

CONTACT: Meagan Cramer
785.532.4435
mcramer@agecon.ksu.edu



Student defends thesis, ‘The Economics of Irrigated Pasture Using Management Intensive Grazing Versus Traditional Cropping Systems in East Central Idaho’

MANHATTAN, KS, August 11, 2004- Mark Orchard, Rexburg, Idaho, defended his thesis, “The Economics of Irrigated Pasture Using Management Intensive Grazing Versus Traditional Cropping Systems in East Central Idaho,” Friday, August 6, 2004. Orchard is an Animal Science Instructor at Brigham Young University – Idaho.

As pressure against grazing on public ground continues to mount, modern day ranchers are forced to evaluate alternatives. In Idaho, roughly 36 million acres are controlled and managed by federal and state agencies. The remaining 16.7 million acres are privately owned. According to the Idaho Department of Agriculture statistical report, of the 16.7 million acres of privately held ground, 20%, or 3.493 million acres, of available crop land is irrigated. As ranchers consider alternatives for grazing livestock, irrigated pasture is one important option to consider.

“Systems thinking mandates thinking outside of the box,” Orchard said. “To stay financially viable, today’s rancher must be willing to look at alternatives to traditional grazing practices. Management Intensive Grazing offers a potential alternative for increased economic return.”

“Mr. Orchard’s research demonstrates potential for Idaho ranchers to utilize irrigated pasture,” Ted Schroeder, major professor said. “However, his work also clearly shows that to be profitable relative to competing crops such as wheat or alfalfa, irrigated pasture requires intensive management and animal production performance levels that would justify greater than traditional pasture lease value. These results are very important for Idaho ranchers contemplating alternatives to public grazing land.”

-more-

K-State's Master of Agribusiness is an award-winning, distance education degree program that focuses on food and agribusiness management. Students in the program are located in 30 states within the United States and 12 countries abroad. They range in age from 25 to 55 and work in every sector of the food and agribusiness industry.

The program, launched in 1998, was the first graduate agribusiness program in the nation to be offered through distance education. The executive style, distance education delivery breaks down barriers associated with earning a master's degree, such as access to a university campus, job changes, relocations and job-related travel.

"We have developed a program that meets students' educational needs, and we deliver it in a format that meets their schedules," said Allen Featherstone, director of graduate studies for K-State's department of agricultural economics. "Students can access the program regardless of where they are."

The MAB program was awarded the University Continuing Education Association/Peterson's Award for most innovative distance education program in 2001. Additional honors include: American Distance Education Consortium's National Excellence in College & University Distance Education Honorable Mention, Spring 2001; University Continuing Education Association Credit Program of Excellence, Spring 2000; University Continuing Education Association Region V Credit Program Award, Fall 1999.

###