

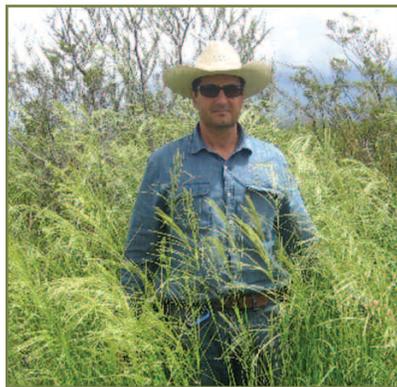
Manejo Holístico in Chihuahua— Las Damas Ranch

BY ANN ADAMS

In the fall of 2014, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory released a video about ranchers in Chihuahua that are improving bird habitat by their grazing management. Two of the ranchers that were highlighted in that film were Alejandro Carrillo and Jesus Almeida—Holistic Management practitioners. Alejandro lives in El Paso, Texas, but commutes to his ranch, Las Damas, in Chihuahua, Mexico (approximately 4 hours away) for two weeks a month. When I visited with him by phone he shared not only how he came to learn about Holistic Management, but also how Holistic Management is beginning to spread in Chihuahua.

Las Damas Ranch was purchased by Alejandro's father, Raul Carrillo, 25 years ago. His father managed the ranch until about 10 years ago when he asked Alejandro to take over the ranch management. Alejandro was living in Miami at the time and was working as a software engineer. He moved to El Paso to help and decided he needed to get all the professional development he could to better manage the ranch.

In 2005, Holistic Management educator, Elco Blanco Madrid, taught a Holistic Management class in Chihuahua City with Holistic Management practitioner Jesus Almeida. The training took place in four different cities around the area.



Alejandro Carrillo on his family's ranch in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Alejandro went to many of the courses and realized how much this kind of management was like what he wanted to do. "They were talking about wholes, how we needed to consider each and every part of the ranch," says Alejandro. "We need to look at the ranch, soil, family, neighbors, and employees—not just the cattle. We need to mimic what nature does, not fight nature."

But, Alejandro admits that crisis brought him to Holistic Management. With the never ending drought, he could run very few animals, so there was too much work for very little return. At that point he was having to supplement his animals from March through July using cornmeal, cotton meal, and salt. He was running 250 cows on his

ranch and 150 cows on some additional leased land.

Now Alejandro runs 580 cows with no supplements and no vaccines. As he improved his management he was able to bring the 150 cows off the leased land to his land, which improved his profits even more. "After we put the cows together, I noticed right away how much better their condition was," says Alejandro. "At one point, right after the training, we had 700 cows, but that was too many so we dropped down to 500 cows. We don't want to be ahead of the grass, so we watch our numbers and move the animals daily.

"We started with 10 pastures, but now we have 80 pastures with a mix of conventional and permanent electric one-wire fences as well as some temporary electric fencing. It took only one year to become profitable because we immediately stopped supplementing when we went to combining the herd and moving them more frequently. It took about 3 years to get enough forage that we could bring the cattle from the area we were leasing. That made the business

- INSIDE THIS ISSUE - Around the Globe



Holistic Management is practiced around the globe on 6 continents. Learn about the many cultures and people and how they are using this process to make a better world, including the Maasai and other pastoral groups in Northern Kenya in the article beginning on page 3.

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even more profitable.

“There were lots of experienced guys practicing Holistic Management at that first training that said the main issue is to make sure you get enough water so you can run the cows the way they need to be run,” says Alejandro. “When you are in the desert, you need the water so you can

begin getting the stock density you need. That was the first thing I did after the training—I put all the cows together. We originally used 1 ½-inch pipe for our water system. Now we are using 2-inch pipe. Our goal eventually is to run 1,200 cows, so we may need to change to 3-inch pipe to make sure we have the water flow we need.

Alejandro also had Bob Kinford come to the ranch and teach some low-stress livestock handling. They had a workshop so others could learn this skill. The stockmanship skills have been a very important piece of the grazing management to get the animals to move easily and have good animal performance.

“The huge advantage for me in Chihuahua was the number of great Holistic Management practitioners that I could learn from. Besides Elco and Jesus there were Octavio Bermudez and Billy Finan. I learned from all of them and had mentors. At the end of the 2005 training there were 5-6 people in the area who were committed. Now we have 30-40 people practicing Holistic Management here in Chihuahua. That’s very exciting,” says Alejandro.



As Alejandro increased forage productivity he was able to move from a carrying capacity of 250 cows to 580 cows—a 132% increase.

Cattle to Match the Landscape

Alejandro’s landscape is dominated by tobosa grass. When he first started ranching he didn’t have much grass at all. But with good management, he began to see more tobosa, and then other grass species. He now has sprangletop, grama, and sideoats among other species. Where the grass used to be very short, it is now one to two feet tall and much wider at the base. This has been accomplished largely by moving his recovery periods to 90-120 days. Moreover, he only grazes twice a year, and usually these are one-day grazes to avoid any overgrazing by staying too long on a pasture.

Alejandro has neighbors both upstream and downstream from his property. During rain events, he has a lot of muddy water moving off the upstream neighbor’s property through arroyos. Alejandro is working to heal the arroyos on his property so that he can use the water runoff to his advantage. “I don’t want my neighbor’s problem,” says Alejandro. “I am working hard to let all my neighbors know about Holistic Management because I want them to

succeed as well and improve land health. But, in the meantime, I will do what I can to use the water that comes on my property.” Alejandro is excited that two of his neighbors are committing to practicing Holistic Management.

Alejandro currently runs about a thousand head of animals. This is about 3 times the stocking rate that his neighbors run on the same amount of land. Moreover, his neighbors are needing to supplement their animals to run that number. However,



With improved grazing management has come improved bird and wildlife habitat resulting in improved deer and bird populations.

Alejandro has been working on the genetics of his herd to improve the ability to run a low input herd. He began with Charlois/Brahma genetics and is moving toward Red Angus from Kit Pharo and Herefords from Billy Finan.

Now the cattle are grazing from November through July and are able to have good body condition with no supplementation. He weans his calves at 8-9 months using nose rings so there is no separation issues between calves and mothers. In this way he can run one herd and keep things simple. He does keep his bulls separate except for the 65-day breeding period.

Alejandro is currently selling into the commodity market when the cattle get to 12 months. At that point they are generally 500 pounds. There is a small grassfed market in Mexico, but at this point he is more interested in trying to sell his animals into the U.S. commodity and grassfed market.

Working with Conservancies

When Alejandro first began working with the various bird conservancies that were interested

in bird habitat in Chihuahua, he had to convince them that he actually had grass plants that were necessary for good bird habitat. As he worked with organizations like the American Bird Conservancy, the Rocky Mountain Bird Conservatory, the Audubon Society, and Mexico's Pronatura, they came to his ranch as well as other Chihuahua ranchers who were managing their land well and noticed how many birds and how many bird species were on these ranches. Consequently, they have offered help with infrastructure development such as electric fencing to help improve grazing management even more so that bird habitat will also improve.

Besides improved bird counts, Alejandro has also experienced increased mule deer and pecari populations. "This part of Chihuahua used to have one of the largest colonies of prairie dogs," says Alejandro. "I'd like to see the return of that biodiversity here. I've always been a conservationist as well as a rancher. We put water everywhere so that the wildlife can use it. We have mule deer and mountain lion. I'm not concerned about the coyotes we have. It's all part of the whole. We have no predation of our

cattle because of the herding and calving in sync with Nature. They stay close together and the predators can't get calves."

In 2004 Alejandro had 20 inches of rain and had less production than he had in 2012 on 8-9 inches of rain (the average rain is 11 inches). With improved management has come not only more diversity, but also greater water infiltration which means more production and continued increase in diversity. As Alejandro continues to experience increased diversity and production, he will work to build out his water and fencing infrastructure to increase stock density and improve his grazing management even more. He also plans to continue to reach out to his neighbors and fellow ranchers so that they too can experience the benefits of Holistic Management. To learn more about the benefits that Alejandro and others have experienced in Chihuahua, view the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsmoJsRWK0Q>

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Saving the Grevy's Zebra & Pastoralist Communities in Kenya

BY CRAIG LEGGETT

Imagine: One woman's quest to save an endangered species of zebra in East Africa resulting in the restoration of millions of acres of savannah and securing the livelihood of a hundred thousand pastoralists. Is that possible? Yes it is, and it is happening in Kenya with the efforts that were started by Grevy's Zebra Trust Executive Director, Belinda (Low) Mackey.

Belinda's fascination with zebras began early in life and developed into a passion while working as a researcher for a wildlife conservation organization in her home country, Kenya. She saw how habitat destruction was making survival harder and harder for the endangered Grevy's zebra – as well as for the livestock-based livelihoods of the Samburu, Maasai, Rendille, Borana, Turkana, and other pastoral groups in northern Kenya. It was obvious to Belinda that in order for wildlife to thrive, the people living on the land also had to thrive. To make a win-win for the zebras and the people, a new approach was needed. Her challenge: How to make that happen?

Holistic Management & Conservation

Belinda's search led her to Holistic Management International's (HMI) Africa-based Certified



Using the Elders' canes and plastic toy animals, recovery time for plants is demonstrated.

Educator Training Program (CETP) in 2006. At the time, she had struck out on her own and was establishing Grevy's Zebra Trust (GZT) as a highly effective conservation organization. GZT was carrying out field-based research and community education through partner communities with a team of more than 30 local community monitors. The tools and processes that Belinda picked up in the Africa CETP – namely the Holistic Management® framework—helped structure and guide her organization's plans and actions to a new level. Critically, she began the work with like-minded partners, such as the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), a non-government organization (NGO) started in Kenya in 2004 for the sake of

wildlife conservation.

NRT had been mobilizing and supporting pastoral communities in establishing community-based wildlife conservancies. They assisted communities in setting aside core wildlife conservation areas that exclude livestock and include safari concessions. This diversification created the need to manage the community rangelands for multiple use and to have the land be more productive and resilient. Enter Belinda with an idea on how to do that.

