Frontier Extension District # 11

2013 Eastern Kansas Grazing School

Frontier Extension District Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents Rod Schaub and Darren Hibdon partnered with the Eastern Kansas Extension Grazing Team to present “The 2013 Eastern Kansas Grazing School.” The two day program was held Sept 11-12, at the Fairgrounds in Ottawa. Forty-Seven livestock producers and twenty Natural Resource Conservation Service and Extension Faculty took part.

The focus of the program centered on Management Intensive Grazing (MIG). Perhaps a better term would be, Intensive Management Grazing (IMG), as information presented helped producers gain decision making skills regarding management of pastures rather than with grazing.

Topics presented at the school included: Art and Science of Grazing; Economics of Intensive Grazing; Soil and Plant Basics/Nitrogen Cycling; Animal Behavior/Animal Interaction; Resource Inventory and Stocking Rate; Fencing, Watering; Complimentary Forages; and Layout and Design of Grazing Paddocks.

Participants had the opportunity to experience several hands-on in-field exercises. The first exercise was about allocating cattle enough grazing area to four cow/calf pairs for one day of grazing. In utilizing the pasture, consideration was given to the need to consume half of the grass and leave the remaining for rest and recovery. In another exercise, four groups of producers walked a native grass pasture focusing on weed identification. During the pasture walk, the group had the opportunity to identify plants that were both positive and negative indicators to pasture health. A third outside demonstration highlighted high tensile fencing, and provided the group an opportunity to witness different construction techniques as well as products that are available. Special emphasis was placed and how to tie or crimp high tensile wire for best conductivity and longevity.

Producers attending were from several surrounding counties. These producers operated nearly 4000 acres of crop land and over 14,000 acres of pasture or hay ground. They also represented over 1325 cow/calf pairs, 370 head of stockers, over 570 meat goats, 160 sheep, and 230 head of dairy cattle.
When producers were asked what information they received that they plan to use to improve production or economics of their 2014 agricultural enterprises, some of their responses were:

“Utilize resource inventory to help improve animal performance.”
“Use portable electric fences, and use stockpiled forages instead of hay.”
“Start to add cover crops to extend the grazing season.”
“A lot of the electric fence design; a bunch on grazing design; may need to change my haying to grazing.”

When asked what changes do you plan to make in your agriculture interest in the next 1 to 5 years due to the information received, producers answered:

“Make increased use of more paddocks and rotations; may move to more grazing and less hay.”
“Plan to put in a flexible watering system.”
“Introduce rotational grazing and use more complimentary forages.”
“Try to add plant diversity to my pastures.”
“Renovating abused and neglected pastures.”

On a scale of 1 being poor and 5 being excellent the program was rated 4.65.

Other comments on the evaluation were:

“EXCELLENT opportunity to practice what was being taught by providing the field exercise.”
“One of the best seminars I have ever been to.”
“This grazing school was excellent! Informative and Inspirational!!!”
“Excellent program. Keep up this good educational opportunity.”

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

There are currently 365,000 Kansans who are uninsured. Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) about one-third will remain uninsured and two-thirds will receive insurance coverage. Of those who will receive insurance coverage, a majority of them say they don’t understand how the law will impact them. Furthermore, it’s likely they don’t understand health insurance terms, public health insurance programs, and health care options (e.g., the bronze, silver, gold, and platinum plans) available under the Affordable Care Act. K-State Research and Extension is an objective provider of information to help citizens in Kansas and beyond to understand how the Affordable Care Act affects and benefits them. Specifically, K-State Research and Extension aims to:

1. increase understanding of the Affordable Care Act among Kansas citizens;
2. provide information so that consumers can make informed personal decisions; and
3. cooperate with Kansas groups who have an interest in providing education about the Affordable Care Act.

Over 100 individuals attended one of three educational sessions co-sponsored by the Frontier Extension District this fall. Dr. Roberta Riportella, Kansas Health Foundation Professor of Community Health, Kansas State University, presented a session for small businesses (employers) about their options through the Marketplace. Other session were held for individuals. Participants stated that they learned more about the Affordable Care Act, how it affects them, and what information they need to be able to enroll on the Marketplace.