Scott Stout

N-N Ranch Inc.

Loess Canyon Rangeland Alliance

N-N Ranch Inc.: **Then**

Incorporated in 1976

200 hd cow/calf operation

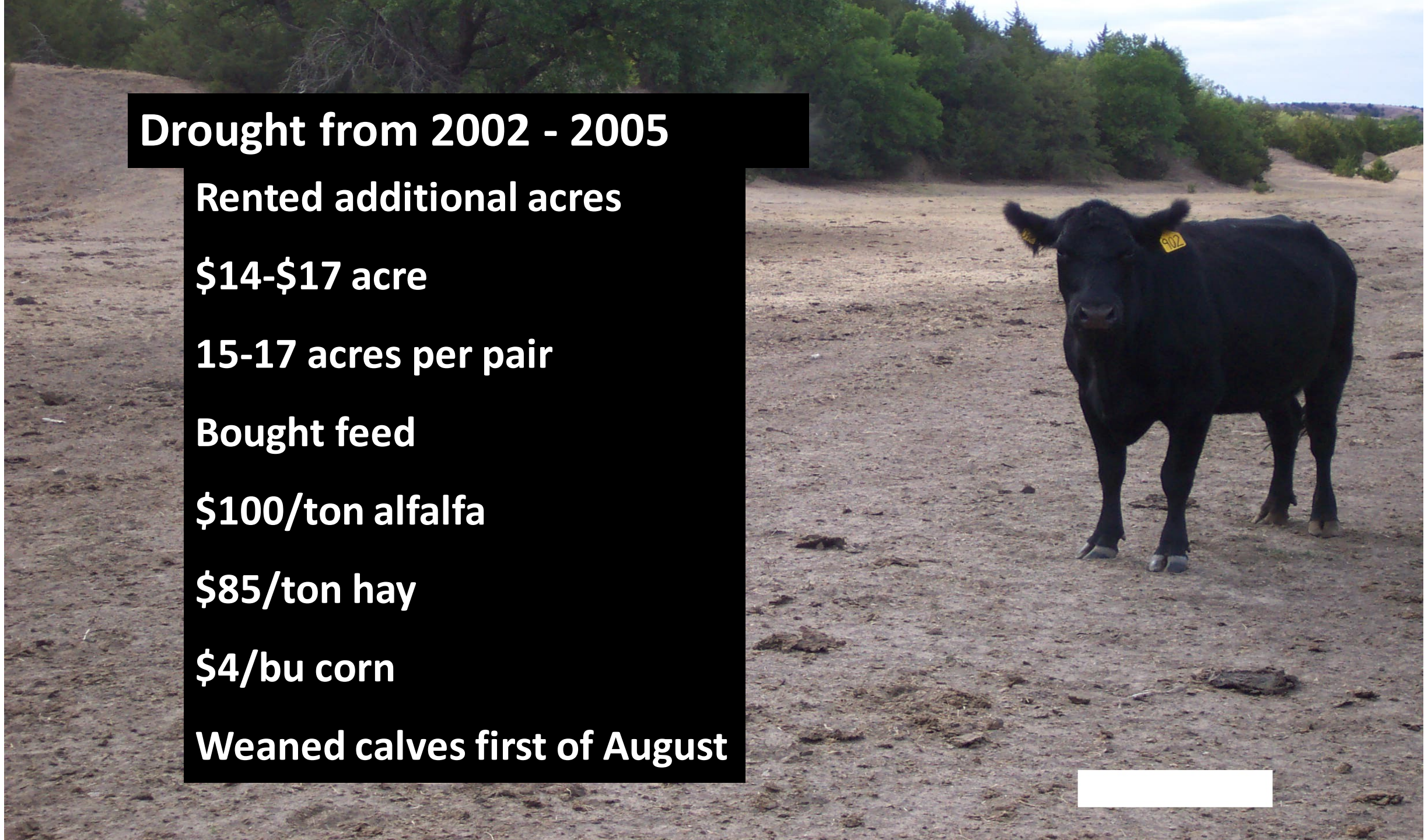
1000 acres farm ground

2000 acres Native Range

Bought Section of ground for $187.50/acre and a Quarter of that was farm ground.