GZT brought holistic planned grazing to the conference room and got NRT and other organizations to support its trial on several conservancies. Even the US Agency for International Development and The Nature Conservancy got behind it. Holistic planned grazing looked like it would take hold because it worked with underserved pastoralist groups and had the potential for increasing biodiversity and rangeland productivity in one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world. Not to mention that it was a model that could scale up and remain effective with relatively low input – a feature attractive to the partner organizations with high hopes and tight budgets.

Today, GZT and its partners have facilitated holistic planned grazing workshops for more than a dozen community-based wildlife conservancies that manage over 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) and include over 133,000 people. These trainings have empowered people to put their

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Saving the Grevy's Zebra & Pastoralist Communities in Kenya

continued from page three

assets to work – namely, their land and livestock – for a more secure and resilient future.

Conservation Curriculum

The strategy for establishing planned grazing throughout the conservancies had a 2-prong approach: awareness workshops for community groups and trainer-of-trainer workshops for management. One would build broad-base support and understanding throughout the communities and the other would build capacity to efficiently carry on holistic grazing planning and implementation. To fulfill the 2-pronged approach, GZT developed a set of training



Samburu morans (warriors) demonstrating to the workshop group the interconnections of biodiversity (community dynamics).

materials that was appropriate and easy to use for the setting and audience.

The grazing planning workshops rely heavily on visual aids and participatory approach methods. Much of it is built from John Hall's "Bespectacled Crocodile" training manual developed in West Africa and from the first-hand experience of Belinda and her team in similar settings in Kenya.

The workshops start with participants drawing past and present maps. Invariably (and sadly), the maps chart the demise of wildlife, plants, water sources and good grazing sites – all in the course of several generations. This brings to light what people want and what people don't want and arouses the feeling that things need to be done differently. What people value and what they want to do and need to have for it to be a reality are listed on flipcharts. Their words become the basis for a working holistic goal that is then looked at throughout the training sessions for guidance in planning and action items.

By opening with a simple exercise like this people become engaged and feel listened to. When the workshop progresses into the benefits

of planned grazing—the restored grasslands, the enhanced security, better animal welfare—they feel empowered: "We can do this, our ancestors did this and it was good, we can do it again" is a common acknowledgement.

Of course, not everyone has embraced the idea of holistic planned grazing. To some it is seen as an avenue for outsiders to come in and take their land. Others feel they are left out of the process and will end up marginalized. And justifiably so: the region has a long history of that happening. Also underlying the resistance to community-wide planned grazing is the situation known as the "tragedy of the commons" where people do their best to get the best grazing first and stay for the longest period time, much to the detriment of the land and others. Holistically planned grazing goes counter to that impulse/tradition and people fear they will lose out.

Being resistant to change is only human and Belinda has taken on this challenge because she is in it for the long haul—she is passionate about Grevy's zebra and she knows bringing back an endangered species from the brink does not happen with anything but sustained effort. Planned grazing takes cooperation and trust among community members working together for the common good over a long period.

Pilot Project Results

Pilot demonstration sites were set up to build trust, confidence and experience in implementing holistic planned grazing. The first pilot site was set up in West Gate Community Conservancy in 2010. Since then several other conservancies have organized their own pilot projects. On these pilot sites a herd of cattle is brought together and grazed on dedicated land for a specific period of time to demonstrate that it is possible for cattle and land to benefit from this new/old practice.

West Gate used an area of approximately 1,000 hectare (2,500 acres) set between the core wildlife area (livestock exclusion zone) and open communal grazing land called the "buffer zone." The trained grazing committee developed a grazing plan for 133 days in the dry season and calculated it could carry 200 cattle. Interestingly, but not surprising, this stocking rate was first estimated by the elders on the committee and then confirmed during the planning process with

on-the-ground forage assessments with adjustments for forage and quality and leaving residual biomass. The coincidence of the results –the intuitive and scientific – gave credence to the planned grazing process.

Families loaned their cattle to become the "holistic herd". The animals were bunched together and tended by hired herders day and night. The herders built predator-proof "bomas" – corrals made out of acacia branches – for safe keeping and night and moved the cattle according to the plan during the day. With the help of Belinda, the conservancy hired a young fellow to oversee the project—a "Holistic Management coordinator" – named Joseph Lopsala. He worked with the herders, grazing committee, conservancy management, and interested community members throughout the process.

West Gate's first pilot project had its challenges and Joseph was adept with adjusting the grazing plan as need be. He monitored the animals' health and the land's condition with the herders throughout the project period and dealt with grass poaching by outside herds. In the end all turned out well and West Gate made plans to do it again the next year. To their credit, the community has now grazed the buffer zone with a holistic herd 4 times and the results are becoming visible. They also host groups from adjoining conservancies for "exposure tours" showing what is possible when a community adopts holistic planned grazing, even at a small scale.

In Kalama Conservancy, the conservancy's Holistic Management grazing coordinator put his cattle into the herd the first year of implementing a holistic grazing plan because people were too skeptical to volunteer the 75 head of cattle needed. Two years later cattle were turned away because they already had the 600 cattle they planned for. The pilot projects were working.

What impresses the community most is the condition of the animals coming off of the planned grazing sites at the end of the dry season. The animals are noticeably fatter and healthier than the local cattle. Some of these cattle are bought by NRT's livestock marketing program—which is a financial incentive for conservancies to participate in the holistic planned grazing program.

Belinda interviewed a woman whose cattle were in the holistic herd at West Gate and were subsequently bought by NRT. She told Belinda how well she had made out financially by having her cattle in the pilot project. She identified that the extra money would be used to pay school fees for her children and buy supplemental food for the family. These two items, education and food security, are cited by community members in



Belinda Mackey explaining ecosystem processes to GZT game scouts.

the holistic goal developed at the beginning of the grazing planning workshops. Within several years these hopes were becoming a reality.

Community Support & Training

The workshops are in remote locations and include a diversity of people: young, old, schooled, non-schooled, men, women. Belinda makes sure that there is diversity so knowledge from the training has the power to affect all. During the workshops, the participants are divided into sub-groups of women, morans (warriors), and elders. Each sub-group learns a certain piece of content and then teach what they learned to the whole group. This participatory process allows people to know the content more intimately and it equalizes the dynamics among the participants.

The workshop content includes information about ecosystem processes. The women sub-group tends to connect with the ecosystem process called energy flow. They go through an exercise that links the capture of sunlight by forage plants to animal productivity and on to family well-being through better nutrition. Belinda enjoys seeing their faces when they realize it all starts with the grass and they can do something about it. The shift of focus from animal performance (they depend on daily milk) to land performance becomes an “ah ha moment”. They realize that shifting grazing practices to ones that nurture and strengthen grasses and forbs will make them less vulnerable to food shortages throughout the year.

Belinda has organized annual trips to the Africa Centre for Holistic Management (ACHM) near Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe for the second level of Belinda’s

Trainer-of-Trainers program. The trips expose conservancy managers, Holistic Management coordinators, and selected conservancy leaders to other communities already putting Holistic Management into practice. ACHM has done much work with near-by communities and has developed something called the Community Action Cycle (CAC) that allows communities to establish and scale up their efforts to regenerate land. The Kenyans are impressed with the ability

of community members to talk about their holistic context (holistic goal), their holistically planned grazing and their sense of ownership in the process and are encouraged that it is possible for their communities to have the same sense of ownership of the grazing planning process.

The Kenyans also have the privilege of seeing Dimbangombe Ranch’s present grazing plan in action and walking the land with Allan Savory and ranch manager Shane Bartlett. Allan spends a day with them going through the whole grazing planning process using parameters/challenges that they face. This becomes a very important exercise for them as they hone their skills in teaching holistic planned grazing to their own communities.

One day at Dimbangombe is spent with Shane’s herders as they graze the cattle and goats according to their grazing plan. The Kenyans are impressed with the handling of the cattle and goats at Dimbangombe and see it as key to implementing holistic grazing in their conservancies. They implore Belinda to help them learn low-stress livestock handling like it is done at Dimbangombe when they return home.

Delivering on her promise, Belinda had Guy Glosson, a well-known, low-stress livestock handler and HMI Certified Educator (and the person who trained the herders at Dimbangombe) give a workshop for a group herders and managers in the spring of 2014 at Kalama Conservancy. Even though there were some logistical problems with the cattle supply, the participants went away with an understanding of the principles and confidence in practice: They could see this technique playing a pivotal role in ensuring their livestock can benefit from bunching and moving together as called for in their grazing plan.

Belinda’s goal for the training programs is to establish enough knowledge and information within a community so they can get behind holistically planned grazing and put it into action and sustain it for generations to come. The principles of planned grazing as she presented them aligned with people’s values and were easily embraced by workshop attendees. People were heard to say “our elders used to manage grazing like this.” For many it was a comfortable return to how things were done—but this time they understand the principles behind the practice. Workshops end with participants asking for more knowledge, more practice, and more ideas.

Belinda has captured the heart and respect of the people in this region of Kenya. They see her working to conserve an endangered species she dearly loves and have collaborated with her to conserve the pastoral way of life in Kenya. Because she is advocating and providing a holistic approach, a new paradigm for conservation is gaining ground in one of the most remarkably complex regions of our world. With so much gained in a handful of years just imagine the possibilities to come. 🌱

Craig Leggett taught HMI’s Certified Educator Training Program in Kenya where he met Belinda

in 2005. Since then they have worked together in developing and facilitating the Holistic Planned Grazing and Trainer-of-Trainer workshops for the Northern Rangelands Trust community-based wildlife conservancies. Craig has worked with the Borana in Ethiopia and the Maasai in southern Kenya and other holistic planned grazing projects. He now lives in northern New York State where he is reviving his family’s 200 year old farmstead. He can be reached at: craigleggett@gmail.com or 518/4942324



Grevy's zebra family

Lundgard's Nature's Way Farms— Expanding to the Next Generation

BY KELLY SIDORYK

A Holistic Resource Management (HRM) Course in 1992 changed the course of life for Peter and Mary Lundgard of Peace River, in northern Alberta, Canada. Peter had started farming in the late '70s. After interest rates got as high as 26% in the late '80s, they found themselves in trouble.

