



extension  
**IMPACTS**

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## How to manage horse grazing on small acreages

### **Situation:**

Subdivision of agricultural land, especially rangeland, into small acreages continues to occur within Johnson and Sheridan counties. Many of these acreages are grazed by horses whose owners have little or no experience in grazing management, especially in a semiarid region, and thus are in need of grazing management information.

The need to address this issue has been identified by both the Sustainable Management of Rangeland Resources and the Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Systems initiative teams of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. They formed a joint issues team to address this subject. In addition, the Big Horn Mountain Extension Area Advisory Board members have reiterated the need for educational programs within this area.

Three evening classes were held in Buffalo and Sheridan in March and April 2008. Classes were approximately two hours long, and topics presented were: Class 1) Grass growth and regrowth; Class 2) Time and timing of grazing; and Class 3) Balancing forage demand with forage supply. PowerPoint slide presentations were used at each class with clicker technology to achieve active participation by attendees. In addition, for the third class, participants were asked to estimate their animals' annual forage needs and the amount of land necessary to meet the need based on what they had learned. An average of eight individuals attended each class in Buffalo and 11 in Sheridan.

In June 2008, two separate early-evening field sessions were held where participants had the opportunity to learn the common range plants of this region and a hands-on activity on how to estimate the amount of useable forage in a pasture and calculate stocking rate. Unfortunately, due to late afternoon thunderstorms both days, attendance was poor with a total of five people.

## Impacts:

Participants indicated that, from attending these classes, they had learned the importance of not allowing grazing in the same place at the same time each year and how to determine proper stocking to improve and/or sustain pasture forage productivity. Attendees stated that changes in management they planned to make included fencing to implement a grazing rotation, monitoring grass growth and residual leaf material so overgrazing does not occur, and include use of their corrals in their grazing plans so pasture forage supply can be balanced with their horses' forage needs.

Participants were provided an evaluation form in which they were asked to indicate their knowledge of the subject matter prior to and after the classes on a 1 to 5 rating with 1 having little knowledge and 5 being very knowledgeable. They were also asked if the overall workshop met their expectations, if their questions were effectively answered, and if they will use the provided information on their property. Knowledge level of participants prior to the grass growth and re-growth class averaged 2.9 and afterward 4.2; for the time and timing class, 2.5 prior and 4.3 afterward. More than 97 percent of the participants indicated the workshop met their expectations. With regard to their questions being effectively answered and using what they learned on their property, the average response for both was 4 out of a possible score of 5.

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