

## College or Continuing Education Credits

You can take the Nebraska Ranch Practicum for college credit (4 undergraduate hours or 3 graduate hours) through the Animal Science or Agronomy and Horticulture Departments at UNL. Make arrangements for college credit during the initial Practicum session. The Nebraska Ranch Practicum is also approved for continuing education credits by the following organizations: Society for Range Management, 16 CEU credits for their Certified Professional in Range Management program; and Nebraska Board of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, 32 CE hours. For additional information, contact Jerry D. Volesky at (308) 696-6710 or [jerry.volesky@unl.edu](mailto:jerry.volesky@unl.edu).

## Practicum Application and Costs

To participate in the Nebraska Ranch Practicum, please submit a completed application and registration fee by May 3, 2024. The registration fee for this eight-session Practicum is \$675. No applications will be accepted after May 3. Fees for a spouse are \$350. All educational materials, noon meals and breaks are included. Participants are responsible for travel and lodging expenses.

Enrollment is limited to 35, and applicants will be notified of their status no later than May 20.

Applications are available from the Ranch Practicum website at <http://nebraskaranchpracticum.unl.edu/>, or from Troy Walz (phone: 308.872.6831, e-mail: [troy.walz@unl.edu](mailto:troy.walz@unl.edu)).

*Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.*

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Institute of Agriculture  
and Natural Resources

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln

The Nebraska Ranch Practicum  
WCREC  
402 W State Farm Rd  
North Platte NE 69101-7751

# N EXTENSION

## The Nebraska Ranch Practicum 2024



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- Sharpen your decision-making and risk assessment skills to manage more profitably
- Enhance stewardship of natural resources

# THE NEBRASKA RANCH PRACTICUM

## Cutting Edge Research, Idea Exchange



The Nebraska Ranch Practicum is a three-season, hands-on educational program designed to give participants the skills and education needed in today's complex ranching industry.

Camaraderie and exchange of ideas among participants, instructors and facilitators are among the most valued aspects of this University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension program. High-quality educational material includes software, notebooks with laminated field guides and a collection of University publications.

You'll also benefit from cutting-edge research in range livestock production and marketing at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory, a nationally-recognized research and education facility.

Participants will develop their ability to efficiently use decision support tools to evaluate management and marketing alternatives dealing with grazing strategies and systems, methods of managing market risk, calving and weaning dates, winter livestock nutrition, cull cow management, feed rations and mineral supplements.

## Understanding Natural Resources

You will gain plant identification skills and learn to evaluate and monitor range condition. You will learn to formulate grazing strategies based on natural resource management and livestock production objectives and to determine which grazing system will accomplish your objectives.



By understanding the importance of the season of grazing, end-of-year residual herbage and plant-year precipitation, you will optimize grazing management using grazing response indices, a simple decision-support system designed to enhance water use efficiency and rangeland drought tolerance. Precipitation and grazing records help to evaluate the effects of grazing management on livestock performance and vegetation response.

## Insight Into Livestock Production

While evaluating cow and calf performance over a range of calving and weaning dates, you'll learn to estimate individual and herd-average cow condition scores. You will predict animal performance and determine nutritional requirements to obtain target cow condition scores at future points in the reproductive cycle.



Participants will collect diets from esophageal fistulated cows throughout the Practicum. Participants will use nutrient content of the diet samples in the National Research Council (NRC) beef cattle computer program to determine how range and meadow forage meet animal requirements for maintenance and growth; this information and nutrient requirements of cows, calves and yearlings will be used to develop management and systems strategies for beef production. Understanding and managing cow milk production will be an important component in developing the management and systems strategies.

## A Systems Approach

The Practicum advantage is in the approach, where beef production is viewed as an integrated continuous ongoing system.

This approach gives students the training and understanding to consider the use of resources, management and economics in the context of their personal preferences and goals. This integrated view means students will track range and feed resource



changes through the year including the value and cost of hay quality and quantity of fertilizer and harvest management of sub-irrigated hay meadows from June through September. Drought mitigation becomes an integral part of the management plan as does managing

market risk including its cyclical and seasonal nature. Decision tools provide timely information relative to cost and revenue and are used for individual enrichment and practice assignments. Assignments include feed cost comparisons, cow and calf marketing strategies, production cost estimates, and risk assessment.

## Calendar and Sites

The first and final sessions will be in North Platte, NE. All others will be held at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory (GSL), a 12,800-acre working ranch with research and education facilities, located near Whitman, NE. Attendance at all sessions is important because of the sequential nature of the curriculum. Participants must attend six of the eight sessions to receive a Certificate of Completion.

June 4, 2024 — Tues. — North Platte, NE  
June 5, 2024 — Wed. — GSL, Whitman, NE  
July 10, 2024 — Wed. — GSL  
September 4 & 5, 2024 — Wed. & Thurs. — GSL  
November 7, 2024 — Thurs. — GSL  
January 7, 2025 — Tues. — GSL  
January 8, 2025 — Wed. — North Platte, NE

