

SUMMARY

Roundtable Proceedings

November 9 - 11, 1986

UCROSS FOUNDATION

"Roundtable on Ranching & Agriculture"

Prepared by  
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I. IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE, WHAT DOES WYOMING HAVE TO OFFER RANCHERS AND FARMERS?

A. As a state, Wyoming offers to ranchers and farmers:

1. A state government that is accessible with a citizen legislature attuned to agriculture.
2. Clean air and water, with an abundance of water, both developed and undeveloped.
3. High quality, abundant grasslands.
4. Other natural resources, such as minerals, scenic beauty, native animals, and Wyoming's youth.
5. Freedom of choice, as a part of the high quality of life in Wyoming.
6. Good educational opportunities.
7. A favorable tax climate, including no state income tax.
8. A strong representation of agriculture through a variety of agricultural organizations.

B. Also stressed as important were:

1. A variety of recreational opportunities.
2. Minimal disease problems in crops.
3. High alfalfa yields.
4. A dedicated and knowledgeable work force.
5. A favorable climate, providing diversity in temperature and thus a diversity in crops.
6. Availability of land to lease or buy, providing room to grow.
7. Wyoming's pride in itself and a strong western image.
8. Friendliness of its people, providing a sense of community.
9. Link deposits program.
10. The State Farm Loan Board.

II. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT AG?RANCHING BUSINESSES FACE IN WYOMING?

A. Stressed as the biggest barriers were:

1. A worldwide commodity oversupply, resulting in low prices.
2. Interference (perceived or real) on the part of the federal government.
3. Lack of venture capital.
4. Lack of local processing.
5. High interest rates.
6. Lack of value-added processing.
7. National foreign trade, monetary, and farm policies.
8. Lack of a willing, skilled agricultural labor force.
9. Limited marketplaces, without sufficient value-added emphasis.
10. Scarce, expensive funding.
11. International trade barriers.
12. Lack of cooperation among agricultural organizations.
13. Lack of political involvement.

COMMENT: It was noted by the participants that several things considered to be a benefit in round one were also considered detrimental in round two. One of the most important finds by the participants was this duality in agriculture.

B. Other barriers also considered important by the participants were:

1. Multiple land use demands
2. National health concerns about eating beef, sugar, and other Wyoming-produced items.
3. Large capital requirements which make it difficult for youth to enter the agriculture business.
4. Distant markets, both for buying and selling.
5. Lack of cooperation with and between federal and state agencies.
6. New crop diseases.
7. A poor self-image on the part of agriculture.
8. High overhead costs.
9. Banking institutions reluctant to loan money.
10. A lack of lending expertise to agriculture on the part of banking institutions.
11. Misconceptions, held by the public, about agriculture's use of public lands.
12. Liability concerns.
13. A lack of information networks and promotion for native products.
14. Overpriced land. It was felt that land which could be used for agriculture is priced at recreational and development rates.
15. Isolation of ag families.
16. Little continuing education in isolated areas.
17. Adverse influence by environmental groups.
18. An unwillingness to change on the part of those in the agriculture business.

COMMENT: The group also rated a number of climate-related factors, and other factors, such as mixed land ownership and market price-parity, about which it is felt that nothing can be done. Since these factors are unchangeable, it was felt to be fruitless to devote time to discussing or worrying about them.

III. WHAT FUTURE CONDITIONS, FACTORS, OR CHANGES COULD OCCUR TO MAKE WYOMING AGRICULTURE MORE PROSPEROUS?

A. The discussion groups rated the following as having the highest possible beneficial impact:

1. The \$1 beef check-off program.
2. Preparing realistic financial approaches to agricultural projects before beginning the projects.
3. Developing alternate market competition, such as co-op marketing, retained ownership, and specialty markets for specialty products.
4. Implementing a restructuring of Farm Loan Board payments, ,Ad lowering interest rates on those loans.
5. Establishing a clearinghouse for foreign marketing opportunities.
6. Increasing total alfalfa production.
7. Improving the balance of foreign trade between manufactured goods from abroad and foods grown in the U.S. (e.g., wheat).
8. Implementing a vertical integration of value-added products, all the way to the consumer. Also. providing demonstration shops for value-added products. such as wild game meats, lean beef, and other local products.
9. Developing a quantity image for our products.

