

A Newsletter about Livestock, Pastures and Rangeland  
Edited by John M. Harper, Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, Mendocino & Lake Counties

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## John Harper's Livestock & Natural Resources Blog Updates March 24—May 18, 2011

*From time to time **The Grazer's Gazette** will reprint articles from John Harper's on-line blogs and postings to Facebook and Twitter. If you are not already on John's email distribution list and would like to get this information when it is posted, please contact the UC Cooperative Extension at 707-463-4495 or email [cemendocino@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cemendocino@ucdavis.edu) with your current email address. Also, be sure to notify us of email or address changes so that you continue to receive timely information.*

## A Friend Supports UC Davis, UCCE & California's Range Cattle Producers March 24, 2011



Many of you knew Russ Rustici, and I had the pleasure to know him for almost 17 years. He attended every educational meeting on livestock and range management that I ever put on. He believed in lifelong learning and as a UC graduate (Berkeley) was well-trained in critical thinking. He and I often traveled together to the annual beef field day, and it was during those too few trips that we talked about the issues facing California's range cattle industry.

He used to routinely call me at home to ask questions or to get more information. Russ was not computer savvy, so on several occasions he wanted more information on such diverse topics as benthic macro invertebrates (backbone-less animals that in the wild are considered good fish food and their presence serve as an indicator of stream health) and limnology (study of inland waters). I would scan various journal articles or find books for him to read. Often the books I'd recommend were available on Amazon.com so I would buy them for Russ and he'd write me a personal check.

He also confided in me that he wanted to leave this world without the wealth he'd acquired, but it came as a complete

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surprise to me that he would ask my help in writing part of his endowment. My basic response was always to say "it's your money, Russ, so you can specify how it should be spent." I suggested that the best place to start was with endowed chairs on the campuses as those types of gifts free money up for projects. He commenced with that process while still living. Ken Tate, Randy Dahlgren and Barbara Allen-Diaz were the recipients. At the same time, he set up the endowment that would start upon his passing. I had no idea how large that gift was going to be.

In addition to his wonderful gift you'll read about below, Russ provided many years earlier close to a million dollars in seed money for research on rangeland water quality to a team that included Ken Tate, Randy Dahlgren, David Lewis, Barbara Allen-Diaz and me. That research was conducted at both the Hopland Research & Extension Center and the Sierra Foothill Research & Extension Center.

Russ also created one of the very first rangeland water quality plans that resulted from those early courses conducted by that team and with Mel George. I miss Russ and his challenging questions.

With his gift more research will be possible, so perhaps he's given us a chance to answer future questions. Those answers will benefit the cattle ranching industry of California. I'll be sure to keep his Lake & Mendocino rancher friends aware of the projects that Russ' gift will support.

***The following is from UC Davis News & Information.***

## **Late cattle rancher Russell Rustici wills millions to UC Davis for rangeland research**

March 8, 2011

The late Russell Rustici, a Lake County cattle rancher who had a scientist's drive to understand the rangelands that were his livelihood, has left about \$9.5 million to the University of California, Davis, to support research and outreach efforts addressing problems that face California cattle producers and rangelands.

Rustici's gift establishes the Russell L. Rustici Rangeland and Cattle Research Endowment in the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The endowment will support applied research in water quality, rangeland ecology, animal health and other areas of importance to ranchers and residents across the state.

"Russell Rustici's bequest will assure the long-term health of rangelands and cattle ranching in California," said Neal Van Alfen, dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. "His gifts will allow our researchers to solve ecosystem problems facing ranchers and help improve the quality of life for generations to come. Russell clearly understood how private donors can support our land-grant mission of solving society's problems."

Rustici, who died in October 2008, fulfilled a lifelong dream to become a cattle rancher in Lake County after working many years in produce distribution. As he became immersed in ranching, he sought to better understand the science behind rangeland and cattle management.

