



**Sustainable
Southwest Beef**
knowledge and tools for ranch and
rangeland resilience

Sustainable Southwest Beef CAP Newsletter **January 2021**

From The Leadership - A message from Andres Cibils

Hello all:

In a recent podcast conversation with Emile Elias and the SW Climate Hub team I was asked to use a single word to summarize the achievements of our SW Beef CAP during its first year. The word that first came to mind was 'collaboration'. As hard as I find it to be concise, this was a relatively easy choice. The way our team of talented ranchers, graduate students, staff, educators, extension specialists, and researchers worked together in 2019/20 does not cease to amaze me. Our list of top 10 accomplishments during year 1 (expertly summarized by Jean and our extension team) suggests that the CAP team delivered in a big way -- despite the pandemic and its profound impact on our day-to-day lives and on the way we did business in 2020. Undoubtedly, this puts

us in an ideal position to ramp up activity once things return to some level of pre-COVID normalcy.

As I move on to a new position with NIFA, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity I had to work with such brilliant and committed colleagues. The team's collective efforts, beginning with the letter of intent to NIFA back in 2018 and the subsequent successful grant proposal (Sheri's leadership, talent, and hard work were critical to this success!) followed by this past year's progress, have led to sizeable accomplishments that I think should make each of us very proud. I very much look forward to staying connected to learn about how the efforts of this wonderful team are helping boost the sustainability of beef production systems in the Southwest and beyond. Hasta siempre!

Kudos

Thank you to Dr. Glenn Duff for taking on the responsibilities of Project Director as Dr. Cibils moves to his new position with USDA NIFA. Dr. Duff has been working closely with Dr. Sheri Spiegel, Project Co-Director and the entire Steering Committee for the past months to ensure a smooth transition.