B. Also perceived as important were the following:

1. The implementation of in-state processing plants, for such production as meat packing, wool processing, tanning.
2. Establishment of a livestock market auction in northeast Wyoming.
3. More cooperation from our Congressional delgation in seeing that the interests of Wyoming agriculturists are well-represented in Washington.
4. Continuation of vocational education funding at the high school level.
5. Inclusion of agricultural interests when setting guidelines and rules for the allocation of monies as provided by Amendment 4.
6. Involving the landowner in setting wildlife management and harvest goals.
7. The increase and promotion of ranch recreation, such as bed and breakfast establishments, game tours, participation in round-ups, etc.
8. Promotion of alternate livestock production, such as fish and fur-bearing animals.
9. Improvement of soil characteristics.
10. Protection of private property rights.
11. The allotment of hunting licenses to landowners for resale.
12. The involvement of agriculturists in public land management.
13. Establishment of a unified voice for agriculture through networking.
14. Improvement of Wyoming's transportation systems.
15. The merger of ranching operations for more efficient operation and better use of available financing.
16. Provision of low-cost legal aid and financial education to those members of the agricultural community who are financially distressed.
17. Establishment of equipment banks for leasing instead of purchase.

IV. WHAT COULD AN OUTSIDE INVESTOR DO TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE IN WYOMING, TO BOTH MAKE MONEY AND PROVIDE JOBS?

A. The following projects were suggested:

1. A fertilizer/chemical company.
2. Beef and lamb meat processing plants.
3. Wool processing plant.
4. A trade brokerage (i.e., act as middleman between growers and processors).
5. Bird farms and other game management operations.
6. Purchase a sheep ranch (already considered the most prosperous agricultural pursuit in Wyoming by participants).
7. A manufacturing plant to produce frozen entree meals made entirely with Wyoming products.
8. A stocker operation.

V. SELECT AN ACTION PLAN TO BE DEVELOPED WHICH WILL POSITIVELY ASSIST RANCHING AND AGRICULTURE.

A. The following ideas were presented:

1. Produce a feasibility study of a meat processing plant in Wyoming.
2. Coordinate government and private agriculture sectors.
3. Have the State Farm Loan Board restructure current payment plans by using a tier system.
4. Increase alfalfa production.
5. Determine if game ranching is feasible in Wyoming.
6. Establish trade offices for Wyoming products in Hong Kong and Rotterdam.
7. Establish a flour mill in Pine Bluffs.
8. Establish a frozen food processing plant in Torrington.
9. Establish a pet food processing plant in LaGrange.
10. Support the Middle Fork reservoir project.
11. Give Landowners hunting licenses for resale at their discretion.
12. Establish low cost legal aid for agriculturists.
13. Appoint a state director of marketing for agricultural products.
14. Allow test marketing of game meat and specialty items.
15. Establish a free trade zone in Casper.

COMMENT: One of the participants, Bob Kidd of Casper, is an especially strong advocate of the free trade zone idea, and stresses that this particular project should be investigated by the Agricultural Task Force of the Wyoming Futures Project.

VI. WHAT DIRECTIONS SHOULD THE AGRICULTURAL TASK FORCE OF THE WYOMING FUTURES PROJECT TAKE?

A. The group recommended the following ideas:

1. Research and extension efforts to increase alfalfa production.
2. Development of a processing and marketing system to integrate all Wyoming products, to include research, financing, cost and feasibility aspects for all products.
3. Establishment of a marketing organization, both for national and international marketing, to find the markets which are available for Wyoming goods and bring that information back to Wyoming producers.

4. Coordinate recreational opportunities with agriculturists (e.g., guides for hunting).
5. Production of alternative crops.
6. Consult with major food processors for cooperative growth.
7. Establishment of thermal greenhouses at Saratoga, Thermopolis.

B. Recommended by the participants as potential co-chairpersons of the Agricultural Task Force were:

Harold Hellbaum, Chugwater  
Carolyn Pasineaux, Casper  
Don Meike, K,/ycee  
Dave Flitner, Shell  
Ken Kirkeride, Casper  
George Salisbury, Savery/Baggs  
Cindy Ogburn, Cheyenne  
Kim Kreuger, Wheatland  
Jim Magagna  
Ed Herschler.  
Stan Hathaway  
Bob Kidd, Casper  
Don Cundall, Wheatland  
Jim Ellis  
Larry Bourret, Laramie  
Doug Chamberlain  
Bob Fletcher

COMMENT: The economic aspects and problems of the agricultural community were stressed heavily during all phases of the roundtable. it was felt that not enough attention was being paid to the emotional and mental health issues presented by agricultural life, and the following statement is included to address these issues:

The governor should be informed about the family and emotional issues and consequences to the failing economy. Self-isolation of the small family rancher affects family functioning and, therefore, our rural children. Mental Health Centers and Family Crisis Centers need the governor's support. They face cutbacks in management due to reduced state and local funding and reduced ability of clients to pay for services at a time when the demand for services is increased. Our rural people need increased Mental Health Center services as do the rural merchants who are dependent upon agricultural customers.