"We were basically broke and in a tough situation. A flyer showed up in the mail talking about improving the land, finances and people," recounts Peter. He attended the HRM intro put on by Noel McNaughton. "I went home to Mary and said 'I think we have to do this' and she said to go ahead." But Peter talked her into going with him as that had been emphasized at the intro session.

"I did not know what it was about but I had picked up there was something more to it and I knew it was important that she come," he says. Mary agreed.

That course resulted in "giving us the tools to establish a clear goal and to make decisions that took into account people, the land, and financial management," he adds. "Those tools enabled us to become very creative and develop effective models that we could apply to our farm and our lives."

A few years ago an opportunity to purchase another farm in a neighboring community came up. After some family discussions they came up with the top price they would pay. Lo and behold, the high bidder at the auction was the Lundgards. Mary says she turned to their son, started crying and said 'Well I guess

we are moving."

The new farm had a number of outbuildings and, most significantly, a natural spring that pumped water year round. It was an excellent spot to relocate to.

Lundgard's Nature's Way Farm is a buzz of activity—no pun intended, as one of their major enterprises over the years has been leaf cutter bees. They also are involved in alfalfa seed production, dairy cows, beef cattle, Berkshire hogs and chickens. Daughter Lisa has a market garden CSA enterprise and son Eric has Dorper sheep.

Peter has a keen interest in the chemistry of the soil and has been working on improving their soil through soil amendments and compost. It is a subject he is well versed in and can talk for great lengths about. This has also grown into an enterprise as he works with others.

The cattle are managed through a planned grazing program during the growing season and bale grazed in the winter months. They are forage finished. The yellow alfalfa is a key component and they condition pastures to have high energy regrowth. The hogs are housed

outside in pens with access to shelter and bedding in the winter. In the summer they are on pasture. Fermented food is a focus, and they have expanded into the hogs with their ration including bagged barley and pea silage. The natural springs allow them to irrigate, an important practice as they have experienced some very dry conditions. The Lundgards also direct market as much as they can off the farm through Lisa's CSA.

That number of enterprises requires many workers and the Lundgards have both interns and World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms workers (WWOOFers) on their farm. On a recent visit, there were workers from Japan, Germany and Australia.

Both Peter and Mary say they would never be where they are now if it was not for that first Holistic Management course. Holistic Management opened doors for them to ACRES U.S.A., studying in New Zealand, and the Weston A. Price Foundation.

They have repeated the Holistic Management course several times, most recently attending one with their daughter and their son and his girlfriend. "We want to enhance the future by giving them the tools so they can create and enhance their opportunities," Peter says. ♣

Kelly Sidory is a Holistic Management Certified Educator who lives near Lloydminster, Alberta. She can be reached at : sidorykk@yahoo.ca or 780/875-9806.



Peter Lundgard



Vegetables from Lisa's CSA in cold storage



Berkshire pigs at the Lundgard's farm.

Holistic Management Down Under— Working with TAFE College

BY JASON VIRTUE

It's been a long time since the readers of *IN PRACTICE* have heard anything much about what the Certified Educators in Australia have been up to. So at the prompting of your editor, Ann Adams, I've put fingers to key board to give the Holistic Management community an update on some of the activities down under.

One of the most exciting things to report on is our involvement with the key community college in Australia, Technical and Further Education (TAFE). TAFE Western from New South Wales (NSW) has been delivering a Diploma of Holistic Management – Sustainable Rural Lands, Business and Communities. The program was initially started by Certified Educator Bruce Ward (now deceased) and TAFE Western Head Teacher and Savory Institute Educator, Ian Chapman. The program has been delivered throughout the state of NSW for the last 5 years. Educators Brian Wehlburg, Brian Marshall, Paul Griffiths, George Gundry (deceased), Bruce Ward, and, to a lesser extent, Helen Lewis, Jason L Virtue (both from Queensland) and John King from New Zealand, have delivered over 40 programs to well over 600 people in this time.

The Diploma course units covered include:

- Implement a holistic financial plan
- Develop a holistic financial plan
- Develop a holistic grazing plan
- Implement a holistic grazing plan
- Monitor land holistically
- Design a rural water supply system
- Manage crop health holistically
- Review and develop Policies holistically
- Support and review business structures
- Whole Farm Business Management Planning

Most of the programs are conducted over 8 two-day sessions over about six months. The class size varies between 8-22 students with students ranging in age from 14-70. These courses have been delivered on a TAFE campus and in all manner of domestic and community places—woolsheds, lounge rooms, community halls, racetracks, and church halls. People from all walks of life have been through the training programs—from large-scale conventional animal and crop production farmers to small-scale backyard growers, many permaculture practitioners, and change of life folks (or tree changers as we call them over here—folks on the uphill side of fifty leaving the city to begin a new life in a more rural environment). The praise for the program

from the folks who are planning to become food producers has been very rewarding. Brian Wehlburg and Paul Griffiths also trained a group of oyster producers on the south coast of New South

Wales—proof, if any was required, that managing holistically is not only limited to land managers

Of particular note is the success of the program at the small town of Bega in south-eastern NSW. Brian Wehlburg has delivered 5 programs there over 2 years. Some of the members of the different programs have joined forces to form a small producers cooperative. They have purchased the local abattoir that had been closed for some years and are now working it on a part-time basis processing meat chickens 2 to 3 days a week with 1 to 2 days a week for other livestock. This has resulted in a small increase in local employment and the local producers once again have local meat processing facilities, giving them greater possibilities with their produce.

A couple from Quirindi, NSW, Derek and Kirrily Blomfield, who did their first Holistic Management Course with Brian Marshall and Bruce Ward in 2007, have completed the TAFE course in the last few years and were

recognised and awarded the NSW farmers of the year in 2014. You can read more about them at www.theconsciousfarmer.com.

Mrs. Pip Job completed the initial course, and thence the Diploma under the tutelage of Paul Griffiths. Pip recently became Australian Rural Woman of the Year for 2014.

To the best of our knowledge this TAFE course is the only academically accredited Holistic Management program of this size in the world delivered by a national learning institution. Graduates of the Diploma of Holistic Management will receive advanced standing of up to one year of a three-year Degree program. Negotiations between TAFE Western, the



TAFE courses take place in a wide variety of venues.

University of New England, and Charles Sturt University at both Wagga and Albury currently have this arrangement in place. TAFE Western is able to deliver this program worldwide.

On a personal note, the greatest reward for me has been in helping and seeing people change their thinking and their lives by the simple process of creating a holistic context and then testing their actions and decisions to this context. The folks who made the most change were the



Grazing planning training includes on-farm activities to look at actual grazing implementation and strategy.

ones that really required things to change in their whole under management. Over the years we have witnessed many, many people make dramatic, positive and lasting changes to their lives and businesses. As our students often say, "This Holistic Management thing really does work." 🌱

Jason L Virtue is a Holistic Management Certified Educator from Upper Noosa West via Traveston, in Queensland, Australia. He can be reached at Jason@spiderweb.com.au. Thanks to Brian Marshall, Paul Griffiths, Brian Wehlburg and Ian Chapman for their contribution to this article.

LAND & LIVESTOCK



Tee Two Land and Cattle Company— Ranching Together as a Family

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

Duane Thompson's family has been ranching near Kelliher, Saskatchewan, Canada on their present farm since 1957. "I am the fourth generation on some of this land, and our son is coming back this year to be the 5th generation. My dad started this particular operation in 1957 when he was 18 and bought his first quarter of land. He married my mom a few years later, and they were quite good at what they did. When I came back to the farm I came back to a bought and paid for operation," says Thompson.

The ranch brand is a T over a 2, so the ranch name is Tee Two Land and Cattle Company. The ranch logo, a picture of big boots and some little boots, represents multiple generations.

"My folks were a great help in getting me started and I have to give them the greatest credit. I graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1987 in vocational agriculture, and my dad was also a graduate of that university," he says.

Duane came back to the farm after graduating, and started working in the operation, which was predominantly a grain farm with a small cow herd and feedlot. He had intentions of living his dream of just being a cowboy and wasn't going to grain farm, but through the years he changed that focus. "The grain farm was always very good to my dad. He went through the late 1970s and early 1980s when it really did well. This helped set up the operation to be able to take me on as another entity," says Thompson.

Father and son continued on with a mixed operation. Then they went through a time when the grain farm was paying the bills and the cattle part was a struggle, with the beef market crash.

"As we worked the operation together, we changed it a bit. When I came home, we didn't have any grass that we managed for grazing. Our herd was sized to the government pasture allotment Dad had. At that time we were summer fallowing. This parkland is pothole country and there is a lot of grass around those. Dad would summer fallow some ground and put cows out to graze the marginal areas as well. When I came home I started planting grass and had some good mentors who showed me some different ways of doing

things," says Thompson.

"I wanted to try these things, so we started to graze our own land as well as the government pasture. We built up our cow herd and improved our grazing management to what we have today. It's nice that that the cattle market has recovered now, but for a few years it was a real challenge. Canada basically lost 10 years of producers. I drive around the country and see a lot of vacant cattle yards. In one sense I am reaping the benefits of that because the supply is low and the market is strong now, but on the other hand it is tragic because we have lost a lot," he says.

"The thing that I learned in university was how much I had to learn! I was also blessed to have 4 grandparents and a set of great-grandparents while I was growing up. I still have one grandmother who is nearly 100 years old now, but I got to know her father when I was young. When I was between

grade 10 and 11, at an age when you think you already know everything, he said to me, 'Young fella, you are a damn poor man if you can't learn something new every day!' He was over 100 years old at that time and I realized that if a guy who is over 100 years old is telling me this, I still have a lot to learn! It was really wonderful getting to know my grandparents, and I put to use what my grandfather told me," says Thompson.



