

2009 Rangeland & Pasture Management Program, Jack County

Developed by Heath Lusty, County Extension Agent- Agriculture & Natural Resources, Jack County, with support from the Extension Education Unit, Department of Leadership, Education, & Communications, Texas A&M University.

Relevance

Jack County has over 920 square miles of native and improved pasture and rangeland. Cow/calf production is still the major ag enterprise in the county with around 30,000 head turned out year round. Proper management of pasture and rangeland is directly correlated to the success and profitability of any ranch. Since we are in a time of skyrocketing input costs, market volatility, and tightening financial markets, it is imperative that producers learn and adopt management practices that will lead to improved rangeland and pasture health. These management practices ultimately impact the bottom line of any operation. The Jack County Agriculture Committee felt that educational programming in 2009 should focus on those issues, but more in depth than the previous year. This program was attended by 30 Jack County cattle producers, both large and small operators.

Response

The following activities were conducted throughout 2009 to address this relevant issue:

- Forage Selection Seminar 2/17
- Soil Sampling (Result Demo) 2/9
- Soil Fertility & Fertilizer Workshop 3/3
- Weed Management Workshop 3/17
- Multi-County Hay, Beef, & Forage Day 3/25
- Rancher's Roundup (*Forage Nutritional Value*) 3/31
- Range Health Meeting 4/14
- Brush Management Meeting 4/28
- Jack County Range Tour 10/16
- Prickly Pear IPT (Result Demo) 10/30
- Multi-County North Central Texas Cattleman's Clinic 11/6
- Quarterly Educational Ag Newsletter
- Ag News Email list
- Individual Ranch Visits

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Results

In order to determine programmatic results of the Rangeland & Pasture Management Program, Jack County a retrospective post evaluation was administered to participants.

Table 1 Knowledge before & after the program

¹Likert scale is indicated by the following scale: 1= poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent.

Topic	Before	After	Change	% Change
Fertilizer inputs for native vs improved grasses	2.1	3.5	1.4	63
Read & use soil tests	2.4	3.4	1.0	42
Proper soil sampling techniques	2.0	3.4	1.4	43
Information found on herbicide labels	2.6	3.7	1.1	44
Proper selection of herbicides	2.4	3.6	1.3	55
Application methods for herbicides	2.6	3.6	1.0	39
Read & use forage analysis	2.1	3.4	1.3	60
Factors affecting nutritional value of forages	2.1	3.5	1.4	63
How soil type influences plant communities	2.2	3.5	1.3	58
How to use range monitoring techniques	2.1	3.2	1.1	50

Land & Cattle Managed

- 1365 is the mean number of acres of pasture/rangeland respondents manages.
- 128 is the mean number of cattle respondents manage.

Satisfaction results by respondents in the Cow Herd Management Program, Jack County

- 100% (14/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the overall program.
- 100% (14/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the knowledge level of presenters.
- 100% (14/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the instructors response to questions.
- 100% (10/10) were mostly or completely satisfied with the range of topics covered.
- 100% (14/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the timeliness of information
- 86% (12/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the helpfulness of the information in making decisions about their own situation.
- 86% (12/14) were mostly or completely satisfied with the information being new to them.
- 100% (14/14) stated the material they learned in the program will give them the ability to analyze land situations and make better land management decisions.
- 100% (14/14) stated they would likely recommend Texas AgriLife Extension Service to their family and friends as a contact for information & assistance on agriculture issues.

Intentions to Adopt practices discussed in the Cow Herd Management Program, Jack County

- 35% (5/14) probably will or definitely will utilize forage species/varieties best suited for their operation.
1 respondent stated they had already adopted this practice.
- 71% (10/14) probably will or definitely will use cost effective soil management practices.
1 respondents stated they had already adopted this practice.
- 50% (7/14) probably will or definitely will reduce fertilizer use & expense by fertilizing only most productive fields.
5 respondents stated they had already adopted this practice.
- 50% (7/14) probably will or definitely will manage weeds and brush with herbicides.
7 respondents stated they had already adopted this practice.
- 50% (7/14) probably will or definitely will use forage analysis to determine the nutritional value of forages.
1 respondent stated they had already adopted this practice.
- 29% (4/14) probably will or definitely will establish and use range monitoring sites.
1 respondent stated they had already adopted this practice.

What is the most significant thing you learned during the Program?

- Herbicide selection and application (5 comments)
- Soil and forage sampling (3 comments)
- Nutritional value of forages & stocking rates (2 comments)

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Looking Ahead

This year's program took a more in depth look at topics related to rangeland and pasture management. This program, which was a two year effort, along with the April 2009 wildfires, revealed the urgent need to conduct educational programming about prescribed burning. With the help of the Jack County NRCS Field Office, we have developed a program to be conducted beginning in January 2010 to educate landowners on how to plan, implement, and conduct a prescribed burn. The program will also promote and involve the new burn association formed in the county in 2009.