



Cows and Fish Report

**Grazing Schools for Women - A Unique Learning Perspective:  
EVALUATION REPORT**

**Cows and Fish**

Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society Report No. 38

## **About Cows and Fish**

Riparian areas are those areas along rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, and ponds that are strongly influenced by water and are recognized by water-loving vegetation. Cows and Fish is striving to foster a better understanding of how riparian areas function and how improvements in management strategies in riparian areas can enhance landscape health and productivity for the benefit of livestock producers, their communities and others who value these landscapes.

Cows and Fish Supporters and Members: Producers and community groups, Alberta Beef Producers, Trout Unlimited Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Conservation Association.

Funding Associates: Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture.

*Working with producers and communities on riparian awareness*

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EVALUATION REPORT**

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*prepared for*

**~ Cows and Fish ~  
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society**

February 28, 2009



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## SUMMARY

This report provides results of an evaluation of a series of two-day awareness/training workshops offered to women agricultural producers, delivered under the auspices of Local Committees comprised of Cows and Fish, rural extension staff, and/or representatives of local, provincial, and federal agencies. The workshops, referred to throughout this evaluation report as "the School(s)", have been delivered across Alberta under the names Grazing School for Women, Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women, and Ladies Livestock Lessons.

The evaluation methodology incorporated a personal telephone interview with nine women producers and a mail survey completed by 96 respondents, representing a 47% survey response rate. Data were collected throughout the early winter of 2008.

Overall, the value, content and format of the School as designed and delivered to date has been strongly reinforced by input received in this evaluation.

### **Interest and Value of Attendance**

The most common reasons reported for attending the School included general interest or curiosity about the School or School topics; the desire to build or reaffirm knowledge as a member of an agricultural operation; referral or invitation; and specific interest in grass, pasture and forage management and strategies, including plant identification and grazing, and/or grass and forage utilization.

Further, the School offered attendees an opportunity to network with other women, as a "ladies event" with no men present, the latter situation being described by School attendees as often being one in which they feel uninformed or unaware of the topics being discussed. Other reasons for attending the School included that it was held close to home and/or was affordable and, for some, attendance represented travel, a holiday, getaway or retreat, as well as an opportunity to have fun.

The value of attending the School lay primarily in learning that "I could do something" or it "expanded my insight" about topics such as pasture health and identifying plants, stewardship, and sustainability of grass/grasslands. Additional value was offered by the opportunity to meet new people, bond with other women, and share experiences with and learn from women. Further, attendees learned about how to apply specific practices such as rotational grazing, swath grazing, weaning practices, and fencing.

The School was viewed to be good value, affordable, well organized, and in a nice setting with almost all survey respondents rating attendance as valuable. This input was corroborated by almost all survey respondents also reporting that they would attend a future School and would recommend the School to other women.

As described by one attendee, "this course gave me an all-round better business head."

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### **Value of Presenters**

Respondents described presenters as knowledgeable, capable, positive, open to questions, encouraging, and "real". They also "helped me learn", appreciated and understood their topic, and explained topics in a way that was easy to understand.

Overall, School presenters were rated by survey respondents (more than 80% in each case) as very respectful, very knowledgeable, very enthusiastic, and very approachable. About two-thirds of survey respondents rated presenters as able to motivate, and as being aware of the practicalities of managing an agricultural operation.

While the Local Committees have consistently selected School presenters based on their knowledge of the relevant topic(s) and not whether they were men or women, comments from some survey respondents suggested that found women presenters to be more motivational than men presenters.

### **Value of Classroom Topics**

Value of classroom topics was rated very highly, with 10 of 16 topics rated as informative by more than 90% of survey respondents. The other six topics were rated as informative by between 80% and 89% of survey respondents.

The four highest rated classroom topics, all dealing with management principles and strategies that encompass broad concepts for application at the individual scale, were:

- Livestock Handling/Behaviour.
- Grazing Strategies.
- Grazing Basics/Principles.
- Riparian Areas and Management.

The practical appeal of this type of foundational knowledge that helps guide decisions and practices appears to have met a significant need among women producers.

### **Value of Field-Based Topics**

Value of field-based topics was also very high, with six of nine topics rated as informative by more than 90% of survey respondents. The remaining three topics were rated as informative by between 80% and 89% respondents.

The four highest rated field-based topics, all dealing with specific management tools that support the principles and strategies addressed with the classroom topics, were:

- Plant Identification.
- Range Health Assessment.
- Weed Identification.
- Riparian Health Assessment.



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### **Value of Female-Only Participation**

The assumption about School design and delivery that limits attendance to women only was seen by attendees as appropriate, necessary and appreciated. Since almost all (82%) of interview and survey respondents indicated that having women attendees only was a positive factor for them personally, there is no indication that this program design assumption should change.

