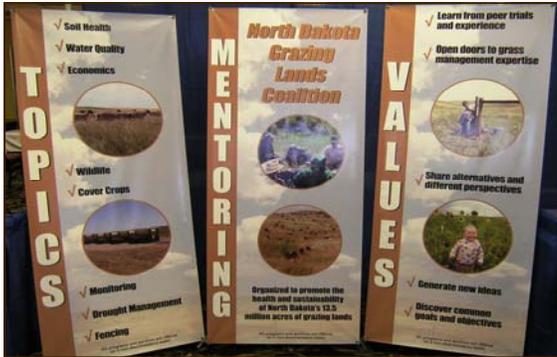




# Dakota Prairies RC&D

## Bismarck, ND



Mentors address a variety of management topics and various strategies as they work one-on-one with producers around the state.



Grassland and livestock management strategies that are demonstrated by the mentors, lead to healthier soil, improved livestock and wildlife habitat, increased organic matter, improved water infiltration, water holding capacity, water quality.



Mentors work with producers to incorporate and manage cover crops as one of tools to improve soil health and productivity, and reduce input costs. .

## Grazing Lands Coalition Mentorship Program

Dakota Prairies and Dakota West RC&D Councils partner with the North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition to provide education and one-on-one mentorship assistance to area producers, to promote innovative management strategies that improve soil health, protect and conserve land & water resources, and improve sustainability for those involved in agricultural production. Mentors work with individual farmers and ranchers to help them implement these strategies and work through the details that are needed to help them become successful in that endeavor. Dakota Prairies RC&D provides administrative assistance and program coordination, and the Councils have secured funding to support their educational efforts and one-on-one mentorship program.

Coalition mentors are producers who have successfully adopted innovative practices and have a desire to assist other producers in this effort. Their innovative practices are designed to ultimately improve soil health. This is partially accomplished by adding diversity to the system, by extending the season of green and growing plants to maximize the utilization of available sunlight and moisture. Strategies include: cover crops and combinations of cover crops, alternative crops, rotational grazing, winter grazing, and swath and bale grazing.

Mentors have a keen understanding of what needs to be done above ground to positively impact what happens below ground. They know how to manage above-ground inputs to impact soil biodiversity, fertility, and carbon-nitrogen and fungi-bacteria ratios. They understand that every operation is different, and they work with those resources that each producer has. They utilize a whole-farm, systems approach to help producers maximize productivity and job satisfaction, while improving the health of their soil and utilization of available water. These mentors are innovators of this technology.

This project is also supported by local SCDs who utilize their services for presentations at grazing and cropping management workshops. The ND Department of Health (EPA 319) and SARE are the financial partners of this program.

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