



Holistic Resource Management of Texas, Inc.

Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 2

Summer 1997

One Person's Experience on the PlanIt Texas Coalition

by Marcia Hermann

I am part of the group called PlanIt Texas. At first I was a little skeptical about a group of so many different people, representing a broad range of ideologies, trying to consult on a plan for managing a ranch. PlanIt Texas members include non-profit groups such as the National Wildflower Research Center, which I represent, Riverside Landowners Coalition, Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers, and Holistic Resource Management of Texas. Also represented are government agencies such as U.S Fish and Wildlife, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The group consists of many more members, but this is a sample of the variety of viewpoints. Colleen Reeves is the owner of Red-Corral Ranch, chosen to be a demonstration of this planning process.

During the first meeting I attended, people were throwing out all kinds of ideas, some of them far from my view, some right on, in my opinion. Peggy Sechrist was leading a brainstorming session about something called a "holistic goal." When we got to the part about possible ways to earn money or "forms of production," ideas started flying. Someone said we should plant bamboo because it would be a good building material; someone else said the ranch could make money from raising emus. Someone said people would pay to see birds, especially endangered Golden-cheeked warblers. I jumped into the fray with the idea of raising bison instead of cattle because they had evolved in the American grasslands along with the vegetation. That brought on a joke: Isn't a bison something you wash your hands in?

The banter continued until we had a

holistic goal outlining the desired: 1. Quality of life, 2. Forms of production, and 3. Future resource base. Along with a general statement of each goal were many specific ideas to try. People had felt free to suggest any idea, conventional and unconventional. The planning session was successful because we were not arguing against any ideas, but bringing lots of ideas from many viewpoints.

That first meeting was fun and stimulating. Yet I still was skeptical. I was worried there would be lots of meetings to attend and a lot of talking and no action. At first this was true, but the talking and planning helped all of us express our different viewpoints in positive ways that would help the ranch. We started developing a plan. We sorted through the ideas and found ones acceptable to the ranch

continued on page 3

Sustainable Ag training for Texas

by Nancy Roe

*Extension Horticulture Specialist and
Sustainable Agriculture Co-Coordinator for Texas*

Most HRM practitioners are probably familiar with the concept of sustainable agriculture, as its principles are similar to those of HRM. Although only an historical perspective will tell us what is truly sustainable, working towards sustainability involves considering not only yields, but also environmental and social consequences when making farm and ranch decisions.

In the late 1980's, the USDA created the SARE/ACE program (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education/Agriculture in Concert with the Environment) to promote "economically profitable, environmentally sound, and socially supporting farming systems." The grant programs funded through this agency emphasize practical, applied farming systems. There is a program of research and education grants, as well as grants for producers who wish to investigate a farming system or a

particular aspect of one. The SARE Professional Development Program was first funded in 1994. This part of the SARE program supports training of Extension personnel and agricultural professionals in the concepts of sustainable agriculture and the practices and methods that can be used to work towards sustainability.

In 1995, representatives from Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, other agricultural organizations, private agricultural companies, and non-governmental agencies associated with agriculture developed a strategic plan for sustainable agriculture in Texas. The plan included a vision statement: "The Texas Agricultural Extension Service and 1890 cooperative Extension Program, in partnership with agricultural producers and associated organizations and agencies will focus resources to ensure a higher quality of life for citizens of Texas and economically, environmentally, and socially sound agricultural practices."

continued on page 3

HRM of Texas, Inc. Officers and Directors

Clint Josey, President

6060 N. Central Expwy, Suite 305
Dallas, TX 75206
(214) 691-8994

Dalton Maddox, Vice President

6360 East Co. Rd. 337
Colorado City, Texas 79512
(915) 728-2376

George Riggs, Treasurer

PO Box 1803
Ft. Stockton, TX 79735
915-336-5269

George Brannies, Secretary

HC 60 Box 14
Mason, Texas 76856
915-347-5911

Pernie Davis

HCR 2, Box 15
McLean, TX 79057
(806) 779-2620

Lawson Allen

PO Box 1527
Fort Stockton, Texas 79735
(915) 336-3331

Scott Phillips

Box 368
San Ygnacio, Texas 78067-0368
210-765-5948

Ernest Haner

PO Box 554
Hebbronville, TX 78361
512-527-4728

Cristi Horton

PO Box 493
Goldthwaite, TX 76844
915-648-3344

Patricia Q. Richardson

608 Fairfield Lane
Austin, Texas 78751
512-371-1885

Joe Williams

3324 Purdue
Dallas, Texas 75225
214-368-4032

President's Report

by Clint Josey

Your Board of Directors had its planning session in April. There are a number of field days and workshops being scheduled. As the dates firm up, you will receive notices. These are in addition to the three workshops sponsored by the Ewing Halsell Foundation.