Respondents indicated that they valued the female-only aspect of the School because it removed the possibility of them feeling intimidated by men, an experience that respondents alluded to encountering in mixed events they had attended in the past. Leveling the field, so to speak, by having only women as School attendees, removed the potential for men, for example, to monopolize the discussion and dismiss contributions by women attendees, such that the women feel they cannot speak freely or speak without risking criticism.

In a woman-only setting, attendees stated that they were more readily able to network and learn about the diversity of rural women's experiences and contributions to agriculture, including their influence and value, and to share the "particularly female" perspective on rural, agricultural and/or family life.

Further, fewer social conventions operated to restrict conversation among the women as a group. The School offered women socializing, camaraderie, fellowship, and humour that the respondents stated were not as forthcoming at a mixed event. There was "No male-female thing going on, which I like – we get enough of that everywhere else, many of these activities are very male-oriented", i.e. in the experience of these responses, the discussion at mixed events, whether technical or social, tends to be led by and focus on men.

As some women attendees summarized, "overall, it was very informative and a great opportunity to learn from and meet other women in the business".

### **Raising Awareness and Enhancing Decision-Making**

The most frequently identified learnings included:

- Evaluating range and riparian health, including how to properly manage grazing and use strategies to identify or rectify overgrazing, and/or to encourage efficient grazing.
- Plant and weed identification.
- Importance of sustainable agriculture for the environment, protecting native grasslands, and to be land stewards.
- Cattle behaviour and handling.

Overall:

- 98% of survey respondents reported that attendance increased their knowledge, an essential requirement for informed decision-making.
- 95% indicated the School increased their access to or interest in other management resources.

More than 80% of respondents agreed that the School:

- Provided ideas and strategies helping them to participate more effectively in joint management decisions.
- Increased the ability to convince others to consider management ideas learned at the School.
- Increased confidence in making management decisions on their own.
- Increased their ability to convince others to adopt management ideas learned at the School.

### **Changing Management Practices**

Almost three-quarters of survey respondents confirmed or anticipated practice change as a result of the exposure to School topics, with 30% indicating change had already occurred and 40% indicating that they would like to make a change in the near future.

- Among those anticipating making a change using a classroom topic, about one-half had only attended the School once.
- Among those anticipating making a change using a field-based topic, just under one-half had only attended the School once.

### **Barriers**

The two significant barriers to meeting the goals of the School were identified as time and availability to attend, and challenges associated with communicating and working with other decision-makers who are resistant to change. The demands of family responsibilities, including raising children, as well as off-farm jobs, were major factors in the ability of women producers to participate in the School. Timing of the School in the early summer also tended to conflict with operational busy periods and other events in the home locale. Other barriers to attendance included lack of awareness the School was being offered, due to perceived poor advertising, and lack of awareness of the benefits of the School.

### **Recommendations**

Refer to Section 6 for recommendations to promote attendance (including family and sole-operator components), to continue to build knowledge about management practices, and to enhance confidence in management decision-making by incorporating strategies for:

- Succeeding in joint operations, across generations, spouses and other partners.
- Building relationships in business settings.
- Managing time and multiple demands.
- Addressing the evolving farm demographic, specifically aging producers operating in a changing industry.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE

A series of two-day awareness/training workshops for women producers, variously called Grazing School for Women ("GSW"), Southern Alberta Grazing School for Women ("SABGSW"), and Ladies Livestock Lessons ("LLL"), have been presented for the past several years under the auspices of Local Committees comprised of rural extension staff, and/or representatives of municipal, provincial and federal agencies, and local Cows and Fish staff. These events are referred to here collectively as "the School(s)".

The School had come about as a result of past observations and delivery of pasture schools, stockmen's courses and similar events. The Local Committees recognized that few or no women attended those events, even though women are often actively involved in management and day-to-day operations of farms and ranches. The rationale for the School was, therefore, to try and engage this female producer audience in learning and management, which did not seem to be occurring at other training events.

Each School has been attended by approximately 35 women, with some women returning in subsequent years. Some Schools have run as many as six consecutive years, beginning first with the GSW. They incorporate both classroom and field-based components. Classroom components may include six to eight presentations covering core topics like range and grazing management principles, herd health, livestock handling, economics, and succession planning. The field-based component covers two to four elements, including riparian health assessment and plant identification, and may also include demonstrations of such things as watering systems and electric fencing. There may be unique elements to each School as well, and a lighter interest topic, such as upland game birds. Presenters may be men or women, depending on the best person available with knowledge of the required topic(s) for any given School. The Schools have typically been held in the months of June and July

The purpose of conducting this School evaluation was to enhance the School's effectiveness for future attendees by improving its content and format so as to promote awareness and practice change, based on input from past attendees. Past end-of-event hand-in evaluation forms returned excellent results and, while never analyzed, the current evaluation can be used in conjunction with those results. However, this more extensive evaluation does not specifically incorporate or integrate past evaluation efforts.

