

ANNOUNCEMENT
of
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
from
CATTLE OPERATORS
for
RANGELAND GRAZING LICENSE

Subject to conditions prescribed by the University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hopland Research & Extension Center (HREC), responses to HREC's request for proposals are sought for the following:

RANGELAND GRAZING LICENSE
University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources
Hopland Research and Extension Center
Hopland, Mendocino County

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOPLAND RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER PROPERTY: Located in California's north coast region in Mendocino County, the Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) is one of nine agricultural research and extension centers administered by the University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources. It provides land, labor, facilities and management for agricultural and natural resource research on its 5,358-acre property. As stewards of oak woodland, grassland, chaparral, and riparian environments, HREC aims to maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity through applied research, adaptive management and educational activities, while also supporting working landscapes, with diverse agricultural products and recognized ecosystem services derived from these landscapes.

DESCRIPTION OF HREC'S INTENT FOR RANGELAND GRAZING LICENSE: In the wake of the 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire which burned roughly 3,000 acres of its rangeland, hardwood and chaparral pastures, HREC acknowledges the need for more extensive grazing on the HREC property. This cannot be accomplished solely by the sheep flock at HREC, and the introduction of cattle grazing to the property would present the opportunity to provide local ranchers with increased land use, a chance for their stakeholder voice to be heard by the University, and the opportunity to collaborate with researchers in many possible grazing research projects relevant to local and regional agricultural producers, land managers, and policy developers. HREC plans to implement this grazing plan in two phases. Phase One starts in 2024 and will encompass three separate pastures, 619 acres total size, in the southern part of the property and will require up to 65 Animal Unit Equivalents (AUEs) with the exact number and type of livestock flexible. There will be no calving on the property for Phase One. If the outcome of this grazing and ecosystem improvement is satisfactory, HREC plans to launch Phase Two in two to three years, which will include up to 2,124 acres in six additional pastures in the northern portion of the property. Stocking rates and exact pastures for Phase Two are as yet to be determined and will require a new grazing license or a modification to the existing grazing license, but may or may not require a new Request for Proposal. HREC seeks a Cattle Operator who will collaborate with HREC in developing and realizing expanded grazing, and possible future research projects in study areas including, but not limited to rangeland ecology, rangeland management, and various aspects of animal science. Preference will be given to Cattle Operators prioritizing rangeland restoration and biodiversity conservation, as evidenced through current practice of or interest in adopting adaptive rotational multi-paddock grazing.

GRAZING PLAN

Objectives

1. Reduce herbaceous biomass and thatch.
2. Promote biodiversity of desirable plants with emphasis on native perennial bunchgrasses, young oak trees, and forbs.
3. Time grazing in pastures to sustain and encourage native perennial grasses and forbs.
4. Support research and education as opportunities arise.

Cattle Producer will:

1. Monitor, in collaboration with HREC staff, forage conditions and rotate cattle as range conditions dictate.
2. Assess forage production and grazing success using, in part, enclosures maintained by UC HREC and researchers.
3. Maintain consistent communication with HREC Director, providing necessary updates on operations and grazing conditions.
4. Maintain water systems and fencing infrastructure to at least a pre-lease state of repair. Inform HREC personnel of damages due to treefalls or other natural, non-cattle events.
5. Have personnel on site at least once a week to check on animal health and respond on same day to calls received from HREC personnel regarding urgent water, fencing, and livestock issues.
6. Use horses and/or ATVs to gather and work cattle, or seek approval to use dogs in certain situations.
7. Install and maintain portable working pens at mutually agreed locations.

Operations are as follows:

1. Up to 65 Animal Unit Equivalents (AUE) with the exact numbers and stock types flexible, to achieve end of season residual dry matter (RDM) goals: 700-800 lbs/acre on flatter ground, 800-1000 lbs/acre on steeper ground. RDM will be evaluated by HREC staff using both quantitative (<https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8092.pdf>) and qualitative (https://ucanr.edu/sites/UCCE_LR/files/202961.pdf) methods.
2. Cattle moved onto property in early May, depending on weather, soil, and pasture conditions.
3. Two rotations through leased pastures, once during end of growing season and once during dry season, timing per range conditions.
4. Herd is gathered and worked as needed for deworming, doctoring, etc.
5. Cattle moved off property at end of October.
6. Cattle producer and HREC Director will meet in March 2025 to determine stocking rates, rotations, and grazing plans annually for the following year.

Interested Cattle Operators may obtain an electronic copy of the Request for Proposal document beginning on February 27th, 2024 at:

<http://hrec.ucanr.edu>

Cattle Operators interested in submitting a Proposal must attend a MANDATORY conference at **9am on March 18th, 2024** at HREC, located at 4070 University Road, Hopland, California. Cattle Operators must meet at the HREC headquarters office and sign the visitor check-in log.

Proposals will be received at the HREC until **April 5th, 2024**. Grazing will begin by **May 10th, 2024**.

Proposals and all other documentation related to this project will be held in confidence to the greatest extent permissible by University policy and the laws of the State of California.

For additional information on this project, contact HREC Director John Bailey at 707-744-1424 x 1649 (direct phone) or jtbailey@ucanr.edu. For additional information on the HREC, visit <http://hrec.ucanr.edu/>.