

Educator Training for the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System

Dallas Mount (Wyoming – Professional Development Program Grant)

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Title: Educator Training for the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System

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Training in the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System was conducted across Wyoming.

Participants:
Jason Irvine, Rancher

Steven Paisley
University of Wyoming Beef Specialist

Western SARE Grant: \$9,500

Situation:

High Plains livestock producers face a number of challenges, like drought and volatile markets. At the same time, these producers are becoming more comfortable using computers to assist in ranch management, record-keeping and decision-making.

In response, the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System, WCCRMS, was developed under funding from a Western SARE Research & Education Grant (SW04-051). The computerized database was designed to meet the special needs of High Plains producers for which other record-keeping systems were inadequate.

The database rollout in 2007 and 2008 was successful, with 40 Wyoming producers requesting a copy and several initiating its use to keep herd records.

Feedback from the early adopters showed a pressing need for educators in the region to be trained in the operation and usefulness of the database so that they, in turn, can encourage producers to use the tool and to provide them with troubleshooting service.

Objectives:

1. Raise knowledge and awareness of agriculture professionals on the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System
2. Increase the level of usage of the database by agricultural producers

Actions:

A strength of the database development has been producer involvement and real-world feedback. For that reason, it was deemed important that the training include a producer who had served on the database advisory team and implemented the database on his ranch. This allowed the producer to assist with delivering the training and provide real-world examples on the benefits and challenges of implementing the database.

Fourteen participants from Wyoming and Montana, primarily from cooperative extension but also representing the Laramie County Conservation District, attended a three-day, two-night training session Feb. 25-27, 2007, near Moran, Wyoming. The training consisted of:

- A general session on the importance and potential impact of repeatable performance and economic record-keeping for livestock producers
- A session on the overview of the Wyoming Cow-Calf Record Management System
- A session on how to use the system
- A hands-on exercise requiring participants to use the system in a production year for a mock ranch

Speakers included John Patterson, Montana State University extension beef/cattle specialist, who discussed potential economic benefits of producers adopting a record management system.

During the training, participants were familiarized with the educational materials provided and given time to interact with and ask questions of the presenters.

To help participants implement their educational efforts in the field, an email listserv was created after the training to facilitate information exchange, troubleshooting and coaching.



Large numbers of producers and professionals from ag-support agencies were exposed to the new record management system.



Results:

Training the natural resource professionals from across the region in the use of the Wyoming Cow-Calf Records Management System increased their knowledge and comfort level in its usefulness and operation.

By increasing utilization, producers will be able to:

- Better manage their operations by having greater knowledge of the production and economic indicators on their ranches
- Allow them to make better management decision that can improve their economic sustainability and the quality of ranch life and the communities they help to support.

Potential Benefits:

The participants expressed satisfaction with the training, and at least two participants have taught courses to their clients using the database.

In addition, professionals who participated in the training developed new partnerships among colleagues owing to the diverse cross-section of those attending from three institutions and two states.

