

## Webinars for ranch advisors to focus on drought planning

Written by Gothenburg Times

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A spring webinar series will provide drought planning techniques and technologies to advisors seeking to help Great Plains ranchers manage through drought.

The webinars are scheduled from January through May 2013, on the last Wednesday of each month.

“What happens from January through May will be really critical,” said Lynn Myers, a Sandhills rancher who will be one of the January presenters. “For example, it could determine whether there are cattle in the western Sandhills in 2013.”

Each one-hour webinar will start at 10 a.m. with a briefing on current drought status and what to expect in the foreseeable future, followed by a session on a specific technique related to drought planning, and question-and-answer time. The webinars will be led by ranchers and advisors with hands-on experience in drought planning and range management.

Jerry Volesky, a range and forage specialist at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, Neb., will introduce the series by talking about why ranchers need drought plans.

“It leads to earlier and more effective management decisions that can have positive economic benefits,” he said. “Additionally, ranchers that have well-developed plans indicate that their plans have made the drought event less stressful and it gives them a sense of confidence.”

Dates, topics and presenters in the series are:

Jan. 30—Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch: The Planning Process, by Jerry Volesky, range and forage specialist at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, Nebraska, and Lynn Myers, owner of Tippets-Myers Ranch in western Nebraska.

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Feb. 27—Avoiding Analysis Paralysis: Monitoring and Setting Critical Dates for Decision Making During Drought, by Dwayne Rice, rangeland management specialist, NRCS, Kansas; Ted Alexander, owner of Alexander Ranch in south-central Kansas; and Cal Adams, owner of Adams Ranch in north-central Kansas.

March 27—The New Cumulative Forage Reduction (CFR) Index: for Assessing Drought Impacts and Planning a Grazing Strategy, by Pat Reece, owner and senior consultant of Prairie Montane Enterprises and professor emeritus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

April 24—Using a Drought Calculator to Assist Stocking Decisions, Stan Boltz, state range management specialist, NRCS, South Dakota and Jeff Printz, rangeland management specialist, NRCS, North Dakota.

May 29—Economic Factors to Weigh in Making Decisions during Drought, by Matt Stockton, agricultural economist at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte.

The sessions are free and open to the public. Registration is required to receive the Adobe Connect webinar link. To register, go to <http://go.unl.edu/uwk>.

More information can be found at the Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch website, at <http://drought.unl.edu/ranchplan>. Please contact Tonya Haigh, National Drought Mitigation Center and SARE project coordinator, [thaigh2@unl.edu](mailto:thaigh2@unl.edu), 402-472-6781, with any questions.