His bequest follows years of philanthropy in support of research at UC Davis. In 2008, he gave \$1.2 million to establish two endowed positions at the university: the Russell L. Rustici Endowed Chair in Rangeland Watershed Science and the Russell L. Rustici Endowed Specialist in Cooperative Extension in Rangeland Watershed Science.

The endowed chair position, held by Randy Dahlgren, professor and chair of the UC Davis Department of Land, Air and Water Resources, is devoted to research that examines water quality, nutrient cycling and hydrology on rangeland watershed. The endowed extension position, held by Cooperative Extension rangeland management specialist Kenneth Tate, is focused on helping livestock producers manage rangelands in ways that simultaneously improve both water quality and ranch profitability.

Rustici's total gifts to UC Davis are expected to exceed \$10.8 million once his estate has been fully distributed. He is among the top 10 donors to The Campaign for UC Davis, which seeks to raise \$1 billion by 2014 for expanding the university's capacity to meet the world's challenges and educate future leaders.

# Organic Agriculture Growing

April 7, 2011

The following information offers quite a bit of economic hope for Mendocino & Lake Counties organic producers and really supports the idea of having a local meat harvest and processing plant that is certified organic.

WASHINGTON, April 6, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Organic farming is an important part of the U.S. agricultural landscape, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack today told participants at the Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) 2011 Policy Conference and Hill Visit Days here in D.C.

"Organic producers are very entrepreneurial in nature. They're in a position to create value-added products that provide a wealth of opportunities in rural America," Secretary Vilsack said.

His comments were made before the more than 150 persons taking part in the policy conference. Organized by OTA and supported by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) under the theme "Advance Organic Together," the conference is focusing on the value of organic agriculture in providing jobs, supporting rural livelihoods, and advancing an entrepreneurial spirit.

OTA released data onsite from OTA's 2011 *Organic Industry Survey* that reveal that the industry has grown from \$3.6 billion in 1997 to \$29 billion in 2010. Despite the nation's worst economic downturn in 80 years, the organic industry has come out of the recession hiring employees, adding farms, and increasing revenue. For further information about the survey, visit [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com).

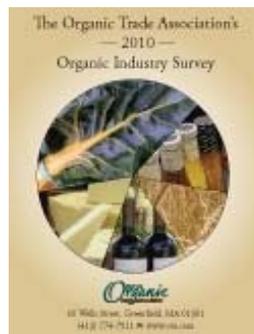
Among the findings from OTA's latest industry survey:

- The organic sector grew by 8 percent in 2010, dramatically outpacing the food industry as a whole which grew at less than 1 percent in 2010.
- The organic industry supports 14,540 organic farms and ranches across the country. A total of 4.1 million acres of land are currently in organic

management, and there are organic farms in all 50 states.

- Since 78 percent of organic farms report planning to maintain or increase organic production levels over the next five years, the organic sector will continue to play a contributing role in revitalizing America's rural economy through diversity in agriculture.
- Forty percent of organic operations added jobs in 2010. In addition, 96 percent of organic operations are planning to maintain or increase employment levels in 2011, and 46 percent of them are planning to increase employment levels three times the rate of businesses as whole.

"The USDA is creating financial assistance for organic because we recognize organic as a part of the strategy to rebuild rural America," said Secretary Vilsack. "A lot of folks in rural America need help. One very good strategy is organic."



Organic agriculture and the organic industry are fueling America's growth. U.S. Census data shows that on average, U.S. organic farms have higher sales, higher production expenses, and higher operating profit than the average for all U.S. farms, thus creating real opportunities for rural economic livelihoods. In fact, organic farms were shown to have an average operating profit nearly double that for all farms (\$45,697 for organic versus \$25,448 for all farms).

