

GOVERNOR'S

2014

CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE



KEYNOTE: Dave Coon, Anderson Dairy



CONFERENCE REPORT



About the Department of Agriculture

The Nevada Department of Agriculture promotes sustainable agriculture and natural resources, which work to protect food, fiber, human health and safety and the environment through effective service, regulatory action and agricultural literacy.

The Department was established in 1915 by Chapter 561 of the Nevada Revised Statutes. It includes the divisions of: Administration, Animal Industry, Consumer Equitability, Food and Nutrition and Plant Industry.

Introduction

It is my honor to present this report on the first Nevada Governor's Conference on Agriculture held November 13, 2014 at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno. This conference hosted more than 40 presenters with over 200 participants to discuss issues relevant to Nevada agriculture.

This report summarizes some of the workshops and panel discussions. A few of the panel presentations may be viewed online at youtube.com/nevadaagriculture. Participants overwhelmingly ranked the conference as positive. Here are a few survey results:

- 87 percent of attendees completing the survey indicated they were satisfied or strongly satisfied with the quality of the event.
- Many positive comments were received from attendees on the quality of the panelists and presenters.
- The sessions receiving the highest satisfactory rating from attendees completing the survey were Livestock Grazing for Ecosystem Management, GMOs Pros & Cons, and Finance, Capital Grants and Incentives for Agricultural Producers.
- Feedback from exhibitors was very positive. They were very impressed with the organization of the conference as a whole, especially since this was the first such conference. They all said that they were positive about participating in future events. Most would like the option considered of opening up the trade show event to the public at some point during the day to provide even more value to exhibitors.

Future topics requested by attendees include: water and drought; assisting future agriculturalists; GMOs; community outreach and engaging the public as an industry; and more time to collaborate as an agriculture community to address concerns and other challenges within the state.

We are extremely pleased with conference, the presenters, our many exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees. News coverage of the event was substantial, with news channels KTVN and KRNK coming to the event for interviews, KKOH radio interviewing staff before the event, a pre-interview with KOLO Channel 8 and numerous articles appearing in the *Nevada Ag. and Livestock Journal*, *Progressive Rancher*, *ThisisReno.com* and *CarsonNow.com*.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this inaugural event or would like to discuss any of the topics and recommendations contained herein.

—JIM BARBEE
Director, Nevada Department of Agriculture



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Workshop Summaries

PANELISTS

- Dr. Bill Payne, Dean, UNR College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources (CABNR)
- Dr. David Shintani, Associate Dean, Professor of Biochemistry, UNR CABNR
- Rick Lattin, Owner, Lattin Farms, Inc.

► **WATCH THIS PANEL ONLINE:**
youtube.com/nevadaagriculture



■ GMOs: Pros & Cons

What were the key concerns expressed by panelists?

- The general public's access to unbiased, scientifically based information about genetically modified organisms.
- The use of GMOs is much larger than what we see in the U.S. This technology has the potential to feed and nourish the hungry around the world.
- GMO technology plays an important role in food security by making food more accessible, nutritious and at a lower cost.
- USDA-certified organic food is GMO labeling, which means the industry does not need additional labeling.
- Any labeling should be consistent across the U.S.

What were the key opportunities expressed by the panelists?

- The industry needs to work on providing unbiased, scientifically based information.
- The industry needs to keep an open dialogue with the public on the subject.

What were the key concerns expressed by members of the audience?

A key concern in the audience was that the panel focused mainly on the pros of GMOs and not the cons. One potential negative is the potential impacts on pollinators.

What were the resolutions to the concerns, if any?

The panel touched on some of the cons but was unable to explore many of the cons due to time.

Cons included:

- The industry must manage GMO technology correctly; Roundup® is used a lot for weed control, and weeds could become resistant to it.
- Insects could become resistant to *Bt*.
- Best management practices are key.

Additional Resources:

- World Health Organization: www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/food-technology/faq-genetically-modified-food/en/
- UC Biotech: ucbiotech.org
- Academics Review: academicsreview.org

■ Panel: Public Lands Issues

What were the key concerns expressed by panelists?

