

BEEF Q & A

BEEF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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Release of the Updated Food Guidance System: MyPyramid



by Charlene Schuster, Executive Director, Montana Beef Council



The recently released food guidance system titled MyPyramid delivers a core message to help Americans keep smart nutrition simple: enjoy foods that are rich in essential nutrients first from all five food groups.


There are five food groups for a reason – no single food or food group can provide all the nutrients you need each day. MyPyramid can be an important tool to help Americans choose wisely and select more nutrient-rich

foods to lead healthier, more active lifestyles.

Given the current obesity epidemic, we know Americans haven't been following tools like the previous Food Guide and they're struggling to find simple nutrition advice that makes sense. The good news is that MyPyramid stresses the basics for good health, which means that beef easily fits into a healthy diet. It's not about diets or unrealistic recommendations.

Lean beef is a premier, naturally nutrient-rich food that provides more than nine essential nutrients. A 3-ounce serving of lean beef is an excellent source of five nutrients (protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium and phosphorus), and a good source of four nutrients (niacin, vitamin B6, iron and riboflavin) – while contributing less than 10 percent of calories to a 2,000 calorie diet. Beef's combination of nutrients can play a powerful role in many issues facing Americans today – from fueling physical activity and helping manage weight, to developing cognitive skills and aging vibrantly.

Lean beef can easily fit within guidelines for a healthy diet that is low in saturated fat. Beef is 20 percent leaner than USDA indicated just 14 years ago, and there are at least 19 beef cuts, including favorites like sirloin, tenderloin and flank steak, that meet government guidelines for lean.

We need to look at MyPyramid as much more than a motivating graphic – it's a teachable tool that must be supported by a massive, integrated education program to show Americans how to lead healthier lifestyles and individualize MyPyramid messages for their lives. 

***Beef: Questions & Answers** is a joint project between MSU Extension and the Montana Beef Council. This column informs producers about current consumer education, promotion and research projects funded through the \$1 per head checkoff. For more information, contact the Montana Beef Council at (406) 442-5111 or at beefcncd@mt.net*



Producer Profile: Wing Road Farm – Gene and Larry Billmayer

by Mike Schuldt, MSU Extension Agent, Blaine County

The Wing Road Farm is a fourth generation family ranch managed by brothers Larry and Gene Billmayer in Hogeland Montana. The ranch is located in Northern Blaine County in a region known as the “Big Flat.” Larry and Gene’s grandparents homesteaded the land and their parents still live on the place. Larry’s two sons (who make up the fourth generation) currently work for the farm.



Wing Road Farm, Hogeland Montana

In recent interview, Larry described the ranch as a diversified operation with a number of enterprises including 400 mother cows, a 2000 head feedlot, irrigated lands producing peas, barley, canola, wheat and alfalfa (for silage). The operation includes 5000 acres of dryland wheat and 5000 acres of ground enrolled in the CRP program. The ranch employs four full-time and three part-time seasonal employees as well as Larry, Gene and Gene’s wife Susan, who does the books. This makes them one of the larger employers in the area.

The irrigated silage production is used to feed 2000 lightweight calves each fall from 500-550 pounds to 900 pounds at which time they are shipped to a finishing feedlot in Wyoming. Wing Road Farm retains around 90 percent ownership in all of the calves through the feedlot until they are harvested.

Two things that have helped this enterprise succeed are a great relationship with the finishing feeder (Larry says that it is a lot like a marriage -- you need to work together and develop trust in the relationship to be successful) and having a brother who is a full time cattle buyer assisting them as their marketing specialist. Larry said that low feed costs and excellent markets in recent years have helped the effort. Low interest rates have also been a factor in making the capital-intensive feeding operation more lucrative. In the past 10 years the risk has always paid off for them.

