

# Canada - Sustainable Grazing Mentorship program

## 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