

Ranching and the Farm Bill

Opportunities for improvements

Tim Sullivan

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ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE

finding the ways that work

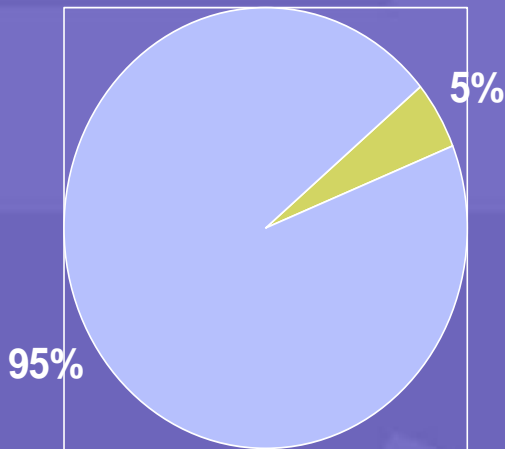
Public benefits from well-managed rangelands

- Open space
- Wildlife habitat
- Water quality
- Water quantity
- Carbon sequestration
- Restoration of ecosystem functions

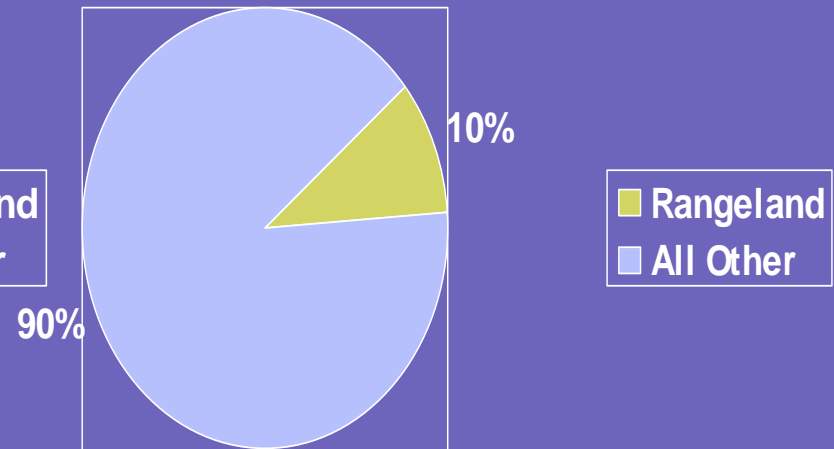


Rangeland Receives Small Share of Conservation Funds

EQIP



CSP



FY 2003 Numbers

Farm Bill opportunities to aid ranchers

- Rewarding and promoting good rangeland stewardship
- Keeping ranchland as ranchland
- Restoring grasslands
- Promoting cooperative conservation
- Technical assistance
- New markets/rural development

Rangeland Stewardship

Address resource concerns:

