



NDGLC Update from the Chairman

Jerry Doan, Chairman NDGLC

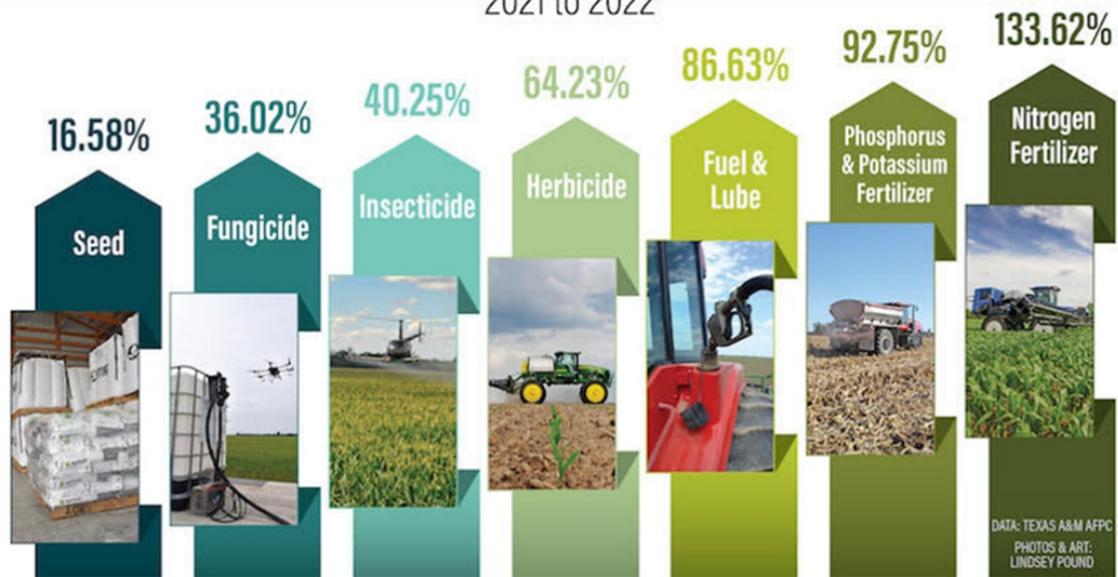
Wow, how the time flies by! A long winter and cool spring, but some much-needed moisture across North Dakota!

The country is sure pretty when Mother Nature provides the rain. The grasslands are resilient and even though they were used hard last year, they appear to be recovering well, especially if you are utilizing planned rotational grazing and regenerative practices. The cool, wet spring has really brought Kentucky bluegrass on strong. I see it in places I didn't notice it much before. It is here and is not native, but we must learn to manage it to broaden the diversity of native grasses while realizing Kentucky Blue is part of our grassland mix. Leafy Spurge also is wide awake after the severe drought and popping up and flourishing across many landscapes. Control is an ongoing problem and I would love to hear from producers out there what is helping them. I know some are having success with sheep or goats and we would like to share your stories with other producers.

This year is becoming challenging for producers, particularly beginning producers, as we struggle with input costs inflating out of control. It seems everything I go to buy is either two to four times what it was last year or in short supply and I can't get it at all. I tried to buy a 4x8 sheet of steel and the price was 400% above last year! The table below illustrates the increase in some input costs.

FARM INPUT COSTS

Average Percent Change Per Acre
2021 to 2022



Regenerative ag practices utilizing holistic management will definitely help you as you navigate these severe cost increases. It won't make everything perfect, but I know from experience increasing profitability by utilizing Mother Nature to our benefit while allowing the livestock to harvest forages year-round. I encourage you to reach out to Trish Feiring or any of our mentors listed on the website to answer your questions. We will do our best to share our experiences on what we do on our operations.