We are also working toward hiring an Executive Director. The lack of a paid staff member is a big bottleneck for our objectives. This of course means raising the money. As you probably know, overhead is the hardest money to raise and a large part of it must come from our members and supporters. You will be hearing more about this later.



HRM of Texas Mission Statement

**Working to create a healthy ecosystem
capable of supporting the people in it.**

Revised at the Long Range Planning Session, March 23, 1996

THREE-PART GOAL

Quality of Life - We value a healthy ecosystem, strong family units, financial stability, a strong land ethic, and personal growth and development; and to have fun and fellowship as a professionally proactive organization.

Forms of Production / Activities - Practicing holistic management, self-sustaining forms of revenue, facilitating training and education, creating public awareness and forming collaborative partnerships.

Future Landscape Description - High biodiversity, a healthy water cycle, a healthy mineral cycle, efficient capture of solar energy, and a harmonious interdependence between urban and rural communities through an understanding of ecological processes.

Holistic Resource Management of Texas, Inc.

Newsletter

is published quarterly by HRM of TX, Inc., a non-profit organization. News articles, area updates and photos are gratefully accepted and will be published as space allows. We welcome letters to the editor related to HRM principles or activities. Deadline for ads, articles, etc. is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Direct newsletter correspondence to:

Peggy Cole Jones
101 Hill View Trail,
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
phone / fax (512) 858-4251

or

Patricia Q. Richardson
608 Fairfield Lane
Austin, Texas 78751
512-371-1885

PlanIt experience, from page 1

owner, Colleen Reeves, and acceptable to all the members. The holistic goal kept us focussed on ideas that would bring the ranch toward that goal. We started taking small steps to implement the plan.

One of the most rewarding parts of the experience is participating in the implementation of the plans. We all got to be cow-hands one day when we moved the cattle and worked on fences. I am coming to understand what it takes to make a living raising cattle. Colleen decided she didn't want to try bison so I didn't get to be a buffalo gal.

Even without bison, my concerns for the health of the native vegetation are being addressed in the plan. The cattle grazing in the ranch fits in with part of the ranch goal to have "high functioning, unencumbered ecosystem processes." The goal of the cattle grazing on the ranch is to improve the native plant community, just as bison were a important part of the grassland systems that survived for thousands and thousands of years. At the Red Corral Ranch the participants will help make sure that the grazing rotations help the pastures rather than hurt them. Vegetation surveys will check the vegetation cover and species mix in each pasture and wildlife experts will be sure the cattle do not interfere with bird nesting or other wildlife that depends on the vegetation.

PlanIt Texas has helped me express my ideas about land management while gaining insight into other people's ideas and getting to know these people. This process takes a long time because there are so many people to coordinate, but all the people give the process vitality and energy. I hope our collective solutions benefit both the natural community and the people who depend on it.

Sustainable Ag training, from page 1

Many training programs for Extension agents and producers presently teach practices which work towards sustainability. Integrated pest management, farm and family financial planning, and practices such as no-till farming and crop rotation are a few examples. A more concentrated effort to train Extension workers and other agricultural personnel about sustainable agriculture will begin this year. It will include training for all these personnel in the basic concepts of sustainable agriculture; and regional programs which will emphasize sustainable farming systems for local commodities. Certainly the HRM land management concepts need to be part of these training programs.

Other plans include the development of a training video about sustainable agriculture in Texas. This video will include the basic concepts of sustainable agriculture illustrated by examples from all over the state. We have also developed a Texas sustainable agriculture website. It presently must be accessed through aggie horticulture at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/sustainable/>. Within a year, it should have its own server. Please visit this site, but don't be disappointed; at the present time, it consists mainly of links to other sustainable agriculture information. By early summer, it should include our own information about sustainable agriculture for Texas. We are also planning to develop an exhibit that can be used at agricultural meetings and trade shows. Its purpose would be to inform producers about the concept of sustainable agriculture and about productions and research projects in the state.