- Sage grouse
- Protection of people, the economy and livelihoods
- Rangeland health – fire, drought, invasives and wild horses
- Protection of property rights and federal government policies and how they affect rangelands

What were the key opportunities/solutions expressed by the panelists?

- The state sage grouse plan will work if we are allowed to let it.
- U.S. Forest Service: Bi-state sage grouse partnerships – maybe the bird doesn't need to be listed.
- Bi-state vegetation treatment projects were discussed as being successful.
- The Nevada Division of Forestry becoming a year-round wildland fire fighting agency is considered beneficial.
- Bringing together agencies and landowners works well, to include resource advisory councils, large-scale land treatments and action plans.
- NDOW: a lot of species that were NOT listed – partnerships kept them from being listed.
- Elk population plans worked well.
- Overland habitat project – multiple partners made a great project for mule deer, cows and sage grouse (livestock grazing improved sage grouse habitat).
- Data and monitoring are important.
- Become members of Nevada Cattlemen's Association and the Nevada Farm Bureau to stay informed.

What other issues were considered?

- Getting Conservation Districts plugged into issues and partnering more.
- Livestock trends are going down – the number of cattle and sheep are down drastically from the 1900s and we're seeing an increase in cheatgrass and burned rangelands, instead of grazing. We need to see a reversal of that trend.

PANELISTS

- J.J. Goicochea, Nevada Rancher, Eureka County Commissioner
- Jim Lawrence, Nevada Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Ramona Hage Morrison, Liberty and Property Rights Foundation
- Tony Wasley, Nevada Dept. of Wildlife
- Amy Lueders, Bureau of Land Management
- Bill Dunkelberger, U.S. Forest Service

“The state sage grouse plan will work if we are allowed to let it.”



PANELISTS

- Dr. Barry Perryman, UNR CABNR
- Dr. Tamzen Stringham, UNR CABNR
- Brad Schultz, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
- Ron Torell, Nevada Cattlemen's Association

► VIEW THIS PANEL ONLINE:

youtube.com/nevadaagriculture



PRESENTERS

- Paul Thomsen, Nevada Governor's Office of Energy
- John Hargrove, NV Energy
- Sarah Adler, USDA Rural Development

PRESENTERS

- Nicole Sallaberry, Great Basin Food Co-op
- Jeff Sutich, Nevada Dept. of Agriculture
- Tom Harris, UNR Dept. of Economics

■ Livestock Grazing for Ecosystem Management

What were the key concerns expressed by panelists?

- Ignorance of agriculture and how livestock grazing works
- Not telling enough success stories
- There are too many trees in Nevada, particularly on rangelands where they historically did not exist, such as in sagebrush and sage grouse habitat.
- There is no incentive for federal employees to take risks – there's plenty of incentives for them not to take risks.

What were the key concerns expressed by members of the audience?

Youth want to learn from the older generation of agriculturalists, but youth also want older generations to learn from youth.

What were the resolutions to the concerns, if any?

- We need to get the message to Washington, D.C.
- We need better agriculture education.
- Get more youth involved in agriculture.
- Tell better success stories, and more often.
- University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Range Management School is a positive effort.
- UNCE's noxious weed control projects are a success.

■ Energy Incentives for Agricultural Producers

What were the key concerns expressed by panelists?

None. Each had a number of opportunities presented to the audience that included incentive programs, revolving loan programs and grants available from USDA Rural Development, Nevada Governor's Office of Energy and NV Energy.

What were the key concerns expressed by members of the audience?

Virtual net metering for agriculture producers – the ability to generate electricity in one place, from renewable sources, and have it credited from another place.

What were the resolutions to the concerns, if any?

Virtual net metering is a gray area of policy that the legislature may address.