It is suggested that the governor provide incentives for existing human service agencies to develop volunteer programs, using indigenous people to provide active listening and support for local people in remote areas of Wyoming.

OF THE ACTION PLANS PRESENTED IN V, ABOVE, THE FOLLOWING PLANS OF ACTIONS (GOALS) WERE PRESENTED.

## RESTRUCTURING FARM LOAN BOARD PROCEDURES

GOAL                   Restructure the Wyoming Farm Loan Board procedures and regulations for current loans and future applicants, to provide the maximum benefits to Wyoming farmers and ranchers. This restructuring process could include the following options: debt restructuring, reduction of interest rates, reamortization of loans, deferment of payments, tier system of loan repayment, lease-back options to repurchase land or renew the loan at a later date, better knowledge by Farm Loan Board members of lease permit regulations of the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, and third party mediation between landowners and the Farm Loan Board before foreclosure.

LEADERS in this effort would be:

- the governor
- the state treasurer
- the Wyoming Rural Support Network
- executive secretaries of all trade organizations
- agriculture committee members of both the Wyoming house and senate
- Wyoming banking associations
- Farm credit system

PROPONENTS to this effort would be:

- people with existing Farm Loan Board loans, and new applicants
- anyone who is sympathetic and educated to the importance of agriculture in Wyoming
- main street businesses and rural community leaders
- lending agencies
- news media

OPPONENTS to this effort could be:

- urban legislators
- non-benefitting public
- municipalities and other individuals or organizations which may feel that agriculture is getting more than its share
- members of the Farm Loan Board who may be resistant to change

NEUTRAL participants in achieving this goal might be:

- members of the Farm Loan Board
- state employees
- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management

The FIRST STEP in achieving this goal is the dissemination of this report to all Wyoming trade organizations, the Wyoming Rural Support Network, Wyoming legislators, the governor, and other Farm Loan Board members.

The PROCESS should begin before the legislature convenes in January, 1987.

The STEPS to be taken in reaching this goal are:

dissemination of this report, as mentioned in first step, above  
refinement of plan by Agricultural Task Force  
provide information and pressure on house and senate agriculture  
committee members by the executive secretaries of trade  
organizations  
educational thrust to small town business people and the general  
public.  
encourage Farm Loan Board borrowers to write to the Farm Loan  
Board about the needs for assistance  
implementation of recommendations by the Farm Loan Board

The TIME FRAME for the steps, above, is:

- dissemination within ten days (by 11/21/86)  
refinement by January 1, 1987  
information and pressure, prior to the legislature  
education ongoing from the present  
writing to Farm Loan Board ongoing from the present until the  
legislative session  
implementation by March 31st, 1987

ENHANCEMENT of the process can be provided by the proponents and neutral  
participants, plus a great benefit could be provided by the media.

HINDRANCES may arise from various legislators, the media, and any participants  
who do not act in a timely fashion.

NEUTRALIZATION of the hindrances can be achieved by education, lobbying, and  
positive media coverage.

The participants in this goal setting project recommend that the goal be  
pursued, commenting that if nothing is done, the state will become a landholder  
for property that requires personnel, time and money to manage: that cannot  
be resold currently to cover debt; and that is displacing more Wyoming jobs.

This group also took on the following tasks in achieving this goal:

Charles Medina will talk to his Forest Service clients  
Lael Good will send the roundtable report to those on the Wyoming Rural  
Support Network mailing list  
Dale Koch will give the report to the Wyoming LEAD office  
John Barrasso will talk to the executive director of the Wyoming Futures  
Project and stress the importance of beginning the Agricultural Task  
Force as soon as possible  
Ken Serres will discuss the goal with Wyoming treasurer. Stan Smith  
George Salisbury will discuss the goal with governor-elect Mike Sullivan  
and Secretary of State-elect Kathy Karpan  
Sue Grant will talk to the members of the legislative agriculture committees.