An Alternative and Sustainable Agriculture Team of Extension agents and specialists from around the state are leading the effort from various agricultural disciplines. The Sustainable Agriculture co-coordinators for Texas, Dr. Nathaniel Keys, with Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Dr. Nancy Roe, with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, were appointed to chair this committee.

One of the most important aspects of this effort is working together with organizations such as HRM, Texas SAWG (Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) and TOGA (Texas Organic Growers Association). In fact, leaders from the HRM movement have been active in this training program from the beginning. We in the Extension Service are pleased with the manner in which our efforts are being accepted and encouraged by these groups. We would like to be able to call on all of you to help us with our training – this may mean being a part our video, or taking a group on a tour of your farm and ranch as a part of one of our training programs. Some of you may even be willing to give a talk for a training program.

We hope we can continue to work together towards sustainability of agriculture in Texas and the world.

HRM of Texas, Inc. Advisory Board

Joel Ham
Past President

Blair Fitzsimons
Past President

Joe Maddox
Past President

Walt Davis
Past President

Bob Steger
Past President

Charles Probandt

Claudia Ball

Laurie Lasater

J.D. Cage

Dr. Ed Soltes

Dr. Larry Gilbert

Joseph Fitzsimons

Bunker Sands

Steve Hartman

Peggy Sechrist

Dr. Richard Teague

Enrique Garcia

David Graf

Holistic Resource Management is a dynamic and collaborative process. Our experience with this process precludes us from rendering comment or advice regarding a specific tool or management practice outside of a total context. Therefore the editors cannot necessarily endorse the views of any subscriber or contributor to this newsletter. We offer their comments and advertisements for your reflection and appropriate use.

Practitioner Profile: Colleen Reeves, The Red Corral

TRAINING AND PRACTICING HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT

In 1986 I took one of Allan Savory's first "grazing management" courses in Albuquerque. Over the course of several years, I took agricultural courses from other places and even spent 54 fascinating weekends in New York over a 6 year period studying many different disciplines. I began noticing that the most interesting studies to me had a common thread—holographic principles, wherein every part is related to every other part. By then, Holistic Management was being emphasized at the Center; so I took some refresher courses and began searching for a way to apply these principles in our lives in Austin as well as on our 1,087 acres of Texas Hill country limestone land.

THE WHOLE TO BE MANAGED

Resource Base and People: Home — 3704 Eastledge Dr., Austin Texas 78731
Employees in Home in Austin: Ruby, Geneva, & Michelle. Red Corral Ranch (all improvements and assets are listed in this part) Education, skills, and knowledge of PlanIt Texas Coalition members (from 22 organizations and agencies) Education, skills, assets, & knowledge of Reeves: Colleen, James, Brian, Russell, Donald; Grazing lessees: Peggy and Richard; Hunting lessees: Bill, Gerald, and 8 hunters; Potential customers and guests at Red Corral; Volunteers—both Austin and Red Corral; Neighbors—both Austin and Red Corral; CPA—both Austin and Red Corral; Consultants.

Money: Reeves money; Hunting Income; Main House Income; Guest Houses Income; Grazing Income; In-kind contributions.

The Management Team: The management team and the People in our Resource Base are closely intertwined. Every single person listed above contributes significantly to the present and future operations of the Red Corral. However, the ones who make the most decisions, have "veto power," and who depend directly on the resource base for part or all of their living are my husband, my sons, our ranch hand and myself. My husband has a full practice in Austin with very little extra time, and my sons also have full lives off the ranch. Therefore the actual day-to-day management and decision making is mine. Our ranch hand speaks limited English but does 90% of all the physical labor.