The goals of this School evaluation were to identify:

- what attracts attendees and brings them back;
- what attendees learned;
- aspects of the School that facilitated learning, including characteristics, if any, of an all-female setting that may have promoted or inhibited learning;
- which topics were later made use of in attendees' operations, including factors that promote or inhibit current or future practice change; and
- improvements or modifications required to the School, including new topics of interest.

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Of particular interest in this evaluation, based anecdotally on experience with the Schools to date, was whether the learning style of the female producer demographic is unique and whether the Schools can be designed and delivered to maximize learning effectiveness among female audiences. Central to this question was to identify unique barriers and motivators that may apply to entirely female audiences in terms of the School's goals of increasing knowledge and achieving practice change.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

A mixed-methodology approach was used in this evaluation. In the first stage of the evaluation, personal telephone interviews with past attendees, purposively selected by Local Committees, were carried out by the evaluator. The interviewees included single- and multi-year attendees from northern, central and southern Alberta, for whom phone numbers were readily available from Local Committee records. Telephone interviews averaged 25-30 minutes in length.

The second stage involved a detailed survey mailed to all past attendees for whom addresses were available from Local Committee records, excluding those already identified for a telephone interview. The survey was intended to be enhanced by the interview to ensure a greater depth of information explaining the value, impact, barriers, motivations and needs identified by attendees.

School presenters were not included in either sample set unless they were also an attendee at the School.

## **1.3 RESPONSE RATE**

To enhance survey response rate, several techniques were employed. The Local Committees mailed an introductory letter in their respective areas explaining the purpose of the survey, indicating that an independent evaluator would be mailing a survey to them under separate cover, and encouraging their participation. The evaluator mailed a reminder postcard approximately one week after the survey itself was mailed. Finally, evaluation communications with interview and survey respondents indicated that the Local Committees were offering a draw prize for participants. Entry forms were included with the survey package mailed by the evaluator, and the evaluator completed entry forms on behalf of the telephone interviewees if, when asked, they indicated interest in entering the draw. Tokens of a modest nature, offered in exchange for participation can enhance response rate without unduly influencing the reliability of respondent input. The evaluator randomly selected one name from each School attendee set and communicated the names of these prize winners to the Local Committees so that they could complete the notification and delivery of the prizes.

Survey response rate was 47%, as summarized in Table 1.

Of the 13 potential interviewees identified, nine were interested and available, representing a 69% response rate.

**TABLE 1  
SURVEY RESPONSE RATE**

	<b>Survey #</b>	<b>Survey %</b>
GSW	107	
SABGSW	91	
LLL	26	
<b>Total Mailed</b>	<b>224</b>	
Returned due to wrong address	20	
Not useable	1	
<b>Net Sample Size</b>	<b>203</b>	
<b>Total Returned and Useable</b>	<b>96</b>	
<b>Response Rate</b>		<b>47.3</b>

#### **1.4 LIMITATIONS**

One of the operating assumptions of the Local Committees has been that the School is intended to serve a niche of women agricultural producers who, it had been perceived, had been unserved or poorly served by range and riparian extension efforts in the province. A central characteristic of the School has been, therefore, that it be designed for and on behalf of the female producer.

The scope of this evaluation did not allow the application of any framework based on social or education theory that might otherwise have thoroughly informed the assumption that women producers acquire and use management information in ways that are unique or different than the mechanisms used by men, or whether any learning mechanisms are facilitated by the design and delivery of this School. The evaluation simply asked respondents to comment on whether allowing only women to attend the School was a positive factor for them personally, and why or why not. Accordingly, observations provided in this evaluation report about this topic should be considered in a general light.

Further exploration of the complexities of gender-based learning may be an exciting topic for future studies undertaken by Cows and Fish and/or the Local Committees.

Insufficient or incomplete data were provided by respondents on survey questions relating to potential School topics for family members/young women, and for evolving patterns of decision-making resulting from School attendance. Therefore, discussion of these items is limited or excluded from this report.

Tabular data are presented in this report for all survey respondents, but not all tabular data are presented for the nine interview respondents, partly because its inclusion posed a risk of any individual interviewee(s) being identified. However, generalized descriptive data about interviewees have been provided where possible. The primary value provided by the interview data lay in their qualitative nature, and so that input has been merged where possible with the qualitative data provided by survey respondents, with the goal of providing a reasonable level of analysis across all respondents, for the open-ended questions.