The cost of raising a commodity crop such as wheat under the pivot irrigation is high and Wing Road Farm has found that producing irrigated forage crops and converting that to beef in the feedlot is the best production system for them. The calves are placed on feed in Wyoming when they leave the lot in Hogeland to be finished. This works well, as the transportation to the feeder and then to the packer is a fairly straight line and minimizes the transportation costs.

When asked about how they are able to find good employees, Larry said that it’s a challenge. The ranch has had success connecting with young men who have made some decisions that have gotten them in trouble and worked with them to give them a chance to get their life straight. It has been rewarding to watch a young person grow into a productive reliable employee, he said.

Using the CRP program has been a beneficial decision for the Wing Road Farm, as it has provided a source of income as well as additional forage on tough drought years. The management of the CRP income is almost a separate venture, with income and land management responsibilities for 5000 acres taking a dedicated effort by the brothers.

When asked to sum up what it is that they do to make the ranch successful, Larry immediately responded with “Hard work. A good hardworking crew to get the work done.” He quotes his grandfather who emigrated from Norway and homesteaded the home place – “I couldn’t speak English when I got here but I knew how to work hard.”

Larry continues to work hard everyday and says he wouldn’t want to live anywhere else or do anything differently.



The Feedlot at Wing Road Farm

Need quality range management info but don't know where to find it?

by Tracy Brewer, Research Assistant Professor of Range Science, Joe Skeen Institute for Rangeland Restoration, Dept. of Animal and Range Sciences, Montana State University




Making difficult range management decisions without feeling completely confident is challenging and can potentially be costly. Finding the right piece of information to supplement the knowledge you already have -- that might make a decision easier -- is sometimes even more challenging. So, where should you look for those valuable pieces of information? For those of you who are web-savvy, I know of a great Web site that houses a vast amount of information relevant to rangeland management in Montana and the western United States. For those of you who are less web-savvy, this site may be a good reason to hone your web skills!

If you are unable to contact your MSU Extension agent, university specialists, or neighbors to get answers to your range management questions, visit <http://rangelandswest.org/>. This Web site is designed to provide easy access to high quality range management information to anyone interested. The site is the product of a partnership between 19 western states. One range specialist and one agricultural librarian from each land grant university (i.e., Montana State University) was involved. The effort began in 2002, initiated by the University of Arizona, and the team has worked to improve the site for the past four years.

Information on the RangelandsWest Web site covers a wide scope of topics and includes a range (no pun intended!) of information from highly scientific documents to practical, ready-to-use information that can be applied on the ground.

Examples of topics include rangeland ecology, wildlife, riparian management, grazing management, invasive species, policy issues, range and ranch economics, ranch planning, details about the Society for Range Management, and information about and links to various natural resource management agencies. The site includes information specific to Montana and the 18 other western states involved, as well as information that applies to the western U.S. The site is searchable, which helps users find specific answers to management questions quickly.

So, the next time you are faced with a decision that you may need additional information to feel comfortable making, and you are unable to contact your MSU Extension agent, university specialist, or neighbor, visit the RangelandsWest Web site. I am confident you will find something useful. 



Hay Barley: Clean up Your Hay Fields

by Dennis Cash, MSU Extension Service 994-5688, dcash@montana.edu


Montana ranchers have really taken hold of barley and other cereals for hay crops. Since 2000, there have been over 300,000 acres of these crops, worth about \$2.7 million, annually.

Cereal forages provide good hay yields and are nutritious if harvested at the correct stage.

A major issue for most ranchers to consider is the costs associated with an annual or emergency forage, especially done every year. We recommend that the major use of these crops is as a rotation option for one or two years between stands of alfalfa or a perennial legume-grass pasture. Growing cereals allows a producer to eliminate weeds and disease problems in alfalfa ground. If hay barley or another cereal is used for annual hay, we strongly advise you to use good weed control methods pre-crop, in-crop and after harvest, so that alfalfa can be re-established onto clean ground. On irrigated ground, dandelion

and quackgrass are readily controlled by crop rotation to cereals, under good weed control.