The Thompson family

Farming Is A Team Effort

"I've always had a zest for learning and going to conferences and meeting other producers and taking courses. This is where Holistic Management came into the picture. I got to know some people who had taken these courses and told me what a wonderful tool it was for them. So

my wife and I took the courses," he says.

"If I had to point out some of the things that really caught my attention about Holistic Management, the number one thing was the people aspect, working with your team and the resources of people around you, not trying to go it alone. Steven Covey wrote a book called *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. He said there are dependent people, independent people, and the greatest are inter-dependent people. This is a great concept because the people around us have a huge effect on us. I've been blessed with good employees, and my parents who took me into their operation, and a wife who has contributed greatly to our success," Thompson says.

His wife Paula is a nurse and her job made it possible for them to build the operation that they now have today. "Right from the beginning she kept her

nursing job though she didn't work fulltime. She ran the household as well as having an income that ran the household financially, and did the greatest part in raising our children. We were able to have a wonderful life where we weren't financially strapped. If I had to take the dollars required to run the household out of the business, it would have been very different today, so I give Paula a great deal of credit," he says.

"In the Holistic Management course they push the idea that people should all work on the farm or ranch, and that's one place where we have deviated. Paula's job off the farm has worked very well for us and we are a strong team even though we are working in two different areas." It is important to have the flexibility to do whatever needs to be done, to make it work, wherever you are. Every farm/ranch family can do it a little differently, depending on their circumstances and talents.

"One of the things I mentioned at the Holistic Management courses, in response to the notion that everyone in the family should just work on the farm, is that I married a nurse. She didn't tell me that I had to change and go into the health care profession! This is a team effort and everybody works with their individual strength," he says.

"As our children are coming back to the business, this is the challenge that I put to them. I tell them, 'OK, we are going to do everything we can to make a place and a fit in the operation for everybody, but what are you bringing to the table? What is your strength, what is your passion? What do you want to bring to this operation that we can work with?' This is my challenge to them," Thompson says.

Their oldest son Cole is coming back this year. One of the rules in the family is that you have to leave for 5 years and do something else. Cole has achieved this and can bring back to the operation some things he has learned somewhere else.

"He is coming back with his diploma in agriculture and mechanics. He spent a year traveling around Australia on a custom combining crew and has learned a lot. I also went away from the farm for 5 years and I think this is helpful. When you make the decision to become part of this life style and this business, then it's your own decision and you are the one who makes it. No one has pressured you into it. You know what's on the other side of the fence." This generally makes for a more satisfactory outcome.

While their oldest daughter Shelagh is pursuing a nursing degree, Holly, the youngest daughter, is in her second year of college, getting her degree in agriculture, majoring in animal science. And, their youngest son, Adam, is in grade 11 and says he wants to come back to the business.

The children all enjoyed growing up on the farm. "We've had a wonderful life and have been very blessed. This is a wonderful place to raise children and we've been able to mix work with pleasure. The kids have all worked hard on the operation and have contributed tremendously to the business. It is very gratifying to think that this is what they want to do with their life as well," says Thompson.

"The people side of Holistic Management really caught my attention, with the teamwork and communications. We went through the transition, the generational transfer with my parents, and it was not an easy process. I know of many that were worse, however, because any generational transfer seems to have challenges. One of the things I hope is that we can do it easier with our children. We went to a succession planning workshop recently because we want to be as educated as possible and work as hard at it as we can to communicate with one another," Thompson says.

"Holistic Management really focuses on that, and I told Don Campbell, our educator, that whenever each of our children come back to become a part of our business, we will take the Holistic Management course again, so that everybody can be a part of it and take the team approach to it. I think this is a very valuable process," he says.

"A lot of this is very near and dear to my heart, especially the sustainable agriculture side of it. This is just as important as the communication part.



The Thompson children enjoy helping with farm chores, including moving electric fence in the winter.

Sustainability, making plans, and having a process of decision-making—how you want to approach things, and what your goals are—it puts everything out there and gives us a framework of how to approach our business," he says.

Improving the Soil

"Another side I really like is Allan Savory's density grazing principles. These have been so much fun to implement. I enjoy managing grass, and we are growing far more grass than I ever dreamed possible. I've taken pictures of our cattle grazing as I drive by to check them in the mornings, and a calf turning his head around to look at me with that big white muzzle covered with frothy milk, and a pile of froth on the ground underneath. This is in late October-early November, because we've been able to manage our grass so well," says Thompson.

"We have really good grass for a much longer period during the year than we did earlier. This is the side of the business I really enjoy, with the livestock, and being able to take our family out and do the work with the cattle. It's very fulfilling." It's a great way of life for people who find their passion and satisfaction in being caretakers of cattle.

"The Holistic Management goal setting fit nicely with our operation. Our grain farming side is part of the whole picture. I bounced this notion off Allan Savory. I told him that I wasn't sure that I really fit into Holistic Management, because my wife works off the farm and we use technology and some chemicals. We use electronic technologies, but we also use the most basic methods of managing the land and building organic matter. I asked Allan if my definition of Holistic Management, where you take the sum of your resources with the people at the center (and build on everyone's strengths) in a system where you build the land and leave our environment in better shape than we found it was correct. He said it sounds like I had it figured out, so that's the principle I've worked around," says Thompson.

He has created a system that is more than sustainable. The land rotation with the forages and the livestock and crops have greatly improved the soil. "I've been testing our soils and have data that shows where we've more than doubled the organic matter. I bought some land and tested it to see what we were starting with. It had 2% organic matter. Lots of our own ground that we've been rotating for many years, has 5-plus. I am really pleased with this," he says.

"I also have a firm belief that a large percentage of our nitrogen can be free. Mother Nature builds nitrogen for us. So we grow a lot of crops that fix their own nitrogen. This is good for my pocketbook and good for the land. When we take our forages (which are a high percentage of legumes—alfalfa and clovers) out of production, they've added nitrogen to the soil, plus the manure from the cattle. There's 200-400 pounds of nitrogen there, waiting to

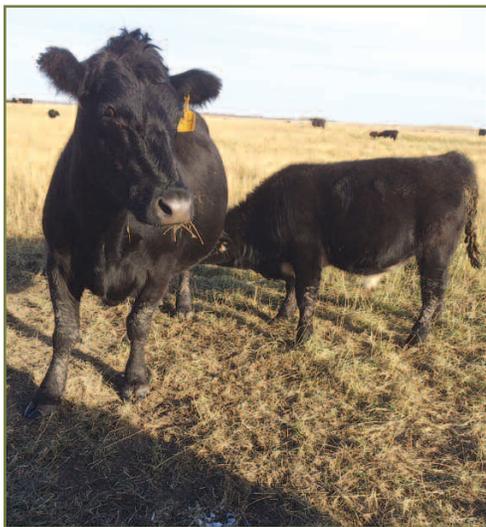
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be harvested. We direct seed into it; we don't till the land. The soil is so rich it is just alive," says Thompson. "My nitrogen bill is less than half (doing it the way I am now) of what it could be, because of all the legumes in my pastures."

A big problem with agriculture today is that we are losing organic matter, mining the soil, diminishing its fertility. "When I can see that our farm is going the other direction, this is very rewarding. We always want to leave the land better than we got it, so when we are building organic matter, we are achieving that goal," he says.

"I am not sure that I truly fit into the Holistic Management definition because I use technology, I use GPS on my seeding machine to minimize overlap. I use chemicals. But on the other hand I feel that I use a combination

of all the tools available. Like any other course that I've taken, I don't go home and think that this is the only way. I have taken a lot of different courses and many different people have influenced our program. I have taken a piece here and a piece there, from various different sources, to build this program, and think it's stronger because of all this," Thompson explains.



With good grazing and genetics this cow is in good condition even with a calf on in late fall.

"Holistic Management has a lot to offer but in the eyes of commodity agriculture, Holistic Management is looked at as a fringe element—the organic producers, etc. who don't really fit into the mainstream. This is unfortunate, because when you take the whole of all your resources and work them together, this is beneficial. One person's goals and set of tools and resources are different from the other person's. So many fantastic things can be gained from taking a holistic approach. The people side is huge; what business can't improve the people aspect? It's unfortunate that there's this rift in how people view Holistic Management," he says.

Duane also utilizes the principles of low stress cattle handling that he learned from Bud Williams. These principles are valuable in many aspects of living. "Bud was a whole package. He had a huge effect on me, with his ideals and the holistic approach. Bud and Eunice were a great team, and Bud's influence on me was huge. I measure my life as 'before Bud' and 'after Bud' in the things I do, and there are many other people who feel the same way!"

Cattle Forage Strategies

"Because of the production system with our cattle, we calve in May and finish up in June. The cows calve on grass. They spend about a month in separate calving fields when most of the calves are born. In early June we get all of them together again as quick as we can. We calve between 250 and 300 in a group, and the heifers are separate. As soon as we can get the entire herd together as one group, we can manage our grass better. We'll have 900 to 1,000 pairs all grazing together, and the harvest interval on each

piece of pasture is between 2 and 4 days. The density grazing, hoof impact and what we can do with the grass is fantastic when a person can do that," he says. All the grazing is on the home ranch except that he sends the yearling heifers to another pasture for breeding.

"We use one wire of electric fence with a lot of power on it, and this controls the cattle, keeping them well educated. Each harvest interval is fairly short, and we use a twice-over system. The cows are on the move constantly. They come back to the yard in November to wean the calves. Then the cows go back out and graze the byproducts and aftermath from the grain farming side. This gives them winter grazing—right through calving, until grass comes. In our grain fields we make straw piles and chaff piles from the combine. We continue the grazing through those fields, and feed supplement to create a balanced ration," he explains.

This is a cost-effective way to get cattle through winter, and puts the byproducts from the grain farming through the cows and leaves the organic matter on the land. "Any of the feed products that we take out to the cattle, they are spreading back on the land where it is meant to be, and we don't have to be hauling manure out there."