OUR HOLISTIC GOAL

Statement of Purpose: A place to nur-

ture people and the ecosystem

Quality of Life: Maintaining a healthy balance between our lives in Austin and our lives at the ranch • Producing enough profit from our enterprises at the Red Corral to pay for taxes, insurance, and ranch-hand salary • Enjoying the fellowship of friends, family and community groups who share an appreciation of healthy living, stewardship, honest challenging work, recreation, fun, a spiritual connection to the land, and a spiritual connection to people • Continuing our commitment to lifelong learning . **Forms of Production:** Income from Reeves in Austin; Income from livestock; Income from wildlife; Income from paying guests • Aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, hospitable environment • Healthy ecosystem with high functioning ecosystem processes • Opportunities for individual and collective creativity and innovation • Working atmosphere which allows for the emergence of larger patterns of possibility.

Future Resource Base: We want for our grandchildren high functioning, unencumbered ecosystem processes (community dynamics, water, mineral cycles, and energy flow). • In order to attain our Goals, we will have to BE: Of the utmost integrity; Responsible for providing a high quality product for a fair price; affirming a positive vision; nurturing; caring; responsive to needs; thoughtful; collaborative; trustworthy; open-minded; respectful; creative; fun; adventurous; and committed • Our future work environment and immediate space will be aesthetically pleasing, spacious, comfortable, nurturing, welcoming, safe, and functional, transformational, and healing. • Our future additions at Red Corral will include a hunting cabin, Dromenon, large meeting room, butterfly/hummingbird native plant gardens, rain harvesting • Our communities will need to be dynamic, diverse, and healthy. • For our future community services, we will need high quality health care and emergency services. Access to diverse educational resources. Responsible, responsive government that serves as a resource and facilitator.

TRANSLATING THE HOLISTIC GOAL INTO DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS

Our forms of production have increased. Income from deer and turkey hunting has doubled. Income from grass lease is the same as in years past but the improvement is in the cattle management. The Red Corral is too small for most profitable cattle

operations unless we lived there, owned them, and worked them ourselves. (Something my husband and I would like to do since we both are from farming and ranching backgrounds.) We divided the place into 17 pastures ten years ago, but it has been difficult finding an HRM practitioner who was near enough to make it profitable. The PlanIt Texas Coalition was the source for finding Richard Sechrist who markets his cattle directly to customers as chemically free under the trade name of Homestead Beef. To enhance the beef marketability, I applied and received organic certification this year from the Texas Department of Agriculture for the entire ranch. Richard practices HRM grazing management and I stay involved in the planning process. We plan our grazing, water, and fence changes around the Golden Cheeked Warbler (an endangered species which we have on the ranch). We are also working with the Wildflower Research Center representative on PlanIt Tx board learning how grazing affects wildflowers. We would like to maximize certain areas for guest enjoyment and aesthetics. For the first time since I took my first HRM course, I am confident that the cattle are properly being used as the tool they were meant to be—as well as providing income.

A major change in our operations concerns paying guests. Since the ranch needs more income, the PlanIT Tx Coalition helped me realize that I could make money doing many activities that I've always done—hosting hunting parties, entertaining guests, cooking, preparing for family gatherings, hosting women's retreats—only more of them! I painted and refurbished many rooms in our main house and two cottages (myself and with the help of friends who have enjoyed the ranch for years). We are now open for Bed and Breakfast, Guest House Accommodations, small retreats, and weddings. ***We book reservations through Hill Country Accommodations 1-800-926-5028*** We have also begun landscaping our yards with native plants to attract hummingbirds and butterflies. We are involved with our deer hunting lessee in developing trophy bucks. In 1984 our neighbor joined us in building a game fence around both places which makes 1600 acres to be managed. We were pleased last year, when one of our hunters won the Blanco County Big Buck Contest.

THE MONITORING PROGRAM

continued on next page

Polyculture makes the most of biodiversity

by Pat Richardson

The pied piper plays, and the animals follow from the pasture they've been in to the one they are going to next. But the setting is unusual—a college campus. The animals are a convivial group of cows, hogs, sheep and chickens. The chickens that lay blue eggs jump on the sheep for the ride. They move from the oak mott in front of the administration bldg. and munch road edges and parking lot islands (opportunity grazing). They “mow” the open areas that are future building sites. They are what Bill Burrows would refer to as part of their practice of Polyculture. Polyculture is multi-species management based on what he considers is a natural law: **diversity leads to stability.**

I first heard Bill talking about multi-species grazing at a registered educators meeting several years ago in Utah. His animal behavior comments were fascinating. I've wanted to hear more ever since. This story is written from notes taken during a recent delightful phone conversation.