Further, quantitative data for interview and survey respondents have not been combined in all cases, due to data structure and the fact that not all survey questions were asked of interviewees, or were asked in slightly different ways. Tables and other data references throughout the report are labeled according to whether one or both data sets are being described.

### **1.5 RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE**

This project was designed and carried out by an independent evaluator, NGB Evaluation Solutions Inc., based in Edmonton, Alberta. Data have been analyzed and are presented here following professional standards that ensure objectivity, completeness, accuracy and confidentiality.

## 2. RESPONDENT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 ATTENDANCE VARIABLES

Survey respondents totaled 96. Interviewee respondents totaled nine. Across all 105 respondents, 40% attended GSW; 39% attended SABGSW, and 21% attended LLL. See Table 2.

About two-thirds of all respondents (63%) attended the School one year, while 21% attended the School two years, not necessarily consecutively. Eight percent attended three or more years, not necessarily consecutively. Eight percent did not identify years of attendance. See Table 3.

Table 4 sets out the home jurisdiction of both survey and interview respondents. The results indicate that the School is reaching across many regions of the province. A discussion of distance as a factor in attendance is discussed later in this report.

**TABLE 2  
ALL RESPONDENTS BY SCHOOL**

	%	#
GSW	40	42
SABGSW	39	41
LLL	21	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

**TABLE 3  
ALL RESPONDENTS BY YEARS OF ATTENDANCE**

	%	#
1 Year	63	67
2 Years	21	22
3 or More Years	8	8
Years Not Identified	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

**TABLE 4  
ALL RESPONDENTS BY HOME JURISDICTION**

MD / County / City / Province	Interview #	Survey #
Athabasca		1
Beaver		4
Bighorn		1
Calgary		2
Camrose		1
Clearwater	1	1
Cypress	1	6
Flagstaff		4
Foothills		2
Forty Mile		3
Kneehill	1	3
Lacombe		1
Lamont		1
Leduc		1
Lethbridge		1
Minburn		2
Mountainview		5
Newell		4
Paintearth		1
Pincher Creek	3	6
Provost		2
Red Deer		4
Rocky View	1	5
Saskatchewan		2
Smoky Lake		4
Starland	1	3
Taber		1
Thorhild		2
Two Hills		5
Vermilion	1	3
Vulcan		1
Wainwright		5
Westlock		1
Wheatland		2
Willow Creek		5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>96</b>



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## 2.2 SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

This section reports on several variables that help describe who has been attending the School. Discussion of some of these demographics and how they may affect attendance, learning and practice change, is provided later in this report. While the scope of this evaluation did not include contextualizing social demographics, refer to Appendix A for some brief but interesting census figures that suggest that School attendees reflect the fairly typical agricultural demographic for Alberta.

### *Age (n=101)*

The average age of all interview and survey respondents was 47 years while the median age was 48 years, indicating that the School is currently attracting a relatively mature group of attendees, an age cohort that is reflective of the typical agricultural family in the province. The age of respondents ranged from 19 to 75 years.

### *Education (n=94)*

Only 21% of survey respondents reported that they had no type of post-secondary education. The remaining 74 survey respondents reported one or more categories of post-secondary education, with the most prevalent category being:

- Business/Commerce (23%).

This category was followed, in order of prevalence, by:

- Health Sciences/Services (19%).
- Agriculture (17%).
- Social Sciences (9%).
- Education (7%).
- Natural/Physical Sciences (6%).
- Engineering (1%).

The balance of types of education fell into the Other category, and included Arts, Tourism, Childcare, Design, Communications, Computer Technology, and Administration.

### *Employment Off-Farm/Ranch (n=81)*

Just over one-half of survey respondents (55%) reported employment off-operation, with 20% employed full-time and 35% employed part-time. The balance of 45% were not employed off their operation. Again, this seems to reflect the typical Alberta agricultural operation.

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*Length of Involvement in Operation (n=82)*

Just over one-third (34%) of survey respondents currently involved in an operation reported their involvement encompassed 26 years or more. An additional 23% reported a relatively long involvement that ranged from 16 to 25 years. Just less than one-third (31%), reported six to 15 years of involvement. The smallest proportion of respondents (12%) reported the shortest length of involvement, of five years or less. These results seem consistent with the average age of respondents of 47 years.

### **2.3 OPERATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

*Type of Operation (n=82)*

By a small majority of 52%, survey respondents were mixed farmers. The next largest operation type was livestock only, at 42%. Just 6% were crop, specialty and other type of operators.

While non-producer descriptive categories were not queried in the evaluation survey, the remaining 14 of 96 survey respondents appeared to fall into the categories of agency staff, industry representatives, acreage owners, and retired producers.

