



Cattle Call

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How Effective is Mob Grazing?

Over the last few years, mob grazing has been a hot topic where any sort of grazing lands are concerned. Mob grazing is defined as a rotational grazing system in which stock densities exceed 100,000 lbs of bodyweight per acre, rotations are one day or less, and there are at least 45 days of rest for grazed areas (Hancock, 2017). To put this in perspective, a stocking density that high would consist of at least 100 heifers weighing 1,000 lbs/ac.

The idea behind this grazing system is to put a lot of stress on your grass for a very short amount of time. This type of grazing event would, to put it loosely, send your perennial grass back to the beginning of its vegetative growth stage, meaning that it would have to completely regrow before it entered a reproductive phase and went to seed. This means that you could graze some species twice in one growing season before it ever went to seed, because it essentially went through the vegetative growth stage twice. However, in order for this regrowth to occur, you have to get ample moisture at just the right time...which doesn't happen a whole lot in eastern Colorado (2017 excluded).

Mob grazing has worked fairly well in places like sub-irrigated meadows or areas that receive more than 30 inches of rain. However, recent studies suggest that even mob grazing isn't all it's cracked up to be. A study conducted by UNL in north-central Nebraska showed that for 4 out of 5 years, steers in a traditional rotational grazing (RG) system (10-20 days per pasture stocked at 10,000 lbs per acre) actually gained 1.5 pounds/head/day, while the steers in the mob system only averaged 0.4 pounds/head/day (Hancock, 2017). Another study, conducted in both Michigan and Nebraska, found that up to 56% of forage was trampled in a mob system, while only 19% was trampled in an RG system, with approximately 10% more forage being consumed in the RG system vs the mob system (Hancock 2017).

These studies also looked at differences in residue/mulch on the soil surface, and the results showed an average of 2% loss in the mob system (similar to the ungrazed control) but a 7-12% increase in several RG systems. And last but not least, the mob system consistently returned less \$/acre than the RG system. In fact, it was estimated that the mob system only had a 12% chance of returning more than \$25/ac, while an RG system rotating every 10 days with only 5,000 lbs/acre had a 75% chance of netting \$25/ac or more.

Does this mean that mob grazing shouldn't be used? No, absolutely not. I do believe it has some benefits in certain situations. Take weed control, for example. It's been found that using mob grazing 3 years in a row on Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), early in the spring when it's still green, will actually knock the Cheatgrass back. I've also seen it work on Iris in a sub-irrigated meadow in the San Luis Valley.

While it's obvious that many more studies about mob grazing need to be done in drier areas, I think it's safe to say that those of us on the arid plains of Colorado should proceed with caution when experimenting with mob grazing.

-Andee Leininger, Range Management Specialist

Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) has an agenda all too familiar to U.S. ranchers. The environmental group, World Wildlife Fund (WWF aka World Wide Fund for Nature), seeks to fundamentally change the entire beef industry through the GRSB. WWF's website states that they are a founding member of the GRSB and are "actively involved in the newly established U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef as well as related pilot projects to develop key sustainability indicators and methods to verify sustainable beef." Their goal is to transform the beef supply chain by influencing the "companies [which] control twenty- five percent of all fifteen of the most significant commodities that threaten biodiversity" (Clay, 2010). The WWF claims beef and biofuels are two of these threatening commodities. (Clay, 2010).

A 2012 WWF press release listed GRSB founding members as "AllFlex, Cargill, Elanco, Grupo de Trabalho da Pecuaria Sustentavel (GTPS), JBS, McDonald's, Merck Animal Health, National Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Alliance, Roundtable for Sustainable Beef Australia, Solidaridad, The Nature Conservancy, Walmart and World Wildlife Fund." The 2014 UN's Climate Summit Agriculture Action One-Year Report recognized McDonald's commitment to "holistically transform the entire beef value chain".... In a 2011 BEEF Issues Quarterly interview, WWF Senior V.P. of Markets, Jason Clay stated: "We've come to a time where a farmer or rancher can't simply . . . point to their own performance and show how good they are and expect to somehow avoid the ire of people who look at the whole system."

At TED Global 2010, Clay addressed whether producers should have to provide proof of sustainable production in order to sell beef to suppliers and whether sustainability is a pre-competitive issue. In 2014, Clay wrote, "Simply put, sustainability is a pre- competitive issue." (WWF, Fall 2014). In 2010, Clay said, "If sustainability is a pre-competitive issue, then we need collusion to address it." (Clay, 2010, 8:30). Collusion? Webster's Dictionary provides a single definition for collusion: a "secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose."

