

Grazing Livestock Systems Alumnus Believes in Involvement

Editor's Note: As a sophomore, Patrick Heerten from Springview, NE, was featured in the Fall 2011 issue of this newsletter. One of his favorite expressions was "thinking outside of the box." He was always seeking new experiences and perspectives. That ever-present desire to learn new things and interact with innovators led to his participation in the UNL Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship and Beef Industry Scholars programs, and the Nebraska Ranch Practicum. It is also why he did job shadowings and internships in other states and on ranches that did things differently than his home place. "I know what it's like to calve in March, so I wanted to intern where they calve in May or incorporate mob grazing." He took the initiative to contact John Maddux of Maddux Cattle Company, where he conducted his official GLS internship March-August, 2013, allowing him to be involved with the calving and breeding aspects. Patrick graduated in May 2014, and among other things, is a member of the Ranchers Advisory Board for UNL's Barta Brothers Ranch. GLS advisor Walter Schacht, who conducts research at the ranch, said Patrick's perspectives will be valuable in guiding the research and education programs at BBR. We asked Patrick to update us on his activities.

After graduation I went to work for a drylot cow/calf operation near Kearney, NE. This provided further beef industry experience from a unique standpoint. It was good to gather new ideas to bring home to the family operation as well as to receive valuable life experiences in a setting with a new set of challenges.

I returned home to the family farm and ranch in December 2014 to head up day-to-day cattle operations. It has been a very exciting time since returning for more reasons than just record high cattle prices. We have



Patrick Heerten repairs fence on his family ranch near Springview, NE.



Hannah Bamesberger

Hannah Bamesberger didn't think she would be going on for a four-year degree when she stepped onto the Southeast Community College-Beatrice campus in 2013. Nor did she plan to major in agriculture. She expected to be done with school after obtaining an associate's degree in business. However, the Hampton, Nebraska native received some good advice

from others who realized her interests in agriculture. She switched her major to agribusiness and completed an internship with Central Valley Agriculture where she did crop scouting – something she enjoyed in addition to cattle handling, which she had done growing up. SCC instructor Mark Goes encouraged Hannah to consider the Grazing Livestock Systems major at UNL. Mark is on the GLS Stakeholders Board, and has sent several students our way. He thought it might be a good fit for Hannah, and she now agrees. She thinks her SCC classes have

prepared her well for the UNL classes she will complete in pursuit of her B.S. degree in Grazing Livestock Systems.

Hannah hopes to start her own cattle herd after college, with some help from her uncles and grandpa who have cattle operations.

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Grazing Livestock Systems Alumnus (continued)

been blessed with some tremendous opportunities on the cattle side of the operation recently. Between trading real estate to consolidate rangeland into a block adjoining the family home place and leasing a neighboring ranch, things have not slowed down at all since I returned. We are currently focusing on growing our cow herd internally from retaining replacement heifers and also working to establish a separate terminal cross herd in which calves will be marketed into an all-natural program.

After returning home some exciting things have been happening in my personal life as well. I got married this past June and have been busy remodeling a house with my wife, Sydney. I could not have asked for a smoother move and transition into the area for Sydney, as a position became available at Keya Paha County Schools in Springview where she now teaches 5th and 6th grades.

I have been continuing my education by participating in area ranching for profitability extension meetings, attending open house events at the UNL Gudmundsen Sandhills Lab, and being involved in several area ranch advisory consortia. I firmly believe that industry group involvement is a tremendous way to network with others in my field as well as learn about issues facing the beef industry. I plan on becoming involved/more involved with the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, Nebraska Prescribed Fire Council, and Nebraska Cattlemen. I continue to look for opportunities to better myself as a beef industry professional and to be a good advocate for agriculture.

I would like to offer some advice to current and future college students. I had a little bit different strategy about my education than some do. I vowed to complete two majors and two minors in four years. While I am not saying this is a bad route, I wish I would have taken a slightly lighter course load each semester and focused more on being involved with student groups and activities pertaining to the beef industry and range management. Programs such as Nebraska Ranch Practicum, Nebraska Grazing Conference and Nebraska Range Shortcourse are extracurricular activities that are building blocks for success. Nebraska Beef Industry Scholars and Range Management Club offer ways to network with other students and professionals in the beef industry. For me, involvement in programs and organizations like these greatly enhanced classroom learning. I would also recommend that students take as many internships as possible, whether they are required or not. It is very easy for individuals in agriculture to believe that they are needed at home during the summer months. While every scenario is different, I am here to tell you that the family operation will survive, and by being gone that extra summer or two on an educational experience, you will benefit your operation more in the long run. The practical experience and the ability to look at things from a different perspective are wonderful ways to increase your knowledge and prepare you to be a leader in your field.



Patrick Heerten (middle of right table) is surrounded by family and friends at a graduation reception hosted by the Center for Grassland Studies. At the other table are Martin Massengale (far left), the Center Director, and GLS advisor, Walter Schacht.

2015 GLS Internship Symposium

Two students, both transfers to UNL, presented at the annual GLS Internship Symposium on October 30.

Sydney Gehl McKay had worked for HerdCo Cattle Company near Bartlett, NE, in Summer 2014, during which time she helped prepare the company to take over the nearby Hat Ranch. When it came time for her GLS internship in 2015, she proposed to HerdCo that she do a combination of work at the company's feedlot and the Hat Ranch so she could learn as much as she



Sydney Gehl McKay

could about both sides of the operation. This turned out to be very valuable to Sydney. Because her internship goals were very ambitious, she did need to adjust mid-way through her internship – which was a lesson in itself!

Lance Johnson from Upland, NE, conducted his internship at the Arrowhead Ranch near Whitman. His goals included learning more about the financial side of a heifer development system and running an A.I. business, and improving grazing management skills.



Lance Johnson

One piece of advice Lance offered to future interns was to carry a notebook on the job, because there is a lot to learn, and at night – when you're tired – you can't remember everything you wanted to retain!

Student Profiles



Chelsea Nollette

Chelsea Nollette was already pretty familiar with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources when it came time to decide on college. Her father had worked at the UNL Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory (research ranch) near Whitman, where she sometimes helped out – when she wasn't studying at Hyannis High or participating in sports

and other school activities, or working at Monahan Cattle Company. As a high school student, she came to know CASNR and East Campus through FFA, Youth Range Camp, range and livestock judging contests, and observing graduate students conducting research at GSL. In fact, it was a grad student who told her about the GLS major. The decision to come here as a double GLS/Animal Science major was an easy one for Chelsea, who is now in her second year.

Favorite classes to date are Fundamentals of Animal Biology and Industry, Soil Resources (for which her range judging experience has really come in handy), and Chemistry in Context.

"I like the atmosphere of East Campus, and the GLS program is small enough that it's easy to know the other students in the major," said Chelsea. About the faculty who advise and teach courses taken by GLS students, she said: "You can talk to any of them. Dr. Brink and Dr. Schacht have really helped me."

At UNL Chelsea has been involved in the Range and Rodeo Clubs. She also has an on-campus job working with research animals, sometimes collecting data for ongoing studies. She thinks she would like to be involved in research or consulting on beef nutrition in a grazing system, but would also consider a feedlot setting.