

Classroom to Field to Symposium

On November 6 seven students who conducted their GLS internships in 2009 made presentations at the annual Grazing Livestock Systems Internship Symposium. Two of them share their stories below.

By Lacy Hoksbergen

My internship was with the Padlock Ranch near Ranchester, WY. The ranch consists of nearly 500,000 acres in Montana and Wyoming and over 10,000 cows, as well as farming and feedlot operations.



Lacy gives her final presentation of her college career prior to her December graduation.

I spent most of my time at the Bar V division, where they summered about 2,000 pairs plus some yearlings. My summer was spent doing nearly everything that needs to be done on a ranch – branding, fencing, moving cows, doctoring, and so on. The days were long, but worthwhile. I had the chance to spend a lot of time on horseback, and I learned a lot about reading and handling cattle, even though I grew up around it.

One of my goals for my internship was to learn to shoe a horse, and I made good progress in that

area. I was able to put shoes on my horse with very little assistance by the end of the summer.



Lacy perfects her roping skills during her internship at the Padlock Ranch in Wyoming.

Another interesting learning curve was the size of the pastures. They had single pastures up there that would contain a whole ranching operation in western Nebraska! There was certainly an adjustment when it came time to gather a pasture or check cattle.

I had a great time learning new ways to do things and different philosophies of ranch management. I was able to interact with a lot of different people who possess a great deal of knowledge and experience. Nearly everyone was willing to answer my questions and take the time to help make my learning experience a positive one.

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It was definitely valuable to me, and I have learned things that I believe I will use for the rest of my life.

By Megan Boone

This summer I had the great experience of doing my intern at the Cooksley Ranch, just outside of



Megan shares her experiences during the 2009 Grazing Livestock Systems Internship Symposium.

Anselmo, NE. The people I met and worked with were wonderful to be around. I am not from a cattle background, so this was my first real experience working with cattle. My fellow ranch hands were patient with me, always willing to help and point me

in the right direction. All the hands-on experience I gained at the ranch made me realize that it was right where I wanted to be.

My main duties were checking windmills and cows and training a handful of colts. The hardest part for me was learning the pasture layouts and



Who says a classroom or office has to have desks and chairs? Megan prefers saddles! She took this photo of her “office” at the Cooksley Ranch.

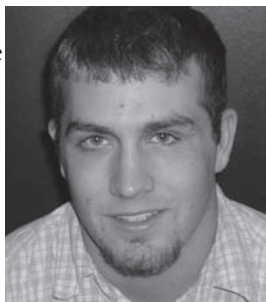
figuring out which direction was home! But I never did get lost, luckily. For me, the most useful thing I learned was herd dynamics. Two hundred head of cattle think a lot differently than the steers I’m used to chasing in an arena, and obnoxious yearlings will do exactly what you don’t want them to!

Overall, this experience broadened my horizons by giving me opportunities I had never had before, and giving me a chance to apply things that I have been learning in classes to real-world situations. My internship let me hone skills I already had (training horses) and introduced me to new ones (working cattle). It was well worth it.

Student Profiles

Peyton Ramm grew up on a 12,000-acre ranch in the Sandhills and participated in high school wrestling, football and track – all of which prepared him for his current passions: ranch management and rodeo!

He pursues those passions by working on his



Peyton Ramm

UNL degree and participating on the UNL rodeo team, both of which almost came to a screeching halt this past summer in a near-fatal accident at a rodeo in McCook. But this die-hard cowboy is back in the saddle and in the classroom. The senior is this year’s GLS student ambassador.

Peyton said his sisters attended UNL before him, and he “knew it was a very good college.” While working on his degree in Animal Science, he learned about GLS from Dr. Dennis Brink and fellow

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—Peyton Ramm

students, and decided to double major. “Grazing Livestock Systems is good to have if you want to get into ranch management,” Peyton said. And that’s exactly what he wants to do, as he prepares to one day take over the family operation in Valentine, NE.

“CASNR (College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources) is a great community,” Peyton said. “You can talk to anyone you encounter on East Campus, compared to City Campus, which is more fast paced and where you don’t have the same opportunities to get to know people as much,” he added.

If Peyton tackles managing the ranch with the gusto and determination that he brings to rodeo competition, the family operation will be in good hands!

Michael Macaluso

grew up in Wheat Ridge, CO (near Denver), but spent several summers with his maternal grandmother in the Long Pine area. “Just staying out there a lot led me to know I wanted to live out there,” he said. During some of those summers he worked for Dearmont Cattle Company. That led him to



Michael Macaluso

know what kind of career he wanted. He has since moved to Long Pine, where he continues to work for Dearmont during non-school times.

Several family members had attended UNL, and Michael had always looked forward to coming here. First, though, he spent a year at a liberal arts college in Illinois on an athletic scholarship. In the spring of his sophomore year at UNL, Dr. Darrell Mark, who was his adviser in Agricultural Economics, mentioned that he might want to consider GLS, given his career goals. Michael then spoke about it with a friend who was a GLS major. He also attended an event at which GLS alumni talked about how the major had prepared them for what they are doing now; he found the comments of Aaron Dinklage with the Reed Hamilton Ranch near Thedford particularly helpful. He decided the GLS major was right for him and switched.

“I realized that with the GLS major, I could get the animal and forage components in addition to the economic aspects of the cattle business.”

—Michael Macaluso

“I realized that with the GLS major, I could get the animal and forage components in addition to the economic aspects of the cattle business,” he said.

He’ll certainly need all of that for his career path. He plans to work for Dearmont Cattle Company after he graduates. In fact, the company has not only encouraged him in his pursuit of a college degree, but has even indicated that down the road, it will do what it can to help him start his own operation.

In Other Faculty News...

In June **Darrell Mark** and **Bryan Reiling** received the 2009 Teacher Fellow Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA).



GLS Welcomes New Faculty Member

A new face is showing up at GLS activities. Grassland systems ecologist John Guretsky became a faculty member in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture in September, and joins Drs. Walter Schacht (same department), Dennis Brink and Bryan Reiling (Animal Science), Darrell Mark (Agricultural Economics), and Martin Massengale (Center for Grassland Studies) in directing the GLS major.

Prior to coming to UNL, Dr. Guretsky was a research agronomist with the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, OK. He received a B.S. in Natural Resources (Environmental Studies) from UNL, and Ph.D. in Crop Production and Physiology from Iowa State University.



John Guretsky

Dr. Guretsky's teaching areas of expertise include forage crop and range management, physiology and function of perennial grasses, grassland systems ecology, and grassland research techniques and analysis. His goal is to impart to future and current land managers the best information available about grassland systems ecology to meet their production and ecosystem management goals.

We are happy to have Dr. Guretsky as part of the GLS faculty team!

For more information or to receive GLS materials, please contact:

Center for Grassland Studies
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
306 Biochemistry Hall
P.O. Box 830736
Lincoln, NE 68583-0736
p: 402-472-4101
e: grassland@unl.edu

f: 402-472-4104
w: gls.unl.edu