If the cattle need more protein during winter, to utilize the forages, they can be fed alfalfa silage. "I don't believe in buying protein. We can build our own protein, and when the snow is deep and the cows are eating straw, I haul silage out to them in a feed truck and have a plow on the front of it to blade away the snow. If the weather gets extremely cold, we will also supplement with some grain, but this is only there as a tool if we really need it," he says.

Generally, the cows are constantly on the move, harvesting their own feed. "Winter grazing can end unexpectedly at any time. However, in severe conditions with a lot of snow, we make some larger straw stacks in the fields, with the old stackers. We make 4 or 5 stacks in a group and put an electric wire around them. When the snow is too deep to graze we can let the cows into those stacks. That's our bad weather insurance! The cows can use these any time through the winter that the snow gets iced and crusted over, or we get too much snow. We place the stacks on eroded hilltops where organic matter is needed." This brings those hilltops back into good soil fertility, with all the litter left from the straw and manure.

"I make more than enough straw stacks each year, because you never know when they might be needed. After the cows winter graze those fields they come back to the yards in the spring to be sorted into groups for calving, and the process starts all over again," he says. This has created a very healthy environment for the soil, the plants and the animals, and there is abundant wildlife on the farm, thriving in this habitat. A well-managed system can create a good habitat.

Thompson has been working toward selecting cattle that do well in this grazing system. This is an Angus-based herd, but the cattle are selected for their foraging ability. "In my mind's eye I have the ideal cow, like any other cattleman, but I want to exploit the ruminant ability of a cow. With previous government programs and cheap grain, the cattle industry has fed a lot of grain and has gotten away from the cow's natural ability to use forages and we've changed these animals," he says. The typical beef cow today is not as efficient as a forage digester anymore.

"I want a big fermentation vat on legs—a lot of capacity, a cow with a lot of depth and volume so she can take on a big bunch of roughage that she has no competitors for. There's no other animal that can go out and eat those chaff piles in my fields. I want an animal that can use food products with no competitors, eating things that nothing else can eat. I want a very deep-bodied high-capacity cow that is a highly functioning ruminant," he says.

"I wouldn't say that I don't use grain, because it's a great tool if you need it, but I want my cows to first be efficient ruminants and not need grain as part of their diet. My herd is Angus-based, but it is kind of a rainbow herd. I need animals that can work for a living, and I have cows that can graze through two feet of snow. If I take care of them on the bad days, they take care of me the rest of the year!"

Regengraze— Healing the Land with Cattle

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

Growing up in Mexico, Jim Elizondo has two very successful ranches there, and is now managing a ranch in Florida. “I have been with cattle all my life,” he says. “My grandfather and father were both cattlemen, in Tampico, on the Mexican Gulf Coast—about a 6 hour drive south of Brownville, Texas. This area is located in the dry tropics.”

He has always tried to read and learn from the best teachers. “All my life I have tried to find the best books on cattle raising and land management to improve my abilities. I bought my first ranch in 1990. It is irrigated, and I started growing stockers. I had a small feedlot where I finished them. I had about 700 animals per year on 300 acres,” he says.

Region-Appropriate Genetics

“I started with Andre Voisin’s grass productivity book and electric fences—which I have used since 1980 on my father’s ranch with Gallagher fencing. My uncle was a distributor in Mexico for Gallagher. My uncle also developed the first composite cattle breed in Mexico, called Tropicarne, which in Spanish means tropical beef. This composite was built with Barzona, Charolais, Senepol, Brahman and Angus, over many years, with the most emphasis on Senepol,” says Elizondo.

“In 1993 I started a dairy on that ranch, with Jersey cows. During all this time I was trying to improve my grass management with intensive grazing. Then I studied *Holistic Resource Management* and the companion workbook. I always did marginal reaction analysis for every part of the enterprise to make sure it was profitable and benefited the whole, then I started looking at the weak link and at society—not only looking at the cattle/grass but also looking at wholes. This led me to change my breed from pure Jersey, because they don’t do as well in the tropics. In that area we have piroplasmiasis from ticks. Pure Bos Taurus cows are more affected by various pests,” he says.

“First I used Australian Friesian Sahiwal semen for 15 years, then I switched to Girolando (a Brazilian composite with Holstein and Gyr) after I met Johann Zietsman by e-mail, from Zimbabwe. He teaches courses in sustainable ranching and advised me to try and look for the correct type of Girolando. Girolando has been mostly affected by the hype of taller and



Note the good body condition of the Mashona herd on low quality stockpiled tropical grasses (bahia) in Florida.

higher producing individuals which does not translate to higher sustainable profits per acre,” explains Elizondo.

“In 1994 I used some tropical milking Criollo bulls. This is a Bos Taurus breed adapted to high temperatures and tick problems after roughly 500 years of natural selection. Sixteen years later I found out that my best cows were the descendants from those bulls. So after 15 years of Australian Friesian Sahiwal and 2 years of Girolando I went back to the tropical milking Criollo breed and now I have the largest herd of animals composed of that cross in Mexico. I discovered that these cows originally came from Africa, to Spain, to the Americas 500 years ago. They are very interesting cattle.”

Tropical milking Criollo animals were first selected by nature and possess the short slick hair gene which conveys a high degree of heat tolerance. “This is very important to be able to produce under high temperatures and high humidity because these environmental conditions also mean low-quality, high-fiber forages. It is this high fiber which inhibits forage consumption when temperatures are high as the fiber digestion produces a lot of heat. The animal cannot cope with the heat from the outside and the heat from the rumen—so a non-adapted animal will reduce her consumption and thus produce less. This would be called nutritional adaptation, but as always includes another part of the whole,” says Elizondo.

Increasing Breeding Rate with Mashona Cattle

“I became involved with a franchise for free choice minerals, with Mark Bader of Free Choice Enterprises. I had the franchise for Mexico and started working with the big dairies in the dairy area of Mexico. I did that for 12 years as a dairy nutritionist. I also studied agronomy at the Tech of Monterey in Mexico graduating in 1984 (and received a degree in Agronomy Engineering). I bought a second ranch, this one a dry-land ranch with an average 35 inches of rainfall (which can vary from 8 inches to 40 inches, depending on the year). The precipitation is very erratic,” he says.

“So I had one ranch irrigated and the other depending on erratic rainfall. Even with erratic rainfall, however, you can plan grass management correctly. We were able to double the stocking rate during the worst drought in 60 years. On 750 acres we had 650 animals during that drought. Thanks to Johann Zietsman now I know how to do it, and I’m teaming up with Johann to teach courses of sustainable ranching; I do the grass/grazing management part, and the mineral and protein supplementation as a rumen enhancer, always trying to enhance a natural process,” he says.



This is an example of the Mashona herd grazing at ultra-high stock density.

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Creating Connection with the Land

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With ultra-high stock density you get good manure distribution and fertilization.

In 2010 he and his family had to leave Mexico because of the violence in that region. “In 2012 I started working at this ranch in Florida where they wanted to rehabilitate 550 acres that had once been a tree nursery. The land had been chemically abused with glyphosate for 27 years at twice-a-month application. They came to me first as a consultant and they asked me which breed of beef cattle would I recommend for grazing their land,” says Elizondo.

Before he came to the U.S he had been trying to bring some Mashona cattle into Mexico, from Jim Weaver in New Mexico. Weaver brought the first ones as embryos in 1995 from Zimbabwe. “These are very hardy cattle, being heat, disease and parasite resistant, but most importantly they have nutritional adaptation. They are Bos Taurus Sanga breed and have very high fertility with early marbling and early maturity. When I was asked by the Florida rancher which breed I would recommend, Jim Weaver was selling the whole herd, and this ranch purchased almost all the cows. So now we have them here, and are trying to grow the herd and maintain them pure,” he says.

“We want to keep these cattle pure, as a genetic resource for other people. This is the largest herd outside of Africa. We started with 163 cows

and 10 bulls and now we have more than 480 animals. We have been selling some of the bulls,” says Elizondo.

“The first year here, the cows had 65% pregnancy rate from a 90-day breeding season in New Mexico. I started them on the free choice mineral program to supplement the forage growing on very poor sandy soil with 30% grass cover with tropical grasses. I fed them 0.7 pounds of corner post supplement (a rumen enhancer which improves digestion so the rumen microbes can digest fiber more efficiently) per cow per day for the first 50 days to help them adjust from the West-to-East move and offered them the cafeteria style free choice minerals. The first year after the change, we went to 91% pregnancy rate in a 90-day breeding season. The second year, we went up to a 93% rate, in a 60-day breeding season. This year we tried a shorter, 43-day breeding season and it seems to be even better,” he explains.

High Stock Density Grazing

“The grass cover after 2.5 years has improved and forage production is 4 to 5 times more than when we started. We have already doubled the recommended stocking rate and our goal is to go to 4 times the recommended stocking rate. This is in a region in Florida with a 55-inch rainfall, leached sandy soils, very low in organic matter and CEC (cation exchange capacity—which is a measure of the nutrient-holding capacity of the soil),” says Elizondo.



This photo shows the amount of pasture crop residue after grazing.

The soil is very sandy and didn't have very many nutrients because there was very little organic matter; the plants had all been killed with chemical. “Now it is improving very fast. We have 480 animals on 550 acres and our goal is to have 1,000 animals on this land. We don't feed any hay but we do supplement with protein when the forages go dormant and are stockpiled, as these tropical grasses are very low in protein and very high in fiber,” he says.

“We do a very different type of grass management than most people who are using non-selective grazing. We allow half of the ranch to rest through the whole growing season and then use that rested part as a winter stockpile. The next year we graze that half intensively in the growing season. Every other year it gets a rest through the entire growing season. We alternate those areas so it's never the same area 2 years in a row. This was Johann's idea. I am translating his book (*Man, Cattle and Veldt*) into Spanish,” says Elizondo.