Bill has lived in northern California and taught at Shasta College, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources for 37 years. He is about to retire and will take the opportunity to share, coordinate, practice and live holistic management in wider and wider realms.

He was turned on to Holistic Resource Management in 1985, and really got it going at Shasta College by 1987. The Farm Lab evolved into the Holistic Resource Lab. They are trying multi-species grazing using about a hundred acres (half of them irrigated) on (or very near) campus. They have 42 pastures. One is a pumpkin patch, another is a garlic/carrot patch. One is the Administration Bldg.'s oak mott already mentioned. Some are more conventional, such as alfalfa, or mixes of perla grass, strawberry clover, orchard grass and trefoil. About half the pastures don't have water, so there is a trailer that carries a water tank and has room to haul a trough. The trough goes on or off as needed and is gravity filled from the tank. Bill says it doesn't look fancy, but it works well. During times of rapid

plant growth the animals may move once a day, during slow growth, maybe once every five days. The pied piper actually blows a whistle and uses dogs when necessary to help move the animals.

The Holistic Resource Lab experiments with multi-species cropping too. For a winter forage they plant a mixed field of cereal grain, fava beans and Canadian field peas. The harvest (using a combine) produces a 1:1:1 mix which makes a great energy/protein supplement for the livestock. After harvest there's enough vine, peas and beans on the ground for good gleaning forage in the livestock rotation. In the summer they've mixed milo on 18" row centers with black-eyed peas in between on 6" row centers. The fast growing milo shoots up and acts as a support for the peas. The peas make good ground cover and act as biological weed control. Harvesting gives a 2/3 milo 1/3 peas blend which is again a good feed, and the stubble is grazed by the menagerie.

The menagerie of animals includes

continued on page 7

Practitioner, from page 4

Within PlanIt Tx, there are several sub-committees. One measures the amount forage we have for grazing the cattle as measured in ADA's. One committee checks the forage and quality of habitat for wildlife as well as wildflowers. Another group does bird counts each season to monitor the resident and migrating song birds. At least three spotlight deer census counts are done a few months before deer season to determine deer harvesting. We are keeping records on two pastures where controlled burn was used in 1996. There are nine photopoints on the ranch which are being photographed seasonally. I participate in much of the monitoring. All of these monitoring programs are written, reported to the group at large and kept in our records. Our bookkeepers and I keep detailed and accurate records on all expenditures and income. I am in the process of changing our financial records from a computer accounting package which is CPA friendly to the Holistic Management Financial Planning Computer Software which matches the paper forms.

PROBLEMS, MISTAKES, CORRECTIONS The biggest problem is balancing my “double life.” I am gradually giving up most activities in Austin. It is easier to know what to give up and set

priorities when measured with the Holistic Goal! I tried hiring two different ranch managers. After two failures, I realized they simply didn't pass the testing guidelines! With so many knowledgeable people with so many ideas in PlanIt Texas, I sometimes feel slow in learning and assimilating all this new information in order to make decisions and act. However, there is so much to do that I simply don't have time to waste on self-consciousness! I have also learned that being in denial is a dangerous thing! It may be painful to recognize a mistake, but when I can face it, my defenses seem to dissolve and I can actually be creative!

SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIFIC TOOLS The most significant “tool” in my experience using HRM is, of course, human creativity. I have experienced it “in spades” working with the terrific members of PlanIt Tx. We all know that whenever people work together (committees, etc.), they can create more intelligence or more stupidity than they do individually! However, these people are aware that they can *choose* to create intelligence. And they do. Also, these people are passionate about their ideas and willing to take some responsibility for creating things out of that passion. Their collective knowledge has helped allay many of my fears of government regulation. For example, it has been

a rumor that landowners in Hays County caught cutting any cedar could be fined as much as \$50,000! In spite of the fact that we found an endangered species on our land, the PlanIt Tx members (yes, the environmentalists too) encouraged me to cut cedars. The trees I would leave for warbler habitat are located in places where it would be foolish to cut anyway. I am learning that diversity is our strength, not our weakness. I'm learning about interconnectedness and interdependence of life on this planet—that our “whole” is part of the larger whole and if we spoil our part, the entire whole is effected. I know that people who own land can no longer function successfully in isolation. Those of us who know how to interact and collaborate are more able to make decisions based on the long-term good of the whole.

