



Matching Rare Breeds with Rangeland Needs through Place-Based Direct Marketing

**Gary Nabhan, Catherine Freeman,
and Ashley Rood**

NAU Center for Sustainable Environments, Canyon Country
Fresh and Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT)

www.environment.nau.edu

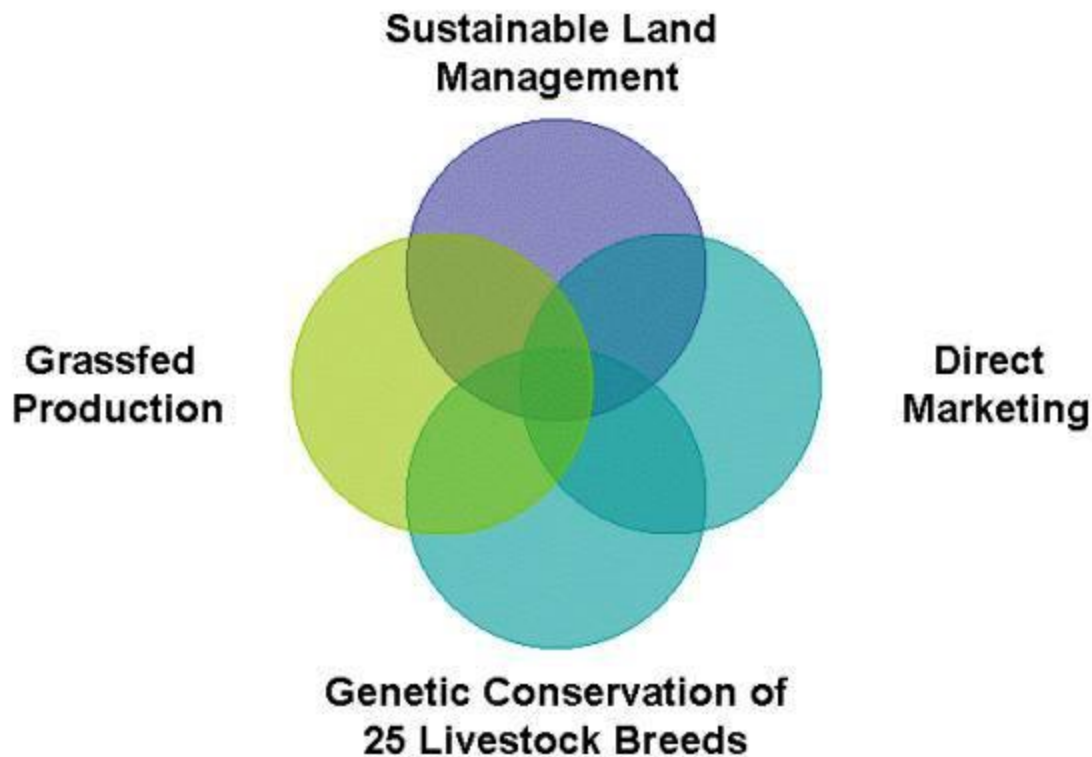




Economic Viability Needed to Sustain Ecological and Cultural Values

- ❖ **Research and on-ground experimentation toward sustainable ranching must equate to long-term economic viability through price compensation.**
- ❖ **Good will and short-term grants alone cannot ensure the continuation of sustainable ranching**

Integrating Four Strategies for Economic Viability of Ranches





Meeting Land Needs

...by Developing a Market to

Pay for Your Conservation Efforts

- ❖ **Selecting livestock breeds and grazing management schemes that address the long-term needs of your land – this requires constant observation, investment and multi-year trials**
- ❖ **Adapting a ranch business to target the specific needs of a consumer group that shares your values enough to pay higher prices to support your conservation efforts**



Meeting Arid Land's Needs

- ❖ Pruning of shrubby “increasers”
- ❖ Removal of invasive plants
- ❖ Maintenance of cover on dry slopes
- ❖ Thinning of post-flood saplings
- ❖ Fire risk reduction

Matching Livestock Breeds with Conservation Mandates



Helping to increase the populations of rare livestock breeds may add conservation value to:

- ❖ Land trusts that can include genetic conservation of livestock diversity as an objective
- ❖ Conservation-oriented ranches that must run some livestock on their BLM, USDA/FS or state land leases
- ❖ Conservation easements that must document their tangible conservation accomplishments or lose their tax write-offs
- ❖ Conservation Security Program (CSP) grazing management plans

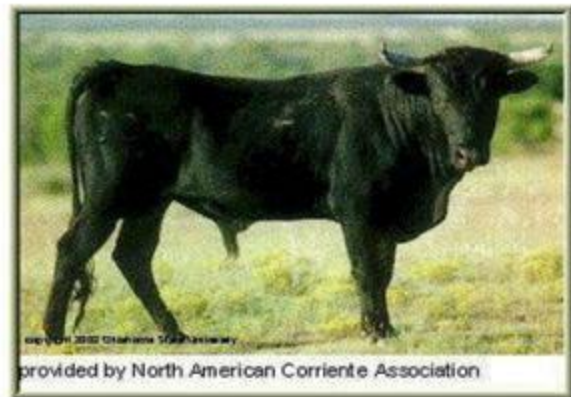
Focus on Minor Breeds Adapted to the Southwest

*Now on Slow Food's
Ark of Taste and RAFT Red-List*



- ❖ **(Criollo) Corriente Cattle** registered by North American Corriente Association (NACA)

- ❖ **Navajo Churro Sheep** registered by Navajo-Churro Sheep Association (NCSA)





Why Corriente/ Churro Breeds?

- ❖ Both breeds have spent more than 300 years adapting to arid Southwestern conditions
- ❖ Both were “pre-adapted” to arid and semi-arid conditions
- ❖ Both adapt to scrubby rangeland production better than to irrigated pasture or feedlot
- ❖ Both have seen revival of interest in their novel products and in heritage breeds suited to “grass-fed” production

Unique Characteristics: **Criollo Corriente and Chinampo Cattle**

- ❖ Browser of diverse shrubs and herbs
- ❖ Drought – and salt – tolerant
- ❖ Huge demand from amateur ropers and rodeos
- ❖ Omega-3 rich meat with density, texture and flavor unlike grain-fed Angus



provided by Dr. Jose Luis Espinoza V.

Unique Characteristics: Navajo-Churro Sheep



- ❖ Double fleece with long staple carpet wool
- ❖ Resistant to internal parasites and foot rot
- ❖ Needs little assistance during lambing
- ❖ Omega-3 rich meat with flavor reflecting forage (e.g. sage)





Exceptional Conservation Successes with Rare Breeds in the Southwest

- ❖ Jim Bill Anderson – Canadian, Texas:
Corrientes used in integrated range management to promote populations of Lesser Prairie Chickens

- ❖ Jay Begay – Prescott National Forest, Arizona:
Churro sheep and goats used to reduce fire risk in wild lands/ urban interface



Demand Currently Outstrips Supply

- ❖ **Corrientes – “Nowhere near demand saturation point/growth in roping industry beyond belief.”**
-Mel Gnatkowski, North American Corriente Association

- ❖ **Churros – *Meat in demand in gourmet restaurants plus...***
“Wool now up to two dollars a pound on cleaned fleeces/up to ninety-six dollars a pound for hand-spun, with traditional Navajo dyes.”
-Carol Haberstadt, Black Mesa Weavers for Land and Life



Defining and Promoting Your Goals... **Yampa Valley Beef**

“To develop an expanded market for locally produced brand name beef as a tool for improving the economic viability of ranching in the Yampa Valley while preserving agricultural lands and the natural communities they support.”



Source: 2001. Yampa Valley Beef, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.





Defining and Promoting Your Goals... Oregon Country Beef

“To provide a simple, stable and profitable means for its members to produce for an Oregon Country Beef consumer market. Oregon Country Beef as an organization will excel at developing markets which best utilize practical ranch cattle and at translating cost and carcass data into information which assists members in making sound management decisions. By striving to market our livestock in a sustainable manner, the members of OCB will take care of and respect the customers, communities and lands which sustain us.”