COMMENT There was considerable concern on the part of several participants  
that such a restructuring would not be administered fairly and  
might be used by agriculturists who are not fiscally responsible.  
Guidelines for fairness to all while weeding out those who are  
not using FLB loans properly was advised.



WYOMING EXPORT TRADE OFFICES

GOAL To establish and create a direct link and office in Hong Kong for the Pacific Rim, and Rotterdam for the European Common Market for the promotion and sales of Wyoming products.

LEADERS in this effort should be

Department of Agriculture  
the governor  
the Economic Development and Stabilization Board

PROPONENTS in this effort would be

the Wyoming Lean project  
wheat growers  
wool growers  
Beef Council  
mining industry  
oil and gas industry  
Department of Agriculture  
the Governor's Office  
Wyoming import-export associations  
Wyoming LEAD  
University of Wyoming (College of Agriculture)  
private industries who will participate

OPPONENTS to this effort might be

middle men, who would see it as competition  
private industry, same as middle men  
other states

NEUTRAL participants could be

the governor  
the legislature

The FIRST STEPS toward reaching this goal would be

organize participants  
establish an office in Cheyenne to pursue the goals  
request capital funding  
decide if this will be a private or state government endeavor  
establishment of foreign offices

The PROCESS should begin immediately, in Cheyenne.

The TIME FRAME for this process should be

immediate organization and request for funding  
legislation establishing agency (if necessary) by March 1, 1987  
establishment of Cheyenne office by June 1, 1987  
overseas offices opened within the year (by November 1, 1987)

ASSISTANCE in reaching this goal can be provided by

Executive Secretary of the Mining Association  
The University of Wyoming  
the new Governor, and the Governor's Office  
Chris Clothier with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture  
Sami Hajjar, with the University of Wyoming  
the Congressional delegation  
Bob Kidd  
John Nicholaysen  
any private industry that would want to export Wyoming products

ENHANCEMENT in reaching this goal can be provided

the legislature, in funding and setting up the agency

HINDRANCES to reaching this could include

competition for funding in the legislature  
resistance to the creation of a new state agency and the perceived  
need to hire more state employees  
trade barriers  
U.S. trade policies  
competition from other exporters

NEUTRALIZATION of the hindrances could be obtained by

stressing that this program would enhance economic development for  
the entire state  
assuring that personnel to staff the new agency would be drawn from  
existing state agencies, thus not increasing the state payroll  
asking the Congressional delegation to assist in easing trade  
barriers and working through and with the U.S. trade policies.

There can be no compromise in reaching this goal – it will either happen or not. It will take time before the results from establishing overseas trade offices can be realized, perhaps as much as five years. However, the discussion group feels that such offices would enhance economic development for the entire state and, thus, that the goal is eminently desirable.

ALFALFA PRODUCTION

COAL To increase yields on alfalfa on irrigated Lands at 5 percent per year, from 2.8 tons per acre to 3.5 tons per acre on about 400,000 acres. Convert 100,000 acres or 20 percent of "other hay" to alfalfa, increasing, yield from 1.45 tons per acre to 2.9 tons per acre. The net increase is 425,000 or \$60 per ton, or \$25 million. Secondary goal is to develop and enhance current markets, including export markets.

LEADERS in this effort would be

University of Wyoming Extension offices and Experiment Stations  
U.W. Plant Science Department  
U.W. Animal Science Department  
U.W. Agricultural Economics Department  
Commercial Agriculture

PROPOSERS to this should be

hay producers  
farmers and ranchers using hay for feed  
hay processors (pelleters and cubers)

OPPOSERS to this effort might be

ranchers producing grass hay for sale  
Nebraska farmers wanting to sell hay in Wyoming

NEUTRAL participants in reaching this goal would be

farm supply and agri-businesses  
seed-chemical-fertilizer producers  
producers of other supply items

The FIRST STEPS to be taken in reaching this goal are

to initiate education programs with the producers and feeders  
of alfalfa  
to initiate market promotion for export or processing  
to demonstrate the economic justification for the increase

The PROCESS should begin immediate, on local levels statewide

The STEPS necessary include

education and information to be disseminated to growers and  
users of alfalfa  
market development in-state and for export

COMMENT The steps necessary by the grower to achieve increased yield would be improved rotation, best varieties, best pest control, good fertility program, good irrigation, proper timing of harvesting for highest quality and to insure two or three cuttings annually, depending on the area.

