



LIVESTOCK AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Placer/
Nevada

Livestock and Natural Resources program is the leading information, education, and demonstration source for livestock producers and a new generation committed to working in agriculture.



Livestock production in Placer and Nevada Counties generates gross income of over \$14 million annually to local ranchers. Many types of livestock are raised in the two-county area, including: cattle, sheep, goats, horses, llamas, and alpacas.

Agricultural viability is a major issue in both Placer and Nevada Counties. Land development, increasing expenses, lack of economic and financial planning, and an aging agricultural population have contributed to a challenging agricultural situation.

To meet this challenge, the Livestock and Natural Resources program in Placer and Nevada Counties takes local and statewide UC research to producers to help them be economically and environmentally sustainable.

Ag viability translates to three core concepts:

- *Structure your livestock operation to work with nature. This means matching your herd's production cycles with nature's cycles. This results in being a low-cost producer.*
- *Develop a plan for profitability over and above providing a salary for the rancher. This includes both economic and financial planning.*
- *Manage for the ecological landscape you want to create. This means understanding the ecosystem processes of energy flow, water cycle, and mineral cycle and how to use them to manage for a sustainable, productive landscape.*

Program Highlights

- ◆ **36 workshops** provided 140 hours of instruction and reached over 2,300 ag producers
- ◆ **700 ag producers** received the quarterly ***Foothill Rancher*** newsletter
- ◆ **65,000 hits** on livestock related information on our UCCE website (ceplacer.ucdavis.edu)
- ◆ **California Grazing Academy** held for the 21st time, reached over 575 producers and agency personnel who manage over one million acres of pasture and rangeland



California Grazing Academy



Red team wins a medal and T-shirt for winning grazing jeopardy.

“The things that went well for me at the Academy:”

- ***Loved the hands-on activities***
- ***Very open to questions***
- ***Incredibly well organized***
- ***Affordable***



Solar pumping for livestock water was demonstrated.

Issue

Many producers need increased knowledge or awareness of controlled grazing. Livestock producers need hands-on experience to help them implement controlled grazing on their operations.

What Was Done

The academy is a three day, live-in course emphasizing the practical application of research based, controlled grazing principles. The target audience is ranchers who manage on private or public pasture and rangeland. The unique aspect of the Grazing Academy is the emphasis on experiential learning. Participants learn by actually applying the principles taught in real pastures with live cattle.

Impact

The academy celebrated its 20th year anniversary in 2012. There have been 21 academies since 1992. Over 575 ranchers, agency people, and extension advisors have attended who collectively manage over 1 million acres of range or pasture. Participants commented on the important things they learned:

- Avoiding bare soil and how to calculate and understand graze/rest periods.
- Learning how to determine quantity of forage using the square method of estimation.
- Looking closely at pasture composition and grazing effect.
- I want to think about how I can apply the grazing principles to my ranch. They are simple and easy to remember.



PlacerGROWN Food & Farm Conference



Lincoln FFA performs the opening ceremonies at the PlacerGROWN Food and Farm Conference.



The trade show featured 16 booths of local agricultural organizations and businesses.

Issue

The 16th annual conference's purpose is to provide diverse educational opportunities, keynote speech that addresses relevant educational issues, and networking with other producers and support businesses.

What Was Done

Keynote Speaker J. Scott Vernon, professor at the Cal Poly State University, discussed the non-profit organization "I Love Farmers...They Feed My Soul". The group is a national agricultural advocacy group of young people with headquarters in San Louis Obispo. The underlying theme of their message is that young people need to tackle the issue of food and farm security by being advocates using social media.

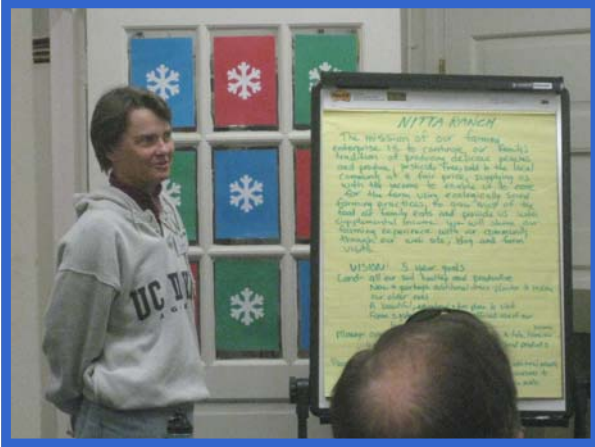
25 workshops were held on the following themes: Local Food, Planning for Your Farm, Crop Information, Getting Started in Farming, Using Social Media, Support for Your Farm, and Livestock.