There is an opportunity to attend a holistic school conducted by Josh and Tara Dukart as part of the Starion Legacy Ag School Series. This school titled "*Regenerate; a land, relationships, and wealth school and retreat*" July 19-21, 2022, at Black Leg Ranch near McKenzie. This will be a great chance for you to learn about how to think and plan for profitability and a better life in agriculture. I know it will change the way you think and will bring the fun back into your operation. If you have any questions, please reach out to me, Josh or Don Morgan, CEO of Starion Bank. Starion is committed to making a difference in regenerative ag in North Dakota and helping producers stay viable. We are pleased they are offering this tremendous opportunity to producers!

Thanks so much to Chad and Amanda Njos of Cow Chip Ranch for all the work on the great Birds, Bovine and Biology on the Prairie event. Also, thanks so much to Audubon Dakota for all its work and all the sponsors and people that helped. It was a great event and we are glad to incorporate the importance of the grasslands with the wildlife resource we all love.

Look in this newsletter for the upcoming summer tour on June 2 at the Arrow Down Six Ranch near Denbigh. Also, the Leopold Tour will be held on Brad Sand's Ranch near Ellendale on August 9. Both will provide a great opportunity to network and have a great discussion about grassland and how to regenerate it.

The North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition continues to be an advocate for the grasslands

and their importance to the state's economy and their importance to our ecosystem. It has been involved with many different groups on ideas and ways to enhance and regenerate our grasslands. The grasslands are facing tremendous pressure as we see many pastures broken up for farming. This year seems to have brought renewed interest in grassland conversion to cropland because of increased grain commodity prices. We understand the economics for producers, but once the native prairies are gone, they are gone! We hope to be a leader in the discussion on "How do we move forward?" to ensure the next generation has the benefits of a diverse grassland and a diverse wildlife population along with a strong livestock industry providing a nutrient dense protein product for a healthy world.

Please enjoy the beauty of a greener countryside and be safe as you work with livestock and machinery. Take time to enjoy that beauty and relax and have fun in this great North Dakota land.

Field Update

Trish Feiring, NDGLC Field Representative

We started the year out thinking we were heading into drought for the second or third year in a row, only to have two livestock-killing blizzards and several high-rainfall events. What a difference a year makes! Mother Nature has blessed us with adequate moisture and the cattle are flourishing on all of the green grass. This is the type of year that helps us plan for the extremes, such as drought and flooding. It allows us time to focus on getting our water, mineral and carbon cycles functioning at a higher level to help minimize the extremes.

Observe, observe and observe some more. Take the time to get off your horse or ATV or get out of your pickup and get your boots on the ground. What do you see? What is different from last year? What would you like to see different in the future? Does the landscape match your goals? If not, adjust and keep working toward it.

Here are a few management tips for the summer to help you improve your water, mineral and carbon cycles:

1. Cover the soil. Put a soil thermometer in your pocket to take with you to the pasture. Seventy degrees is the optimal temperature for grass to grow. At 70 degrees, 100% of the moisture you receive is used for plant growth. At 90 degrees, plant growth slows. At 100 degrees, only 15% of moisture is used for plant growth and 85 percent is lost to evaporation and transpiration. At 140 degrees, soil bacteria dies.
2. Minimize soil disturbance.
3. Increase diversity. Work towards a diverse landscape of cool season grasses, warm season grasses, forbs, shrubs and legumes. Diversity is beneficial to livestock, but it's also beneficial to pollinators, grassland nesting birds and other wildlife.
4. Maintain continuous living plant and plant roots. Additional ground cover helps to shield the soil surface from the extremes. This additional cover allows plants to stay green and growing for longer into the season. It keeps the ground warmer into the late fall and winter and warms it up earlier in the spring.
5. Integrate livestock. Livestock are key to grazing systems. Whether it be cattle,

sheep, goats or horses, each species can be managed in a grazing system. The key is to changing things up from one year to the next. Don't graze the same pasture at the same time every year. Allow adequate time for plant recovery before the next grazing window.

