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- News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management

By: Emily Helms

Excellence in Range Management: Dennis and Jean Fagerland



The SD Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) gives Excellence in Range Management awards to agricultural operations across the state every year. The objective of the Excellence in Range Management Award is to demonstrate to the public and other rangeland managers outstanding examples of rangeland management which result in long-term health and sustainability of the range resource while providing efficient production of livestock, water, wildlife, esthetic values, recreation, and other non-commodity values. This award is given to an

operation in one of the four geographic areas of SD, annually. Nominations can come from SRM members or other partners.

Dennis and Jean Fagerland were the 2019 Area I Award Winners. They were nominated by Judi Schulz, Soil and Water Conservation Society member. The Fagerlands own a crop and cattle operation in Marshall County near Langford, SD. Dennis and Jean have long been proponents of conservation. Their operation includes native rangeland, seeded pastures, hayland, and cropland. Through different projects, they have planted cropland back to grass for more grazing acres and installed water and cross-fence to facilitate better grazing management. They've also installed fabricated windbreaks and renovated shelterbelts for improved winter protection of their cattle. They have been a long-time user of cover crops in their cropping rotation, and they use these for early spring and fall grazing opportunities.

Their grazing management includes early season use of U.S. Fish and Wildlife lands, then weekly rotations through their pastures. Rotational grazing promotes many livestock production benefits for their operation including increased weaning weights, higher breed-back percentages, an increased number of cattle settled in the first cycle, and less foot rot and pinkeye occurrence. Their grazing management also promotes great wildlife habitat. Turkeys, grouse, pheasants, and deer can be found across their operation throughout the year.



Dennis is also an Earth Team volunteer for the Marshall County NRCS, as well as a Voices for Soil Health with the SD Mentoring Program. He's a strong advocate for soil health and is always willing to chat about issues with fellow producers.

As part of the Excellence in Grazing Management Award, Dennis and Jean will host a tour of their operation this summer. Check the Society for Range Management: South Dakota Section Facebook page for more details.