ADVICE TO SOMEONE BEGINNING TO PRACTICE HRM Setting your holistic goal is a must. Don't give up. Read the newsletters from the Center as well as Texas HRM. Ask the HRM of Tx office for an updated list of Texas members and confer with them—maybe management groups will be active again. Remind yourself, “If we have anything to teach, it is that we are a people who care, and that we believe there is a place worth caring for.”

Bulletin Board

HRM Field Day

Forrest Armke, at the Ford Ranch near Brady, TX (see Practitioner Profile, last issue) will host a field day **September 24, 1997 from 10am to 4pm**.

Lunch will be provided so we need an accurate head count before the field day. **Please R.S.V.P. in writing to Jane Moore at Rt.1, Box 67, Maxwell, TX 78656** (or call her at 512-357-9091). Watch your mail for a reminder and map as the field day approaches.

The Ford Ranch encompasses 32,000 acres of gentle, rolling hills covered with low oak brush and a dense grass turf. There are mesquite flats with deep topsoil and thick turf. The ranch is managed to benefit the land ("to get Mother Earth haired over again") and the people. Production includes cattle, sheep and wildlife.

Planned grazing is the hub of Armke's approach to improving the land. With constant monitoring and the yearly addition of new fences, the ranch improves visibly with less soil capping and the return of old world grasses. The conception rates and weaning rates for livestock have improved drastically. The produced pounds-per-acre has increased and the labor bill has decreased as cattle learn to move stress-free through the pastures. The chemical bill has also decreased because the parasites are not a problem under this system.

Armke says, "Under this program, our wildlife income is up 450% over 1985. Our annual total wildlife expense ratio is only 11% of gross wildlife income.

"HRM works and this landscape is a fine example. We are reminded of this each time local old-timer ranchers visit the ranch. They are amazed at the difference in the landscape this type of management has brought about. Watching the earth heal with the aid of rotational grazing has been very rewarding."

HRM of TX field days are a gift from generous practitioners who help our organization promote the use of holistic management by hosting these free tours for people to see first hand how HRM is applied to specific situations. In addition to the outreach aspect, the field days offer an opportunity to get together with other HRM practitioners for networking, support and social enjoyment.

Halsell/HRM workshops continue

The Ewing Halsell Foundation grant, awarded HRM of TX for the education of tomorrow's Texas ag leaders, is being well spent on a series of free half-day workshops to introduce HRM philosophies, principles and practices.

Sponsored by the Halsell Foundation and HRM of TX, with the cooperation of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Texas A&M Agricultural Research and Extension Center, the workshops feature a variety of presenters familiar with both HRM and other aspects of the effort to forge a more ecologically and economically sound future. The series includes an April workshop in San Angelo (which was very successful), a June 10 workshop in San Antonio and an August 19 workshop in Uvalde.

Although the primary audience will be ag teachers and youth leaders, anyone interested is welcome to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce your friends to HRM and no cost.

For more information and a map to the sites, drop a note to **Jane Moore at Rt.1, Box 67, Maxwell, TX 78656** or call her at 512-357-9091.

Ag Sustainability Tour & Rural Fair

A full slate of activities are planned for the Promised Land Network's (PLN) 5th annual Ag Sustainability Tour and Rural Fair on Saturday **July 19th** in Nazareth, TX. The PLN seeks to build sustainable agriculture and rural communities through sound land stewardship and Judeo-Christian ethical principles by cultivating rural entrepreneurship, on-farm education, rural spirituality, public dialog, community development, moral reflection and partnership-building.

Preliminary events begin on **Thursday, July 17** with a training session in Spanish for small farmers, presented by the University of California's Dr. Miguel Altieri. A native of Chile, Altieri is highly respected throughout the world for his pioneering work in sustainable agriculture, agroecology and small farm development. The Spanish session is scheduled for 5-8pm in Hereford.