6. Know your context. The five principles above apply no matter where you live, but knowing your context is probably the most important. What is your willingness to change? What are your goals? What are your unfair advantages with the resources you have on your ranch? What is your desired quality of life? What are your family dynamics and are they on board with you? What is your forage base? What types of geographical challenges might you face when making changes to your ranch?

Everyone accepts and makes changes at different rates. Some quicker and some slower than others. The speed at which you implement new infrastructure and management doesn't make any difference. What matters is that you have a goal, you're making change and you're moving forward. Start with one cross fence or one water line.

If you need help or assistance in getting started, please reach out to me or one of the 30-plus mentors with the North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition. We would love to help you get started. We also have some amazing conservation partners that are ready, willing and able to assist with implementing conservation practices on your land to get your grazing plan started. Reach out to me at 701-872-5888.

Coalition Hosts Birds, Bovine and Biology

More than 65 people took part in the NDGLC bird tour held at the Cow Chip Ranch near Bowman. Adults and children participated in bird walks and presentations on prairie plants, pollinators, birds and cows, prairie health and several other activities, including a coloring contest. The purpose of the tour was to demonstrate the connection between grazing management and improved habitat for wildlife, specifically prairie birds. In addition, featured speaker, NDGLC mentor Kalie Rider helped make the connection between healthy prairies and healthy humans.

Coalition Receives Grants

The NDGLC submitted successful applications for two funding sources:

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

- Grant funds will be used to add capacity and expand education and outreach programs and improve management on 50,000 acres of grasslands.

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Conservation Collaboration Grants or Agreements

- Grant funds will be used to enhance educational programs, partner in the delivery of the Leopold Conservation Award and serve as a source of information for holistic grassland management.
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Partner News

NDDEQ - Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

Now is the time to keep a watchful eye on your herd's water sources for cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). Under certain environmental conditions, blue-green algae can multiply quickly and form a bloom. Some species of cyanobacteria produce cyanotoxins that are released when the cells die and rupture. The toxins can cause harm to people, livestock, pets, wildlife and aquatic life. Almost every year in North Dakota, a few cases of pet and livestock deaths occur due to drinking water with HABs. [Click here for more.](#)

Audubon Dakota - Conservation Ranching Initiatives

Since 2009, the Conservation Ranching Initiative in the Dakotas has:

- Enrolled 26 ranches totaling over 172,000 acres in South Dakota, North Dakota and eastern Montana
- Provided brand support to two branded programs that source cattle from ACR-certified ranches in the Dakotas, that in turn supply beef to over 20 outlets in the region
- Conducted more than 80 biological surveys on 23 ranches
- Provided enrolled landowners with cost-share funding to implement bird-friendly management through the Prairie Management Toolbox programs throughout North Dakota and South Dakota

Beef from Audubon-certified lands garners a premium price and provides a unique opportunity for ranchers to showcase their excellent management practices. This helps them care for their families and provides exceptional habitat for wildlife. By first listening to the ranching community, trusting in their knowledge of sustainable land management, and learning from their resiliency in a volatile marketplace, we are ensuring that our strategies and solutions will benefit both people and nature. Buying beef from Audubon-certified lands supports rural economies and the ranching way of life.

"Audubon is taking conservation to the next level with an innovative marketing plan that connects conservation-minded consumers with beef produced by conservation-minded ranchers. Consumers can quickly and conveniently find beef from Audubon-certified bird-friendly ranches like mine and other participating ranches online. I am proud of our Audubon certification, appreciate their guidance and am excited to learn more as they guide us in our management plan." — Jeannie Franceus, owner-operator of Leone Valley Ranch, an Audubon-certified ranch in South Dakota

To find out where you can purchase Audubon Certified Ranch beef visit:

www.audubon.org/where-buy-products-raised-audubon-certified-lands

If you would like to learn more about the program or are interested in enrolling, please contact Audubon Dakota Range Ecologist Charlene Kohler at

charlene.kohler@audubon.org

More than 200 organizations across eight sectors representing Mexico, Canada, the U.S., and Indigenous Nations, came together for two days in May for a multi-national summit to commit to conserve North America's Central Grasslands. Hosted by the Grasslands Roadmap Planning Committee, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies was one of the convening summit partners.