*Size of Operation (n=82)*

- One-third (33%) of survey respondents represented operations between one and approximately three sections in size, or 640-2000 acres.
- About one-quarter (26%) represented operations between approximately three and eight sections, or 2001-5000 acres.
- Less than one-quarter (22%) represented operations between one-quarter section and one section in size, or 161-640 acres.
- 10% represented operations of 5000 acres or more.
- 10% represented operations with one-quarter section or less, or 160 acres or less.

*Size of Herd (n=79)*

Overall, herd size was reported as relatively small, with more than one-third (38%) of survey respondents reporting 80 head or less, and 29% reporting 81-200 head. Just 21% reported 201-500 head, while 11% reported 501 or more head. These results would appear to be consistent with the majority of respondents having identified themselves as mixed farmers rather than producers of livestock only.

*Type of Feeding Operation (n=80)*

A majority (70%), of survey respondents reported that in their operation they feed livestock during the grazing season with various types of winter feeding, with less than one-quarter (24%) reporting feeding by both grazing and at a feedlot (backgrounding/finishing). No respondents reported feeding entirely at a feedlot. A small number (6%) reported miscellaneous feeding patterns not readily identifiable with the answer options provided on the survey.

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### 3. SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

#### 3.1 RATIONALE FOR ATTENDANCE

All respondents were asked to identify reasons they attended a School the first time. Ninety-five survey respondents and nine interviewees provided explanations, grouped generally as follows.

##### *Most Common Explanations*

- General interest/curiosity about the School or School topics; wanted to build or reaffirm knowledge as a member of an agricultural operation.
- Referred or invited.
- Interested in grass/pasture/forage management/strategies including plant identification and grazing and/or grass/forage utilization.

##### *Moderately Common Explanations*

- A networking opportunity with other women; a "ladies" event with no men present, a circumstance which respondents reported can intimidate them in feeling they can speak freely and without risking criticism.
- School was close to home and/or was affordable.
- Travel, holiday, get away/retreat; "have fun".

##### *Less Common Explanations*

- Interested in riparian areas/management.
- Interested in ecological/stewardship/sustainability.

Among respondents who returned to the School on a subsequent occasion, 25 survey respondents and six interviewees provided explanations as to why they returned, grouped generally as follows.

##### *Most Common Explanations*

- Enjoyed it a lot/learned a lot the first time.
- New topics/interesting topics/good topics/and presenters.

##### *Less Common Explanations*

- Opportunity for interaction/comradeship/networking; offered a "break".
- Great learning environment for women only.
- Wanted to learn more; build on previous information.
- School was close and/or affordable.

As one producer described it, the School was "such an inspiring, informative, enjoyable seminar. I wanted to repeat such a great experience... meet more people, gain more knowledge."

### 3.2 VALUE OF ATTENDANCE

To begin developing an understanding of whether and how School content and format were considered effective, survey respondents were asked to rate the value, to them personally, of attending the School. Overall, 98% of survey respondents rated the School as valuable, with over two-thirds (69%) rating it Very Valuable and 29% rating it Somewhat Valuable. One percent rated it as Not Valuable and 1% indicated Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 5.

**TABLE 5**  
**VALUE TO ATTENDEE OF PARTICIPATION**

Answer Options	Survey Response %	Survey Response #
Very valuable	69	65
Somewhat valuable	29	27
Not valuable	1	1
Not sure / don't know	1	1
	<i>answered question</i>	94
	<i>skipped question</i>	2

Eighty survey respondents and eight interview respondents provided background on why they believed the School was valuable, as follows.

#### *Most Common Explanations*

- Learned "I could do something" or "expanded my insight" generally about e.g. pasture health and identifying plants; stewardship; and sustainability of grass/grasslands.
- Opportunity to meet new people; bond with other women; share experiences with and learn from women.
- "Learned a lot".

#### *Moderately Common Explanations*

- Topics and presenters were/had been interesting.
- Learned about specific practices to apply, e.g. rotational grazing, swath grazing, weaning practices, fencing.
- Affordable; good value; nice setting; well organized.

#### *Less Common Explanations*

- Enjoyable.
- Generally made aware of possibilities; helped pull information together; learned "what not to do".
- Helped [respondent] to "make my own decisions"; can better understand husband/family decisions.

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As one attendee described her experience, the School "gives a chance to clear your head, to get away, look at how other people do it, you come back and have a new way to look at it... light bulb moments, it's really valuable to get away to incorporate other people's ideas."

Overall, almost all (90%) of survey respondents indicated they would attend a future School, with an approximately level split among those Very Likely (46%) and Somewhat Likely (44%) to do so. Five percent indicated Not Likely and 5% indicated Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 6.