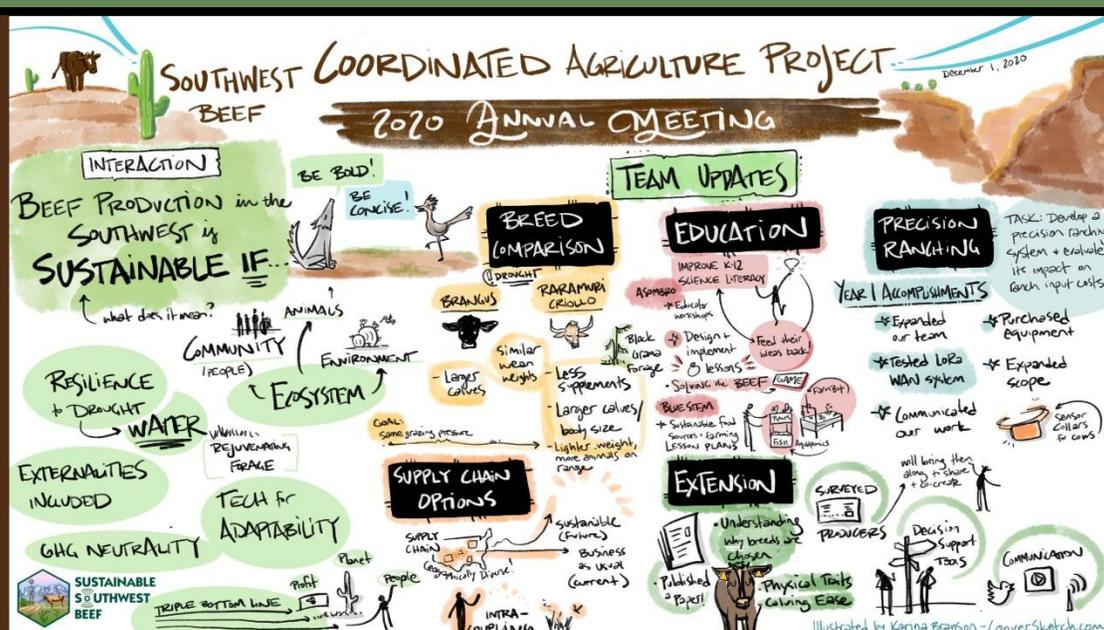
2020 Virtual On-Ranch Demonstration

On December 1, 2020, the extension team hosted a Virtual On-Ranch Demonstration to showcase the Clayton Livestock Research Center (CLRC), where the first project calves in the breed comparison study will be backgrounded and feedlot-finished. While COVID prevented an in-person tour of the facility, it also brought to light how creative people can be in delivering programs via technology. In lieu of an on-the-ground experience, CLRC superintendent Dr. Glenn Duff walked participants through a photo-and-video tour of the center, including video footage of the recently arrived calves. There were presentations on soil health, winter wheat pasture, TAM 204 wheat variety, which is being used at the center, and aquifers near the Clayton, NM area. Breakout rooms allowed for topic-specific discussions with each of the speakers. The diverse attendees, some from places as distant from New Mexico as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the UK, included researchers (the largest group), crop producers, ranchers, extension professionals, education professionals, agricultural advisors, and program managers or administrators. In addition to the general Q&A sessions, participants were invited to share what their biggest information need is, and the biggest barrier to adoption of Raramuri Criollo. The responses will guide future efforts. Another silver lining to holding this event online was that we were able to record the event, and all the presentations are now available “a la carte” on the project website at <https://southwestbeef.org/ranch-demo>.



Annual Meeting

Following the On-Ranch Demonstration, the project's Annual Meeting was held virtually on December 1 to 3. While we could not meet in person, it was still critical that we meet as a group to move our project forward. Specific goals of the planning committee were to build a shared sense of belonging to the team, build a shared understanding across all team members of the project as a whole, provide opportunities for next generation team members, and plan for the coming year. The meeting was organized in five sessions over the three days, using a combination of participatory activities, plenary oral presentations, a poster session, and group breakouts. While not every person could attend every session, we had up to 41 attendees at a time. With outstanding participation from attendees and excellent technical support from our own Melissa Spence and from David Chavez, from NMSU Instructional Media Services, we moved seamlessly through all the different zoom formats.



Graphic Facilitator, Karina Branson, developed the above illustration of our opening session. To see graphics from all other sessions, follow this link: Google SlideShow [view here](#). Or if you want to follow development of the illustrations, check out timelapse videos of each chart in [this folder](#).

Year 2 Annual Meeting Poll: List two to five words that describe your vision or ultimate goals for the project?



(n=26, data collected: 12/3/2020)

Meet Our External Advisory Group

Our project is fortunate to work with a fantastic group of external advisors who are helping us evaluate progress toward addressing stakeholder needs through our research, education and extension activities. The group includes private livestock producers, research ranch supervisors, a chef, a representative of the National Cattlemen’s Association, and an research and extension leader in the Ogallala region. During our 2020 Annual Meeting, we benefited tremendously from their participation and identified several ways that we can increase their participation going forward. Here are brief bios of this outstanding group.



Matthew Redd is the Project Manager of the Canyonlands Research Center and the Dugout Ranch. Having spent his life on the ranch he brings a strong commitment to science and conservation. Located in the heart of the Colorado Plateau, the historic Dugout Ranch encompasses 5,200 acres of private land and 300,000 acres of associated public grazing allotments, spanning some of the most spectacular red rock scenery in the world. The Canyonlands Research Center is a joint effort of The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the USDA Forest Service, the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Utah State University.



Cindy Tolle is the CEO of Evergreen Ranching and Livestock LLC and Evergreen Specialty Foods. Evergreen Ranching raises Criollo Cattle and Bison in the United States and in Mexico. Academically trained as an ecologist, Cindy has a deep appreciation for the role of grazing on the landscape and has collaborated for a number of years with the Jornada Experimental Range on Criollo projects. Evergreen Specialty Foods provides Audubon Conservation Ranching Certified grass-fed, grass-finished Criollo Beef, Bison, pastured pork, goat and lamb to clients in a wide market.



Rob Paulin has spent the majority of his adult life around horses and cattle. He has managed ranches, leased ground and run outside cattle, and had his own cattle. For the last 20 years he has been the manager of Rancho Corta Madera, Inc. Corta Madera is a cow/calf operation located the mountains east of

San Diego. About 6 years ago the ranch began experimenting with Criollo cattle as an alternative to the larger English, Angus, type cattle. Corta Madera now runs a herd of Criollo mother cows, most of which are Raramuri Criollo. As requested by this research project, the ranch also maintains a smaller herd of black Angus mother cows. All cows are bred to black Angus bulls. Rob's agricultural education is strictly empirical. He has B.A. degree in the highly lucrative and employable major of English.



Andrew Cox is Ranch Manager at the Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Center, New Mexico State University. Andrew, an NMSU Graduate, has been managing agricultural operations for the past twenty years, including with Criollo beef cattle production and ranch management.



Scott Brinker is the Certified Executive Chef of Morrison Healthcare and Executive Chef for Rapid City Monument Healthcare. He represents a multi-billion dollar international foodservice contract company and brings 45 years foodservice and food marketing experience. He has served on boards for several sustainability and local naturally raised food organizations (Black Hills Farmers Market, and South Dakota Specialty Producers association) and is an advocate of the Audubon pasture certification and grass fed grass finished Criollo.



