional person registering from the same operation. The fee includes session materials and meals. Registration is limited to 30 participants.

The annual grazing school is hosted by the South Dakota Grassland Coalition, South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Lower James RC&D.

For a complete agenda and registration information, visit www.SDGrass.org.

Gompert’s thoughts on the SD Pasture Walks

Pasture walks can be very informative if one keeps an open mind ... the SD walks at Guptill ranch near Quinn on Aug. 3 and at the Wagner/Dr. Williams ranch near Pukwana on Aug. 4 were no exception.

Guptill ranch: They showed us two herds. The first herd of cow-calf pairs was rotated every four days. They were grazing the paddocks once per year. The ADA (animal days per acre) yield was 55-60. This ranch is near the Badlands where the normal ADA would approach 15 ADA. They were trampling about 40%, leaving 90% of the land covered. Litter 2 up to two inches deep was present on approximately half of the area. The lighter ground had no litter two. The cows and calves were in excellent condition. This relatively short duration and long recovery period was returning three to four times’ the normal stocking rate.

Although the ground was covering, the desired complexity of species was not improving. The pasture was and still is crested wheatgrass and intermediated wheatgrass.

The second herd was their 800 pound yearling replacement heifers. They were doing what they called "mob grazing". Their

present stock density was at 60,000 pounds with about 60 ADA yield (70 some heifers on one acre). On the tour day they were trampling 40% and leaving the ground covered.

Previously, when the forage quality was higher they were moving cattle up to four fold the stock density (240,000 pounds per acre). They were consuming approximately 95% of the forage and leaving the ground bare. In both cases there was no switch of pasture species.

The mob had access to alleys where they watered. These areas had repeated very high stock density. In the lanes the specie change was great.

The crested and intermediate wheat grass decreased and abundant western wheat grass, vetch and other plants increased. Even though these alley lanes were over grazed, the stock density and animal impact started working.

60,000 pound grazing would be great to utilize pastures well, but not high enough to heal the land. Animal impact starts at stock density at over 300,000 pounds per acre and possibly at 500,000 pounds per acre. Species changed to more complex diversity in only days with animal impact should be expected.

Wagner ranch: Wagner’s have a relatively slow rotation with a long recovery period. They have relatively high quality land at 18 inch rainfall. They can grow

super big blue stem. The key to their success is grazing tall and long recovery periods.

One or two grazes a year is sufficient. Their ADA yield varied from 60 to 100 on their big blue stem.

The real exciting and unexpected discovery was their heavy grass finishers selecting mare's tail. The mare's tail was in full bloom and was the highest brix level plant in the paddock. This is the first time that I have seen mare's tail selected first.

However, without exception, the first grazed plants in the pasture seem to always be the highest brix plant.

I believe that we hate many plants that we simply don't understand. Just another reason why "we need to work with what we have and manage for what we want" to quote what Jim Faulstich from Highmore SD says so well.

Keys:

- Work with what you have
- Management for what you want
- Graze tall
- Long recovery periods
- Trample at least 1/3 of the forage
- Hate no plants
- High stock density and disturbance is required to change to a more complex species of plants.

TerryG

Bus Tour Recap

The South Dakota Grassland Coalition held their annual bus tour on July 21-22. This year they had a joint tour with the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition in the Yankton, SD area. They toured three ranches south of Yankton in Nebraska. The first stop made was at Pat Steffen's place near Fordyce, NE. Pat grass-finishes Scottish Highlanders and manages his place holistically. It was interesting to see him rotate his Highlanders through his grazing system. Our next stop was at David Fischer's place. David formerly put up organic hay but has now switched to an organic grazing operation. Martin Klienschmit, David's neighbor, has helped David develop his grazing system and has been a mentor to David during this transition. Last but not least, we stopped at Wayne Rasmussen's ranch near Plainview, NE. Wayne had a very interesting grass-finished and conventional-finishing operation. He compared the two types of finishing to see which was more profitable. I believe all 45 of the participants on the tour came away extremely satisfied.

Fall and Winter Events to Come

There are numerous events that the SDGC is working on this fall and winter and I want to take a moment to mention them.

Wayne Barry Workshop – Wayne Barry, certified educator of Holistic Management, will be in Bison, SD to present a workshop on grazing. This will be held the last week of September. I encourage all who desire more HRM training to attend.

Dave Pratt Seminar - Dave Pratt, of the Ranching for Profit School, will be in Kadoka SD, to give a seminar on October 28. He will also be returning to SD in January to present the entire Ranching for Profit School.

SD Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting – The SD Cattlemen's Annual Meeting will be December 2-3 in Sioux Falls. The SDGC is sponsoring Terry Gompert as one of the speakers at the meeting on December 3. He will be discussing "Money Saving Ideas Including Extending the Grazing Season."

Annual Meeting/Greg Simonds Presentation – The SDGC Annual Meeting will be held December 8th in Oacoma. This year's featured speaker is Greg Simonds of the Deseret Ranch of Utah.

There will be more information on all of these events in this newsletter as they draw closer; however, if you do have any questions on any of these events, please contact Kyle Schell at (605) 688-6623 or kyle.schell@sdstate.edu.



Kyle Schell
Box 2170, ASC 105, SDSU
Brookings, SD 57007

Calendar of events:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>
Grazing School	Sep 15-16	Oacoma	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
Wayne Barry Workshop	Sep 28-29	Bison	Ryan Beer	605-244-5222
SRM/SWCS Annual Meeting	Oct 6-7	Mitchell	Jeff Vander Wilt	605-352-1226
Dave Pratt Seminar	Oct 28	Kadoka	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
Cattleman's Annual Meeting	Dec 2-3	Sioux Falls	Kyle Schell	605-688-6623
SDGC Annual Meeting	Dec 8	Oacoma	Judge Jessop	605-280-0127

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