While comments offered by survey respondents about their likelihood of returning to the School strongly reflected their responses about the value of the School, such as the opportunity to learn, comradeship, affordability, and so on, one of the primary practical barriers to attendance was identified as time, as follows.

- Timing of the School conflicts with activities on the operation, e.g. haying.
- Time required to be away from home is too long/distance prevents returning home each evening:
  - Animals require daily attention;
  - Not possible to have time off from off-farm job; and
  - No-one to care for young children at home.

In addition to these practical factors faced by attendees, a few respondents indicated that they were unsure whether they would attend again until they knew the future School's content but, more importantly, a few respondents also suggested that the information presented at their first School was too basic for their needs or did not apply to their type of operation, e.g. sheep farmers vs. cattle producers.

As with the high likelihood reported for returning for a future School, a large majority of survey respondents (94%) indicated that they would recommend to other women that they attend the School. On this question, however, the strength of agreement was greater than it was on the question about whether the respondent themselves would re-attend. Over two-thirds (69%) indicated they would be Very Likely to recommend attendance to another woman, and just one-quarter (25%) indicated they would be Somewhat Likely to do so. Two percent indicated Not Likely and 4% indicated Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 7.

Since the value of the School was rated very highly by respondents (Table 5), the difference in strength between a respondent attending again themselves and recommending attendance to other women would appear to lie in some of the practical barriers described, despite them having recognized the overall worth of the School.

These and other potential barriers to School attendance and outcomes are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

**TABLE 6  
LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING A FUTURE SCHOOL**

Answer Options	Survey Response %	Survey Response #
Very likely	46	42
Somewhat likely	44	40
Not likely	5	5
Not sure / don't know	5	5
	<i>answered question</i>	92
	<i>skipped question</i>	4

**TABLE 7  
LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING SCHOOL TO OTHER WOMEN**

Answer Options	Survey Response %	Survey Response #
Very likely	69	65
Somewhat likely	25	23
Not likely	2	2
Not sure / don't know	4	4
	<i>answered question</i>	94
	<i>skipped question</i>	2

### **3.3 VALUE OF PRESENTERS AND TOPICS**

#### **3.3.1 Presenters**

Survey respondents were asked to rate School presenters on each of six characteristics to help explain the value of School attendance. Over three-quarters of respondents rated presenters as Very Respectful (92%), Very Knowledgeable (86%), Very Enthusiastic (85%) and Very Approachable (83%).

About two-thirds of respondents rated presenters as Able to Motivate (66%) and Aware of the Practicalities of Managing an Agricultural Operation (63%). On these latter two characteristics, close to one-third of respondents rated the presenters as Somewhat Able to Motivate (31%) and Somewhat Aware (32%). Ratings of Not At All and Not Sure/Don't Know on all six characteristics ranged from 1% to 4% respectively. See Table 8.

**TABLE 8  
PRESENTER CHARACTERISTIC RATINGS**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>VERY %</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT %</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL %</b>	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW %</b>	<b>Survey Response #</b>
Knowledgeable	86	13	0	1	94
Enthusiastic	85	14	0	1	94
Respectful	92	5	1	2	92
Approachable	83	14	0	3	94
Able to motivate	66	31	0	3	93
Aware of the practicalities of managing an agricultural operation	63	32	1	4	84
<i>answered question</i>					<b>94</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>2</b>

\* options shown in survey order

Survey respondents offered 63 comments on this question. Comments reflect these tabular results, with the following positive reasons helping to explain the ratings.

#### *Most Common Explanations*

- Presenters were knowledgeable/capable.
- Presenters were positive, open to questions, encouraging, and "real".
- Presenters "helped me learn", appreciate and understand the topic; and explained topics in a way that was easy to understand.
- Presenters were "great".

#### *Moderately Common Explanations*

- Women [presenters] help women, and they were motivating to each other.
- Presenters were modest and inspiring.

#### *Less Common Explanations*

- Presenters were passionate about their topic.
- Presentations were enhanced by the field setting.

Relative to this positive feedback, a very small number of comments suggest that some modifications to presenters/presentations may be required, as follows.

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*Presenters*

- Presenter quality varied, with some viewed as being very good and others being "dry", or having less general knowledge.
- Information being presented was not practical because the presenter "doesn't make their living running an operation"; some presenters were perceived as "selling a point" that is "not always right" in practice; or were "too philosophical" or "too environmental".
- Some presenters appeared to have gaps in the knowledge of their specific topic.

*Presentations*

- School topics appeared a bit "scattered" and "need to be tied together". *[However, also refer to a discussion about the general congruency of classroom and field-based topics on page 17.]*
- There was a lot of information, resulting in some "information overload".
- It was difficult to hear.

