

Outcome-based Grazing Program

The Bureau of Land Management implements an initiative known as Outcome-based Grazing Authorizations. It is designed to offer a more collaborative approach between the BLM and its partners within the livestock grazing community when issuing grazing authorizations. The following is part of a series highlighting ranches in this pilot program.



John Uhalde & Co. Ranch

Ely, Nevada

Q & A with John Uhalde, Ranch Owner and Manager

How would you describe this ranch to someone who has never been there?

It's almost indescribable to someone who hasn't seen it. It's 150 miles between both headquarters. The ranch, from one end to the other, is 200 miles connected by sheep trails. Managing it can be a little difficult since it is so spread out. It is not a huge ranch by Nevada's standards, but it can be complicated since the winter range is about 100 miles from the summer range. We try to run about 500 mature cows, but that can depend on the year. We could actually run quite a bit more than that, but because of the wild horse population, we are only using around half of our AUMs (animal unit months, which is an indicator of the amount of forage consumed). Some of those AUMs are sheep, of which we run about 2,000 head.

What is the philosophy that guides this ranch?

Basic philosophy of this ranch isn't just to make a living for our family's but to have a viable, productive, and sustainable ranching operation that produces beef and lamb. We also need to be able to grow it. Lately it hasn't been growing, which is partly due to the wild horse population and partly because of lack of range improvements. If we can grow it to where we can run our maximum AUMs, we're still going to manage it for multiple use. However, if we could run more cattle and sheep, we could grow the ranch to its full potential. Growing the ranch to its full potential would allow us to make a better living for our family and keep it going for generations to come.

Why did this ranch enroll in the outcome-based grazing program?

One of the main reasons is so that we could look at the outcome first-hand. We were also interested in it so that we might have more leverage to look at gathering some wild horses. The outcome of the overpopulation of horses is detrimental to the rangeland. If we are going to start operating off of the outcome, something needs to be done about the wild horses so we can work on healing the rangeland. We also enrolled for the flexibility. Even if we get the horses gathered, we still need the flexibility. We need the flexibility to be able to move to the appropriate pastures at the best times based on things that we can't control, like the weather, to get the most beneficial outcome possible.

Why is some flexibility important in a grazing permit?

Basically, it's because of the weather, the time of the growing season, the moisture, and the temperature. Land managers need to be able to rotate pastures during the prime growing season, which will be different every year depending on the weather. Changes in the market and preferences in types of beef also have an effect. There is no right answer, and it could be any number of a hundred different things.

Why should someone who isn't involved in agriculture care about how public lands are managed?

Public land management is important so that resources are protected for the wildlife, as well as our cattle so we can feed our country. If the resources aren't protected, then we will eventually get to the point where the land can't provide anything. That's not good for our country. Not only is BLM land good for raising cattle, but it's also essential to the wildlife populations. When we take good care of public lands, everyone benefits.



Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands is a collaborative effort between the BLM and Intermountain West Joint Venture. Our purpose is to catalyze proactive, voluntary, and community-led sagebrush rangeland conservation – expanding success across private and public lands. This collaboration is supporting the Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations efforts. Learn more at www.PartnersInTheSage.com.