

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Managers gain insight into creating healthy and productive grazing systems

### AT A GLANCE

Attendees gain insight into management practices that incorporate a holistic approach to improve pasture health and productivity.

### The Situation

Idaho has vast amounts of pasture and rangeland. In fact, 41.7 percent of farmland in Idaho is considered pastureland (2017, Census of Agriculture). Pastures and rangelands provide the cheapest feed source for Idaho's livestock industry. In contrast, winter feeding costs are the largest expense producers face on a yearly basis. Extending the grazing season is the best way to reduce feed expenses. Intensifying grazing management is the key to maintaining healthy pastures which is essential for extending the grazing season. Pasture managers need access to information that will help them make informed decisions resulting in healthy productive grazing systems.

### Our Response

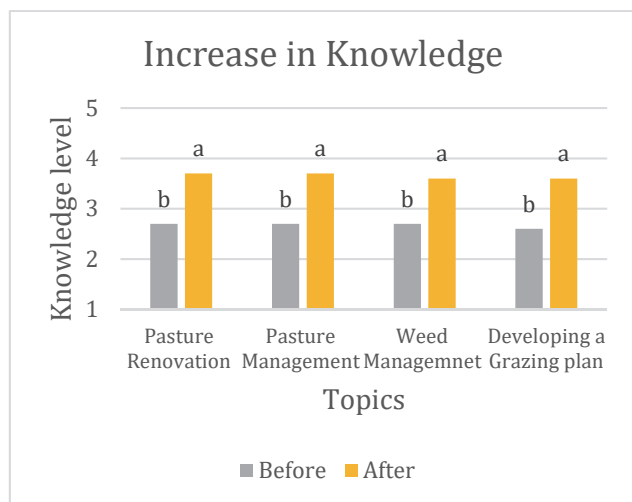
Extension educators Justin Hatch, Jonathon Hogge, Bracken Henderson, Joseph Sagers, Ronald Patterson and Les Nunn collaborated with C-A-L Ranch Stores to offer pasture management workshops in Rexburg, Idaho Falls and Preston. Presenters discussed an array of topics including pasture renovation, grazing management, weed management and developing a grazing plan.



Justin Hatch presenting at the Idaho Falls pasture management workshop. Photo by Jon Hogge.

### Program Outcomes

Participants included male and female producers who collectively managed 24,311 acres. Change in participants' knowledge was assessed using an end-of-workshop evaluation. Data was analyzed using an analysis of variance with  $P \leq 0.05$ . Results indicated a significant increase in knowledge among participants for each topic (see Figure).



Attendees also reported that they planned to implement many management practices learned during the workshop including: using integrated pest management, applying appropriate herbicides (right chemical, right time, right rate), selecting the best grass and legume varieties to achieve management goals, testing soils to identify limiting nutrients, using rotational grazing, increasing stock density to increase utilization and using electric fences to subdivide pastures. As participants implement these management practices, they will be able to maximize production on the acres they operate.

## The Future

Some of the most often-asked questions of Extension educators related to pasture management are: “What varieties should I plant?,” “How do I make my grass last longer?,” “How do I manage the weeds?,” and “How should I irrigate my pasture?” This course was designed to answer common questions that producers ask. A yearly evaluation is given to guide topic selection for future classes. Additional topics suggested for future workshops include:

- Inter-seeding into an existing stand
- Management intensive grazing
- Extending the grazing season by stockpiling feed
- Grazing multiple animal species
- Economic comparison between confined feeding and grazing
- Selecting a mixture of species to plant in dryland and irrigated settings

We feel that there is a definite need to address these important topics at future workshops.

## Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- C-A-L Ranch Stores

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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