

## Grazing Education Team Meeting Notes

03/12/2015

Start Time: 3:30PM EST

In Attendance:

Warren King, Laura Paine, Meghan Filbert, Jane Jewett, Kent Solberg, Margaret Chamas, Terry VanDerPol, Vance Haugen, Allison Van, Robert McGill, Jim Paulson, Allen Williams

### Topics Covered:

#### 1. Results of the Survey Monkey poll regarding the Grazing Education Webinar

(10) people participated in the poll. Top topics were:

1. Integrating livestock into cropping systems
2. Defining 'good grazing' as relates to conservation and soil health benefits
3. Grazing cover crops
4. Grass Based Farm Financials
5. Adaptive High Stock density
6. Use of Grazing in cow/calf feedlot operations
7. Basic info on managed grazing
8. Available Resources Roundtable – Megan asks: Would the panel be trainers, educators, or farmers? Answer by Warren and Allison – this could go either way. The purpose is for 'training the trainer.' Roundtable might be people who are currently doing grazing, talking about resources available as well as options and tools they think other farmers need for success.

#### Agreements:

- The highest rated topics seem to be basic and fundamental, rather than nuanced. It is important for both new farmers as well as veterans to maintain this knowledge of the basics
- All the topics were good. The survey helped prioritize which to do first. Keep the others in mind for the future.
- For the Available Resources Roundtable discussion, it was suggested that this be an opportunity to open the format of the webinar up for conversation, rather than be strictly informational – share your favorite tool. We would try to use approach of multiple presenters and include farmers where appropriate for all the webinars.
- Survey should be released after the webinar – once we get through the ones we settle on here, participants should be able to choose the next topic in the series.

#### Unresolved:

- Funding for organizers and presenters. Will we pay for presenters or try to have everyone be involved for free? Agreement to start with those already involved, and move to paid people later if necessary
- Set up an online forum for additional questions and discussions that might come up after the webinar. Will have a deeper technology discussion at the next meeting.

#### 2. Other Topics for the Webinar

- Grass Fed Beef Genetics
  - \* Concern re: some non-scientificallly-supported information is being presented on this
  - \* Kit Pharo mentioned; but expensive and controversial
  - \* Allen Williams has a presentation on genetics that can be used.
- Animal Handling & Husbandry
  - \* Design of livestock handling systems: focus on both portable and stationary systems.
  - \* Real, practical solutions from actual farmers discussing their own personal experiences and techniques.
  - \* Actual videos of these techniques in the presentation would be helpful.

- Good Grazing Techniques
- Plant Biology: an overview of grasses, forage, and cover crops to plant, including information on warm and cool-season crops.

#### **Agreements:**

- Observations that many farmers lack skills in basic livestock care and livestock handling; also many farmers lack knowledge of forage basics – species and characteristics.
- Pair an expert with a beginner to add to discussion – perhaps the Grazing Champions could be of use here. Also pairing “academics” with “on the ground” trainers
- Make these about building skills, not “cookbook” procedures; remind educators that building skills is important. Also this is about building our skills in communications – how do we help educators be better communicators on these topics?
- A goal for these webinars generally would be to have 3 or 4 knowledgeable people start off with introducing ideas, but then have these be more conversational in nature. That scenario is a powerful learning environment.
- Within this group we have a good handle on who has expertise in what areas.
- Basics of Grazing-Good Grazing Techniques will likely be the first topic covered
- Date for the webinar will be May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

#### **Concerns:**

- Vetting process for any ‘outside’ presenters, to maintain consistency in message.

### **3. Organizations and Networks to be Invited- Upper Midwest**

- NRCS Grazing Specialists
- Livestock Extension experts
- Other NRCS personnel might be able to attend a webinar; DCs
- DNR Land Managers
- RC&D; SWCD
- Grazing Education Experts and Programs – perhaps those who focus on specific groups, such as minorities, women, new and beginner farmers, veterans, etc.

#### **Tasks:**

- Assign people to make the contacts. Everyone should compile a list of their contacts and have it sent out so we can see who should be involved.
- Use contacts within agencies to put out invitation to their personnel
- Create and send out a flier by the end of the month. – To do for Robert, Warren & Jane et al
- Send out list of Upper Midwest Grazing Education programs to all for additions- Warren

### **4. Agenda for Next Meeting in Decorah**

- General overview of what has been discussed for those who have missed out
- Specific decision making about the topics for the webinar
- Discuss the broad goals – to build a coalition amongst those who are doing grazing education.
- Expand the list of potential presenters
- Expand the list of invitees to the webinar series
- Present some new group communication and presentation technologies; e.g. electronic bulletin boards, chat rooms, audience response systems.
- Explore connecting to GLBW Watershed Initiative Information Session