Good weed control ahead of alfalfa will include both timely tillage and herbicide applications. Many excellent herbicides are available for cereal crops, and most can be used when cereals are cut for hay. However, a number of EPA restrictions exist when herbicides are applied to cereal forages (not necessarily due to mammalian toxicity, but a lack of data). For example, some products (Ally, Amber and Puma) have no restrictions for grazing or haying, but many do not allow hay to be harvested following treatment (Assert, Express, Harmony Extra and others). Several products require seven to 60 days prior to hay harvest. Be sure to follow label restrictions, and if you need assistance use a professional applicator service.

More detailed herbicide limitations are cited in the article by Leon Wrage and Darrell Deneke, SDSU, <http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/articles/ExEx8140.pdf> 



ASK JOHN A NUTRITION QUESTION:

How Does Water Quality Affect Cattle Performance?

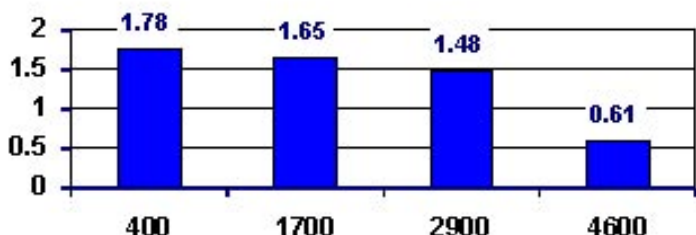
Results of a recently completed drought survey conducted by MSU Extension suggested that after seven years of drought, 40 percent of ranchers were forced to haul stock water, 43 percent drilled new wells but only 18 percent had tested their stock water for sulfate levels. I have suspected that as the drought continues, the quality of the stock water may be declining and the levels of sulfate increasing.

Dr. Trey Patterson from South Dakota State University recently summarized results of several years of research on the effects of high levels of sulfate in drinking water on cattle performance. Dr. Patterson reported that high levels of sulfate in water reduced water consumption by as much as 35 percent and feed intake by 30 percent. In addition, high sulfate consumption is suspected of causing polio (brainers). Patterson also showed that daily gains were reduced by approximately 27 percent because feed intakes were lower when the drinking water contained increasing amounts of sulfate (Table 1).

Table 1. Performance of Steers Consuming Water with Increasing Levels of Sulfate

Item	Mean Sulfate Level in the Water, ppm		
	400	3100	3900
Steer daily gain, lb	1.39	1.01	1.01
Feed intake, lb	17.6	16.5	16.8
Water intake, gal/day	12.5	10.9	11.1

Figure 1. Effect of increasing levels of sulfate in the water on steer daily gain.



Results from a second study confirmed the first study. As the level of sulfate in the water increased, daily gains decreased ($P < .05$; Figure 1). Although not significant, additional results suggested that pregnancy rates were reduced when cows consumed water with high levels (~ 3,000 ppm) of sulfate.

Patterson has suggested that if you find that your stock water is high in sulfates, you might change your management plans so that you use the poorer quality water earlier in the summer; use it when the temperatures are not elevated; mix it with better quality water; and finally consider additional water development.

My suggestion would be to work with either your county agent or feed salesmen to get your water tested before the summer months. The following table presents a guideline for evaluating water quality based on level of sulfate.


—If you would like to read more about this research, go to mbn.montana.edu. 

Table 2. Guidelines for Evaluating Stock Water Quality Based on Sulfate Levels (Patterson, 2005)

Level of sulfate, ppm	Comment
Less than 500	Safe
500-1500	Safe, but may induce trace mineral deficiencies
1500-3000	Marginal, reduced performance and health possible
3000-4000	Poor, likely to reduce performance and may cause polio
Greater than 4000	Dangerous

Reader's comments from the previous month's columns on grain processing:

I've read with interest the two previous articles on dry rolling corn and barley test weight values. Having fed cattle in both Kansas and Montana, I've seen most kinds of grain processing for finishing diets. I've never been convinced that the high cost of steam rolling corn entirely pays for the 10% improvement in feed efficiency. What if we could get the benefit of starch gelatinization from water without the high cost of steam? In other words, how much efficiency would we gain from cold soaking whole corn prior to rolling? Even if this was only done in the summer months, it might be a cheap way to improve corn digestibility.

