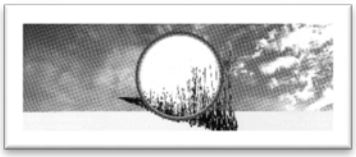

Center for Grassland Studies
2017 Fall Seminar Series and Leu Lecture

About the Fall Seminar Series and Leu Lecture

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Center for Grassland Studies has hosted the Fall Seminar Series for over 22 years. Topics relate to the Center's mission, which is to emphasize the role of grasslands as a natural resource and enhance the efficiency, profitability, and sustainability of grasslands and turfs. Speakers from across Nebraska have provided knowledge and insight on issues ranging from invasive plants to trends driving the beef industry to pollinator conservation to turfgrass.

Each series features a Frank and Margaret Leu Distinguished Lecturer, a nationally recognized person with expertise in some aspect of grassland management. The 2017 Frank and Margaret Leu Distinguished Lecturer is **Dr. David Briske**, professor in the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management at Texas A&M University.

The free seminars, which are open to the public, take place in the Nebraska East Union on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus between 3:00 – 4:00 PM. Students may attend the series for academic credit—contact the Center for Grassland Studies for details.

Speaker Schedule

August 21	Overview for Students … **Steven Waller**, Interim Director, Center for Grassland Studies
August 28	Understanding and Using an Animal Unit Month in Grazing Management … **Aaron Berger**
September 11	Field Peas in Beef Cattle Diets in Western Nebraska … **Karla Jenkins**
September 18	Regenerative Livestock Impact … **Del Ficke**
September 25	What Drives Profit? … **Chip (Ken) Ramsay**
October 2	Wanna Get Buzzed Out on the Range: Pyric Herbivory Promotes Pollinator Diversity on Working Ranches … **Shelly Wiggam**
October 9	Utilization of Corn Silage and Ethanol Co-products in Beef Growing and Finishing Diets … **Henry Hilscher, Jr.**
October 30	Fitting Perennial Grasses to the Agro-ecosystems of the Northern Great Plains by Selective Breeding: Goals and Challenges … **Serge Edme**
November 6	A Rangeland Odyssey: From Equilibrium to Non-equilibrium and Beyond … **David Briske** (Leu Lecturer)
November 13	Visualizing Structural Heterogeneity of Vegetation at Three Scales in the Nebraska Sandhills: Four Student Photographers Take Their Shot … **Larkin Powell**
November 20	Managing an Integrated Cow/Calf System for the Next Generation … **Tyler Burkey**
November 27	Development of an Integrated Cow/Calf Production System in Eastern Nebraska … **James MacDonald**
December 4	Grazing Diversity with Annuals and Cover Crops … **Wayne Rasmussen**

University of Nebraska Lincoln

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Aaron Berger, Extension Educator, Panhandle Research & Extension Center, Scottsbluff, NE – Aaron believes utilizing a systems approach to management decisions and financial analysis is critical to the profitability of cattle operations. Delivering research based information and learning experiences clients can use to meet their goals are his main objective.

David Briske, Professor, Texas A&M University, Department of Ecosystem Science & Management, College Station, TX – David D. Briske is the T.M. O'Connor & Regents Professor in the Department of Ecosystem Science & Management at Texas A&M University. His scholarship and pedagogy have focused on the ecological function and management strategies of global rangelands throughout his career. His initial research addressed the physiology and demography of grasses, it then progressed to ecological resilience and climate change, and he is currently investigating rangelands as social-ecological systems. He served as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Rangeland Ecology & Management* from 2008 to 2015. He has edited and contributed to the volumes entitled *Conservation Benefits of Rangeland Practices* (USDA 2011) and *Rangeland Systems: Processes, Management and Challenges* (Springer 2017).

Tyler Burkey, Producer, Milford, NE – After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2000, Tyler began farming in Seward County, Nebraska. He had somewhat of a traditional farm producing corn, soybeans, alfalfa and cattle. However, like most operations, Tyler wanted to expand, but found that to be nearly impossible due to the increasing cost of land and inputs. This meant he had to go back to the drawing board to maximize on existing land and resources. Currently, Tyler and his wife, Megan, along with their two children, Sydney and Luke, have expanded their operation in a non-traditional way. They still produce corn and soybeans, however, they are also running a spring and fall group of cows by utilizing hoop barns, irrigated perennial grass pastures, cover crops and readily available crop residues. This integrated system allows them to better control their inputs, as well as manage and conserve soil and water for the next generation.

Serge Edme, USDA-ARS Wheat, Sorghum, & Forage Research Unit, Lincoln, NE – Serge received his bachelor of science from the School of Agronomy in Haiti in 1980, and then worked in farming systems research there until 1988. He earned his masters and doctoral degrees at the University of Florida between 1989 and 1994. The next six years found Dr. Edme in the private sector with U.S. Sugar Corporation in Clewiston, Florida, where he worked on breeding sugarcane, particularly for flood tolerance. In 2001, Dr. Edme joined the USDA and began research on breeding sugarcane for freeze tolerance. Today, Dr. Edme continues to work for the USDA ARS Wheat, Sorghum, and Forage Research Unit at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to breed perennial crops for the Great Plains.

Del Ficke, Producer, Pleasant Dale, NE – Del Ficke is the manager of Ficke Cattle Company – Graze Master Genetics® and the Green Acres Cover Crops Dryland Research Manager. With more than 35 years of experience as both an agriculturist and cattleman, Del has developed a one-of-a-kind trademarked breed of composite cattle, the Graze Master.