Soil erosion

Soil stability

Appropriate fertilizer and pesticide application

Efficient irrigation of pastures; groundwater withdrawals; minimum streamflows

Protect water quality and riparian areas

Good plant condition

T&E species

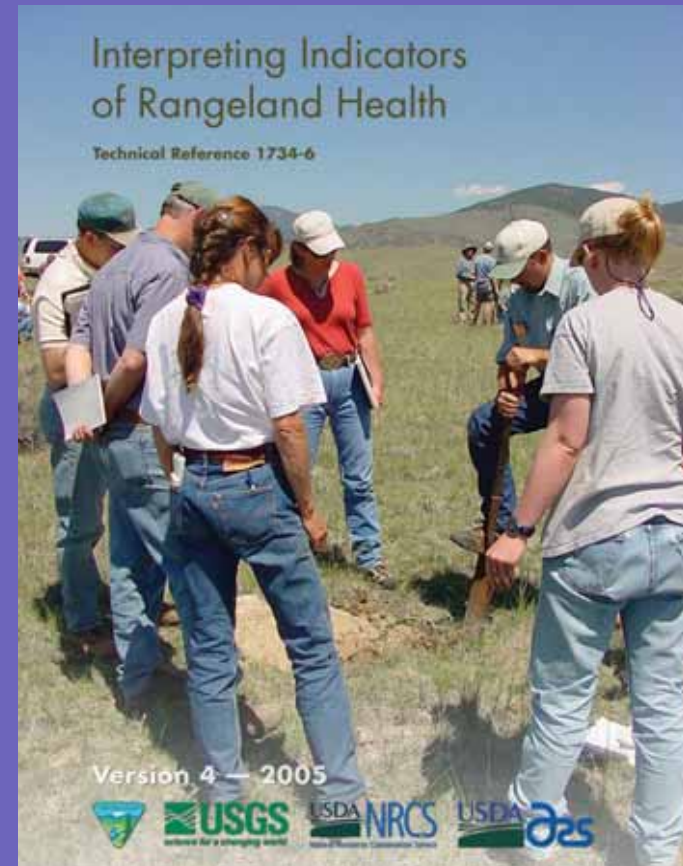
Invasive species

Adequate forage and water



Rangeland health

- Soil/Site stability;
 - Rills, bare ground, blowouts, gullies
- Hydrologic function;
 - water flow, plant cover, litter
- Biotic integrity
 - Plant composition, production, invasives



Rewarding Rangeland Stewardship

- Conservation Security Program was a model for future “green payments” program
- Rewards producers for maintaining and further enhancing quality land management
- Program payment formulas not favorable for rangeland and overall funding levels too low
- Tie farm support payments to environmental stewardship.
- Stricter focus on performance.
- Support to help producers improve ranking.

Keeping Grassland as Grassland

- Two main programs:
Grassland Reserve Program,
Farm and Ranchland
Protection Program
- Huge demand and need, but
underfunded
- Expand to 3-7 million acres
- Some technical fixes to
address most pressing threats
and protect highest priorities