On **Friday, July 18**, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC) will host a regional workshop in Nazareth designed to "strengthen local leadership and resources in order to develop sustainable local and regional communities." NCRLC brings together the Church, care for creation and care for community, seeking to relate religion to the rural world, develop support systems for rural ministries, and serve as a prophetic voice and catalyst for social justice.

On **Saturday, July 19**, four Ag Sustainability tours will be conducted by the following presenters: 1) Biological Pest Control in Large-Scale Farming, Dr. Miguel Altieri; 2) Bio-Intensive Gardening, Ken Hargesheimer & Allixandria Sherral of Llano Esatcado Organic Gardeners; 3) Pasture Allotments for Planned Grazing, Walt Davis of HRM; and 4) Value Added Small Farming Options, ATTRA staffers. Tours 1 and 4 are also offered in Spanish and a children's tour at the Birkenfeld's farm will take place in the morning. Plans for afternoon activities include a PLN benefit auction, historical dramatizations of early settlers from the region, and a panel discussion on making rural schools centers of sustainability. A rural fair will begin at 5 with live music, rural arts and crafts, and refreshments including hamburgers from locally grown, pasture-raised beef. The day concludes with a concert and dance featuring performances by Ann Zimmerman, cowboy poet/singer Buck Ramsey of Amarillo and Tejano band, Anglo Simple of Hereford.

All proceeds from the gathering will go to assist St. Francis Church, a rural Catholic community 12 miles east of Amarillo, who lost their church building to a fire in April. The NCRLC conference registration is \$20 per person. Both concerts, as well as registration for Saturday's tours are \$5 per person.

For brochures, registration, lodging arrangements and additional information, contact Lydia Villanueva (806-364-4445 or e-mail: pln1@wtrt.net) Registration is required by July 14th.

Polyculture, from page 5

about 20 female hogs (a dozen different breeds, some heritage) and their assorted many pigs, 35 head of cattle (20 Angus cows and their calves), 50 sheep, and 30 laying hens (free range during the day, in an egg mobile at night).

The animals learn to benefit from each others talents. The sheep have figured out that they can find protection from coyotes by hanging around in the middle of the cattle. The cattle have figured out that the pigs know how to break the pumpkins open, so they stick close to the pigs in the pumpkin patch (cattle love pumpkins but aren't adept at opening them). The blue egg laying chickens like to ride (the brown and white egg layers are not so inclined). The emus so far have just been stupid (translation: hard to manage in multi-species grazing program).

Regarding the laying hens, their product is marketed as natural "rainbow" eggs: four blue, four white and four brown per dozen.

Multi-species grazing requires different selection criteria. Instead of hog weaner weights, they select for those animals that can make it on their own in the pasture, which means they are moving toward "vegetarian pigs" (Bill calls them "spinach hogs"). They also select for hogs that don't eat the baby lambs when they pop out. The hogs farrow in pasture year round. They get a bale of hay for nesting material. Now they're trying to do away with that too. The Russian hogs are good about foraging for materials from the pasture and making an igloo type farrowing hut on their own. These "vegetarian" hogs don't grow as rapidly, but the input cost is only about \$.15/lb at weaning weight (that includes irrigated pasture and water costs). They are sold as naturally grown (not on concrete, few shots etc.) to 4H, FFA, and local backyard "raise/eat-your-own-hog" customers. Selection for cows moves toward those that don't trample the nesting piglets. Overall they are looking for compatibility and for the "good doers" off of pasture gleanings, the healthy animals that raise healthy offspring.

Some of the results they have observed from multi-species grazing are: much better utilization of available forage, an economic buffering against market price fluctuations, an economic savings in terms of input (less petrochemicals used because most of the harvest is done directly by the animals, less man hours required because

there are no pens and floors to wash, no manure disposal, no animals to feed). You do have to keep the fences good and hot (8000 volts) to hold the sheep. Pigs in contrast are easy to control - one electric wire six inches off the ground will suffice.

Current "let's try" projects include using "weeder" geese as natural weed control in the pumpkin and garlic/carrot patches. Yearling geese work best, so they will be coordinated with a "Christmas goose" market. They are introducing goats to the multi-species grazing crowd. They are working on different combinations of vegetation to create "living fences" (a blend of overstory trees, mid-story bushes and low story plants). These fences must hold livestock, provide products for human and/or wildlife consumption, act as wildlife corridors and attract beneficial insects. One such fence they are trying uses persimmon and Asian pear trees with pomegranate bushy trees and thornless blackberry vines (yum).

