

New series of livestock grazing videos available online

Submitted by: David Kehler, County Extension Director/Agriculture Agent

Cow-calf and beef stocker producers in the Great Plains now have a new set of tools to help them adapt quickly to a wide range of changing weather conditions and climate scenarios.

A new series of eight videos from researchers at institutions in Kansas and Oklahoma has been produced and posted online, said Lana Barkman, extension program coordinator for the Great Plains Grazing project, a cooperative effort involving researchers and educators from Kansas State University, Oklahoma State University, the Noble Foundation, University of Oklahoma, and Tarleton State University.

The videos, webinars, and extension publications are available on the Great Plains Grazing program's website. <http://www.greatplainsgrazing.org/> They include:

- * Stocking rate decisions and pasture management considerations, Hugh Aljoe, The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation (2 videos)
- * Evaluating options and response to drought, Walter Fick, Kansas State University
- * Genetic trends and climate consideration, Dave Lalman, Oklahoma State University (2 videos)
- * Culling strategies for drought management, Megan Rolf, Oklahoma State University
- * Historical climate patterns in the Southern Great Plains, Albert Sutherland, Oklahoma State University
- * Nutrition and management of early weaned calves, Justin Waggoner, Kansas State University

The approach was to compile the most successful practices used by cow-calf and beef stocker producers in the Great Plains into this series of videos, said Waggoner, who is the K-State Southwest Area extension beef systems specialist.

“For example, what were some of the most successful practices used by producers to adapt to the recent multi-year drought in this region?” Waggoner asked.

One practice, or strategy, was to have a diverse operation, with both stockers and a cow herd, rather than depending on just one type of operation. This allows producers to be able to sell parts of the operation under stress in a severe drought, or other climate extreme, and still retain enough resources to survive, he said.

Another successful practice is early weaning of calves at something like 120 days instead of the normal 180 to 200 days.

“Many of these strategies, such as diversification or early weaning, are certainly not new. But they have been some of the more successful ways producers have been flexible enough to survive the drought. Our goal is to make a series of videos on ways cattle producers can successfully adapt to different climate extremes and archive them all in one location,” Waggoner said.

The series also addresses ways of adapting to unusually wet conditions, extreme heat or cold, and other extremes, Barkman said.

“Our goal is to encourage livestock producers to plan ahead for ways to ensure their livestock grazing operations survive a wide range of possible climate swings. We believe the best way to ensure survivability in a changing future is for beef grazing enterprises to become more flexible and plan for ways to survive under as many contingencies as possible. That's what we hope to achieve with this video series,” Barkman said.