



Western SARE

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Western SARE Grant Categories

- Research & Education
- Professional Development
- Farmer/Rancher
- Professional + Producer
- Graduate Student
- Sustainable Farm Tours

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INTEGRATED RANCH MANAGEMENT

Situation

Western ranchers and farmers, often hidebound by tradition, are faced with new challenges on an ever-changing landscape:

- Rising pressure over environmental concerns
- Increasing government regulations
- Fluctuating markets
- Rising costs for inputs

Finding ways to more effectively analyze the ranch or farm operations, set goals and formulate strategic pathways to achieve those goals could improve both profitability and quality of life for ranch and farm families.

Objectives

1. Teach ranchers/farmers a process of integrated management – Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education – in four Western states: Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming

Research & Education Grants

Title: Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education

Project Numbers: SW94-034 and SW96-010

Principal Investigator:
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Amount Funded: \$126,323



Instruction for WIRE conducted in Evanston, Wyoming.

2. Develop in-depth follow-up training in specific resource areas to meet needs identified by program participants
3. Evaluate the program in terms of adoption of management concepts and resource sustainability following implementation of the WIRE process by selected cooperators

Actions

Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education (WIRE) derives from a similar systems approach to managing agricultural operations, developed by the Texas Cooperative Extension Service, called Total Ranch Management, or TRM.

A team of Wyoming extension professionals expanded, refined and adopted TRM to apply to northern plains and mountain regions. The Wyoming team invited representa-



tives from Idaho, Montana and Utah to join a four-state team to teach ranchers and farmers a process of integrated management.

The resulting WIRE process teaches participants these critical management activities:

1. Establish strategic goals
2. Inventory resources, including the type, quantity and quality of human resources, financial resources, livestock resources and wildlife resources
3. Explore possible enterprises using existing resources
4. Develop enterprise plans considering the resources needed and



Western SARE, a USDA organization, funds grants for research and education that develop or promote some aspect of agricultural sustainability, which embraces

- *profitable farms and ranches*
- *a healthy environment*
- *strong families and communities.*

The Western Region, one of four SARE regions nationwide, is administered through Utah State University.

Western SARE:
<http://wsare.usu.edu>

National SARE
www.sare.org

INTEGRATED RANCH MANAGEMENT

- when they'll be needed
- Assess the flow of resources, especially in light of resource competition among existing and potential new enterprises
- Implement plans by acquiring resources, scheduling tasks and overseeing all aspects of the plan
- Monitor and adjust the plans to evaluate how closely they're being followed
- Replan using a yearend analysis to evaluate the performance of all ranch/farm resources.

Results

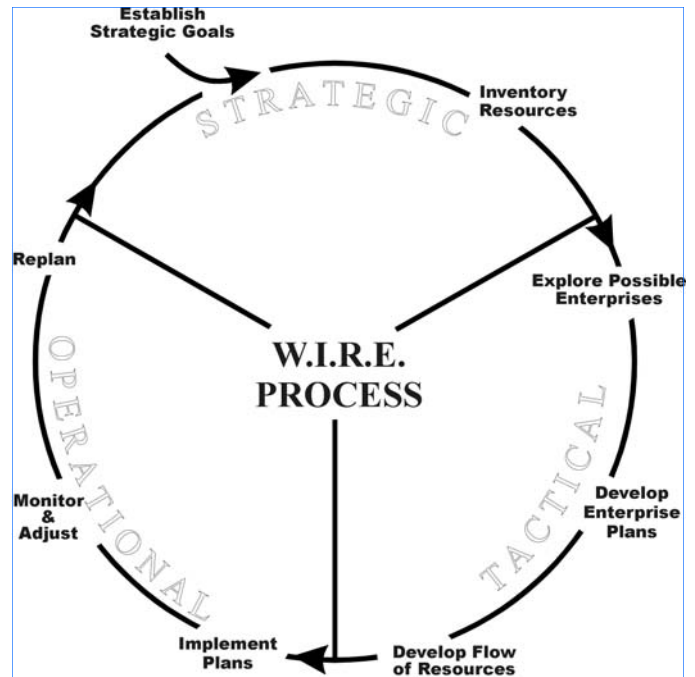
As of the project's final report in 2000, the four-state WIRE teams had offered 76 courses: 37 in Montana, 21 in Wyoming and nine each in Idaho and Utah. Courses had also been conducted in Saskatchewan, Canada, and Queensland, Australia. Evaluations showed that all participants rated WIRE courses 3.22 on a scale of 4 being the highest score.

A three-credit, online course was developed and offered through the University of Wyoming to traditional and nontraditional students and to individuals seeking borrower certification from the Farm Services Agency.

Follow-up training has been offered in Wyoming on financial management, marketing and risk management, and in Montana on property transfer and goal setting.

Wyoming WIRE helped two producers obtain Western SARE Farmer/Rancher grants to implement the WIRE process:

- Ogden Driskill, Bearlodge Cattle Co., Devils Tower, Wyoming, FW95-045, "Integrated Management to Improve Rangeland Health and Reduce Noxious Weeds"



- Tom Bruce, Bruce Ranch, Newcastle, Wyoming, FW95-067, "Initiation of Integrated Management"

A USDA Managing Change In Agriculture mini-grant funded a satellite broadcast in February 1997 that included airing of a video tape on a case study (featuring the Warbonnet Ranch operated by Rich and Betty Gray) funded by a Western SARE grant. Sixty-five sites across the United States and Canada registered to receive the broadcast.

The Utah WIRE team developed a WIRE video library to assist in teaching WIRE courses. The library includes six videos available in VHS tape and CD-ROM.

Potential Benefits

The best way to portray the benefits from the WIRE program is through participant testimonials:

- "The WIRE program is intensive and extremely valuable. Finally, we have a program that really does tie everything together. I especially appreciate the goal, goal cost and human resources concepts."
- "As a result of participating in the WIRE course, we are working together better and having family meetings."
- "Our family operation has worked out a more flexible arrangement for all those involved so there is less pressure on all involved."
- "I have learned to put my time to better use in strategic, tactical and operational uses. Thanks. I would love to do it again."