The common thread to all of these polyculture endeavors is diversity. Increase diversity, increase stability (environmental, financial and social). It is a fundamental truth in Bill's belief system. He also believes that if you manage for health at the soil surface you manage for health of the whole ecosystem.

The Redding area of northern California has a Mediterranean type climate with most of its 30" average rainfall coming in the winter. The soils of the Shasta College 100 grazed acres are fairly deep and drain relatively well. In 1987 they measured 1.7% organic matter. In 1996 they measured 2.3% organic matter. The increase in biological capital has also been indicated by greater numbers and more species of birds and by a tremendous increase in numbers of beneficial insects (from sweep counts). Economically the difference is striking too. Before 1987, from that 100 acres, Shasta College was losing \$8000 to \$9000 a year. In 1996 from that same ground, they made a \$14000 profit. Isn't that a nice legacy from Bill?

Closer to home, Bob Steger has been

doing multi-species grazing for a number of years on two Texas ranches. One has 2500 acres, clay loam soils, 17 pastures and an average 12" annual rainfall. The other has 900 acres, clay loam and sandy soils, 19 pastures and an average 17" annual rainfall. At the latter he has six 10 acre pastures used to train animals to electric fences and herd moving basics. In good conditions they have had as many as 900 sheep, 300 goats and 50 cattle grazing together.

The Stegers are using a diversity of animals to manage for a balance of vegetation. The sheep for example graze the weeds down and allow good development of perennial grasses. The diversity of animals is also used to produce a more even cash flow and to protect against market fluctuations. Each type of animal comes to market at a different time during the year. The cost per animal unit is usually lower for sheep and goats (they pay for themselves with the first lamb/kid crop and have a shorter turn around time). The economic flexibility gained from "diversity" has reduced their use of borrowed money.

The carefully managed grazing program has not detracted from wildlife habitat. Bob has even observed antelope moving in among the sheep to take advantage of the protective burro's presence. Bob feels that all animals have a role in ecosystem management. He is taking advantage of the synergy possible from a polygrazing program.

For further information contact Bill Burrows at 916-549-5239 or Bob Steger at 915-835-4583.

HRM of TX Newsletter

Advertising

ad rates and specifications

Full Page \$100 4 for \$350

3 columns (7 1/2" across x 9 3/4" deep

1/2 page \$60 4 for \$200

3 columns (7 1/2") across x 4 3/4" deep

1/3 page \$40 4 for \$150

2 columns (4 7/8") across x 4 3/4" deep

1/4 page \$35 4 for \$100

1 1/2 columns (3 3/8") x 4 3/4" deep

1/6 page \$25 4 for \$90

Send camera ready ads or let us create an ad from information you send to: Peggy Jones 101 Hillview Trail, Dripping Springs, TX 78620. Fax / phone: 512-858-4251



P.O. Box 49822
Austin, Texas 78765-9822

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701
PERMIT NO. 1309

Working to create a healthy ecosystem capable of supporting the people in it

Holistic Resource Management of Texas, Inc. is a non-profit organization made up of ranchers, farmers, public land managers, educators, conservationists, and others who are interested in finding financially and ecologically sound ways to manage land.

Categories of membership: \$20—Individual Member; \$35—Family Membership (2 people); *\$100—Active Member; *\$250—Sustaining Member; *\$1,000—Lifetime Member. **Includes one textbook/workbook set*
An annual membership fee entitles you to:

- Four editions of the HRM of Texas, Inc. *Newsletter*
- The privilege to vote for and serve as director of HRM of Texas, Inc.
- The opportunity to participate in management clubs, field days, practitioner panels and other educational opportunities to assist with the application of Holistic Resource Management.

Please complete, detach and return the form below with a check for your 1997 dues.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ (home) _____ (work)

Occupation: _____ Membership Category: _____

Please make check for desired membership category payable to Holistic Resource Management of Texas, Inc.
and send to: **HRM of TX, Rt.2, Box 184-A, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.**

For more information contact: Peggy Sechrist (210-997-5932) or Clint Josey (214-691-8994).