8 – 10 acres per cow/calf pair

No rented native range



Drought from 2002 - 2005

- Rented additional acres
- $14-$17 acre
- 15-17 acres per pair
- Bought feed
- $100/ton alfalfa
- $85/ton hay
- $4/bu corn
- Weaned calves first of August

Problem

Early on rancher wanted trees around for various reasons such as:

- **Shade for cows in the summer**
- **Windbreaks for buildings and livestock**
- **Wood to burn in the winter**
- **Fence posts**
- **Soil erosion**
- **The railroad even harvested the trees in our area years ago.**

N-N Ranch Inc. in 2008

- **500 hd cow/calf operation : AI program since 1979**
- **Replacement Heifers**
- **Bulls**
- ***500 acres crop ground : Corn and Alfalfa***
- ***7000 acres of Native Range***
- ***Before 2008 native range was 40+ % canopy of Eastern Red Cedar***
- ***Stocking rate before 2008 was 13-15 acres per cow/calf pair for 5.5 month grazing period***
- ***2008 land values $450-$500 per acre for native range***

In 1976 N-N Ranch could run 1 pair per 8-10 acres of native range. In 2008 N-N Ranch's stocking rate had reached an average of 13-15 acres per cow/calf pair; during the drought years that climbed to 15-17 acres per pair. At that time, for rented acres of native range, we were paying $15 to $18 an acre in rent. By 2015, on acres treated with prescribed fire, the Ranch has reduced the amount of acres per cow/calf pair to 8-10 acres. Rented acres in our area currently are valued at roughly $30 an acre.

Current prices in 2015

- $120/ton Alfalfa
- $75/ton Corn Stalk Bales
- $60/ton Distillers Grain
- $3.80/Bu. Corn
- $3500-$4000/Acre Irrigated Crop Ground

- Dealing with Irrigation water restrictions
- Native Range Values of $950/Acre
- Rented Native Range $40 - $60+ / pair a Month
- Or $1.40 - $2.00+ / pair a day
- $2.65 Diesel Fuel
- $3.00 Gasoline

By introducing Prescribed Fire into our operation in 2008, we reduced our acres per pair back to 8 -10 acres on treated areas. That reduced our cost per pair on pastures that were burned from roughly $250 per pair to roughly $150 per pair for a 5.5 month grazing period. Savings of $100 per animal unit.

Now, in 2015, land values have increased. In turn, price of rented acres increases and so does the % of canopy of the Eastern Red Cedar tree!

Without prescribed fire, we would easily be up to 15 acres per cow/calf pair at a rate of $30 per acre; summer grass for us would be roughly $450.

With prescribed fire, we decreased amount of canopy, and increased the amount of grazing acres. We can run an average of 9 acres per cow/calf pair; using the same $30 an acre for summer grass, input cost was reduced to $270.

$180 difference

So if we have a Section of pasture (640 acres), we would expect that it would run 64 cow/calf pairs (10 acres per pair) for a 5.5 month grazing period.

Now add the factor that 45% of your rangeland is canopied with Eastern Red Cedar trees. If all your ground is like this, then you only have 55% of usable foraging ground for your livestock. That is only 352 acres of the 640 acres needed to run those 64 hd of pairs.

On a per-acre basis, you would need 940 acres to run 64 hd of cow/calf pairs for a 5.5 month grazing period. This will figure 14 acres per pair, and if you can find grass to rent for $30 acre, that makes a summer grazing cost of $420.00 for 1 pair.

With only one treatment of prescribed fire on our operation, we have an average of 70+ % mortality on all cedars within the burn unit.

That means out of 45% canopy of Eastern Red Cedars, we are killing at least 70%, reducing total canopy of your pasture to 13.5%. This is reducing infested acres from 256 to 86.4 acres of UNUSABLE pasture ground and regaining 169.6 acres of grass that you are paying land taxes on and that you can actually use.

Tree Shearing

Management
Plan

By reducing acres per animal unit, we can increase herd size and reduce the amount of rented acres. We have increased the amount of replacement heifers 15% from what we used to save back before we introduced fire into our program.

- Prescribed fire provides economical and ecological boost.
- Reintroduces native grasses that were pushed out by encroachment of Eastern Red Cedar.
- Improved vegetation for livestock results in more productivity from your cattle such as heavier weaning weights and more bred cows in the fall.

Not all land owners are solely based on livestock production. The Loess Canyons are great habitat for a vast majority of wildlife. By using prescribed fire we can reenergize habitat for all wildlife species.

Greater Prairie Chicken

Pheasants

Mule Deer

Bobwhite Quail

Elk

Wildlife on a property enables land owner to increase income with hunting/leasing contracts.

These are just some practices of local land owners in our area that are increasing productivity from their property without abusing wildlife or native range.

This is all a result of a safe and effective treatment of prescribed fire.

With local landowners working together, we have learned to use prescribed fire in a controlled environment to achieve a common goal -- to restore our native range and increase productivity and profitability from those treated acres.

Now

Future Generations

Thanks For Listening!