The TIME FRAME for achieving this goal would begin immediately and would be an ongoing process requiring periodic review.

ASSISTANCE in reaching this goal can be provided by

U.W. administrators  
Wyoming legislators  
Agriculture credit providers for necessary financing

A solid justification of this idea can provide ENHANCEMENT, by demonstrating successful preliminary results.

HINDRANCES to reaching this goal might be provided by traditionalists who do not wish to change.

This goal is fairly conservative but should be attempted. The benefits are significant and fairly easy to achieve. Although there would initially be some added costs to growers, benefits would far exceed costs.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

- GOAL To establish cooperative wildlife management enhancement, by sharing benefits and rewards among all those involved in the production of wildlife and related businesses (e.g., tourism). To set up wildlife management areas for groups of landowners to cooperatively manage, which would allow for various quotas and opening days.
- COMMENTS Pressure on wildlife could be increased by having various opening days.
- Area licenses would not be available to the general public, but a certain number would be allotted to Wyoming residents, as provided by current law.
- Landowners would receive no landowner coupons, no damage claims, and no future forage compensation from Wyoming Game and Fish.
- Landowners could designate who would receive a certain portion of licenses allotted to his land, so the landowner could build up a regular clientele.
- LEADERS in this effort would be
- Wyoming Woolgrowers
  - Wyoming Stockgrowers
  - Wyoming Farm Bureau
  - Senator Eddie Moore
- COMMENT This process is already underway through the efforts of those just named.
- PROPOSERS to this effort would be
- U.W. Range Management Department
  - outfitters
  - lending agencies
  - merchants
  - Wyoming Game and Fish Commission and Department
  - Wyoming Travel Commission
  - Landowner-Liaison Board
  - individual landowners
- OPPONENTS to this effort might be
- individual members of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department
  - local sportsmens associations (who might fear losing access)
  - non-Landowning outfitters
- COMMENT Legislation concerning access to public lands might also negatively affect this goal.

NEUTRAL participants in this: effort would be the Wyoming legislature.

The FIRST STEPS in this effort have already been taken, through the drafting of a bill which will be presented during the 1987 legislative session.

The TIMING for this process began about six months ago, and prefiling of the bill will occur before the start of the legislature.

The necessary PROCESS in this effort will entail

gaining feedback at the agricultural Task Force meetings  
convincing legislators of the need for this action  
informing members of pertinent organizations what is  
proposed and what is needed to achieve it

The TIME FRAME involved, after introduction of the bill, is enactment by the end of the legislative session, and one year for the development of regulations.

ASSISTANCE in this endeavor can be provided by

support from members of the Game and Fish Commission  
Chambers of Commerce  
Motel and Hotel Association  
realtors

COMMENT Benefits will also be provided by stressing that land values will be enhanced, and that there will be no cost to the general public in establishing the changes.

ENHANCEMENT of the goal can be obtained through

thorough, clear explanations both in the media and on a one-to-one basis  
lobbying efforts on the part of agricultural organizations

COMMENT It is recommended that a hunter information gathering system be implemented, similar to the one in use in Utah, which requires that detailed responses on the part of hunters, and which is used to police hunters, by denying licenses to those who do not cooperate. Wyoming Game and Fish already uses an annual questionnaire, which could be expanded and used to regulate in the same manner as Utah's.

HINDRANCES to this effort may arise from

reluctance on the part of the Game and Fish Department to change negative news reports  
non-landowning outfitters  
perception that this is an attempt to establish private game ranches  
potential liability of landowners (which can only be resolved by an actual court case)  
current Game and Fish management by herd units rather than by area

NEUTRALIZATION of the hindrances can be achieved through

emphasizing the benefits to non-ranch owners (e.g., increased  
land holdings, more tourists, steady customers)  
support from non-agriculture groups  
cooperative agreements between landowners and outfitters  
education of the public  
setting program up on an experimental basis to begin with to  
see if it is actually feasible

The discussion group decided that this goal should be tried, because the  
result is a compromise from game ranching as is found in other  
parts of the nation, because agriculturists would find it in  
their best interests to improve game habitat, and because it  
would increase income to the state.

COMMENT This program would be more successful in eastern Wyoming than in  
western Wyoming, because of past patterns, and might be opposed  
by western Wyomingites. Also, participants in the discussion  
saw several problems in implementing this program, but felt it  
could be successful, with careful planning.

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November 9 - 11, 1986

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