*The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 6,500 organic businesses across 49 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect the growth of organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public and the economy.*

**SOURCE: Organic Trade Association**

# Equine Herpes Virus Myeloencephalopathy

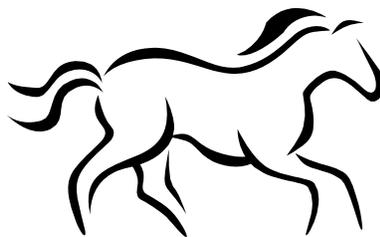
May 18, 2011

Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM), caused by Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1), has been confirmed in 10 horses in California, in Kern, Placer, Stanislaus, Amador and Napa counties. No cases have been reported in Mendocino or Lake Counties yet, but horse owners need to be aware, especially if you're participating in horse shows. One horse in Kern County was euthanized after showing severe neurologic signs often associated with the disease. All of the infected horses recently attended the National Cutting Horse Association's Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah on April 30 - May 8, 2011, where they were most likely exposed to the virus. All California horses that have been in contact with an infected horse and show signs of disease or test positive for EHM will be placed under a CDFA quarantine in order to limit spread. This disease outbreak is evolving, and CDFA will continue to investigate cases and provide updated information.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has contacted all 54 exhibitors from California who participated in the Ogden, Utah event and asked them to isolate and monitor their horses for clinical signs of EHV-1. A rectal temperature in excess of 102F commonly precedes other clinical signs. Therefore, horse owners with potentially exposed horses are urged to take temperatures on each individual horse

twice a day. If a temperature above 102F is detected, the horse's private veterinarian should be contacted immediately for evaluation and laboratory testing.

Equine Herpes virus is a contagious disease and may spread quickly among horse populations. EHV-1 is not transmissible to humans. Horse-to-horse contact, aerosol transmission, and contaminated hands, equipment, tack and feed all play a role in disease spread. Horses infected with the neurologic strain of EHV-1, may show any of the following clinical signs: nasal discharge, lack of coordination, hind-end weakness, lethargy, urine dribbling and diminished tail tone. There is no specific treatment for EHM. Treatment may include intravenous fluids, anti-inflammatory drugs and other appropriate supportive



treatment. Immediate separation and isolation of identified suspect cases and implementation of appropriate biosecurity measures are key elements for disease control. Currently, there is no equine vaccine that has a label claim for protection against the neurologic strain of this virus.

More information is available from the CDFA and on our website under "Current News" at: <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>. Also at <http://nahms.aphis.usda.gov>.

# EPA Releases Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Sinks

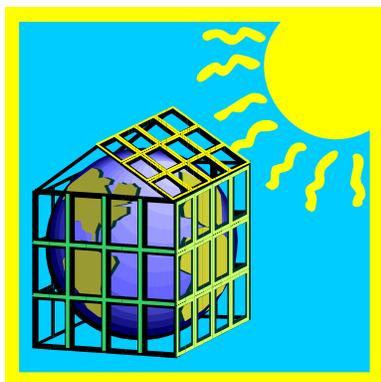
April 18, 2011

On April 15, 2011 the EPA released its inventory of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and sinks for the period of 1990 - 2009. Within the inventory you'll find statistics for both the problems and the benefits that livestock agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas and its effect on climate change. Up front it's important to recognize that livestock agriculture is a relatively small contributor especially with regard to CO<sub>2</sub>. This is illustrated in the following from the executive summary. Clearly we as consumers have a stronger role in reducing greenhouse gases.

*"As the largest source of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuel combustion has accounted for approximately 78 percent of GWP-weighted emissions since 1990, growing slowly from 77 percent of total GWP weighted emissions in 1990 to 79 percent in 2009.*

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Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuel combustion increased at an average annual rate of 0.4 percent from 1990 to 2009. The fundamental factors influencing this trend include (1) a generally growing domestic economy



over the last 20 years, and (2) overall growth in emissions from electricity generation and transportation activities. Between 1990 and 2009, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion increased from 4,738.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

to 5,209.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.—a 9.9 percent total increase over the twenty-year period.

