FOOTHILL RANCHER

...Practical Information for Foothill Livestock Producers

California Grazing Academy
April 24-25, 2015
UC Sierra Research and Extension Center Browns Valley, CA

This year’s Academy will feature an emphasis on Drought Planning

Fees and Enrollment:
$170.00 (includes meals, and course materials – some lodging available)
Limited sleeping space available — first come, first served (bring your own sleeping bag and towel). No walk-in registrations due to set-up needed for hands-on activities. Registration is available on line at http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=14369, or complete the attached registration form.

NO REFUNDS.
Your check guarantees your space.

About The California Grazing Academy
The California Grazing Academy is a unique and exciting program emphasizing practical application of controlled grazing principles to improve the environment and increase ranch profit. This challenging course consists of a minimum of lecture and a maximum of hands-on experience.

After completing the Academy, course participants will be able to:
- Assess the condition of the four basic ecological processes that determine ranch productivity.
- Apply principles of time and stock density to improve pasture productivity and stock performance.
- Estimate carrying capacity.
- Apply principles of animal behavior to reduce stress.
- Determine the supplementation needs of grazing animals.
- Design a layout to efficiently use resources and apply controlled grazing principles.
- Immediately improve grazing management on your own ranch.
- Understand underlying principles of using high stock densities.
- Managing through drought.

For More Information
Contact Roger Ingram at the UC Cooperative Extension Office/Placer County, located at 11477 E Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603, call (530) 889-7385, or email at rsingram@ucanr.edu

WEB SITE: ceplacernevada.ucdavis.edu
I am writing this article on February 12, 2015. The 10 day forecast does not show any precipitation until showers on February 21st. Temperatures will continue to be unseasonably warm. The warm fall and winter so far has resulted in minimal snowpack. The California Department of Water Resources reported that the February 1 snow survey was at 25% statewide and 12% at Echo Summit (south of Lake Tahoe).

Forage Production Year to Date - October 2014 - February 13, 2015

The Sierra Research and Extension Center (SFREC) weather station reported 12.5 inches of rain from October 1 - January 31. This is 78% of normal precipitation at SFREC. The Auburn weather station reported 15.65 inches of rain from October 1 - January 31. This is 86% of normal precipitation at Auburn. Despite the lower than average rainfall totals, the timing of the rain has generally maintained adequate soil moisture.

December forage production at SFREC was 333 lbs./ac or 71.4% of normal. January forage production showed a 60 lb. decrease from December and was at 273 lbs./ac. While this may be a sampling artifact, it definitely shows that forage production was none due both to lack of rain and short photoperiod (short day lengths). The lack of growth has forage production at 53% of normal at SFREC. Last year it was 19% of normal. Soil temperatures have been unusually warm this year and are currently at 55 degrees at SFREC and Auburn. Grass growth will normally start increasing some at soil temperatures above 50 degrees. Once it gets at 60 degrees, this is when the spring flush of growth occurs if we have adequate soil moisture.

WE ARE STILL IN A DROUGHT!

I would encourage you to assume drought conditions for 2015, even if your irrigation district can come close to providing a full irrigation season. I would recommend staying conservative with stocking rates. Some strategic destocking may be in order. I would think that March 1 and April 1 would serve as critical dates to consider further destocking to match carrying capacity (forage supply) with stock rate (animal demand).

California Grazing Academy

The California Grazing Academy is scheduled for April 24-25 at SFREC. Registration information is included with this newsletter. The California Grazing Academy will help you in managing through drought. You will learn how to assess carrying capacity and project stocking rate. You will learn about grazing and drought planning as well. Other topics include: pasture and range ecology, cell design, nutrition, supplementation, and monitoring. The academy features lots of field work where you work in a group to assess carrying capacity and then allocate forage for your herd using electric fence.
CATTLE PRICES

The January 2014 cattle inventory for cattle and calves was 87.7 million head. This was the lowest inventory since 1951, which was at 82.1 million. Beef replacement heifers were up 2% from 2013, but that was the only indicator that was a positive.

The January 2015 cattle inventory report for cattle and calves increased 1% to 89.8 million head. Beef replacement heifers were up 4% from 2014. This is a 6% increase from 2013 totals and begins to point to herd expansion starting to take place. All other indicators were up, except for other heifers that were down slightly.

Per capita beef consumption (per person) will be 52.2 pounds in 2015. This has been dropping annually since 2007 when it was 65.3 pounds. The export market is still strong, but factors such as higher value of US dollar worldwide and declining oil prices can potentially impact export markets.

While cattle prices should stay strong in the short term, there is no guarantee they will continue to go higher. Retained heifers born in 2014 would most likely get bred and calve in 2016. Sale of weaned calves from those heifers would start in 2017.

