



Valles Caldera Trust
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2012 Summer Grazing Program – Fact Sheet

Who?

This year's cattle program is being conducted under two separate grazing permits. One issued to New Mexico State University and the other issued to the Pueblo of Jemez.

Points of Contact:

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How Many Cattle?

750 head.

What?

The Valles Caldera Trust has awarded two separate summer grazing permits on the Preserve to NMSU and the Pueblo of Jemez. The university, (through the extension service) will be operating three small, multiple objective educational programs on the Preserve this summer designed to address animal health

and ecological issues important in the regional area. The Pueblo of Jemez will be resting tribal land by grazing on the Preserve.

High Altitude Bull Evaluation Program – NMSU will have about 150 young bulls (about a year old) are grazing on the Preserve this summer and undergoing a variety of tests before being used for breeding. Most important of these tests is the *Pulmonary Arterial Pressure* or *PAP* test. The PAP test provides an indicator of the animal's resistance to Brisket Disease. Brisket Disease, also known as High Mountain Disease or Pulmonary Hypertension, is one of the Rocky Mountain region's most costly diseases. The disease is the result of elevated pulmonary arterial pressures or pulmonary hypertension and generally affects animals less than one year of age residing at an elevation above 5000 feet.

Brisket Disease is caused primarily by an oxygen shortage; oxygen availability reduces considerably at higher elevations causing increased resistance to blood flow in small arteries in the lungs. The heart compensates for higher resistance by stretching and building up a higher pressure. The pressure can continue to build up until fluids leak out of the blood stream and collect in the chest cavity, the brisket, and other places. Eventually, the heart wears out and stops beating.

Susceptibility or resistance to brisket disease is an inheritable trait. The goal this program is to identify bulls with the greatest resistance to brisket and promote that genetic trait, adding value to the animal and reducing the incidence of the disease.

We will also be measuring the weight gain of these bulls. Gaining weight is the heart of the cattle industry. Identifying bulls that are good at gaining weight as well as resistant to brisket adds additional value to these animals.

Replacement Heifer Program – For this program (50 heifers), NMSU will have cattle producers from New Mexico will bring in artificially inseminated heifers (female calf that has not been previously bred) for grazing and breeding. They will be bred with bulls who are likely (through genetics) to produce a calf who will be small at birth but should gain weight nicely in the first year. When the young cow can give birth to a small calf her first delivery it will reduce the likelihood of complications occurring during birthing. This not only protects her during this first birth but can lead to an overall improvement in her reproductive health through her life.

Cow-Calf Pairs Program – For this NMSU program (300 cow/calf pairs), local cattle producers will be bringing in cows and their calves for grazing on the Preserve. Both the mother cows and their calves will benefit from the abundant forage and will gain significant weight while on the Preserve.

Conservation Stewardship Program – Under this program (250 cow/calf pairs), Jemez Pueblo Livestock Association will be resting and restoring tribal lands through summer grazing of their cow-calf herd.

Workshops/Seminars – NMSU is considering hosting workshops for animal health and/or livestock and range management this summer focusing primarily on youth programs.

Where?

The NMSU bull and heifer programs will be in the south end of the Preserve, in the Lake and Field pastures in the Valle Grande (but not adjacent to the East Fork of the Jemez River), at the bull barn in the paddocks, and the cow-calf pairs will be in the Seco/San Luis/Santa Rosa pasture south of the Valle San Antonio and San Antonio Creek. The Pueblo of Jemez will have cattle in the Rincon and Posos pastures on the East side of the Preserve. The total number of animals will be limited to about 650 animal units (cow/calf pairs and mature bulls equal 1.0 A.U.s; yearling heifers and yearling bulls equal .7 A.U.s.).

When?

Cattle will enter on or around the first of June and graze through the end of September.

Why?

The Valles Caldera Preservation Act foresaw continued management of the VCNP has a working ranch in both the purposes of acquisition and the goals set for management. Recently the Trust completed an environmental assessment (EA) regarding the “Multiple Use and Sustained Yield” of consistent with the act. The EA provided a framework of adaptive management to guide the Trust in the continued operation of annual programs for domestic livestock grazing.