Case Overview

- Experienced graziers, acted as mentors
- Helped producer identify available options, select first steps and ongoing strategies
- Administered by national not-for-profit association representing Canadian cattle producers (Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA)). Majority of funding from federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- SGMP delivered from 2007 – 2009 on private lands and Crown grazing lands on long-term lease to producers
Knowledge Exchange

• Management practices based on existing science knowledge
• Understanding each ranch and farm is unique combination of natural, human, and financial resources making it necessary to apply different management practices for each one.
• Mentoring decreases time lag between management practice awareness and implementation
• Experienced graziers (mentors) worked with producers to identify options on how to change management practices to benefit producers economically and environmentally.
Knowledge Exchange

• The program delivery was accomplished by provincial partners, primarily forage councils, with existing expertise in extension and technology transfer and passion and knowledge of grass management.

• Mentorship manual encouraged a national approach to mentoring. Each year of the program, mentors were brought together to share issues and successes.
Lessons
Opportunity

• Assisting one producer to make change provides opportunity for their neighbours to mimic success
• Report success based on acreage influenced as opposed to numbers of producers signed up
• Sustainable grazing supports biodiversity which may lead to payments for ecological services
• Maybe the greatest benefit a mentor can bring to a producer especially in hard times is the recognition there are factors within their control.
Lessons
Challenges

• Perception grazing is easy. Do with no thought or planning.
• Belief high tech is only exciting approach to increasing agricultural productivity
• Lack of balance between productivity and provision of ecosystem services
• Lack of continued financial support. Government program support declines as priorities change with economic conditions and political priorities. Corporate support focus on crops that require purchase of inputs.
Lessons

Research Gaps

• Carbon sequestration – native/natural forage species

• Mapping of native/natural areas

• Biodiversity index

• Valuation of ecosystem services such as water quality and pollination