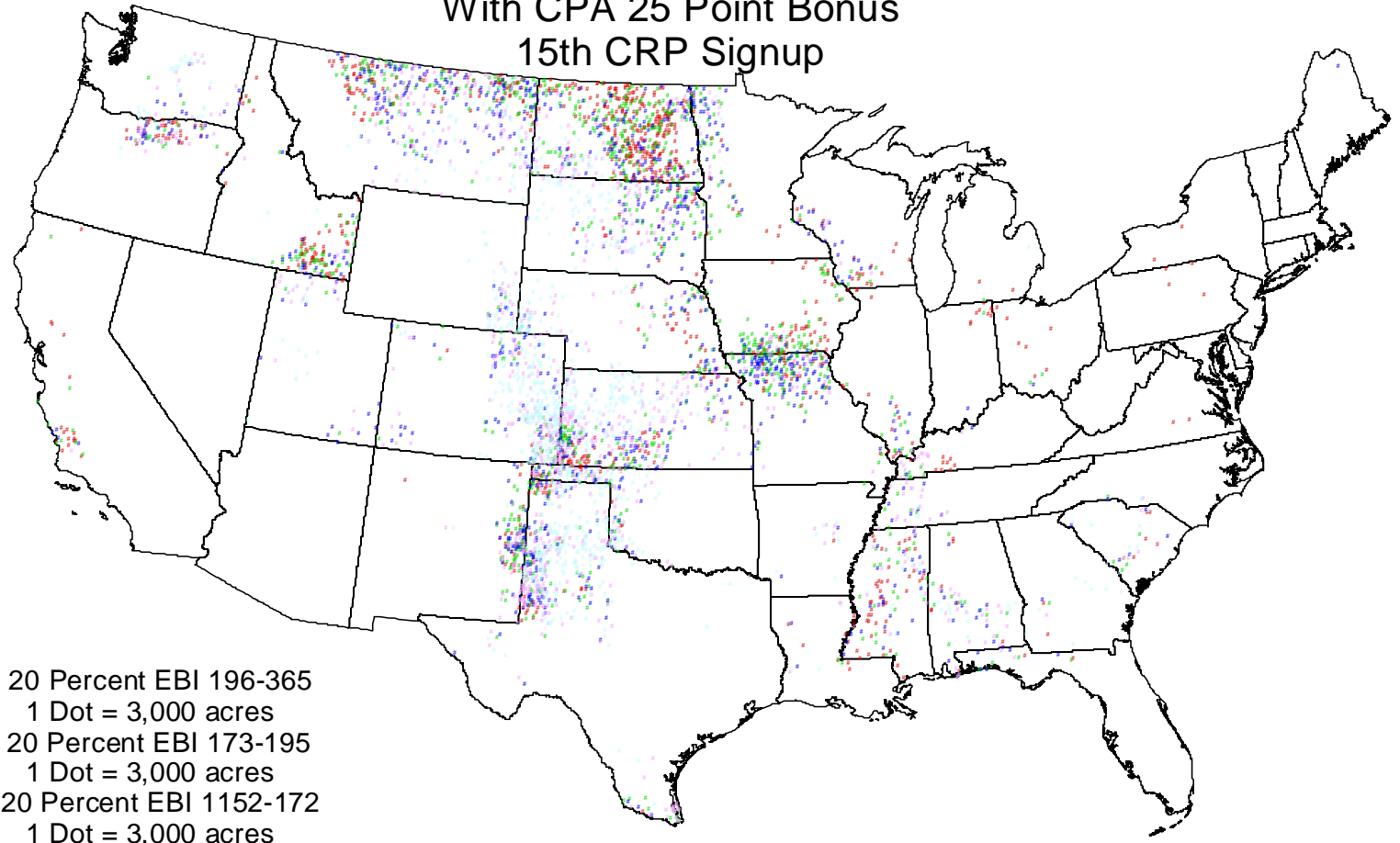


Conservation Reserve Program

- Largest conservation program
- New categories of eligible land and practices, particularly marginal pastureland
- Longer contract durations
- Grazing transition easements
- More emphasis on management including mid-contract



Quintiles of CRP Reenrollment With CPA 25 Point Bonus 15th CRP Signup



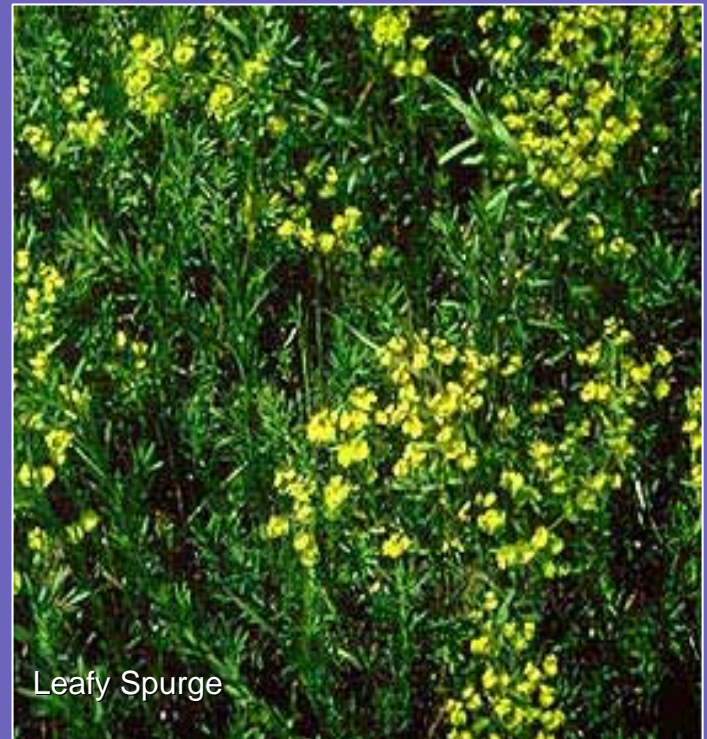
- Top 20 Percent EBI 196-365
1 Dot = 3,000 acres
- 2nd 20 Percent EBI 173-195
1 Dot = 3,000 acres
- 3rd 20 Percent EBI 1152-172
1 Dot = 3,000 acres
- 4th 20 Percent EBI 1129-151
1 Dot = 3,000 acres
- Last 20 Percent EBI 73-128
1 Dot = 3,000 acres

EQIP for rangelands

- More funds for rangeland projects and ranking by resource concern
- More cost-share for certain projects
- Increase focus of funding for performance, not practices
- Address drought resistance, invasive species
- Enlarge Ground and Surface Water Conservation
- Technical assistance

Cooperative Conservation

- Multi-producer
- Watershed scale
- Examples:
 - Water quality
 - Invasive species projects, tamarisk



Leafy Spurge

Enhance Wildlife Habitat



- Great public interest
- Avoid and address endangered species conflicts through incentives
- Cooperative/watershed conservation projects
- Avoid predator conflicts

New Markets and Rural Development



- Growing market for natural and grass-finished beef
- Organic beef products increasing market share
- Energy production and use: wind-power
- Use Farm Bill to help ranchers explore and expand opportunities

Questions

- What are the key obstacles to keeping working and family ranches in ranching that Farm Bill could address?
- What are the most urgent rangeland resource issues affecting ranching communities today?
- How can the farm bill help ranchers address these economic obstacles and conservation issues simultaneously and help keep working ranches in ranching?
- Are there reforms ideas other than the ones described here that we should focus on?
- Are there specific types of conservation incentives that might help ranches conserve land while improving their bottom line?