Clay speculated that, "we can actually impact 40-50 percent of global [beef] production by working with a carefully selected group." (Clay, 2010). A conclusion reached after he observed the failure of the organic movement to transition all of agricultural to organic production. He felt they had relied on a group too large to adequately "inform" - 6.9 billion consumers. Clay estimated they could impact the entire beef supply chain by focusing on the smallest group, packers and retailers. "If we change those companies [that control 70 of trade for the 15 identified commodities] and the way they do business, then the rest will happen automatically." As for any companies that didn't agree to participate, they would "twist arms" and "use whatever leverage we have available to bring them to the table." (Clay, 2010). In Brazil, the Nature Conservancy (TNC) is also working towards transformation. "A victory here could ignite global change in beef production." TNC's theory involves developing a sustainable livestock plan while utilizing their "expertise in satellite imagery mapping systems to help the government monitor land use and Forest Code compliance . . . [TNC] is working with Wal-Mart in Brazil to buy meat from Marfrig, who only buys from deforestation-free ranches." (TNC, n.d.).

The real threat to sustainability for American ranchers is excessive government regulation under the Endangered Species Act and the Environmental Protection Agency. Other issues impacting American ranchers and farmers are the estate tax, rising land values, urban encroachment, manipulation of the live cattle market, and lack of protection and labeling for USA-raised beef. Meanwhile, government funded NGOs operate freely, largely without accountability, with agendas aimed directly at dismantling the free enterprise of the American beef industry.

Can the WWF be trusted to determine the amount of Earth's total resources or accurately predict the future? The big problem with the sustainability agenda, is the lengthy track record of failed environmental predictions. In the 1970s, environmental science claimed Earth would soon enter an ice age due to manmade global cooling, basing their models on temperatures trends. Another consensus reached through "sound" science predicted the Earth's inability to support an estimated population of 7 billion by 2000. The projected 7 billion wasn't reached until 2012 with the earth still supporting human life today. Scientists claimed mass starvation worldwide was to occur by the year 2000 with only North America, Africa and Western Europe unaffected. Additionally, natural resources like oil, nickel and copper were predicted to be depleted by the year 2000. Yet recent fracking has made it possible to access new oil reserves in shale formations.

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National Monuments see Reduction in Acres Under Trump Administration

President Trump traveled to Salt Lake City, UT on December 4 to sign two proclamations that will scale back Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

According to CNN, The New York Times, NBC News and USA Today, Bears Ears will be cut by 85% from roughly 1.3 million acres to approximately 200,000 acres. Grand Staircase-Escalante will be cut by about 39% from roughly 1.6 million acres to 1 million acres.

The cut-back, which will go into effect 60 days from the signing, will actually split the 2 monument areas into 5 smaller monuments. Management of the lands no longer designated will revert back to previous management agencies, namely United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Therefore, it is not a land grab like some liberals have been calling it. The President was simply turning it back over to the USFS and BLM, which therefore allows the public to use the land again for recreation, grazing, etc.

Both monuments were created by Presidents using the 1906 Antiquities Act, which states that monument areas should be "the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected". President Trump says that both Presidents Obama and Clinton overstepped their authority when creating Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante. Trump also stated, "With the action I'm taking today, we will not only give back your voice over the use of this land, we will also restore your access and enjoyment. Public lands will once again be for public use, because we know that people who are free to use their land and enjoy their land are the people most determined to conserve their land (www.usatoday.com)".

This decision came after a review of 150 monuments was completed by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. Zinke also suggested that Trump "seek congressional authorization to turn over the remaining landmarks to be co-managed with Native American tribes (www.usatoday.com)".

Some Native American tribes and conservation groups have vowed to fight this decision in court, while residents (including The Aneth Chapter of the Navajo Nation in San Juan County) who actually live near the monuments are praising Trump's proactive approach at reducing government overreach.

90-Day ELD Waiver to be Issued to Ag Haulers

According to articles posted on www.truckinginfo.com and www.capitalpress.com, the Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (DOT-FMCSA) is granting livestock haulers a 90-Day waiver from the Electronic Logging Device ruling.

Initially, the ruling stated that commercial truckers could log 11 hours of driving, but then must stop and rest for 10 hours. There were no exemptions for drivers that needed to haul livestock more than 11 hours.

In August, an exemption was issued allowing private agricultural commodity drivers, who are operating completely within 150-air miles from the place of origin, to bypass the work and driving hours. However, this exemption would only be applicable "during planting and harvesting periods as determined by the State (www.fmcsa.dot.gov)", and it still didn't address long hauls.

After considerable push-back from cattle, pork, fish and bee organizations, the DOT announced on November 20 that it is giving livestock haulers a 90-day waiver from the regulations that will go into effect December 18.

These organizations are still petitioning for a one-year exemption, and DOT has said they are willing to work with livestock groups to edit the language of the new ruling in order to consider livestock health. Livestock haulers will be required to carry the waiver form with them on long hauls during the 90-day period.