Del has spent the last several years transitioning his farming operation back to what he calls, "a more holistic, sensible and profitable approach that is both modern and historically-based in both concept and philosophy." He is restoring the soils to their more natural state and has transformed commodity-driven cropland back into native pastures, as well as adopted a mob-grazing approach to cattle raising.

In addition to his production agricultural pursuits, Del has experience managing a medical clinic in Lincoln, Nebraska, held numerous leadership positions in agricultural associations and agricultural businesses. Del and his wife, Brenda, live on the fifth-generation farm near Pleasant Dale, Nebraska with their daughter, Emily, and son, Austin.

Henry Hilscher, Jr., Doctoral Candidate, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Animal Science, Lincoln, NE – Henry Hilscher is a doctoral student in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He serves as the feedlot manager at the Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center (ENREC) monitoring and managing research trials with faculty and students in Lincoln. He also manages research utilizing cropping and livestock systems that use steers and cows grazing crop residue and grass around the ENREC. His research focuses on the utilization of ethanol co-products and corn silage in growing and finishing beef steers. Hilscher has evaluated different silage hybrids and inclusion level of silage in finishing diets on animal and economic performance. He has been involved in research with growth promoting technologies in research and commercial feedlots. Hilscher grew up on a cow-calf operation in south central Texas. He received his bachelor's degree in animal sciences from Texas A&M University, and his master's degree from the University of Nebraska. He lives with his wife live near Yutan.

Karla Jenkins, Associate Professor, Panhandle Research & Extension Center, Scottsbluff, NE – Karla Jenkins received her bachelor's degree from Texas A&M and her masters and doctorate from the University of Nebraska. She is the Cow/Calf Specialist for University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff. Her research program includes finding more efficient and economical ways to produce beef cattle while sustaining the range resource. This research often includes evaluating annual forage crops and alternative uses for grain crops, such as field peas, as components in beef cattle diets to improve sustainability and efficiency of cattle operations in western Nebraska. Since 2009, she has been studying limit feeding energy dense by-products mixed with crop residues to maintain beef cows in confinement to provide grazing deferment for range, maintain a core herd from liquidation, or as part of a system to reduce dependency on pasture. Her extension program involves working with producers to explain and implement practices found to be beneficial through research.

James MacDonald, Associate Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Animal Science, Lincoln, NE – Jim MacDonald is an Associate Professor of Animal Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) where he holds a 60% research, 40% teaching appointment. His primary research focus is in beef cattle production systems, including incorporating alternative feeds into beef diets, improving yearling-stocker management systems, integrated cropping and livestock systems, improving the management of newly received calves, and investigating dietary effects on beef quality. MacDonald teaches classes in animal nutrition, management, and systems analysis at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He is also an instructor for the Nebraska Beef Industry Scholars program the UNL Feedlot Internship Program and advises graduate and undergraduate students.

MacDonald was raised on a cow-calf and diversified cropping operation in central North Dakota. He received his bachelor of science in animal sciences from North Dakota State University, and his masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Nebraska. He served as faculty in the Texas A&M system for six years prior to returning to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2012. He lives with his wife and two children near Waverly.

Larkin Powell, Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, School of Natural Resources, Lincoln, NE – Larkin Powell is a professor of conservation biology and animal ecology in the School of Natural Resources (SNR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also serves as the Director of the Great Plains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit and the Mission Area Leader for the Applied Ecology faculty in SNR. His research covers a questionable array of topics that, on good days, are connected by an interest in landscape dynamics, wildlife habitat, animal demography and movements, and decisions made by private landowners. His research has focused on the Nebraska Sandhills region with a formidable team of collaborators. Larkin teaches wildlife management and techniques courses, and he leads a study abroad trip to Namibia where he was a Fulbright Scholar during 2009.

Chip (Ken) Ramsey, Manager, Rex Ranch, Whitman, NE – Chip was born and raised on a corn, soybean, and cattle operation in central Indiana. Chip earned his associate degree in beef cattle management from Ricks College, his bachelor of science in business finance from Brigham Young University, and masters of agriculture in feedlot management from Texas A&M. In addition, Chip has held various management positions in cattle production, and retained ownership for Ag Reserves Inc. (ARI) in Florida (Deseret Cattle and Citrus) and Oklahoma (Sooner Cattle Company) from 1991 to 2006. Chip currently manages ARI's Nebraska operation known as Rex Ranch.

Wayne Rasmussen, Board Member, Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, Plainview, NE – Wayne is an all-natural cow/calf producer and finisher with an interest in rotational grazing and grassfed beef production. Utilizing holistic management tools to care for the land is a priority. Wayne was the founding member of the Grassfed Exchange, and served as Chairman for eight years. This organization brought grassfed producers from around the U.S., Canada, and Mexico together to share new ideas.

Shelly Wiggam, Doctoral Candidate, Kansas State University, Department of Entomology, Manhattan, KS – Shelly Wiggam is a Popenoe Fellow and doctoral student in the Department of Entomology at Kansas State University. She is active at the national and state levels for the Society for Range Management and The Wildlife Society, a board member for the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, and a past AAAS Science Policy Fellow. Her research and policy activities focus on the use of fire and grazing throughout the Great Plains, that mimic historical ecosystem processes to restore insect diversity, while maintaining landowner profitability and functionality.