—Montana Cattle Feeder

Reader comments continued, next page

Do you have a question for this column? Give John Paterson a call: 406-994-5562 or email at johnp@montana.edu

Response from Rick Stock,

Feed Products Manager for Cargill Sweeteners, Nebraska

In order to get gelatinization, you must have moisture & heat; water alone will not accomplish this task. I don't remember the temperature used in flaking, but likely is in the range of 160 to 180 degrees. These temperatures may be wrong, but the bottom line is that summer temps are too cool for gelatinization. Adding some water before rolling will reduce fines and improve consistency of particle size, and will subsequently reduce potential of acidosis. With today's increased cost of energy, flaking may not be cost effective. However, it depends on size of operation, design of flaking system, etc. Because most feedlots do not have engineers on their staff, there may be opportunities of increasing efficiency in the flaking operation that are not obvious to nutritionists & managers.

—Rick Stock

Response from Abe Turgeon,

Feedlot Consultant, Texas

John—I have pulled heated/soaked corn right out of the peg feeders of steam flakers and tested it for starch availability -- with disappointing results. Still need the pressure of the rolls to gelatinize the starch consistent with flaked corn. Steam flaked corn is still 5-10% better in terms of NEg than wet rolled (hot water).

—Abe Turgeon

Response from Bob Bellows,

Research Physiologist (retired), Bozeman

Dear John:

I enjoyed the recent telecommunication program presented by Drs. Lamb and Funston. We were given excellent information. During the program a study was reviewed on work in Nebraska covering rearing of replacement heifers. The conclusion of the work being that the target begin-breeding weight should be 50 – 55% of the mature cow body weight. I don't disagree that this might work with heifers raised on plenty of good grass after turn out in the spring (like they have in the Nebraska Sandhills), but after 5-6 years of drought in Montana I believe we need to be pretty careful about that 50-55% figure.

Bob Short and I did a study at Miles City (Short and Bellows, Jour. Anim. Sci., 1971) where we fed crossbred Hereford - Angus heifers to gain 0.6, 1.0 or 1.5 lb. daily during a 153 day wintering period. Heifers were turned out May 7 onto native range pastures when there was 6 inches of new growth on Western wheatgrass. All heifers were run together for the remainder of the 2-year study. Breeding was by A. I. during a 60-day breeding period with all heifers being bred to the same Angus sire. This study was before the target weight concept came on board so we were looking at the effect of winter gain only on puberty, subsequent pregnancy rate, and dystocia. The average puberty ages for the 0.6, 1.0 and 1.5 lb. daily gain heifers were 433, 411, and 388 days and pregnancy rates were 50%, 86% and 87%, respectively.

The 2-yr-old calving data was also interesting. Differences between the 1.0 and 1.5 lb gain heifers were minimal so we combined those two groups when we summarized the calving data. The average precalving body weights and pelvic areas of the 0.6 and the combined 1.0 and 1.5 lb. gain heifers were 807 and 922 lb. and 240 and 252 sq. cm., respectively. We assisted deliveries in 46% and 36% of the 0.6 and the combined 1.0 and 1.5 gain heifers. So not only did winter gain have a major effect on puberty and subsequent pregnancy rate, but we “stunted” the heifers in terms of precalving size resulting in an increase in assisted calvings.

