

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program at South Dakota State University, FY2008



South Dakota
Cooperative Extension Service

South Dakota's 22 million acres of native range and pasture lands (50.3% of SD acreage) support 14,500 beef and 2,000 sheep family operated ranches. These families graze 3.7 million head of beef cattle and 0.35 million sheep with a combined value of \$3.8 billion. Approximately 2.0 million acres of rangeland are in public ownership with the remaining 91% in private ownership. Recent high crop prices and USDA crop support programs have resulted in the conversion of nearly 3.0 million acres of range and pasture lands during the last decade. Fragmentation of range and forestland near the Black Hills into small lifestyle acreages has directly impacted vast acreages and indirectly impacts the "ranchability" of most private range and forestlands within the Black Hills and within a sixty-mile radius surrounding the Black Hills. The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) funds allocated to South Dakota State University are administered by the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. Funding is used to address these natural resource issues through landowner/operator based educational programming. Each federal dollar allocated through the RREA program is leveraged with \$45.67 in state, private, and /or local funds.

RREA Activities

- **Rangeland Monitoring Workshops** for public and private range managers were conducted in drought impacted areas to assist with establishing sustainable stocking rates.
- **Ranch Lenders Educational Camp** for private agricultural lenders specializing in ranch operating and mortgage loans was conducted to assist them in working with range producers.
- **Rangeland Youth Days** were conducted with the NRCS to stimulate interest in renewable resource careers and fundamental knowledge of range and soil resources.
- **Small Acreage Workshops** focused on the range and forest management needs of lifestyle acreage owners in and near the Black Hills to reduce risk of fire damage, soil erosion, and infestation of invasive weeds while meeting their landscaping and equine grazing interests.
- **Native American Sustainability Circles** conducted jointly with USDA-SARE focused on sustainability of natural resources and communities on South Dakota Reservations.

Youth learn about range and soil management at Rangeland Days



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