Impact

- 200 people attended the Food and Farm Conference. Each participant received a 200-page proceedings booklet.
- PlacerGROWN President Dave Chappell presented the Farmer of the Year awards to Fowler Nurseries and Twin Peaks Orchard. Each celebrated their 100th year of operation in 2012.
- Constant Contact conducted two social media for agriculture workshops that were well received.



Farm Business Planning



Homework was given after every class. Each farm presented their homework with the following class.

“The class was great! We learned so much from the teachers, producers, and our fellow classmates! We really appreciate all the time you all spent helping us. I would definitely recommend the class!”



Each farm developed a calendar of operations to assist with planning.

Issue

More and more people are becoming interested in farming and ranching due to the economy, interest in local food, and a desire to get back to the land. Those who have begun to establish their farm or ranch need tools to develop a business plan and to listen to experiences from other established producers.

What Was Done

This was the fifth year in a row that UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) conducted a six-week business-planning course for farmers and ranchers. Topics covered included: determining mission and vision, three secrets to profitability, conducting an economic analysis, cash flow and operations planning, marketing, and developing an action plan of implementation. The course was supported by a USDA Risk Management Agency grant.

Impact

- Nine Placer County farms and ranches representing eighteen participants completed the 2012 course.
- Presentations by producer graduates from previous business planning courses provided the practical knowledge needed to implement principles and tools learned in the class.
- Each participant was able to set profit and salary targets for their business, create mission and vision statements, develop an operations plan, and map out an action plan of next steps.



Lamb Fabrication Class



Dr. Patrick Doyle discusses the Meat Science Program at Chico State and desirable lamb carcass characteristics.



Participants got first-hand experience in fabricating a lamb carcass into retail cuts.

Issue

There is growing niche-marketing meat in both Placer and Nevada Counties. The raising of sheep and selling meat is becoming more popular. Producers need to understand desirable carcass traits, cuts of lamb, how to fabricate a carcass, and retail yield.

What Was Done

Lamb carcass fabrication workshop was held for 20 participants at Chico State University of March 27, 2012. The workshop featured hands-on experience with fabricating a lamb carcass into retail cuts in the morning. The afternoon was spent discussing carcass cutting instructions, the economics of building a USDA Inspected Harvest and Processing site, working with processors, and niche meat information needs.

Impact

Participants were able to learn during this workshop:

- Desirable carcass characteristics.
- How to fabricate 4 lambs into retail cuts.
- Gain better understanding of retail cuts and their yield. For example, a 100 pound lamb will yield approximately 33 pounds of retail cuts.
- The importance of developing cutting instructions for the processor.
- Learned about the economic and financial projected for building a new USDA inspected plant.
- Provide input on future information needs to niche marketing meat.



Multi-Species Academy



Participants learned how to tell the age of a goat by looking at their teeth.

“The Academy had a wealth of information. The depth of the class was impressive. Lots of time was devoted to questions and answers. The field observations were great!”



Participants build an electric fence to contain goats in the area to be browsed.

Issue

Ranchers and farmers in Placer and Nevada Counties are currently interested in or using goats or sheep on their property for fuel load reduction and removal of noxious weeds. Many that are interested in goat or sheep production see opportunities to add value to production through niche marketing or contract grazing. The California Multi-Species Academy was designed, developed, and implemented to enable local producers to gain experience and knowledge in working with goats or sheep prior to using them on their farms and ranches.

What Was Done

The California Multi-Species Academy was held at two Nevada County ranches. It featured 25 hours of instruction taught over 2.5 days.

Participants worked in teams that each received a flock of one hundred finishing lambs and sixty goats to graze during the school.

Impact

Training evaluations revealed knowledge increases in the following areas:

- Body condition scoring to assess nutritional condition, planning, grazing behavior, grazing principles, niche meat marketing, and contract grazing.
- Participants found networking with other producers, where to find more information, and the class binder as very helpful.