Let's take an example of the target weight concept assuming heifers we select for replacements weigh 500 lb at weaning. If we

want a 1200 lb mature cow (the cow weights in the Nebraska study) and we use the 50% or 55% target weight, this gives a 600 or 660 lb heifer at the beginning of the breeding season. Assume the heifers were weaned November 1 and the begin-breed date is May 1 giving us about a 180 day wintering period. This example means the heifers must gain 100 or 160 pounds during that 180 day period. Dividing 100 or 160 by 180 gives us average daily gains of 0.6 or 0.8 lb per day. Those gains fall in the range of the 0.6 lb gain group in the Miles City study which had the poor reproduction. You will get compensatory gains when the low winter-gain heifers are turned on grass, but that doesn't always cure the problem. The compensatory daily gains we found from May 7 to June 15 (the beginning of breeding) averaged 1.3 and 1.0 lb for the 0.6 and the combined 1.0 and 1.5 lb groups, respectively.

The figures I have used may not be the best (Montana cows will probably be in the 1300-1350 lb range) so you can come up with any kind of example you want by substituting other values for weaning weight, mature cow weight and length of the wintering period. In addition, heifers in our study were lighter than heifers you see now, but I hope this discussion gives you an idea why I am concerned we must be very sure the correct target weight is selected. No, it does not pay to over feed, but underfeeding can result in disaster.

Now, add breeding heifers 20 days before the cow herd, plus the Miles City data showing higher conception rates if heifers are cycling before the breeding season begins so they aren't bred at the puberal (first) estrus. This means feeding for an adequate target weight becomes even more critical. I believe that 50% is too low and 55 to 60% a more realistic minimum for our Montana cattle.

Thanks, John, for allowing me to comment.

— Bob Bellows

Abstract of the research to which Dr. Bellows refers

(provided by Ritchie et. al. from Michigan State)

Developing replacement heifers to 50 or 55 percent of mature body weight

For many years, it was recommended that yearling heifers should be developed to reach 60-65% of their projected mature body wt. (MBW) prior to the start of their first breeding season. Recent research has indicated that this recommendation may be lowered to 55% of MBW without jeopardizing first- and second-calf conception rates. In a 3-yr. Univ. of Nebraska study, a total of 261 March-born heifer calves were developed to reach either 55% of MBW prior to a 45-day breeding season, or 50% of MBW prior to a 60-day breeding season.

Extending the breeding season by 15 days for the heifers developed to 50% of MBW resulted in pregnancy, calving, and weaning rates that were comparable to those of the heifers that were developed to 55% of MBW. Moreover, a reduction in development costs in the 50% system more than offset the reduced income from lighter weaning weights caused by later calving dates, resulting in lower costs to produce one pregnant yearling heifer or 2-year-old cow. These results suggest that developing heifers to 50% of MBW prior to their first breeding season would appear to be a feasible alternative for some producers.

(Creighton et al. 2005. Univ. of Nebraska Beef Cattle Report MP 83-A)

Survey Results

Ranchers Opinions on Seven Years of Drought

John Paterson, Extension Beef Specialist

It seems like there is not a long term forecast that the drought will soon be over. In the February issue of Beef: Questions and Answers newsletter, I asked the following questions of the readers. This was not intended to be a scientific survey, but rather a questionnaire to gauge rancher's opinions on the drought. Approximately 2500 surveys were sent to the readership and about 200 were returned. The survey emphasized management of the cow herd, feed resources and sources of water.

Summary of Ranchers Opinions on the drought:

Cow Herd Management

- Cow herd numbers have been reduced.
- Conception rates were not consistently reduced.
- 50% of ranchers early weaned their calves.
- Few cows were shipped out of state with retained ownership.

Feed Resources

- The majority of ranchers purchased more hay than normal.
- The majority of ranchers grazed hay fields instead of normal haying operations.
- Ranchers fed hay for a longer period of time than normal.

Water Resources

- 40% of ranchers were forced to haul stock water, and;
- 43% drilled new wells.
- Only 18% of ranchers responding answered that they had tested their stock water for sulfate levels. This should be done if there is a reduction in calf performance.

We appreciate the MSU Extension County Agents and Feed Industry Nutritionists who provided questions for this survey.

