

Rosebud County Range Committee

December 12, 2007~Forsyth USDA Office~7:00 pm

Attendees: Laurie Kelley, Bobbi Vannattan, Amy Adler, Jewel Davenport, Doug McRae, Dave Davenport, Rocky Schwagler, Donny Bailey, Mark Mees, Jackie Manley, Ron ? and Tyler Larsen.

Minutes: The minutes of the last known meeting (May 30, 2001) were passed out.

Treasury: The balance of the account is the same as it was then; \$1,246.16.

Since there was no real agenda, the group discussed the following:

Dave Davenport said that a lot of producers are doing a lot of interesting things these days. There are many different grazing systems being used and it would be motivating to see them in action. We could tour what is currently out there and bring in a speaker to give us new ideas.

Another idea was to visit areas that are starting to recover from fires. Early on it might include a lot of cheat grass, but it would be interesting to see how it looks later on.

Amy Adler told the group that seeding prairie dog towns with dead ones from another town seems to be an effective form of eradication. The prairie dogs eat the dead ones and then catch the plague. Each town has a different strain of the plague, so when the new version is introduced, they don't have antibodies to fight it off and they die.

Cactus control—the dryer it gets the more prevalent cactus becomes. A good idea for the tour might be to teach various techniques for controlling it.

Rocky asked if anyone was planning on doing something that might be of interest to the group.

- ✚ Jackie wanted to see irrigated pasture.
- ✚ AI would like to see grasses for used for ethanol. Switch grass does real well and Rocky said it's coming on out at Weights.

- ✚ **Dave** talked about prairie dogs. Farming to the edge of it seems to help control town size.
- ✚ **Rocky** passed around pictures of Weight's warm season grasses.
- ✚ **Dave** had cows on yellow alfalfa for 2 months and they didn't get sick.
- ✚ **Tyler** and **Ron** are doing intensive grazing on their places; Tyler uses 4 paddocks, move the cows once a week, and they never shut the pivot off. But conception is a problem. They don't seem to conceive as easily. Possibly the high nitrate value in the grass.

Rocky: some of the warm season irrigated pastures will be up and ready to look at by summer. A planting of Maximilian Sunflower on irrigated ground has been planted and it may turn out to grow as well as corn and it is a perennial plant. It would be nice to get someone in to talk about the economics of irrigated pastures.

Dave: should we have our first tour be irrigated pasture land? There are a lot of advantages to it for example; it could be used for yearlings. We could use some of the money in the account to hire people to come in and talk.

Rocky: it's hard to beat the return on irrigated pasture. Sugar beets didn't do it this year. We could invite Pat Goggins to speak.

The group discussed who we could get to come in to talk and agreed that the speaker would have to be from our area or from a similar area so that their ideas would be applicable.

The Bridger Plant Material Center was discussed as a possible tour site, as was Fort Keogh.

Amy brought up the grant money the YRDC got from NFWF. The area that was chosen for the grant is at Neil Sheldon's. The pasture is full of Russian olives, goat heads and cheat grass. Could we use the grant money to bring in the chipper that Treasure CD demonstrated and GPS the chipped spots? Once the olive is gone, they will probably have to re-seed. He may be putting in a pivot if all goes well.

Amy mentioned that there is a machine in Ashland that will grind salt cedar and Russian olive trees to the soil level. If we could use the grant money to look at several alternatives, we could determine what works best and leaves the least residue.

Donny Bailey bought a piece of equipment that can be used to clear Russian olive. Could we do a demo project down there? The machine has a 28 inch blade that will cut a 24 inch tree. It has a "pusher" on the front of it that helps to keep the trees from falling the machine and the operator.

Dave wondered if we could put together a workshop to be held sometime in February. The group could pay the cost of the speaker and charge for the meal. The group agreed that it would take more time to find speakers and make arrangements.

It was decided that everyone will go home and research speakers and return on Wednesday, February 6 to discuss it. Everyone was asked to bring a friend or neighbor along. Laurie will send out announcements and contact the media and look into getting a grant from DNRC for a workshop.

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