Resources

- USDA Rural Development: www.rurdev.usda.gov/NVHome.html
- Nevada Governor's Office of Energy: energy.nv.gov
- NV Energy: www.nvenergy.com/renewablesenvironment/renewables/

■ Direct-to-Market Opportunities

The workshop covered interesting topics for agriculture producers when it comes to different options of marketing their products. Guest presenters were addressing some tools and possibilities that exist through the Distributors of Regional and Organic Produce and Products (DROPP) program as well as exporting opportunities to global markets around world. The DROPP program

is a tool that helps producers market and distribute their regional and organic products and connect them with the existing market. Exporting opportunities were presented through participation in the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) program, as well as funding opportunities that are available to businesses if they decide to enter the global market.

Resources

- DROPP: *dropp.coop*
- WUSATA: *wusata.org*

■ Finance, Capital and Incentives

The workshop covered information related to existing financial resources, grants and incentive programs that are available to agriculturists to expand and support their business operations. Presenters covered Farm Loan Programs available to family farmers available to establish, improve, expand, transition, and strengthen farm or ranch operations, like Farm Operating Loans and Microloans, Farm Ownership Loans, Emergency Farm Loans, etc., financial assistance available through USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to help them manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Capital offered to agriculturists and small businesses may be available through the Nevada Department of Business and Industry.

■ Enriching the Connection Communities have to Food and Agriculture

Key Concerns:

- Creating opportunities for students to explore/experiment in school and on their own to learn about the importance of food and agriculture.
- Funding through grants and sponsorships for these types of projects.
- Succession planning on projects to ensure continued success.

Key Opportunities:

- Utilizing school-based businesses to train students for future careers.
- Farm-to-school program as a tool to educate youth on food and agriculture.
- Farm-to-institution programs as a method to fulfilling needs within the community while supporting the agriculture industry within the state.
- School gardens as a tool to educate on healthy eating, collaboration and communication.
- Encouraging schools to provide time for students to observe, discover, experiment, nurture and learn about food and agriculture as part of their educational journey. Examples might include school garden elective time or a 20-minute agriculture literacy lesson during a specific period/class.
- Collaboration within communities between educational institutions, nonprofits, government agencies, businesses and volunteers to create synergy and to make a greater impact.

► **WATCH A CONDENSED VERSION OF THIS WORKSHOP ONLINE:**

youtube.com/nevadaagriculture



PRESENTERS

- Bruce Breslow, Nev. Dept. of Business and Industry
- Clint Koble, Farm Service Agency
- Bruce Petersen, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

PANELISTS

- Jeff Bryant, Urban Roots
- Emily Dieneman, Smith Valley FFA
- Wendy Madison, Healthy Communities Coalition
- Andy Miller, Smith Valley High School
- Denise O'Toole, Moapa Valley High School
- Jennifer Ott, UNR High Desert Farming Initiative
- Kellie Rogaczewski, Smith Valley FFA

PANELISTS

- Heather Dye, Nevada FFA Foundation
- Dr. Bill Payne, UNR CABNR
- Dennis Perea, Nevada Dept. of Employment, Rehabilitation and Training
- Dr. Mark Walker, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
- Anne Willard, Nevada Dept. of Education

“UNR’s College of Agriculture could hire an agricultural education professor to oversee the training of Nevada agriculture educators...”

■ Preparing the Next Generation of Agriculturalists

Key Concerns:

- Lack of public knowledge about agriculture in general and specifically Nevada food and fiber production and processing.
- Lack of agriculture training dollars being used through Nevada Works and Workforce Connection.
- Lack of teachers with degrees in agricultural education to fill positions in Nevada school districts.
- Lack of a defined agricultural education degree program through UNR. Currently most students leave the state to attend other institutions and then potentially take jobs in those states instead of returning to fill positions in Nevada.
- Lack of funding for agricultural education in-service training for those teachers coming in through Business & Industry licenses.
- Education courses need to be aligned with economic needs and workforce needs.
- Lack of determined method of disseminating information and resources across the state.
- Lack of Nevada youth’s awareness about career opportunities within the agriculture industry
- Lack of support for financial investments in agriculture institutions and research.
- Industry division between conventional and organic agriculturalists that diminishes the ability to educate the consumer about their options.