What would happen to you if cattle prices declined 10-20%? Have you structured your operation to be a low-cost producer? Lease rates, transportation, and hay costs (due to drought) have risen with prices. You should be considering some sort of savings plan to be a source of contingency funds should prices fall in the future.

REMINDER to PNSSNS Members from Linda Wantanabe, PNSSNS:
Thank you to the 270 members who have filled out the Farm Evaluation Plan survey! If you have not filled your FEP out yet, please join us at one of our remaining workshops. Bring your "Enrolled Parcels List" or your invoice to verify parcel numbers. If it is convenient, you may also drop off your filled out survey to the Placer County Farm Bureau, 10120 Ophir Road, Newcastle CA.

LAST CHANCE Workshop:
Wednesday, February 25, 2015
9:00 AM– 5:00 PM
PCWA, 144 Ferguson Rd., Auburn
American River Room

Contact PNSSNS at 916-645-1774 www.cleanwaters.info for information. Please contact Roger Ingram if you need help filling out the farm evaluation plan and you are a livestock producer.

PNSSNS notes that it came to their attention that several farmers who called the Regional Water Board (RWB) last year or even a few years ago, were told that they were exempt from having to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program because they were “too small.” Before
March 2014, the Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) included only surface waters. So, when RWB staff asked the farmer, “do you discharge to surface waters?” and the farmer answered “NO,” RWB staff put the farmer on a list promising to conduct a site visit to determine whether they really discharged or not. Sometimes, if the acreage was less than 5, the RWB staff would say, “you are too small” thinking it wasn’t worth it to do a site visit on such a small farm when the list held several hundred farmers. However, March 1, 2014 new requirements were approved that included groundwater discharge. This means every farmer who irrigates, regardless of size must be in compliance with the ILRP because everyone discharges to ground. If you call the RWB today and ask if you need to belong to PNSSNS, they will ask you 2 questions:

1. Are you commercial agriculture?
2. Do you irrigate?

If the answer is “YES” to both questions, then you must comply with the state’s Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

If you are a farmer who has “ignored” the ILRP believing you were exempt, the PNSSNS Board decided that they may join the coalition without the $500 3-year back-dues penalties. Simply fill out the sign-up form, include a note or send an email with the date or approximate date when you were told this misinformation and penalties will be waived upon processing your membership.

Contact PNSSNS at 916-645-1774 www.cleanwaters.info for information.

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Mobile Poultry Processing Trailer

A mobile poultry processing trailer is available for rent from Nevada County Grown. You may contact Nevada County Grown for rental information at http://nevadacountygrown.org/poultry-trailer/.

Nevada County has determined that you may use the 1,000 bird exemption defined in California Assembly Bill 224. The exemption permits a poultry raiser to slaughter and process their own birds on their own premises for marketing within their own state as human food without federal or state inspection as long as the number of birds does not exceed 1,000 chickens (or 250 turkeys) within one calendar year. For the purposes of this exemption, rabbits qualify as poultry. This exemption allows poultry producers to process on-farm and to market those birds at a farmers’ market or through an off-site Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

SLOW POULTRY
Sustainable Poultry Production

DATE: Tuesday, April 14th, 2015

Workshop times: 9:00am – 5:00pm (registration begins at 8:30am)

WORKSHOP LOCATION:
Dawnridge Farm
Owners: Carlos & Erin Angulo
20548 Dawnridge Drive
Grass Valley, CA 95949
Contact person: Erin Angulo 916.768.3629 Email: palidans@aol.com

Cost: $89.00 if paid by Friday, April 10th. AFTER April 10th, the registration cost increases to $109.00. Registration includes training notes & lunch. Send checks to Sustainable Poultry Network - 642 Moffitt Hill Road, Old Fort, NC 28762. You can also register online at www.sustainablepoultrynetwork.com
USDA Inspected Slaughter and Processing (Cut and Wrap) Update

Roger Ingram, County Director and Farm Advisor, Placer/Nevada Counties

I attended, presented, and facilitated at the Central Coast Livestock Producer Summit: Exploring Producer-led Solutions to Processing Bottlenecks. There is interest in Placer and Nevada Counties in building a USDA inspected slaughter and processing facility. I wanted to summarize the current processing situation and what I learned at the Summit.

Completed Studies on Building a USDA Inspected Slaughter and Processing Facility

There is interest in building a USDA inspected facility in the Calaveras-Amador-Tuolumne area called Mother Lode Meats. They have completed a business plan and grant report that can be found here: http://motherlodemeats.com.