Source: Oregon Country Beef, 2003.
Online at <http://www.oregoncountrybeef.com>





Defining Your Goals...

Proposed Mission Statement Elements for a Southwest Ranch

- ❖ To manage our livestock and land in a sustainable manner, and to care and respect our customers, communities and landscapes which sustain us.
- ❖ To utilize heritage breeds adapted to the arid-Southwest.
- ❖ To provide high-quality, natural, grass-fed meat to local and regional niche markets.
- ❖ To manage livestock for genetic conservation.
- ❖ To provide management applications that conserve soil, water, plant and wildlife diversity as well as historic and cultural values of our region.
- ❖ To collaborate with other ranchers and land managers in our region to keep the integrity of our landscape intact.
- ❖ To enable these efforts by providing value-added products and services for competitive prices that ensure the economic viability of our operations.

Labeling Guidelines for Niche Marketing



❖ Natural:

- A product containing no artificial ingredients or added color and only minimally processed. (A process which does not fundamentally alter the raw product.)
- The label must explain the use of the term natural (i.e. no added colorings or artificial ingredients; minimally processed)

❖ Heritage Breed:

- Stock should be registered in a breed registry recognized by American Livestock Breeds Conservancy & USDA

Grassfed Labeling Claims



❖ Organic:

- According to U.S. Organic Standards Act, including use of organically-grown feed

❖ Grassfed:

- Currently there is *not a federally standardized definition* of grass-fed.
- Proposed Rule – expected to be made final by the government in 2005:
 - Cattle that throughout their lives received 80% of more of their primary energy source from grass, range, pasture or forage.



Other Labeling Claims

❖ Free-range or Pasture-raised:

- Proposed Rule – expected to be made final by the government this spring:
 - Animals that have had continuous and unconfined access to pasture throughout their lives and have never been confined to a feedlot, where movement is limited.

❖ “No Hormones” (pork or poultry):

- Hormones are not allowed in the raising hogs or poultry on any commercial farm in the US.
- The claim *“no hormones added”* cannot be used on the labels of pork or poultry unless it is followed by a statement that says *“Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones...”*

Other Branding or Labeling Options



❖ Predator-Friendly

- Pioneered by Ervin's Natural Beef with Defenders of Wildlife

❖ Link to Slow Food *Ark of Taste*

❖ Link to regional or state branding campaign

- Canyon Country Fresh, Salmon Safe, Arizona Grown, Taste of New Mexico

❖ Fresh and Local

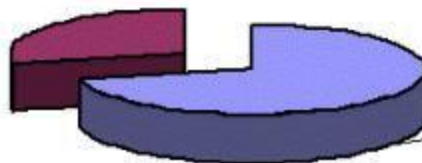
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Over 1 Million Arizonans *Would Pay More* for Local Range-Fed Beef

Arizonans Willing to *Pay More* for Beef
...if it is from Range-Fed, Arizona Packaged
and Traceable Sources

No (28%)
406,283



Yes (72%)
1,044,728

Marketing Opportunities Are Expanding, But Require Reorientation



- ❖ Rapidly growing interest in natural, grass-fed and heritage breed meats from farmers markets, restaurants and eco-tourists. *Growth rate of diffuse natural foods industry higher than Walmart!*
- ❖ New ways to tell the stories of your land, breed and family: Expos, Chef's Colaborative, Slow Food Convivia, internet, can help you market the values you have embedded in your meat in ways that reach both chefs and consumers
- ❖ Many government and nonprofit programs can assist in making the transition (e.g. Canyon Country Fresh, RAFT, ALBC, Western SARE, Southwest Direct Marketing Network)

Marketing Opportunities Are Expanding, But Require Reorientation



- ❖ Few small- & medium- scale processing plants are available in Southwest. Mobile units cost \$75-120K to set up plus training and inspectors
- ❖ Niche markets take time to develop within reach, sustain, and expand consumer interest
- ❖ “Natural product” consumers are somewhat fickle, forever redefining key values in their markets
- ❖ Some ranchers prefer to remain in comfort zone of taking stock off to feedlots as a bet-hedging strategy and are not prone to self-promotion



For more information, contact:

Gary Paul Nabhan
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