“We use high density grazing, with very high stocking rates. Right now I



Jim Elizondo with his Mashona calves





This is the leucaena at 3 months after no-till planting into established bermuda pasture.

am moving the cattle 4 times a day. We never worm the cattle or use any insecticide or any chemicals. People here think cattle need to be wormed, but we have to stand firm and not worm them,” he explains. This helps the cattle develop more resistance to the worms, having some exposure.

Animals with a well-developed immune system require a constant challenge to maintain it and keep it working for peak protection. “If we were to worm the cattle they would lose or diminish their immune resistance to worms and we would not be able to identify the wrong genetics for this environment. We would end with a pampered animal and not the hardy, highly resistant adapted animals that Mashona cattle are,” he explains.

“This region has some problems—especially with the low mineral status of the soil—that people in other areas of the country don’t understand. This is part of a unique area in the U.S. that is more tropical than what people call the Southeast. This part of southeastern Florida (and southeastern Texas) is very different. We are at the same latitude as Houston, Texas. It is a different environment, and grass management needs to be different for maximum sustainable profits while improving the land.”

History of Mashona Cattle Genetics

“There is a booklet about these cattle, published by the Mashona Zimbabwe Society,” say Jim. “This breed has over 1,000 years of history. Originally they were mainly Bos Taurus that came from Egypt, descended from the African Auroch which is different from the European Auroch or the Indian Auroch (the Auroch was the precursor of cattle). About 300 or 400 years ago there was an epidemic of Rinderpest in Zimbabwe and most of the cattle died. They had to bring in some Bos Indicus cattle. The Bos Indicus in Africa is very different from the Bos Indicus in India,” says Elizondo.

“For hundreds of years, African people raised these cattle for meat. A cow that was not a good meat animal was not selected for breeding. If a cow was aggressive, or escaped the enclosure, it would be eaten by lions and hyena.” This “natural selection” weeded out the problem animals.

“After hundreds of years of breeding in relatively closed herds, tests at the research station at Matopos in Zimbabwe (and in another research station in Namibia with a breed similar to Mashona from Zimbabwe) these cattle were first place in productivity of pounds of weaned calves per acre, out of all the other breeds,” he says.

“I am glad that I can be here working with these cattle that I love. They are the nicest and gentlest of all the breeds that I have ever handled. They have an affinity with humans if you treat them right.”

The Mashona is very long-lived. “I really like these cattle. The original

ones in this herd were imported as embryos in 1995, and we have many cows here that are 16 or 17 years old. The tropical milking Criollo cows are also very long-lived; I have seen cows that were 22 years old still calving, and I have one that is 19 years old and still calving yearly with twice-a-day milking on pasture,” he says.

“I think the best use for the Mashona is to use them as part of a composite. They should be at least a quarter of the composite, to increase relative intake, for areas where the climate is not hot and humid. In regions that are hot and humid you would probably need the animals to be about half Mashona or other African breeds, to improve feed efficiency. These animals had to be able to eat fast, and a lot.” They lived in kraals in Africa (enclosures to keep out lions and other predators) and were taken out to graze during the day, with herders.

They might only be allowed 5 to 6 hours of grazing before being brought back to the safety of the kraal before evening. “In a drought, they had to walk farther and farther away to get to some grass, and come back fast. The ones that didn’t eat fast enough to consume enough food would not have enough nutrition to reproduce. They would fall out of the gene pool. This concentrated the genetics that were able to eat more, to keep some weight,” says Elizondo.

“It was good that this happened, and we now have these genetic resources. Johann says cattle have a dual role. One is to convert forage to beef efficiently. The other one is to improve the soil on which they graze. Neither of these two goals are being met currently, with typical cattle breeding today,” he says. The cattle, land and plants must all exist in a symbiotic relationship, and most breeders have gone away from that perfect whole in U.S. cattle production.

“We can improve this situation, however, because we can manage the grass, the severe grazers (the cattle) and the predator effect (using electric fence or herding). We need to do this, and can use the Mashona genetics to breed animals that can improve the land on which they graze. We need animals that can graze non-selectively, with minimum inputs. When you graze non-selectively, the forage species composition improves,” he explains. When cattle graze selectively, by contrast, desirable species decline and undesirable species increase.

“Nearly all of the ranches that I have been to—even those that are managed holistically, are grazed selectively. The stockman may think the



This is the crop of leucaena after grazing at ultra-high stock density

cattle are grazing non-selectively but they are not, and the ranches are going backward in forage production. To graze non-selectively and have good results, you need animals that are capable of higher relative intake

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Bringing Genetics & the Land Together

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(pounds of dry matter forage ingested per 100 pounds of live weight). They need to be able to eat the whole plant (and not just the most nutritious part) without reducing animal performance," he says.

"To do this, the grazing management has to be adequate with very short occupation periods and very high density. Then the rumen receives a constant quality forage and microorganisms in the rumen can be more efficient," explains Elizondo.

The reason people allow selective grazing is because they have animals that require better nutrition in order to perform. Even with most kinds of rotational grazing, cattle eat their favorite plants (or the most edible plant portions, or just the tops of the plants) and then move on.

"There was a man in Chihuahua, Mexico, Bill Finan, who started using Holistic Management. He recognized the need for an animal that could graze non-selectively. He bred a herd of Herefords, with that goal in mind. Today, that herd is superb. His grandson has them now. Those animals look different from the typical beef cattle of today. They are shorter at the hip, but wider and thicker bodied, and very efficient. The higher the relative intake (with the same size animal), the better the feed efficiency, because less of the intake goes to maintenance and more goes into production," Elizondo explains.

"If an animal matures early, this means he/she has a correct hormone balance. These animals will generally be shorter in the hip, but maybe wider and longer in body. This is what I learned from Johann about the cattle. I didn't know very much about cattle breeding when I started; I knew more about grass management, and numbers. A person has to visualize the whole to be able to improve the parts (the people, the cattle, the land, etc.). This is very important to success; it helps when you can put the whole picture together."

Increasing Diversity and Productivity

For best land management a person has to consider water efficiency, the water cycle, energy flow, and the recruitment of new individuals of desirable species in the grassland. "Succession needs to advance and the whole needs to improve. The way we practice Holistic Management takes care of all this. We aerate the soil with the hoof action of the cattle, and efficiently/adequately distribute manure and urine over the land to increase soil health, and give adequate rest in the area that will be stockpiled. This allows new desirable species to establish," says Elizondo.

This kind of management is good for wildlife, too. "When you leave half the ranch resting for the whole growing season, this is where the wildlife concentrate because nobody goes there, and it also makes good habitat for them. We have a lot more wildlife than we did before," he says.

"It all goes together. When you improve the water-holding capacity of the soil, and the roots go deeper because that pasture hasn't been grazed for 6 or 8 months of the year, new species can become established. Each new species brings another 7 to enrich biodiversity. This is the same with plants, insects, birds, deer, etc. This improves the resiliency of the environment. This is what I am working on," says Elizondo.

"In my ranch in Mexico I was the pioneer of edible silvopasture and have written some articles on this topic. I have over 550 acres of leucaena/grass pasture which is a legume tree that fixes nitrogen and is 24% protein as forage—and very palatable. It has the highest beef production per acre of any forage in the world. After many trials we developed a way to plant it with no-till methods and found the correct density, which is about 30,000 trees per acre. It produces another tier on



The pasture crop can grow tall and still be grazed by cattle. This is a pasture crop of 9 different species planted to improve organic matter levels in the soil and provide good quality forage in difficult times of the year.

your ranch and you produce double the forage per acre compared to just grass, without outside inputs," he explains.

"This is an important concept for people to understand but nobody is doing it here in the US. We have done this on our ranch in Mexico, but not in Florida. We can't bring this plant into Florida because they consider it an invasive species but in Texas it is widely used." There are opportunities, however, to utilize various trees in any region, in innovative ways.

As Jim has continued to experiment with cattle genetics and grazing practices, he has developed a consulting practice (Regengraze) to help others reduce their learning curve and achieve results more quickly. "I am starting consulting for people interested in this type of management," he says. "I would also like to eventually lease some ranch land to raise a composite breed adapted to the real South East as I call it, where the limiting factors are the high temperatures, high humidity and low quality/high fiber forages." With his experience and knowledge, it will be interesting to see what kind of animal Jim develops and what additional management practices he will add to his tool belt along the way. Certainly the end result will be healthier land with more diversity and better organic matter with hardy cattle that can utilize the forage grown on the land. 🌱



This is a 9 year old Mashona bull that settled over 100 cows in 35 days.





DEVELOPMENT CORNER

2014 WSARE Distance Learning for Agricultural Educators Report

In 2014, HMI focused predominantly on delivering all 5 Whole Farm/Ranch Planning modules online to the Agricultural Educators in our Distance Learning for Agricultural Educators program funded by Western Sustainable Agriculture and Education as part of their professional development program. 38 participants have remained in the training program through the course of the year.

Participants were not required to take all modules, however our goal was to have at least 35 participants participate in 3 or more classes. As can be seen below there was a total of 148 course scholarships given to achieve that goal which we did achieve.

The breakout of courses people took were as follows:

Course	# of Participants
Introduction to Whole Farm/Ranch Planning	38
Land Planning	29
Grazing Planning	31
Biological Monitoring	29
Financial Planning	21
Total	148

We used Instructure Canvas as our distance learning platform and made sure that all webinars were interactive and anyone who handed in completed assignments received feedback on their work. We recorded all webinars and archived so those who couldn't make the sessions could watch and listen to the recordings and email instructors with questions and provide input via the discussion forum.

Overall response to surveys shows that there was high satisfaction rate among participants for these courses ranging from 90-100% satisfaction. Actual behavior change in terms of created plans/drafts varied depending on subject.