There is interest in building a USDA inspected facility in Mendocino County. The Mendocino County Meat Plant (MCMP) Study can be found here: http://cemendocino.ucanr.edu/files/171140.pdf. Both of these are excellent studies and provide a good deal of information that is useful no matter what area of California that you reside.

USDA Inspected Facility Update

Messina Meats in Orland is now available for USDA inspected slaughter. You can contact them at 530-865-4440. They do provide slaughter for swine. Carcasses can have the option to go to Manas Meats in Esparto for processing if needed. Manas Meats can be found here: http://www.manasmeats.com. Johansen’s in Orland still provides USDA slaughter and processing. You can contact them at 530-865-2103.

Superior Farms in Dixon is building a new 50,000 sq. ft. slaughter and processing facility for sheep and goats. The new facility is being built next to the existing facility that was built in the 1920’s and acquired by Superior in 1981. You can contact them at: http://superiorfarms.com.

Wolfpack Meats with University of Nevada-Reno provides USDA inspected slaughter and processing beef, pork, and lamb. You can contact them at: http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/wpm/Welcome.aspx

These would be the most common facilities used by producers in Placer and Nevada Counties.

Central Coast Livestock Producer Summit: Exploring Producer-led Solutions to Processing Bottlenecks

There were several interesting speakers at the Summit, which was organized by Luis Sierra, California Center for Cooperative Development. Keith DeHaan, Food and Livestock Planning, Inc., gave a presentation on Processing Plant Economics and Infrastructure Requirements. He noted the national trend, which applies to California as well, that there are an increasing number of producers desiring to market meat from their own livestock. This rising demand for custom service is occurring when there are decreasing number of USDA-inspected plants offering custom processing.
services to customers. He noted common complaints from producers would include the facility being too small, far away, antiquated, and booked up months in advance.

He commented on planning considerations to overcome failures experienced by other start-up facilities:

- Operating Capital – planning to raise, manage, and strategies to conserve are critical to plant survival and success.
- Custom processing conserves operating capital as there is no financing of inventory.
- It is not a good idea to simultaneously start a meat processing and marketing company at the same time as a custom processing facility. Both are working capital intensive and inefficient businesses.
- The customer is the producer in a USDA-inspected custom processing facility. Producers must become part of the marketing plan.
- Livestock numbers eligible to process have to be accounted for and siting a plant should be centrally located for participating livestock producers.
- Plant must clearly define the products and services to be provided. Examples include slaughter, boning, portion cutting, grinding, curing, and processed meats.
- End product marketing plan must drive the market.

Main Infrastructure Needs

- Potable waste in enough capacity - 300 gals/beef animal and 100 gals/small stock.
- Water out – need sewer hook-up plant treatment is costly.
- Rendering and byproducts disposition – as much as 24% of beef carcass from harvest and up to 19% from boning and/fabrication.
- Size and scope – Keith DeHaan noted that plant must minimally be able to slaughter and process 30 beef or beef equivalents (4 sheep, goats, or pigs) per week.
- Utility hook-ups. Electricity costs are the highest utility expense.
- Site that is build ready – proper zoning and minimal grading if possible.

Kathryn Quanbeck, Oregon State University and the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN) spoke on cooperative ownership examples, size and scale, and the importance of commitment.

Cooperative Example

- Bowden, ND Meat Processing Co-Op
  - 3,100 sq. ft. facility that can process 1,000 hd./yr.
  - $1.1 million in construction and start-up costs. A total 72 co-op members paid a $100 membership fee and purchased 109 shares of preferred stock at $5,000 per share ($545,000) to provide part of the financing for the plant.

Size and Scale

- 3 sizes of plants
  - Very small custom-exempt – 2,000 sq. ft., 4 FTE employees. Must process 462 beef equivalents annually to breakeven.
  - Small inspected – 4,000 sq./ft. with 10 FTE employees. Must process 1,130 beef equivalents annually to breakeven.
Spring 2015

- 15,000 sq. ft. with 60 FTE employees. Must process 8,884 beef equivalents annually to breakeven.
- Higher quality packaging requires higher number of animals being processed and meat packages. An example would be vacuum packaging with one color printing vs rollstock packaging with a full color label.

Commitment
- Producer viewpoint – livestock numbers are there, market demand for local meat is there, and processing is the bottleneck. Solution: build more plants.
- Processor viewpoint – There is not enough steady business throughout the year. No steady business = no profit = no plants. Solution: bring processors more business on a steady basis throughout the year.
- Convenience – Producer: I’ll call you when I need you; Processor: I’ll see if I have an opening.
- Commitment – Producer: I’ll bring 5 head every week; Processor: I’ll process them to your spec, on time, high quality.
- Commitment in a nutshell
  - Anchor tenants to bring animals on a regular basis throughout the year.
  - Active scheduling for smooth flow: take slot in spring, get fall guarantee; book month 6 months out and book week 2 months out; annual producer meeting.
  - Variable pricing – fall vs spring: surcharge if fall only.
  - Marketing/distribution help.
  - Financial Investment.
  - Regular and on-going communication.

