

# Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education

*John Hewlett (Wyoming – Research & Education Grant)*

**Project Numbers:** SW94-034 and SW96-010

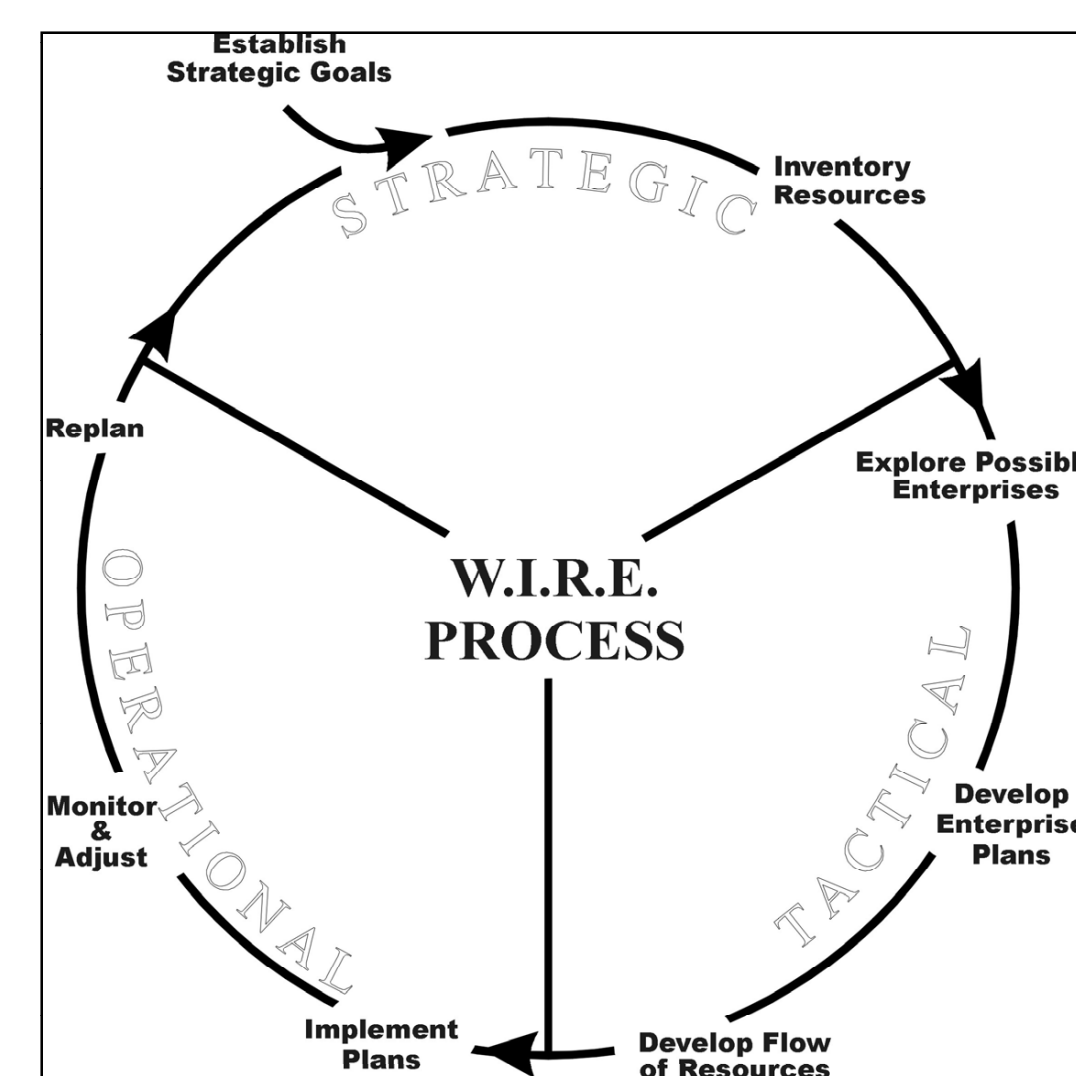
**Title:** Western Integrated Ranch/Farm Education

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**WIRE**  
WESTERN INTEGRATED  
RESOURCE EDUCATION



**Participants:**

University of Wyoming:

Gene Gade, Kent Drake, Frank Henderson, Jim Jacobs, Randy Weigel

University of Idaho:

Joel Packham, Kendall Johnson, Ken Sanders, Chad Cheyney, Jim Hawkins, Steve Harrison, Ruhn Panting, Wilson Gray, Richard Gerrard, Dave Barton

Montana State University:

Gene Surber, Mark Manoukian, Jim Moore, Dave Phillips, Ellis Williams, Kent Williams

Utah State University:

Roger Banner, Kim Chapman, Craig Burrell, Glen Jenson, Tom Lee, Verl Bagley

**Producer Cooperators:**

Richard Gray, Warbonnet Ranch, Moorecroft, Wyoming  
Bill Hopkins, Deseret Ranch, Woodruff, Utah  
Tom Bruce, Bruce Ranch, Newcastle, Wyoming  
Ogden Driskill, Bearlodge Cattle Co., Devils Tower, Wyoming

**Western SARE Grant:** \$126,323

**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



Participants work through goal setting and resource evaluation in the classroom.

Finding ways to more effectively analyze 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
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



A WIRE class near Laramie.



Instruction for WIRE conducted in Evanston, Wyoming.



Taking inventory of operation resources is a key element in the planning process.

**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 representatives 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, financial, livestock and wildlife resources
3. Explore possible enterprises using existing resources
4. Develop enterprise plans considering the resources needed and when they'll be needed
5. Assess the flow of resources, especially in light of resource competition among existing and potential new enterprises
6. Implement plans by acquiring resources, scheduling tasks and overseeing all aspects of the plan
7. Monitor and adjust the plans to evaluate how closely they're being followed
8. Re-plan 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 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 personal testimonials of participants:

*"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."*

WIRE participants are trained to analyze existing and new enterprises.