### **3.3.2 Core Classroom Topics**

Survey respondents were asked to rate how informative each of 16 core classroom topics were. Table 9 lists all ratings for all classroom topics, and incorporates a total percentage for both the Very Informative and Somewhat Informative ratings. The combined total rating for Very and Somewhat Informative is also illustrated in Figure 1. Ten of the 16 topics received a combined Very-Somewhat Informative rating from more than 90% of respondents, while the remaining six topics were rated as Very-Somewhat Informative by less than 90% but greater than 80% of respondents.

Using just the Very Informative rating category, the four highest rated classroom topics (rated as Very Informative by about two-thirds of respondents) dealt with management principles and strategies that encompass broad concepts for application at the individual scale, including:

- Livestock Handling/Behaviour (67%).
- Grazing Strategies (64%).
- Grazing Basics/Principles (60%).
- Riparian Areas and Management (60%).

Note that 95% or more of respondents assigned a combined rating to these topics of Very Informative and Somewhat Informative, with 5% or less indicating Not Informative or Not Sure/Don't Know. These results suggest that the practical appeal of foundational knowledge that helps guide decisions and practices, as intended to be communicated through the School, has met a significant need among women producers and has been very well received by these respondents.



**TABLE 9**  
**CLASSROOM TOPICS RATINGS**  
(survey respondents, in descending order on "Very")

	<b>VERY INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>SOMEWHAT INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>NOT INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</b> %
Livestock Handling / Behaviour (n=58)	67	28	5	0
	<b>95%</b>			
Grazing Strategies (n=86)	64	33	1	2
	<b>97%</b>			
Grazing Basics / Principles (n=90)	60	38	1	1
	<b>98%</b>			
Riparian Areas and Management (n=89)	60	37	0	3
	<b>97%</b>			
Women in Agriculture (n=62)	55	32	3	10
	<b>87%</b>			
Water Quality (n=70)	53	39	4	4
	<b>92%</b>			
Economics of the Grazing Season (n=65)	52	40	0	8
	<b>92%</b>			
Grazing and Biodiversity / Wildlife (n=57)	48	49	0	3
	<b>97%</b>			
Herd / Calf Health (n=56)	43	50	5	2
	<b>93%</b>			
Wintering Site Management (n=57)	43	49	2	6
	<b>92%</b>			
Water Economics (n=64)	42	48	3	6
	<b>91%</b>			
Marketing Options (n=46)	39	46	7	9
	<b>84%</b>			
Market Outlook (n=39)	38	41	10	10
	<b>80%</b>			
Soil Basics (n=60)	35	50	5	10
	<b>85%</b>			
History of Grazing (n=39)	28	54	0	18
	<b>82%</b>			
Branding (n=15)	27	53	7	13
	<b>80%</b>			

Classroom topics that received a Very Informative rating by approximately one-half of survey respondents included:

- Women in Agriculture (55%).
- Water Quality (53%).
- Economics of the Grazing Season (52%).
- Grazing and Biodiversity/Wildlife (48%).
- Herd/Calf Health (43%).
- Wintering Site Management (43%).
- Water Economics (42%).

Classroom topics that received a Very Informative rating by about one-third or less of survey respondents, but that still received an overall Informative rating of 80% or greater, included:

- Marketing Options (39%).
- Market Outlook (38%).
- Soil Basics (35%).
- History of Grazing (28%).
- Branding (27%).

A discussion of the role played by some of these topics in practice change is provided later in this report.

