

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) at the University of Nebraska

RREA programs in Nebraska help forest land and rangeland owners manage and use the forest and range resources in ways that sustain the resource and provide optimum economic value. RREA funds enable Nebraska Cooperative Extension to cooperate with numerous partners to deliver education programs to land owners and operators. Examples of partners include NRCS, Sandhills Task Force, Grazing Lands Coalition, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Nebraska Forest Service, and many others. The RREA dollars enable the Nebraska Forest Service and the School of Natural Resources to support 0.7 FTE of forestry education programming in Nebraska.

In recent years RREA funds were used to:

- < Organize the annual Central Region Forest Stewardship Conference for nearly 1000 forest landowners since 1998.
- < Develop a Primary Processor and Timber Buyer Directory.
- < Develop a major website (www.snr.unl.edu/forestry) focusing on extension forestry in Nebraska, and containing a specialty forest product market information system.
- < Support Tree Care Workshops and a Nebraska Wild Fruit and Nut Jam which focused on specialty forest products.
- < Support the Nebraska Ranch Practicum for the last five years. This program is a “hands-on” learning experience designed to emphasize a "systems" approach to livestock and rangeland resource management. The curriculum integrates animal, rangeland management and economic considerations to improve the ability of participants to make management decisions and monitor progress toward their goals. From 2000 through 2004, Practicum participants influenced decisions on 5,500,245 acres of upland range, meadow and seeded hayland and cropland; 1,787,551 head of cattle and 2,620 people through their ownership, educational and consulting activities. Participating producers estimated the impact of the Practicum at \$26.40 per head in their own herds. The average cow herd size per participating producer was 942 head, resulting in an average benefit of \$24,789 per ranch.
- < Support programs at the Nebraska Range Youth Camp, Range Judging contests, and Youth Field Days. Participation in these youth programs has been increasing with over 1,100 students participating in 2004. These youth programs increase student awareness and knowledge of rangeland resources and improve their stewardship skills.

“After 20 years of continuing education programming, I was amazed at the quality of technical information and the confidence I gained in evaluating management alternatives” – Dr. Nancy Peterson, rancher and veterinarian, Ranch Practicum Participant



Grazing and livestock management strategies are discussed during a Ranch Practicum session.

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