From 2008 to 2009, these emissions decreased by 356.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (6.4 percent), the largest decrease in any year over the twenty-year period. Historically, changes in emissions from fossil fuel combustion have been the dominant factor affecting U.S. emission trends. Changes in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion are influenced by many long-term and short-term factors, including population and economic growth, energy price fluctuations, technological

changes, and seasonal temperatures.

In the short term, the overall consumption of fossil fuels in the United States fluctuates primarily in response to changes in general economic conditions, energy prices, weather, and the availability of nonfossil alternatives. For example, in a year with increased consumption of goods and services, low fuel prices, severe summer and winter weather conditions, nuclear plant closures, and lower precipitation feeding hydroelectric dams, there would likely be proportionally greater fossil fuel consumption than a year with poor economic performance, high fuel prices, mild temperatures, and increased output from nuclear and hydroelectric plants.

In the long term, energy consumption patterns respond to changes that affect the scale of consumption (e.g., population, number of cars, and size of houses), the efficiency with which energy is used in equipment (e.g., cars, power plants, steel mills, and light bulbs) and behavioral choices (e.g., walking, bicycling, or telecommuting to work instead of driving)."

A great YouTube video map on US CO<sub>2</sub> is also worth a watch. See it at <http://youtu.be/ejpi8UUMTaI>. It was uploaded by Purdue University.

## Exciting News for Sheep Producers!

April 29, 2011

The following is very good news for Mendocino & Lake County sheep producers or for those who want to get into the sheep business! It comes via ASI's newsletter.

"The U.S. sheep industry is realizing an encouraging time; lamb prices are at an all-time high and this spring, the wool market is setting historical records as are wool pelt prices along with a strong cull ewe market. However, from the farm gate through to the lamb and wool processing level, there is a shared concern about meeting the demand for lamb and wool production in the United States.

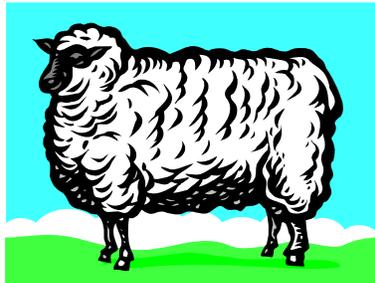
Lamb processors, from the commercial market channel to the rapidly growing nontraditional markets, are clamoring for a greater supply of lamb. In 2011, two major announcements to carry American lamb in our nation's grocery stores occurred. Kroger, one of the nation's largest grocery store chains, launched an American lamb branded campaign and Super Wal-Mart made a commitment to



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exclusively carry American lamb in its stores. Also, the nontraditional market channels, which include on-farm sales, farmers markets and small processors serving ethnic communities, have grown exponentially over the years. In fact, one-third of the U.S. lamb crop has moved outside the traditional industry infrastructure to feed this nontraditional lamb market. As an industry, we must supply the traditional market channel to keep American lamb in the nation's largest grocery store chains and restaurants all while meeting the emerging demand for American lamb in the nontraditional markets.

This robust demand for product is also being experienced in the wool market. The U.S. military, the largest domestic consumer of U.S. wool, is excited for the opportunity to clothe our troops in high-performance, washable wool products. The equipment that makes washable wool top has been installed in the United States and is being used for a variety of domestically produced wool products that are already reaching the military and commercial markets.



A strategy to strengthen the lamb and wool industry's infrastructure by increasing the number of sheep in production is vital for the long-term sustainability of the industry. This is why the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) is calling on sheep producers, both large and small, from east to west, to help accomplish the goal of growing our flock. ASI has come up with a formula to address these shortages within just a few years; it's called **Let's Grow with twoPLUS**. With three goals in mind, the primary objective of this campaign is to encourage current producers to expand their sheep numbers by 2014. This initiative will result in 315,000 more lambs and 2 million more pounds of wool for the industry to market.

The three goals are 1) encourage producers to increase the size of their operation by two ewes per operation or by two ewes per 100 by 2014; 2) encourage sheep producers to increase the average birthrate per ewe to two lambs per year; and 3) encourage producers to increase the harvested lamb

crop by 2 percent - from 108 percent to 110 percent.