Course	% of Participants Completing Assignments
Introduction to Whole Farm/Ranch Planning	97
Land Planning	78
Grazing Planning	69
Biological Monitoring	45
Financial Planning	52

However, increased knowledge or confidence in developing plans remained high throughout the program as noted below:

Course	% of Participants Experiencing Increased Knowledge or Confidence
Introduction to Whole Farm/Ranch Planning	100
Land Planning	88
Grazing Planning	92
Biological Monitoring	100
Financial Planning	88

In 2015, HMI will focus on supporting each participant to work with 2 producers to help them with some aspect of the Whole Farm/Ranch Planning Process. We will also be doing an end of program survey in February to determine the effect of this program.

HMI Receives Funding from Mitchell Foundation

HMI is excited to announce that we have received funding from the George & Cynthia Mitchell Foundation in Texas for drought mitigation programming in Texas. HMI has been providing this kind of programming in Texas for over 3 years with support from the Dixon Water Foundation. We will be able to increase our Open Gate and Drought Mitigation programs with this funding. HMI thanks the Mitchell Foundation for their support.

HMI/TOFGA Open Gate

On January 29th HMI collaborated with our friends at TOFGA (Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association) as we delivered a Seco Valley Ranch Day as part of the TOFGA Annual Conference. 22 participants managing approximately 73,445 acres were influenced by this event.

HMI Program Manager, Peggy Cole, welcomed the group and talked a little about HMI, its mission and its programs. She



Debbie Davis talking about Seco Valley Ranch production practices.

introduced Debbie and Don Davis, the host producers. They've been students of Holistic Management since the early 1990's.

After the Davises gave a history of their operation, Peggy Sechrist, gave a short presentation on Holistic Decision Testing and then led the group through a practice decision before giving them an actual Seco Valley Ranch decision to discuss and test in small groups of 4 or 5 people.

After a delicious lunch made from grassfed lamb from Seco Valley Ranch, participants journeyed through the pastures, stopping to visit with the longhorn herd.

The afternoon discussion was all about marketing. Debbie told how the wild pigs were such a pain in the neck she decided to view them as a resource. She began to offer wild pork on her website. She tamed the pigs with cubes in a trailer and when she was ready to harvest she just loaded them up with cubes in the same trailer and off they went. Many of the questions centered around

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Development Corner

continued from page fifteen

developing enough clientele to justify internet sales and other marketing options were discussed.

Evaluations from this program showed the following results:

Question	% of Participants
Overall Satisfaction (Rated good to excellent)	90
Would you recommend this event to others?	100
Expand your network today by meeting new people or learning about resources available to you?	100
Intend to test decisions for your operation as a result of today's event?	95
Intend to complete or modify a written marketing plan as a result of today's event?	76
Improved understanding of how Holistic Management helps you determine when marketing is your weak link	81

Oregon Whole Farm/Ranch Business Planning Series

In February, HMI completed our Whole Farm/ Ranch Business Planning Series, offering the financial, marketing, and business planning courses during that month. Lead instructor for this program was Certified Educator Rob Rutherford. As has been the case in previous courses, participants enjoyed the small group work and learning from each other. There was a nice mix of people, some of whom are working together on small farms, as well as many who had their own enterprises.

During the financial planning, some of the class had their own numbers to work with, while others who were anticipating starting some enterprises had to rely on working with others or playing with the provided examples in the workbook for their practice of the materials. As with most groups, the brainstorming was a big hit! While some folks struggled with using the HMI Financial Planning software, as one participant remarked, "The value of that software is worth the price of the series alone!"

Marketing planning included focusing on developing an elevator speech for each farming operation and honing in on the best marketing channels for each operation. Using this information participants had the opportunity to map out their marketing plan for the year and get feedback. This plan looks at both strategy and implementation.

After the marketing plan work, the group turned to business planning and looking at different business plans as well as the key sections of a business plan and how this document must be developed to clearly articulate an operations strategy and tactics for success. Again working in small groups helped participants learn from each other's operations and determine what they needed to work on when they got home. The group plans to connect with each other through a Facebook page they will start now that the series is over.

Our thanks to the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District for hosting this series and providing a great meeting place as well as all their gracious support and outreach for the series. For more information about the results of this program go to: <http://bit.ly/1xQ2QMj>

Evaluations showed the following results:

	% of Participants
More confident in determining viable profitable enterprises	97
More confident in getting the profit you need from your farm	80
More confident in determining net worth	80
Improved ability in getting the profit you need from your farm	87
Prioritizing and cutting farm expenses to guide reinvestment in your farm	97
How to use your financial plan to profitably price your products/services	86
Understanding your competition	73
How your marketing outreach reflects your whole farm goal	86
More confident in developing a marketing plan that meets your farm needs and goals	91
More confident in promoting your farm products	82
More confident in implementing important strategic systems and projects on your farm	83
More confident in developing a business/strategic plan	96
Do you intend to complete or modify a marketing plan as a result of today's session?	91
Do you intend to complete or modify a business plan as a result of today's session?	96
Overall satisfaction for course	96



The 2015 Oregon Whole Farm/Ranch Business Planning Class

California Whole Farm/Ranch Business Planning Series

At the beginning of March, HMI completed our Whole Farm/ Ranch Business Planning Series in Willits, California, completing the financial, marketing, and business planning courses. Lead instructor for this program was Certified Educator Richard King.

As noted with the Oregon group, working in small groups helped participants learn from each other's operations and determine what they needed to work on when they got home.

Our thanks to the California Farm Grange School for hosting this series and providing a great meeting place as well as all their gracious



The 2015 California Whole Farm/Ranch Business Planning Class

Colorado Whole Farm/Ranch Planning Course a Success

The Colorado Whole/Farm Ranch Business Planning course in Montrose, Colorado wrapped up on March 7th. 30 participants completed this program taught by Holistic Management Certified Educator Cindy Dvergsten. The Financial Planning sessions resulted in a lot of learning as participants filled out worksheets as well as HMI's Financial Planning Electronic Spreadsheet. Likewise, during the Marketing class, participants appreciated the many examples and exercises. Lastly, in the Business Planning class, participants were particularly excited to learn practical skills like break even analysis. Participants gave the program a 100% satisfaction rating (good or excellent rating). There was a lot of talk about a management club and subsequent trips to producers' operations with a Google group in the works. For more results of

support and outreach for the series. Thanks also to the Christano Family Fund for their support of this program and for providing scholarships. To read more results from this series go to: <http://holisticmanagement.org/blog/california-whole-farmranch-business-planning-series-provides-learning-networking/>

Evaluations showed the following results:

	% of Participants
Increased knowledge in determining viable profitable enterprises	91
More confident in getting the profit you need from your farm	83
More confident in determining net worth	78
Improved ability in projecting income	91
Prioritizing and cutting farm expenses to guide reinvestment in your farm	83
How to use your financial plan to profitably price your products/services	86
Ability to use your financial plan to determine viable products	85
More confident in promoting your farm products	82
More confident in implementing important strategic systems and projects on your farm	90
More confident in developing a business/strategic plan	90
Do you intend to complete or modify a financial plan as a result of these sessions?	100
Do you intend to complete or modify a marketing plan as a result of today's session?	95
Do you intend to complete or modify a business plan as a result of today's session?	100
Overall satisfaction for course (averaged over last 4 classes)	90

Cindy Dvergsten taught a very motivated and advanced group of agricultural producers in Montrose, Colorado.

this program, go to: <http://holisticmanagement.org/blog/colorado-whole-farmranch-planning-course-a-success/>

Thanks to the Valley Food Partnership for all their help and support with this program!

Results from our evaluations showed the following outcomes:

Outcome	% of Participants
How to increase net worth	90
Determining your farm's projected revenue	90
Getting the profit you need from your farm	86
Assessing the cash flow of your plan	86
Do you intend to change any practices as a result of this course?	100
Intend to complete or modify a financial plan for your farm	100
Prioritizing and cutting farm expenses to guide reinvestment in your farm	81
How to use your financial plan to profitably price your products/services	95
More confident in promoting your farm products	100
More confident in developing a marketing plan that meets your farm needs and goals	95
Increased knowledge of how to create a marketing plan	100
Increased knowledge of how to create a business plan	100
Increased ability to implement systems and projects to move you toward your whole farm goal	100
More confident in implementing important strategic systems and projects on your farm	100
More confident in developing a business/strategic plan	100
Do you intend to complete or modify a marketing plan as a result of today's session?	95
Do you intend to complete or modify a business plan as a result of today's session?	100



From the Board Chair

BY KELLY SIDORYK

A great gathering full of enthusiasm and energy was held in Canada at Manitou Springs, Saskatchewan in the middle of February. Over 150 people along with 40 children attended the event. It kicked off with a strategic planning session for interested parties led by David Irvine. David is an excellent facilitator and has a long connection with Holistic Management. He was first involved in the mid '80s when Holistic Resource Management (HRM) also had a Building the Effective Organization as a core course. David has continued that connection with Holistic Management and the people in it since then.

In Canada Holistic Management has evolved as a "movement" with no formal structure. The group of over 70 people who attended the strategic planning session discussed where we would like to see Holistic Management in five years, as well as some ways to achieve the vision. Many ideas were forth coming and an advisory council was set up to pull the ideas together.

The people or human element has always been an important component of the decision-making process, as David's continued involvement can attest to. The group recognizes the importance of this and is committed to its continuation. David also presented keynote speeches during the conference on families in business and working together. His sessions are always popular and are able to strike a chord with just about everyone.

The best illustration of the importance of the human resource was the 40 kids in the children's program, who had their own sessions on soil and money and then shared some of their learnings with the entire group.

Another positive outcome from the conference was the number



David Pogson and members of the children's program at the Canadian Holistic Management Conference.

of total newcomers to the event. One newcomer, whom we now call Mike "the IT guy," had met an enthusiastic Holistic Management practitioner on a plane. Mike had been doing some searching from the health angle due to a family member's situation. When he heard about the Holistic Management decision-making process towards a goal, it made sense to him and he wanted to learn more. So he and his girlfriend braved frigid temperatures and a true Canadian prairie winter storm to join us at the conference. His Information Technology expertise was most welcome and he even agreed to join the advisory council.