I will write more in future issues as further group meetings and discussions on the feasibility of a USDA slaughter and processing facility for the Placer/Nevada and surrounding areas. The points made in this article will be helpful in having those on-going discussions.

UC Ranch to Rail Program
The UC Davis Animal Science Department, UC Cooperative Extension and California Beef Cattle Improvement Association have developed an educational program that will improve California beef cattle producers’ understanding of feeding and carcass attributes as well as the health of their own cattle.

The UC Davis feedlot will purchase 10-15 steers from two cooperating producers every month. Over a 12 month period 24 producers will have the opportunity to participate. All interested producers will preferably be recommended by UC Farm Advisors, and scheduled several months in advance. The cattle participating in the program need to represent a producer’s breeding program, be weaned a minimum of 30 days, and have back-grounding and vaccination information available. The producers will deliver the cattle to the UC Davis Feedlot. Acquired steers will weigh between 800 and 900 lb. and will be Bos Taurus. Producers will be asked to fill out a background information sheet including a vaccination history of the cattle. Cattle will be purchased based upon the current average price received for similar weight cattle. Upon arriving at the feedlot, cattle will be immediately weighed, and pay weight will be actual weight across the scale at delivery. The producer will receive the mid-price for the weight class of cattle sold that week. Price will be agreed prior to delivery.

Each producer will receive the performance and carcass data associated with the cattle they sold. This data will include average daily gain, feed intake (pen basis), cost of gain, carcass data, and any other pertinent info that is collected regularly by UCD staff. The producer will also have the option to purchase up to two of their animals either live or on a carcass basis from the UCD Meat Lab. Please see the brochure with this newsletter for more information.
UPCOMING EVENTS

**Contact Roger Ingram at (530) 889-7385 or rsingram@ucanr.edu to register or if you have questions. Check website for updated information at ceplace.ucdavis.edu**

**Lambing on Pasture Field Day**

**Shepherding School Series**

March 7th
8:30-Noon
Auburn, CA

Lambing on pasture is a positive alternative to barn lambing systems. At this field day, you’ll learn about ewe and lamb nutrition, handling newborn lambs, developing a record-keeping system, and dealing with lambing problems (birthing problems, inclement weather, predators, etc.). Participants should wear clothes appropriate for outdoor work in late winter weather!

Workshop is free. You can register here: [http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=14669](http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=14669)

**California Grazing Academy**
(flyer included with newsletter)

April 24-25th
Sierra Research and Extension Center, Browns Valley, CA
Cost: $170
You can register here: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/Roger_Livestock/?calitem=261308&g=29082](http://ucanr.edu/sites/Roger_Livestock/?calitem=261308&g=29082)

**Pastured Pig Workshop**

Spring 2015
Chicago Park, CA

This workshop is being finalized and will provide you with hands-on experience with raising pigs on pasture for both breeding and meat. You will learn about electric fence, nutrition, husbandry tips, and more.

**California Multi-Species Academy**

September 11-13th
UC Cooperative Extension Office
11477 E Ave, Auburn, CA
Cost: $170
Registration information coming soon.

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Roger Ingram
County Director, Placer and Nevada Counties
Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor
2015 California Grazing Academy Registration Form

Date: April 24—25, 2015
Cost: $170.00 (includes meals, and course materials—some lodging available, first come, first served—bring your own sleeping bag and towel. NO WALK-IN REGISTRATIONS DUE TO SET-UP NEEDED FOR HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES)

Register: Complete this form, mail with your check payable to University California, Regents, to:
Roger Ingram
California Grazing Academy
11477 E Ave.
Auburn, CA 95603
OR, visit our website: http://ceplacernevada.ucdavis.edu and follow the links.

