

# WIRE-D

## UW program looks at ways to better utilize land for increased income

By JEANIE BRIGHT

Muddy trucks out front, coveralls and overboots near the door, cowboy hats sprinkling the tables, and the smell of homemade chili — it didn't look like a typical meeting of businessmen.

But, that's just what it was when 27 ranchers from Converse County and surrounding areas gathered at the Wyoming State Fairgrounds to participate in the Western Integrated Ranch Education (WIRE) program, administered by the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture.

John Hewlett, UW farm and ranch management specialist, said WIRE is a successful and ongoing program which started in 1991 when the team of eight specialists from UW went to Texas to train at a comparable program.

Upon returning to Wyoming the team "basically rewrote the program to fit Wyoming's climate and range conditions," Hewlett said.

Since then, the team from Wyoming has led several five-day programs for ranchers in the state, as well as trainings for leadership teams in other states.

ence the size of the animal at maturity," Plant, Soil and Insect Science Specialist Alan Gray said.

Nancy Foy, who ranches with her husband Rocky west of Glendo, said it was helpful to have learned to visually appraise forage for quality.

Hewlett said one of the things they like to get producers to consider is how to further utilize their assets in order to produce additional income.

"Many ranchers utilize hunting privileges, but there are other income possibilities that may not be as obvious. We try to get them to take a look at those," he explained.

The program teaches participant to see management as a continuous process of setting goals, making decisions, planning, budgeting, recording, evaluating and revamping or repeating.

Converse County Agriculture Agent Frank Henderson, a member of the WIRE leadership team, felt the recent program in Douglas was a success.

"We got a lot of positive feedback from participants," Henderson reported.

Rancher Tim Pexton said, "The program helped me assess my operation in a systematic way and look for

Due to these trainings, Montana now has a team which has presented seven WIRE programs and "Utah has done a couple of programs," Hewlett reported.

The Wyoming team also did a program in Saskatchewan to help generate an interest in assisting producers in that area, and recently finished training a team of leaders in Idaho Falls.

The program focuses on running an agriculture operation as a money-making business while respecting the individuality of each producer and his unique situations.

Converse County ranchers Frank and Leslie Eathorne said they felt "the program was very worthwhile" with lots of good suggestions and practical activities.

One of the activities was a field trip to Robert Clausen's ranch for hay sample analysis and body condition scoring on cows.

"We also looked at frame sizes on young cows and how that will influ-

ways to improve it. It was very worthwhile."

Pexton also said the leaders really seemed to have a lot of practical knowledge instead of just theories.

The practical knowledge comes, in part, from a ranch near Moorcroft where the system taught in the WIRE program is actually being implemented. This has produced real-life facts and figures on which lessons are based.

The WIRE program is usually held one day a week for five consecutive weeks. The course is offered for noncredit or for 2 hours of UW credit through the Office of Off-Campus Credit Courses.

The Farmers Home Administration has approved WIRE to satisfy all borrower training requirements.

The next program will be held in Laramie at UW. Class size is limited to 30.

For more information contact Henderson at the Converse County Extension office, 358-2417.