



Pasture & Space Savings; Master Gardeners

Managing pasture intensively beefs up profits for grazing academy alums

Cattle producer Todd Holbrook of Bancroft will never look at grass the same way again. A participant in the UI's Lost River Grazing Academy, held once or twice a year since 1997, Holbrook says the workshop on intensive management of irrigated pastures "opens your eyes and makes you think out of the box."

Joe Miller, of Salmon, agrees. When he couldn't afford to replace his haying machinery, the workshop graduate says he "had to find another way to make things work or get out of the business."

Now, every few days during the winter, Miller moves his electric fencing—and his cattle along with it—across small sections of his uncut hayfield. "It works extremely well for me," he says. Last year, in harvesting and baling costs alone, Miller saved \$10,000. That didn't include savings in stacking, hauling, fuel, equipment repair, and Miller's own time.

"Feeding cut hay costs twice as much as grazing," says workshop coordinator Chad Cheyney. "Every day that you spend grazing saves you a ton of money." Not only do cows—rather than fuel-guzzling machinery—harvest the solar energy in pasture grasses, but plant nutrients cycle continuously through cows and pasture, putting meat on the cattle and fertilizer back on the ground.

"We want the livestock to harvest and store the greatest amount of solar energy per acre that they can and to convert it to the greatest amount of saleable livestock product—all at the lowest possible cost and using the least possible fuel," Cheyney says.

Contact Cheyney at ccheyney@uidaho.edu.

TechHelp Idaho sparks space savings for tea company R.C. Bigelow in Boise

When G. Dean Hearst, plant manager for R.C. Bigelow, Inc. in Boise, wanted to try lean manufacturing techniques on his tea bagging and packaging floor, he asked TechHelp Idaho to lend a hand.

"They were a good resource to draw on," says Hearst of the partnership of UI, Boise State University, and Idaho State University, with headquarters in Boise. "They had innovations, knowledge, people, and experience with others in the area."

Following workshops on lean manufacturing processes, Bigelow workers launched

into 5S Systems, a plant-specific lean-manufacturing program that involves employees from all lines of work in workplace organization and standardization. The results, says Jeff Kronenberg, UI Extension food processing specialist: 10 to 20 percent savings in floor space.

"It's made things easier and more convenient," says production operator/packer Connie Kimball.

Contact Kronenberg at jkron@uidaho.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

\$2.6

BILLION is Idaho's estimated livestock revenue—59% of the state's total farm-gate cash receipts for 2004.

*Source: UI Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture: 2004 Projections

Master Gardeners donate 13,640 hours a year in Idaho

First sowed in 1976, the Idaho Master Gardener program has blossomed in 32 of Idaho's 44 counties. It has trained 2,000-plus green-thumbed volunteers, more than 775 of whom are currently active. With their research-based knowledge of water conservation, composting, and environmentally astute insect, weed, and plant-disease control, they donate 13,640 hours (worth an estimated \$208,000) of volunteer time each year.

When they're not responding to homeowners' queries or operating plant clinics, Idaho's Master Gardeners are installing public landscapes, organizing community gardens, or delivering instruction to garden-center and garden-club audiences and, increasingly, to children. How's that for a bountiful harvest?

Idaho's green industry votes with its feet when it comes to the program's educational merit: up to half the candidates in some Master Gardener classes have been green-industry employees or business owners.

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