As has been said before: "It is about the people." I hope you consider the people in your resource base and how they can help you in your practice of Holistic Management and how Holistic Management might be able to help them achieve the quality of life they desire. In this way, we can grow the Holistic Management community through our local communities and the goals we are all striving for. 🌱

From the Executive Director

HMI's Global Shared Commitment

The mission of HMI is "to educate people to manage land for a sustainable future." That mission is important and relevant throughout the world, and HMI is committed to the vision of a world where sustainable agriculture communities flourish through the practice of Holistic Management. Why? Because healthy land, animals and people contributes to a better, more sustainable world, and Holistic Management is a framework that makes it possible.

HMI's mission and vision isn't limited to a single region, but instead we must find the resources to support the on-going learning and implementation of Holistic Management around the world in order to produce the outcome we desire...healthy land, animals and people.

Recently I attended the Western Canadian Holistic Management Conference in Manitou Beach, Saskatchewan, Canada. While meeting the many wonderful people at the Canada meeting who are demonstrating how Holistic Management is making a difference in their lives, I was reminded of the incredible work that is happening around the world. HMI will be working to secure the resources and

capacity to support Holistic Management work globally and is already doing that this year with providing support for HMI Open Gate events in other countries—the first in New Zealand on May 11th.

The Holistic Management® Framework has no geographical boundaries; it will help any farmer/rancher wherever they are located to better achieve their goals and better care for the resources under their stewardship. Holistic Management International is seeking opportunities to contribute, to help educate people to manage land for a sustainable future. We want to partner with people inside the Holistic Management family as well as those outside our network who share a common passion for developing a sustainable future.

There is important Holistic Management activities and practice going on in Canada, Australia, Mexico, Southern Africa and many other parts of the world. Where HMI can add value we will contribute. Where we can build collaborations and partnerships we will work hard to provide the opportunity. Holistic Management is needed now more than ever, and we are committed to help you build a sustainable future.

—Bryan Weech



The visioning session for Holistic Management Canada had many enthusiastic and dedicated participants.

Canadian Conference a Success

About 150 people attended Holistic Management Canada's annual conference at Manitou Beach near Watrous, Saskatchewan. The first session, led by David Irvine, focused on reviewing the mission statement of Holistic Management Canada. Over 70 people participated and 2 committees were formed to focus on the mission statement and future planning.

David Irvine also gave the evening keynote about having an integrated life in which there is balance between individuation (growing up) and connection (having relationships). David then described an integrated family business in which:

- 1). People have their own goals and are supported by each other to achieve those goals;
- 2). Caring – without the attempt to save people from their unhappiness;
- 3). Concern without

worry; and 4). There is a deep respect for the individual journey – without compromising yourself. David's talk ended with the 4 seasons to life or a family business which are: dependence, growing up, partnership, and letting go.

David also gave the morning keynote the next day in which he talked about how to

improve communication. He also touched on conflict resolution and how to deal with anger. He provided the definition of maturity:

1. The ability to do a job whether or not you are supervised.
2. Finish a job once you start it.
3. Carry money without spending it.
4. Be able to bear an injustice without wanting to get even.

David ended his presentation by pointing out that we are all leaders. He then gave some traits of a leader which included: takes responsibility, contributes, builds up, talks about



The 2015 Holistic Management Canada conference was a full house with many children attending as well.

solutions, shows loyalty, mastery, rights wrongs, courage to let go, discomfort is seen as an opportunity, and gratitude.

The next session was a producer panel. Allen and Arlette Seib talked about their sheep operation and how they market through their website. Sam and Janeen Colvin shared their story of direct marketing grass fed beef, pastured pork, pastured poultry (meat and eggs), and grassfed raw pet food, including having their own abattoir. Richard and Sue DeBruijn shared their story which included moving from Ponoka, Alberta and 2 good off farm jobs to Stump Lake, Saskatchewan where the main enterprise is custom grazing.

Holistic Management Certified Educator Blain Hjertaas gave a presentation on Regenerative Agriculture, explaining the importance of soil health and increased organic matter. Other speakers included Jodie Griffin, Linda Edgecombe, and Greg Smith. Holistic Management Certified Educator Don Campbell also spoke about the current financial opportunity in the cattle business and urged attendees to invest 90% of their increased income so it becomes profit.

Overall the conference was an outstanding success. Thanks to the organizing committee, auction contributors (\$5,250 raised), and to conference attendees.

HMI Co-Sponsors SRM Symposium

In February the Society for Range Management held their annual conference in Sacramento, California. Certified Educators Richard King and Rob Rutherford moderated a special symposium during the conference titled: "Holistic Management: Extraordinary Success Stories, Extraordinary Possibilities."

The audience greatly enjoyed the stories by Joe Morris, California; Jerry Doan, North Dakota; Ken Miller, North Dakota; Peggy and Joe Maddox, Texas; Maurice Robinette, Washington; and Cooper Hibbard, Montana. All are ranchers and farmers scattered throughout the west, and they manage all sorts of environments. They had fascinating stories about how and why Holistic Management helped them and others become more successful in managing their relationships with land, people, and money. Cooper Hibbard focused on reporting his observations of two ranches he visited in the desert grasslands of northern Mexico, especially the transformation of land health.

The speaker's backgrounds, environments, and experiences were diverse, but despite the great variation in the speakers and their stories,

Certified Educators

The following Certified Educators listed have been trained to teach and coach individuals in Holistic Management. On a yearly basis, Certified Educators renew their agreement to be affiliated with HMI. This agreement requires their commitment to practice Holistic Management in their own lives and to seek out opportunities for staying current with the latest developments in Holistic Management.

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Grapevine

continued from page nineteen

a clear take home message seemed to materialize from them all: managing holistically has an uncanny ability to advance the health of the land, financial security, and quality of life for all of those who practice it.

After the speakers provided brief presentations, the audience engaged in questions and discussion, totaling over an hour in length. The interaction revealed that some of the people who attended were quite moved by the power of this decision-making framework. HMI's Executive Director Bryan Weech was present and encouraged people to contact HMI for more information about Holistic Management.

This symposium was made possible with additional support from the 11th Hour Project, Paicines Ranch, and TomKat Ranch Foundation.

Iowa Farmers Win Sustainable Ag Award

Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice, both of Wapello, Iowa, are the recipients of the 2015 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award, granted annually by Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) to an individual or couple who has shown dedication to sustainable agriculture, shared their knowledge and have been influential in efforts to foster vibrant communities, diverse farms and healthful food. The award was presented to Wahl and Dice during Practical Farmers of Iowa's annual conference.

Wahl and Dice own Red Fern Farm, an agroforestry farm and nursery that specializes in nut and berry crops as well as production of tree nursery stock and medicinal forest plants. The farm, which Wahl and Dice purchased in 1986, is also the site of ongoing research on a variety of tree crops and forest farming systems. Both Wahl and Dice come from a conservation background, having worked for their local county conservation boards. Their thoughts on sustainable agriculture have evolved over time, just as their predominant farm enterprises have changed. They used to

run a sizable pasture poultry operation, but now fruit, nut and berry sales prevail along with nursery stock sales. The farm currently has about 75 species of crop trees and shrubs, including paw paw, persimmon, Asian pears, heart nut trees and aronia berries, and chestnut trees are a cornerstone of Red Fern Farm. Wahl said PFI and Holistic Management have been important as they developed their farm and thoughts about sustainability.

Congratulations, Tom and Kathy!

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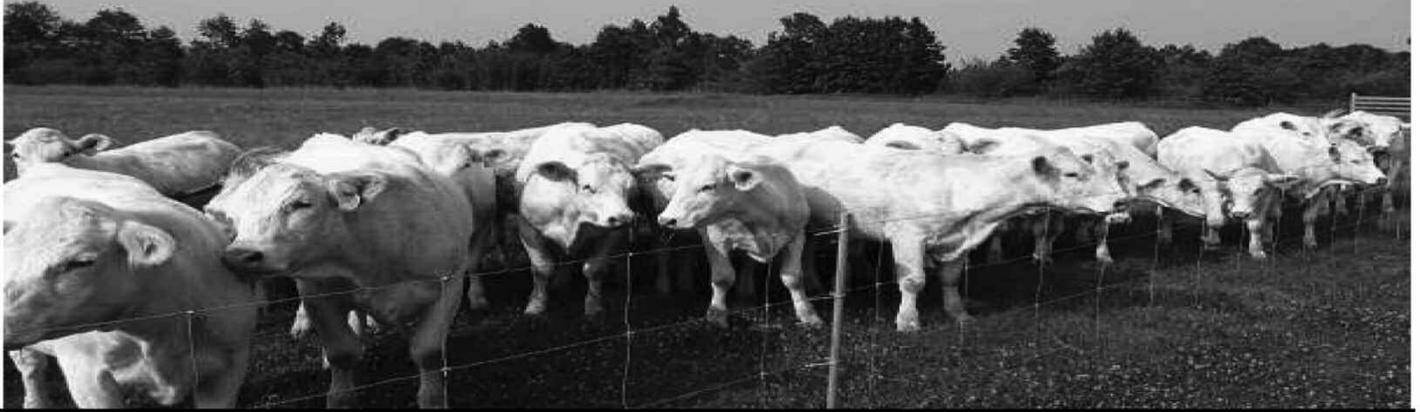
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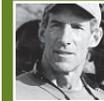
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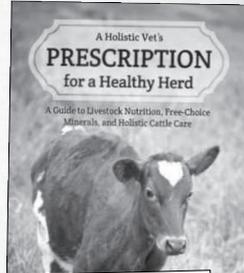
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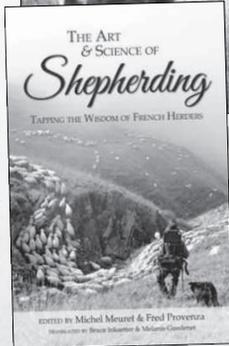


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