

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Tri-State Ranch Management Practicum Beginning Rancher Education and Development Program</b>		
<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>	NIFA	<b>Project Status</b>	COMPLETE
<b>Funding Source</b>	Non Formula	<b>Reporting Frequency</b>	Annual
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<b>Submitted By</b>	Susan James	<b>Date Submitted to NIFA</b>	11/13/2014

**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

Dallas Mount  
307-322-3667  
dmount@uwyo.edu

**Recipient Organization**

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING  
1000 E UNIVERSITY AVE DEPARTMENT 3434  
Laramie, WY 820712000  
DUNS No. 069690956

**Performing Department**

Cooperative Extension Service

**Co-Project Directors**

Berger, Aaron  
Whittier, Jack  
Plugge, Brent

**Departments**

South Panhandle Extension Unit  
Animal Science  
{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

The Tri-State region of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming is located in the High Plains region and agriculture is dominated by forage-based livestock production. A successful training program for beginning ranchers will combine traditional classroom based education with hands-on applied learning in an outdoor classroom and a mentorship program with successful, established ranchers. This project will take concepts and material of separate courses that have been extremely successful, and combine and expand these efforts while joining with partner organizations to offer a new, comprehensive education and outreach package to existing and beginning ranchers. The project involves creation of four Ranch Management Practicum courses, each lasting 8 days over an 8 month period and covering holistic, system-based ranch management concepts including production, ecology, economics and labor. Each Ranch Management Practicum will recruit 30% participation from the targeted beginning rancher audience and provide these individuals with an additional 2 day course on issues specific to the needs of the beginning rancher. Partnerships with non-government organizations (NGO) in each state will develop and implement a rancher mentorship program providing training to willing mentors, matching them with beginning ranchers and providing a framework for the mentorship program.

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

The objectives of this project are as follows: Develop skills of participants in critically evaluating management alternatives. Improve participant's decision making skills. Improve natural resource, livestock and financial monitoring skills so the progress in meeting the participant's business goals can be measured. Develop sustainable rancher mentoring programs in each state. Disseminate ranch business management information to broad audiences in each state. Outputs: 1. Offer four Ranch Management Practicum programs annually with attendance of 20 to 35 ranchers or aspiring ranchers at each. Of the attendees, 30% will qualify as beginning ranchers. Outcomes: Beginning rancher participants will develop a network for resources and support with University Extension Specialists and experienced ranchers. Participants will be able to critically evaluate management alternatives. Participants will have improved decision making skills. Participants will improve natural resource, livestock and financial monitoring skills so the progress in meeting the participant's business goals can be measured. Results will be improved ranch business success. 2. Offer one, two-day session targeted toward beginning ranchers attending any of the Ranch Management Practicum courses. Outcomes: Participants will improve their knowledge and skills in items specific to beginning ranchers on topics including, start-up financing, land leasing arrangement, risk

management, and succession. 3. Develop sustainable rancher mentoring programs in each state Outcomes: Beginning ranchers will have greater opportunities for success through an improved network with established ranchers. 4. Disseminate ranch business management information to broad audiences in each state. Outcomes: Ranchers not involved in the practicum courses will receive information about effective ranch management strategies and opportunities for beginning ranchers.

#### What was accomplished under these goals?

Three Ranch Management Practicum Schools were held during the 2013-14 reporting period. Each school is eight full-days of hands-on instruction. A total of 125 participants took part in the schools, of which 64 were targeted beginning producers. An estimated 25% of the beginning producers reached are socially disadvantaged producers.

Partnerships in each of the three states reached an additional estimated 950 in-person contacts of which 200 would be classified as beginning producers. Partnership organizations added sessions for beginning producers as part of their annual meetings.

The 31 participants in the 2013-2014 Nebraska Ranch Practicum influenced decisions on 113,000 acres of rangeland and 10,000 head of livestock. Participants reported that the value of the practicum to be \$18.00 per head. The total benefit per producer was \$14,228. The total reported impact of the practicum was \$180,000. In addition, a high percentage of the practicum participants reported improved skills in monitoring rangeland and nutrient status of the beef cow. And 100% indicated they would make management changes. Participants also reported gaining new knowledge in 29 identified areas of livestock, range and financial management. There is great value in having beginning ranchers interact with experienced ranchers and industry personnel. This interaction is an informal mentoring process that adds to the overall practicum experience.

Two Ranch Practicum schools occurred in Wyoming for the 2013-14 reporting year. For reporting purposes the results these schools will be combined. Fifty-six participants influenced decisions on approximately 600,000 acres and 12,000 head of cattle. Participants who currently own or manage livestock reported the value of the practicum to be \$37.00 increased profit per head for a total reported improved profit of \$444,000.

Practicum participants indicated that because of knowledge gained:

- 100% would be likely or very likely to use cow body condition as a management tool.
- 90% would use decision making skills gained to help them make management decisions.
- 96% reported that they would improve range management or natural resource management.
- Participants were asked to rate their use of concepts before and after the practicum:
- Unit cost of production in decision making:
  - Before = 2.0 (Seldom) After = 4.4 (often)
- Measure cow body condition scores
  - Before = 3.1 (Seldom) After = 4.4 (often)
- Monitor native range
  - Before = 3.3 (about ½ the time) After = 4.6 (almost always)

The 61 participants of the two-day Ranch Practicum Capstone Conference reported knowledge gained in business planning and successional issues. Peer coaching sessions were conducted at this conference which many said resulted in improved implementation planning efforts.

#### What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?

Three, 8-day ranch management practicum schools in 2 states. Each of the 3 partner organizations has hosted educational programs targeted to beginning producers as part of their annual meetings or as standalone events. A ranch practicum capstone conference was held in February 2014 in Sidney Nebraska. This event brought participants together from all of the ranch practicum schools and focused on business development skills.

#### How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

Extension personnel in each state have submitted impact and program reports to state extension administration. In Wyoming the impact report on the ranch practicum was chosen for publication and released to decision makers and stakeholders state wide.

#### What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

{Nothing to report}

#### Participants

##### Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students within Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	

**Actual FTE's for this Reporting Period**

Role	Non-Students or faculty	Students within Stuffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Professional	1.2	0	0	0	1.2
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0.3	0	0	0	0.3
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Computed Total	1.8	0	0	0	1.8

**Student Count by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Target Audience**

Three Ranch Management Practicum Schools were held during the 2013-14 reporting period. Each school is eight full-days of hands-on instruction. A total of 125 participants took part in the schools, of which 64 were targeted beginning producers. Partnerships in each of the three states reached an additional estimated 950 in person contacts of which 200 would be classified as beginning producers. An estimated 25% of the beginning producers reached are socially disadvantaged producers.

**Products**

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products**

**Product Type**

Audio or Video

**Description**

Video series "How to Calculate Unit Cost of Production". Can be used as a stand alone tool but primarily designed as an educational aid for producers working through gathering their economic information.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tW7h\\_35qyY&feature=share&list=PL88DBC3F060A4A745](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tW7h_35qyY&feature=share&list=PL88DBC3F060A4A745)

**Changes/Problems**

{Nothing to report}