Table 1. Summary of ranchers opinions on dealing with drought in Montana

Cow Herd:	% Yes	% No
Have you reduced your cow inventory	75	25
Has the drought stress reduced your weaning weight	46	54
Has the drought stress reduced your conception rates?	30	70
Have you early weaned your calves?	50	50
If you early weaned, at what age were calves weaned?	4-7 mo.	
Have you kept fewer heifer calves for replacements?	60	40
Did the cows go into the winter months in poorer body condition than normal?	31	69
Did you ship cows out of state and retain ownership?	8	92
Feed Resources	% Yes	% No
Did you lease extra grass for the cow herd?	51	49
Did you purchase more hay than normal?	65	35
Did you graze CRP pastures?	27	73
Did you graze hay fields instead of normal haying operation?	64	36
Did you feed hay for a longer period of time than normal?	74	26
Did you feed any non-traditional feeds such as straw, wheat midds, corn gluten feed, distillers dried grains?	50	50
Have you observed an increase in problem weed species in your pastures and rangelands (fringed sagewort, alyssium, etc.?)	65	35
Will you change your weed management program?	49	51
Has some of your perennial grass died due to the drought?	65	35
Will you have to reseed pastures?	36	64
Water Resources	% Yes	% No
Have you had to haul stock water?	40	60
Have you drilled new wells?	43	57
Have you installed a pivot or wheel line?	17	83
If you had limited irrigation water, did you change management strategies to compensate?	49	51
Have you tested your stock water for sulfate levels?	18	82

Final Question *(Only some of the responses are presented)*

Besides the lack of water, what is the biggest issue you have seen arise from the drought on your operation?

The greater cost of feeding—we have left replacement heifers in a feedlot longer than we usually would; we are considering selling the light end of the heifers this spring. • The fear of not knowing what to do next has effected the economy of Beaverhead County • The lack of forage for cattle...sell?...find pasture? And the long term effects of continued use of stressed forages • Reduced our ability to rotate pastures thru the summer months & water availability dictated rotation rather than grass management. • Overall health of the pastures has decreased leading to poorer condition of the cows & we have had to purchase additional feed for the cows while on pasture to keep the weight of the calves up. • Raising lack of feed stuffs and poor condition of pasture. • Decrease in herd size during this period of high prices. Over- grazing of pastures and range • Stress- people relationships suffer- cash flow suffers- more surveys to fill out. • Stress- it really gets you down after seeing brown all the time; looking for other work; keeping cows moved; feeding 9 months out of the year) • Damage to existing pastures, increase in weeds, such as halogeton. • I'm going to sell out • Poorer range conditions especially around the water. Where there is no water range conditions are better. Lack of money from buying extra feed. • Cow #s have been reduced to level where it is not profitable to ranch no matter what prices are. • Increase of weeds in pasture • Possible long-term effects on grass; profitability is difficult because we have less pounds to sell, but costs are equal or

Is Your Ranch Certified for Environmental Stewardship?

Tell the world that ranchers care for the environment



by Dr. Jeff Mosley, Professor of Range Science and Extension Range Management Specialist, Department of Animal and Range Sciences, Montana State University—Bozeman

Have you ever thought to yourself, “I’m so frustrated with the public’s negative perception of ranching and its effects on the environment. Don’t people realize that ranchers depend on healthy land? Don’t people know that we must take care of the environment if we want to remain in business? If only there was a way that we could tell our story to the urban public!”

Similar thoughts and wishes spurred the creation of Undaunted Stewardship®, a statewide partnership among Montana’s agricultural and conservation organizations that is led by MSU, the Montana Stockgrowers Association and the federal Bureau of Land Management.

A principal goal of Undaunted Stewardship® is to educate the urban public about the compatibility of ranching and environmental values. This message is delivered via many outlets, such as radio and television, magazines, newspapers and the worldwide Web.

But the educators, writers, and photographers working on your behalf need ammunition to successfully carry this message to the public. They need examples of real people raising livestock on the land while simultaneously taking care of Montana’s open spaces, abundant wildlife, and clean air and water. Certification as an Undaunted Land Steward is one tangible way that livestock producers can get involved and provide real-life examples to a skeptical public.