Location: UC Sierra Research & Extension Center, Browns Valley, CA

First Name ____________________________ Last Name ____________________________
Address: _______________________________ _______________________________
City _______________________________ State/Zip _______________________________
Email: _______________________________ Phone Number: ____________________________

What types of animals do you graze or manage? ___________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

How many head: ____________________________ On how many acres: ____________________________

It is the policy of the University of California (UC) and the UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities (Complete nondiscrimination policy statement can be found at http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/files/187680.pdf)

Inquiries regarding ANR’s nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1318.
Fees and Enrollment:
$170.00 (includes meals, and course materials – some lodging available)
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6. Design a layout to efficiently use resources and apply controlled grazing principles. Immediately improve grazing management on your own ranch.
7. Understand underlying principles of using high stock densities.
8. Managing through drought

For More Information
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Complete the registration form on the reverse and include your check payable to UC REGENTS to: Roger Ingram
California Grazing Academy
11477 E Ave.
Auburn, CA 95603

OR

An on-line registration form is available at ceplacernevada.ucdavis.edu – Just follow the link to Livestock and Natural Resources and then to California Grazing Academy.
I am interested in participating in the Ranch to Rail Program, please contact me.

Name: _______________________________ Phone: ______________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

City: __________________ State: _______ Zip code: __________

Email: ______________________________________________________________

I would consider selling _____ head of steers during the month of: _January    _February    _March    _April    _May    _June    _July    _August    _September    _October    _November    _December

Mail this to:

Questions? Contact James Moller, One Shields Ave., Davis CA 95616 (530) 752-1200 or jrmoller@ucdavis.edu

Contact Larry Forero, 1851 Hartnell Ave., Redding CA 96002 (530) 224-4900 or lcforero@ucanr.edu

UCCE Shasta County
1851 Hartnell Avenue
Redding CA 96002
The UC Davis Animal Science Department, UC Cooperative Extension and California Beef Cattle Improvement Association have developed an educational program that will improve California beef cattle producers’ understanding of feeding and carcass attributes as well as the health of their own cattle. The program will engage individual producers with the results anonymously extended to producers across the state.

**Cattle Acquisition and Protocol**

The UC Davis feedlot will purchase 10-15 steers from two cooperating producers every month. Over a 12 month period 24 producers will have the opportunity to participate. All interested producers will preferably be recommended by UC Farm Advisors, and scheduled several months in advance. The cattle participating in the program need to represent a producer’s breeding program, be weaned a minimum of 30 days, and have backgrounding and vaccination information available. The producers will deliver the cattle to the UC Davis Feedlot. Acquired steers will weigh between 800 and 900 lb. and will be Bos taurus. No Holsteins, Brahman-cross or Mexican type cattle will be considered. Producers will be asked to fill out a background information sheet including a vaccination history of the cattle. Cattle will be purchased based upon the current average price received for similar weight cattle. Upon arriving at the feedlot, cattle will be immediately weighed, and pay weight will be actual weight across the scale at delivery. The producer will receive the mid-price for the weight class of cattle sold that week. Price will be agreed prior to delivery. UC Davis retains the right of refusal to accept cattle that are unhealthy or do not meet specifications. On the day of delivery, participants will be given a tour of the Department of Animal Science Facilities on the Davis Campus (feedlot, processing plant, etc.).

**Deliverables to Cooperating Ranches**

Each producer will receive the performance and carcass data associated with the cattle they sold. This data will include average daily gain, feed intake (pen basis), cost of gain, carcass data, and any other pertinent info that is collected regularly by UCD staff. The producer will also have the option to purchase up to two of their animals either live or on a carcass basis from the UCD Meat Lab. If a producer chooses to buy back one or two steers, a nonrefundable deposit will be charged prior to slaughter. Participants in the program are providing an important component of student education as the animals sold to the UC Davis Feedlot will be used for teaching and research purposes. These cattle will provide an invaluable learning opportunity for students to receive, process, feed and monitor feedlot cattle, and analyze performance data.

**Educational Opportunities**

The data derived from this project will be presented to beef cattle producers across the state at the CCA meeting in 2015, and into the future. Identities of producers/ranches will not be included in educational outreach materials. Producers who participate in the program will receive incentives and recognition for their efforts.

**Details**

All cattle owned by UC Davis Animal Science will be sold as carcass beef or live. The UC Davis Meat Lab and Los Banos Abattoir are expected to be the primary outlets. Any cattle not needed by the UC Davis Meat Lab will be sold to Los Banos Abattoir on a carcass index basis. For producers buying back one or two of their steers, they will be killed under USDA inspection and must be picked up within 10 days of kill. Cost will be hot carcass weight times the carcass price based on the current USDA Carcass Meat Report. Cattle killed at the Meat Lab will not be cut there. The producer must arrange for cut and wrap of the carcass at another plant of their choice.

**Legals and Legalities**

Any participant interested in selling cattle to UCD will need to complete a Business Information Form and provide a signed and dated W-9 form. This information is required to set the producer up as a UC vendor and to be paid. If you choose to participate in this program, you will be provided with a Business Information Form and a W-9.

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Inquiries regarding ANR’s nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 752-0495.