The Central Grasslands span hundreds of millions of acres across the continent's interior and are one of North America's largest and most vital ecosystems. These grasslands support crucial environmental functions like water supply, soil health and biodiversity and are essential for agriculture, food security and supporting rural communities and economies. And, as these grasslands disappear, many benefits they provide are lost.

For example, healthy grasslands filter sediment, nutrients and bacteria that otherwise end up in waterways, threatening fish and drinking water. Grasslands improve air quality and help mitigate the effects of climate change by sequestering carbon and increasing resilience against drought, fire and wind erosion.

So, what can be done to reverse the trends? That was the main driver behind the Central Grasslands Roadmap and recent summit meeting. The Central Grasslands Roadmap was launched in 2020 to guide and inform innovative and connected conservation for the benefit of grassland birds, pollinators and mammals, as well as to ensure viable human communities across the landscape of one of North America's most biogeographically unique areas.

The Roadmap community includes a cross-section of leaders and experts who live and work in the Central Grasslands — including producers on working land, Indigenous/First Nations, federal, state and provincial agencies, foundations, industry, and nongovernmental organizations including land trusts, tribal representatives and academia.

Upcoming Events

- **NDGLC Summer Tour:** June 29, Arrow Down Six Ranch, Rob Kramer, Denbigh.
- **Starion Legacy Agriculture Program:** July 19-21, Black Leg Ranch, McKenzie
- **ND Leopold Conservation Award Tour:** Aug. 8-9, Brad Sand Ranch, Ellendale
- **Grazing the Grasslands:** Sept. 21, Black Leg Ranch, McKenzie (See more details below)

[Grazing the Grasslands: Wildlife and Working Lands Tour](#)

The first event in this series will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 21 (3:30-8 p.m.) at [Black Leg Ranch](#) near McKenzie. In partnership with the Doan Family and staff from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, Audubon Dakota will host a ranch tour that will begin with an introduction to the Federal Duck Stamp Contest and PPJV, followed by a series of presentations on the ranch through a field tour. Topics will include the history of Black Leg Ranch, grazing management, potential easement/potential USFWS programming, and Audubon Conservation Ranching (ACR) Initiative and management tied to priority bird species, which will be led by Audubon Dakota staff.

Dinner will follow the tour at Black Leg Ranch, where ACR certified beef will be served and ACR national representatives will lead a discussion on conservation ranching.

Event is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. Registration is required and opens up on July 1, 2022.



Mentor Network

NDGLC has established a grassroots-based network of North Dakota grazing land managers who have agreed to provide guidance and counsel to interested ranchers and agency personnel on grassland management.

[Learn more](#) about NDGLC mentors.

Become a Member Today!

The North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition is a member-supported nonprofit that relies on your generous donations and memberships to provide peer-to-peer mentoring, conferences and outreach to North Dakota landowners. If you are not yet a member, [consider joining](#). As a NDGLC member, you will receive reduced registration rates for the conference, events and field trips throughout the year. The coalition also produces quarterly newsletters to provide members with ideas, practices and information within the industry.

Join Now

Get Involved

Are you looking for ways to get more involved with NDGLC? Here are a few simple ways to help us out:

Like us on Facebook

- Liking us on [Facebook](#) and engaging with our posts helps us share our message with a new audience.

Share your stories with us

- We want to hear from you. Please share your stories with [us](#). Your experience is a great resource.

Invite people in your network to our events

- NDGLC hosts many [events](#) open to the public. Bring a friend the next time you come.



NDGLC newsletters are sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. All programs and services of NDGLC are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

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