What is Undaunted Land Steward Certification?

This no-fee, completely voluntary, and non-regulatory program publicly recognizes farms and ranches that are doing a good job taking care of their grazing lands. It is the only agricultural land certification program of its kind in the U.S. The first 26 certified ranches were announced in 2004, comprising more than 500,000 acres of Montana’s landscape. Another 40 ranches from across

the state are currently progressing toward certification, including ranches large and small, long-time family outfits, new absentee owners and everything in between.

How does a farm or ranch become certified?

Certification begins with a simple phone call to the MSU Extension Range Management office (994-3415). Soon after, an MSU Extension grazing specialist will visit your home or office and answer your questions about certification.

Next, we will work together with you to help prepare your confidential grazing plan, and, if needed, offer technical suggestions to help make your ranch more environmentally sustainable, and more profitable. MSU personnel also will work with you to establish a photo-monitoring program to help you determine whether your grazing plan is working and whether adjustments may be needed in the future.

What does a certified ranch receive?

In addition to their written grazing plan and monitoring program, Certified Undaunted Land Stewards receive a resource kit of grazing management publications, a wooden plaque and a metal roadside sign to help tell the world that livestock producers really do care for the environment.

All Certified Undaunted Land Stewards also receive the personal satisfaction of knowing that they are doing something positive to help educate the American public. Every acre of land that becomes certified reinforces the fact that Montana’s farm and ranch families are preserving the best of Montana while producing food and fiber in ways that are environmentally sustainable. I hope you and your family will consider joining the growing number of Certified Undaunted Land Stewards.



higher than before • Coal bed methane development along with drought is an insane way to handle drought-depleted aquifers
 • Not enough grass, short grass & weeds on about 8 months of grass 10 cows per section . Increase in weeds & our seeded fields are beginning to lose plant density- may have to re-seed spring pastures • Pasture rotation to keep cattle on the move so we don’t overgraze • More wildlife on our land • Cost of maintenance & price of fuel/to compensate for calf & cow retail price • Long-term range conditions will affect profit levels from cattle income • More grasshoppers; stressed range plants will take some time to recover
 • Damage to desirable grasses & dryland alfalfa • Nothing grows except dust and weeds • Rethinking traditional thoughts- seeding grain ground to grass; develop more & larger H2O facilities (water 500 pair); short duration high-intensity grazing; graze wild hay meadows; calve later, calves start last of April; next year, start in May; go to grass range, quit haying • Fewer cow numbers & missing

Reader Survey— continued from page 7



MSU Feedlot Management Students Visit with Gary Vogel for Vogel Feedlot in the Billings Valley”

out on the good markets, finding good quality hay to buy & having to buy so much of it • Grasshoppers, stress on non-native grasses; we are in process of re-seeding old farm ground that was put in wheatgrass pasture and alfalfa; alfalfa stands next to cheat grass last 2 years • The lack of funds due to added expenses (drilling a well & buying feed); the lack of income due to not being able to keep replacement stock • It isn't much worse than NAFTA and the rest of gov. regulation • Increased work load to keep irrigated ground producing & managing to compensate for poor grass and water • I will sell coming yearling heifers unless I find some grasses • Even with light grazing there is a continued degradation of native range • More BLM activity, less grass; mainly the stress it puts on a person wondering if it will ever rain • Having spring grazing • Lack of grass • Hay production • Higher stress & anxiety levels, more meddling in the operation by BLM, Dept St. Lands, etc., who all seem to have the answers, but really are quite ignorant • Pipe lines supply enough water; the biggest issue is lack of forage & an increase in club moss & cactus • Reduced carrying capacity of pastures • Decrease in desirable grass plants • Rising cost of everything else w/a smaller herd to pay for operation • Family stress

(Due to space constraint, only some of the responses are presented)



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