Key Opportunities/Solutions:

- Integrating agriculture literacy into school systems to create an informed consumer base.
- Teach economic realities to individuals interested in starting a business in the agriculture sector.
- Adopt and/or develop agriculture industry accreditations recognized within the state.
- Seek funding and industry support to execute statewide accreditations or certificates.
- Actively market UNR’s College of Agriculture (CABNR) degree programs within the region to recruit and hopefully retain a talented workforce.
- UNR CABNR could hire an agricultural education professor to oversee the training of Nevada agriculture educators and implement a degree program as offered by land grant institutions in neighboring states.
- UNR CABNR could tailor degree programs and curriculum to meet current/projected workforce needs in areas of food manufacturing/food science.
- Grow the number of agricultural education programs in high schools across the state.
- Increase financial assistance to students wishing to pursue education and training in the field of agriculture.
- Increase internships and on-the-job training opportunities to high school and college-age students within the field of agriculture.

Nevada Centennial Awards

The Nevada Centennial Awards Program recognizes agricultural families who have owned and operated the same land for 100 years or more. Forty-nine families have been inducted into the program that began in 2004. The awards program is sponsored by the Nevada Agriculture license plate funds, Nevada Farm Bureau, Nevada Agricultural Foundation, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Nevada Cattlemen's Association and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

THE JOHNSON RANCH

In the name of the Johnson and Springmeyer families, we honor the original ranch, formerly the Lazy J Ranch in Douglas County. Chris Johnson was born in Denmark, and his wife, Celia, was from Germany. It is said that they came to the Carson Valley in the 1870s with Mormon Settlers, where they purchased the ranch and raised a family at their Mottsville Lane property.

After Chris Sr. passed away, Chris Johnson Jr. retained the ranch and partnered with Knox William at the nearby Judge Hickey ranch to raise Hereford cattle and hay. Knox William passed away in 1934 after falling off his horse on Mottsville Lane. After his death, his wife Stella Van Dyke Johnson, a single woman with three small children, took over the cattle operation on her own until her son, Knox Van Dyke continued to operate his portion of the ranch while grazing in the summer at Lake Tahoe.

On his retirement in 1992, Knox Van Dyke leased the ranch to Helen Kolbe.

Helen Kolbe Johnson took the reins and continued to raise Hereford/Angus cross cattle on Knox's ranch with the help of their son Drew Kolbe. Therefore, Drew raises cattle on the same property as his great, great grandparents. Majorie Springmeyer retains ownership of her portion of the J Lazy J Ranch with her daughter-in-law Bonnie, and her grandchildren: they lease it to a local rancher.

The Nevada Centennial Award is presented to the Johnsons and Springmeyers for the longstanding contribution to Nevada agriculture and the rich heritage they have given to the state.



The Johnson/Springmeyer families with Centennial Awards sponsors.

THE TRIPLE S RANCH



The Triple S Ranch of south Reno raises cattle, sheep and bees. The original operation was acquired in 1874 by Ferdinand Ritter but is now held by the Lorraine Dodge Family Trust.

Originally purchased for \$2,600 in gold coins, the property encompassed 160 acres. Ritter initially bought the property to keep his four sons and daughter safe from the “many wild and rowdy inhabitants of Virginia City.”

The land was lush with springs and even attracted some gold mining claims. Ritter and his son Herman used the ranch for their own food and to sell vegetables in Virginia City.

In the 1960s, the ranch was leased to family friends who took over its operation.

Now, Lorraine Dodge’s daughter Michelle, and her husband Jack Spencer Jr., have assumed the ranching and farming. The Triple S Ranch was named to honor past and present family members—Sullivan, Savery and Spencer—who envisioned the property as a place for future agricultural production.

Jack and Michelle Spencer, along with their sixth-generation boys, Hunter and Chase Archer, carry on the tradition of ranching and farming by immersing themselves into the production of cattle, sheep, bees and pasture land. Hopefully, this small but highly desirable property will prosper for another 140 years.

The Nevada Centennial Award is presented to the Spencers for continuing the legacy of Nevada agriculture established at their property 100 years ago.



The Spencer family with Lorraine Dodge and Centennial Awards sponsors.



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