As of December 4, the FMSCA has not updated their website to reflect the decision of the 90-day waiver.

Calendar and Events Page

February 7th, 2018: Legislative Day at the Capitol

-Each year on CICA Legislative Day at the Capitol, members of the Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association have the chance to spend a little time with legislators getting acquainted, asking questions and sharing views. We encourage as many members to attend as possible so that legislators know we are indeed interested in current legislation and we are serious about having our opinions heard. The next legislative day will be held February 17th from 9AM - 5 PM in the basement of the Capitol Building, room 0109.

January 17th, 2018: Ag Council Meet and Greet

-Ag Council members will have a meet and greet with Legislators on the 17th at 7AM outside the Old Supreme Court Chambers in the Capitol Building. Regular Ag Council meetings are held in the Capitol, HR 109. Monthly meetings are as follows:

-Jan 31

-February 14th and 28th

-March 21st and 28th (March 21st is also Ag Day at the Capitol)

-April 11th and 25th (March 25th will be the last mtg unless otherwise determined)

July 20th-21st, 2018: CICA Annual Convention

-The 2018 annual convention will be held July 20th-21st in the San Luis Valley. The venue and agenda are TBD, more information will be available in the next newsletter.

Monthly Board Meetings

-Board meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month. If any of our members have issues or concerns that they want to be addressed, they should contact their District Representative. The DR will be more than happy to discuss these concerns at the next board meeting.

In an effort to keep in touch with our members as well as educate the public and our policymakers, we recently renovated and expanded our web site. The address is the same: www.coloica.com . CICA is also on Facebook www.facebook.com/coloica . AND we are excited about a totally new and improved email system which we just implemented. If you would like to receive our email communications and they aren't currently making it to your inbox, contact Julie at juliesumpter2@gmail.com. If you are not getting a hard copy of the newsletter and would like one, just call or text Julie at 719-980-0460. Having just listed our latest communication efforts all involving technology, just know that we still prefer sitting down over a cup of coffee with our members, discussing issues, proposing solutions and just getting to know one another.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello Members,

First, I would like to thank everyone who voted for me to become President of the Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association. It is truly an honor to represent independent cattle producers. Our organization is unique in that the cattle producers are the ones who create new policy. That policy goes to a vote of the membership, all of whom own cattle. In 2017 cattle producers saw much better market prices and let's hope for stronger market prices in 2018.

The board and I have been busy beginning to plan 2018. This starts with our annual legislative day which is to be held in Denver at the Capitol on Wednesday, February 7th. Our 13th annual convention will be July 20th and 21st in the San Luis Valley area with a location TBD.

Beef sustainability was a highly overused buzz word in 2017 and will continue to be overused. CICA has been working diligently to educate our membership on the realities of beef sustainability. We feel it is dangerous that other groups have partnered with the World Wildlife Fund to help define what sustainable beef is. The ultimate end goal of a group such as the World Wildlife Fund is to put us out of business.

My challenge to you, our members, is to go out and get one new member in 2018.

Cody Jolly
CICA President



Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Con't from page 2

The names of industry organizations involved in these roundtables are used as endorsements to further the WWF's agenda. Through participation, organizations suggest an acceptance of the opinion that current beef production is not sustainable in some way. An opinion with which many multigenerational ranchers disagree. The sheer coexistence of nature and ranching for centuries disproves that beef is a threat to biodiversity. To the contrary, ever-improving, thriving ranches indicate that cattle are healthy contributors to the biodiversity of the environment in which they live. Despite environmental propaganda, and in the face of demeaning rhetoric questioning their intelligence, ranchers as a whole continue to be most excellent stewards of the land on which their livelihoods depend.

Like many so-called "locally" and "stakeholder" driven initiatives, the GRSB and national roundtables were not created due to consumer demand, but rather by environmental organizations who seek to control what is not theirs. Clay laid out the plan at TED Global 2010, identifying the target companies, WalMart, McDonalds, JBS, Cargil, and others, then helped found the GRSB and national roundtables. Clay's complete presentation can be found on www.youtube.com or www.ted.com (video and transcript). The beef industry should not sit at any table with environmentalists who use greenwashing and collusion to get what they want. It is more pressing than ever to become well educated about the agenda of these "stakeholders" and to speak up as producers to policymakers and industry leaders about the collusion taking place in our industry.

**This article has been edited for length. Thank you to Elisabeth Erickson-Noe for lending this outstanding article to the CICA Newsletter. The full length article was published in the Fort Morgan Times 12/21/16. You can find it on the Fort Morgan Times website, or simply google it.*

If any of our members have suggestions for article topics, or suggestions about the newsletter as a whole, please contact the Newsletter Editor. Thank you!

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