Myriah Johnson serves as the Senior Director of Beef Sustainability Research with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). In her position with NCBA, Myriah leads the beef checkoff's sustainability research program. She is responsible

for not only setting the direction of the research program, but developing and implementing checkoff-funded programs that validate and benchmark how beef is responsibly and sustainably raised. Myriah earned a B.S. in Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University, her M.S. in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University and PhD in Animal Science, also from Texas A&M University. Myriah was raised in Perry, OK on a cow-calf, stocker, and small grains operation. She and her husband, Chris Looney, remain actively involved in the operation. the Certified Executive Chef of Morrison Healthcare and Executive Chef for Rapid City Monument Healthcare. He represents a multi-billion dollar international foodservice contract company and brings 45 years foodservice and food marketing experience. He has served on boards for several sustainability and local naturally raised food organizations (Black Hills Farmers Market, and South Dakota Specialty Producers association) and is an advocate of the Audubon pasture certification and grass fed grass finished Criollo.



Dan Devlin is is Director, Kansas Center for Agricultural Resources and the Environment and the Kansas Water Resources Institute at Kansas State University. He is an Advisory Board Member of the NIFA-funded Ogallala CAP; the USDA-ARS Ogallala Aquifer Project, a multi-state consortium that develops, evaluates, and disseminates information and technologies for water users that will balance economic, environmental, and social concerns; and the FFAR-funded Irrigation Innovation Consortium which focuses on modernization and management to enhance energy and water use efficiency in irrigated food systems and amenity landscapes across the globe. Insights from these projects will inform the telecoupling scenarios.

Welcome!

Santiago Utsumi will be stepping in as the project's precision ranching lead. He comes to NMSU after working at Michigan State University for several years developing precision livestock farming systems.

Jason Smith serves as the Interim Project Leader for the Animal Nutrition Laboratory in Amarillo, Texas A&M AgriLife Research/USDA-ARS Research Feedlot and Metabolism Laboratory at Bushland.

Ethan Wright will be joining the project Extension team and will be doing science team liaison duties.

Reaching Out

Rancher input sought through Bull Management, Selection & Marketing Survey: <https://nmbeef.nmsu.edu/bull-survey.html>

Rancher input sought through Grass-fed Beef Producer Survey: <https://southwestbeef.org/survey>

Ledbetter, K. 2020. Criollo-cross Calves Graze Texas-bred Wheat in New Mexico. Drovers. <https://www.drovers.com/news/beef-production/criollo-cross-calves-graze-texas-bred-wheat-new-mexico>

Malloy, C. 2020. "In the sun they'd cook": is the US south-west getting too hot for farm animals? The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/02/in->

[the-sun-theyd-cook-farm-animals-at-risk-as-us-south-west-heats](#)

Washington, F. 2020. NMSU researchers study sustainable beef production. KRQE. <https://www.krqe.com/news/new-mexico/nmsu-researchers-study-sustainable-beef-production/>

Publications

Peer Reviewed

Elias, E., Aney, S., Duff, G., Gifford, C. Spiegel, S., Cibils, A. Steiner, J., Estell, R. 2020. Snapshot of rancher perspectives on creative cattle management options. *Rangelands* 42(6):191-195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rala.2020.09.004>

McIntosh, M., Gonzalez, A., Cibils, A., Estell, R., Nyamuryekunge, S., Almeida, F.R. and Spiegel, S., 2020. A Phenotypic Characterization of Rarámuri Criollo Cattle Introduced into the Southwestern United States. *Archivos Latinoamericanos de Producción Animal* 28(3-4), 111-119. https://ojs.alpa.uy/index.php/ojs_files/article/view/2832

Nyamuryekung'e, S., Cibils, A.F., Estell, R.E., McIntosh, M., VanLeeuwen, D., Steele, C., González, A.L., Spiegel, S., Continanza, F.G., 2021. Foraging Behavior of Heritage versus Desert-Adapted Commercial Rangeland Beef Cows in Relation to Dam-Offspring Contact Patterns. *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 74, 43-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rama.2020.11.001>

Case Study

Bickle, E., R. (2020). "Heritage Cattle Genetics for Drought Resilience." CCAST. Retrieved from <https://arcg.is/1ay59r>. (This case study features Rob Paulin and the Corta Madera Ranch.)

Upcoming Events

The extension team is planning several exciting webinars for 2021, look in future newsletters for the event announcements!



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