ASI has developed a website, [www.growourflock.org](http://www.growourflock.org), and materials to help spread the word of the initiative. The site includes a video explaining the twoPLUS program, Let's Grow partners who are participating in the campaign, resources for producers, an open forum for producers to communicate with one another and a section for media promotion. " All three goals are easy to achieve for Mendocino & Lake County producers.

**CA Rangeland Survey—  
Important Reminder  
May 6, 2011**

Dr. Ken Tate at the University of California Davis recently sent you a survey about your perspective on ranching in California. As of April 30, 2011 our team has received over 250 very thoughtful responses. We are asking for your help generating 350 more.

While we are gaining information that will make range science more useful to ranchers, we feel we are still missing many perspectives.

**Our goal is to receive 600 completed surveys by June 30, 2011.**

If you have not already, please take half an hour of your time to complete the survey and return it to Dr. Tate and his research team. Please encourage other ranchers to participate.

If you have decided not to complete the survey, we invite you to mail back a blank survey and a short explanation. This will help us understand who is not represented in the survey response pool. Full directions and a list of options for refusing the survey are below.

Thanks for your time!

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**Q: What do I do if I am not eligible for the survey or I don't want to take it?**

**A:** If you believe you are ineligible or are unwilling to complete the survey, please return the blank survey and a note indicating the reason you have elected not to complete it. Alternatively, you may call or email Tracy Schohr (916- 444-0845 or [tschohr@calcattlemen.org](mailto:tschohr@calcattlemen.org)). If you call, please include your name and reason for refusal so that we may remove you from future mailings. This will in no way affect your relationship with the CCA or the University of California Davis.

Possible reasons you may deem yourself ineligible include:

- You are under 18 years old
- You do not own a ranch or manage rangeland
- Someone else working for your operation has already completed the survey
- You received two survey packets and already mailed one in

**Q: How will my survey information be stored?**

**A:** This survey is for owners or renters of rangelands used for producing livestock. Individual survey responses are voluntary and completely confidential. Data analysis and reporting will be limited to aggregation across all respondents. The information you provide will not be identified by name, property, or in any other way. The research team analyzing the surveys will not see or handle any of your personal information. **Individual responses will NOT be shared with CCA or other participating organizations or parties.** To guarantee your confidentiality, the address list has been maintained by CCA while all responses are returned to the University of California, Davis. Summaries of results will be shared in future CCA publications and will be available upon request.

**Q: Who is sponsoring this survey?**

**A:** The survey research is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The project is a collaborative effort between the University of

California, Davis and partners that include California Cattlemen's Association, the California Farm Bureau Federation, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition and others.

**Q: What questions are on the survey?**

**A:** In addition to some optional demographic information, the sections of this survey cover two major topics. The first asks about management practices and strategies for meeting diverse goals over diverse lands. This section asks about conservation programs and responses to drought. The second section asks about attitudes and values. This incorporates questions that appear in many other ranching surveys. It will allow scientists and CCA to better understand the complexities of ranching in California. We estimate it will take you 30 minutes to complete. However the detail ranchers have contributed through comments indicate many people are spending much longer.

**Q: I lost my survey; can I get a new copy?**

**A:** Of course! A second survey will be mailed to all non-respondents in the next few weeks. You may also contact Tracy at the CCA.

**Q: What are other ranchers saying about the survey?**

**A:** Very good things! A few people have told us they think it is too long. A handful has noticed two typos that we missed on the last round of editing. One person told that the photo the graphic designers selected for the cover is terrible (sorry!). Several dozens of people have taken the time to tell us it is the best survey they have taken. While we didn't think of everything, we consulted ranchers and other range professionals at every step. Members of the research team travelled all over the state interviewing ranchers trying to create the most inclusive and relevant survey possible.



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Also check out John's Blog on our office  
website: <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>

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