

# Outcome-based Grazing Program

The Bureau of Land Management implements an initiative known as Outcome-based Grazing Authorizations. It is designed to offer a more collaborative approach between the BLM and its partners within the livestock grazing community when issuing grazing authorizations. The following is part of a series highlighting ranches in this pilot program.



## PH Livestock

Rawlins, Wyoming

Q & A with Niels Hansen, Ranch Owner and Manager

**How would you describe this ranch to someone who has never been there?**

Our ranch is a high desert, open-range operation in south central Wyoming. We are a cow-calf stocker operation.

**What is the philosophy that guides this ranch?**

We do not try to maximize anything, but we try to optimize everything. We work to operate in balance with nature by making any adjustments needed to keep the ranch producing in a consistent predictable manner while protecting the land we live. Whether the year is wet or dry, hot or cold, we adjust our stocking rates, our on and off dates, if needed we can change our rotations we do whatever is needed to be effective.

## Why did this ranch enroll in the outcome-based grazing program?

When it was first presented, I listened to the presentation, and realized the program was describing how we already operated. By being involved in the Muddy Creek Coordinated Resource Management Project and an attempt to develop a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances we improved communication with the agencies as well as the public. We were able to show people what we were doing and why which has allowed us to build a level of trust with the BLM as well as the public. We were already going through our permit renewals, the Outcome program allowed us to move forward with some permit changes that were already planned while exploring what more flexibility could be added to our permits. Our Outcome-Based Grazing Program is more of a case study of an existing program rather than a test of something new.

## Why is some flexibility important in a grazing permit?

With the changes we see in our year to year weather, day to day markets and government policies a business needs to be able to react and make whatever changes are needed to stay viable. It makes running an operation much harder if you can't take advantage of a marketing opportunity or make a major change when an environmental threat presents itself. We need to be able to react without going through a lengthy NEPA analysis or a public comment period so we can change our on or off dates or move away from an unexpected problem.

## Why should someone who isn't involved in agriculture care about how public lands are managed?

The truth is no management is the worst management. The runaway wildfires are a perfect example of the kind of tragedy that can occur with improperly managed land. The cost to the public is horrendous. There is no reason for the loss of life, property and wasted money we are seeing every year. Look back in history, when we had active grazing and kept the fuels trimmed down, we didn't have these huge fires like we are experiencing today. The history shows it. The data is there. But now, it is such a runaway problem that we are spending millions of dollars every year that could be used in better ways. The public does care about the management of the land but they have been filled with bad information or outdated science. The public needs to be reminded that everything needs to be cared for and properly managed if we want to maintain for future generations.



***Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands*** is a collaborative effort between the BLM and Intermountain West Joint Venture. Our purpose is to catalyze proactive, voluntary, and community-led sagebrush rangeland conservation – expanding success across private and public lands. This collaboration is supporting the Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations efforts. Learn more at **[www.PartnersInTheSage.com](http://www.PartnersInTheSage.com)**.