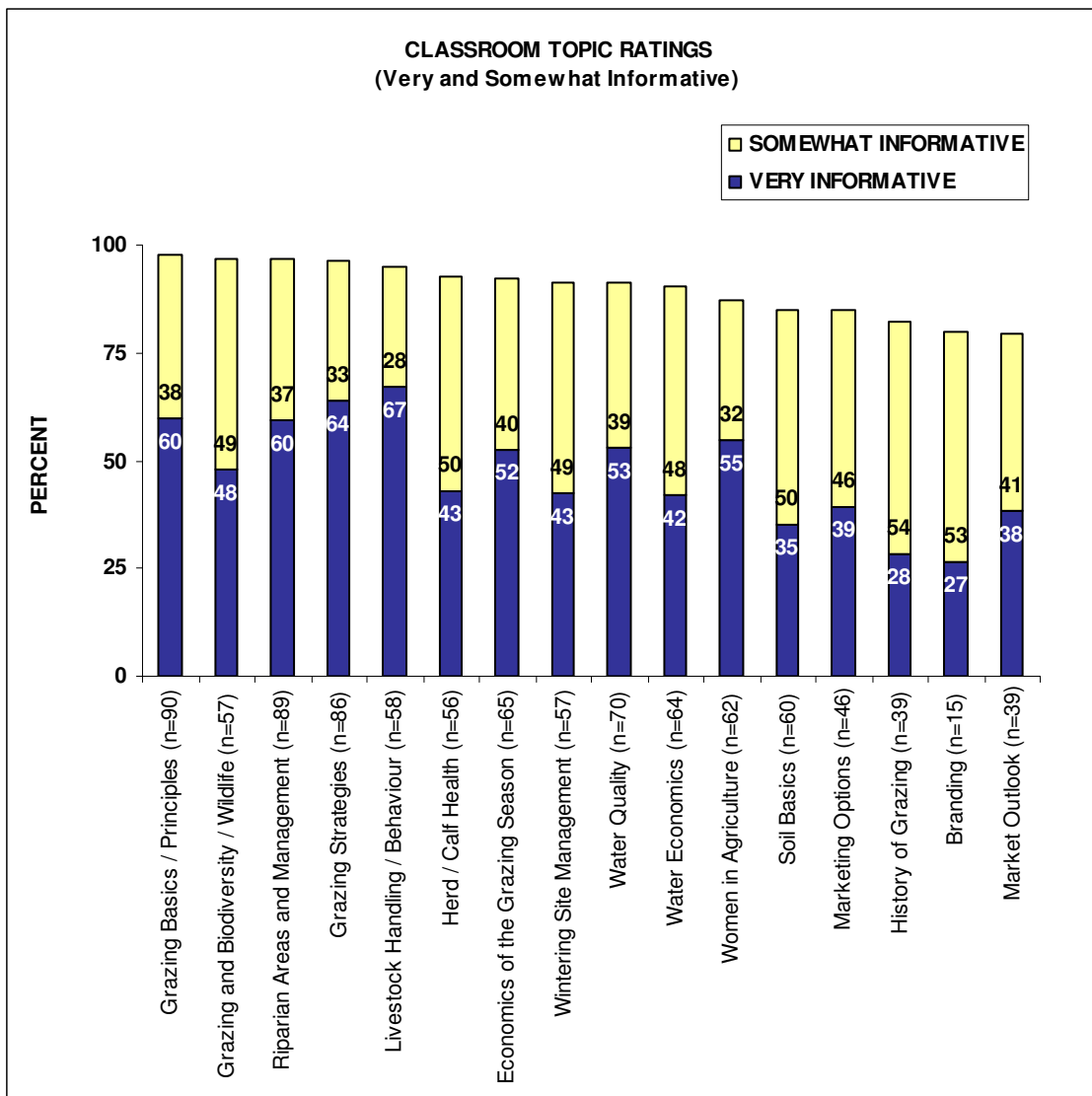


FIGURE 1

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### 3.3.3 Field-Based Topics

Survey respondents rated how informative each of nine field-based School topics was. Table 10 lists all ratings for all field-based topics, and incorporates a total percentage for both the Very Informative and Somewhat Informative ratings. The combined total rating for Very and Somewhat Informative is also illustrated in Figure 2. Six of the nine topics received a combined Very-Somewhat Informative rating of greater than 90%, four of them being rated as Informative by 99% of respondents. The remaining three topics were rated as Very and Somewhat Informative by greater than 80% of respondents.

Using just the Very Informative rating, the four highest rated field-based topics dealt with specific management tools that support the principles and strategies addressed with the classroom topics. Each of the following was rated as Very Informative by more than two-thirds of survey respondents:

- Plant Identification (77%).
- Range Health Assessment (74%).
- Weed Identification (69%).
- Riparian Health Assessment (68%).

Note that each of these topics received a combined Very-Somewhat Informative rating from more than 98% of survey respondents. These results suggest a significant receptiveness to, and highly effective delivery of, practical and useable tools that enable the producer to apply the foundation concepts covered in the School's classroom component. These results also demonstrate that the classroom and field-based components of the School are congruent and synergistic.

It is also possible that these topics received these high ratings because the subject matter was easy to visualize, seemed like a more natural-feeling skill for those familiar with living on agricultural landscapes, and/or was supported by some experience of assessing landscape health even if previously it had been somewhat ad hoc.

Between 80% and 89% of respondents assigned a combined Very-Somewhat Informative rating to the remaining five field-based topics. About two-thirds of respondents assigned a rating of Very Informative to two topics, which covered practical hands-on tools, but which were tools that involved mechanical elements and the physical movement patterns of livestock. These types of in-field activities have been more traditionally handled by men and, in general, the women attendees may have had little or no previous exposure to working directly with them, either alone or with someone else. These two topics included:

- Electric Fencing Demo (66%).
- Water System Demo (58%).

The three field-based topics that received Very Informative ratings from approximately one-half of survey respondents included:

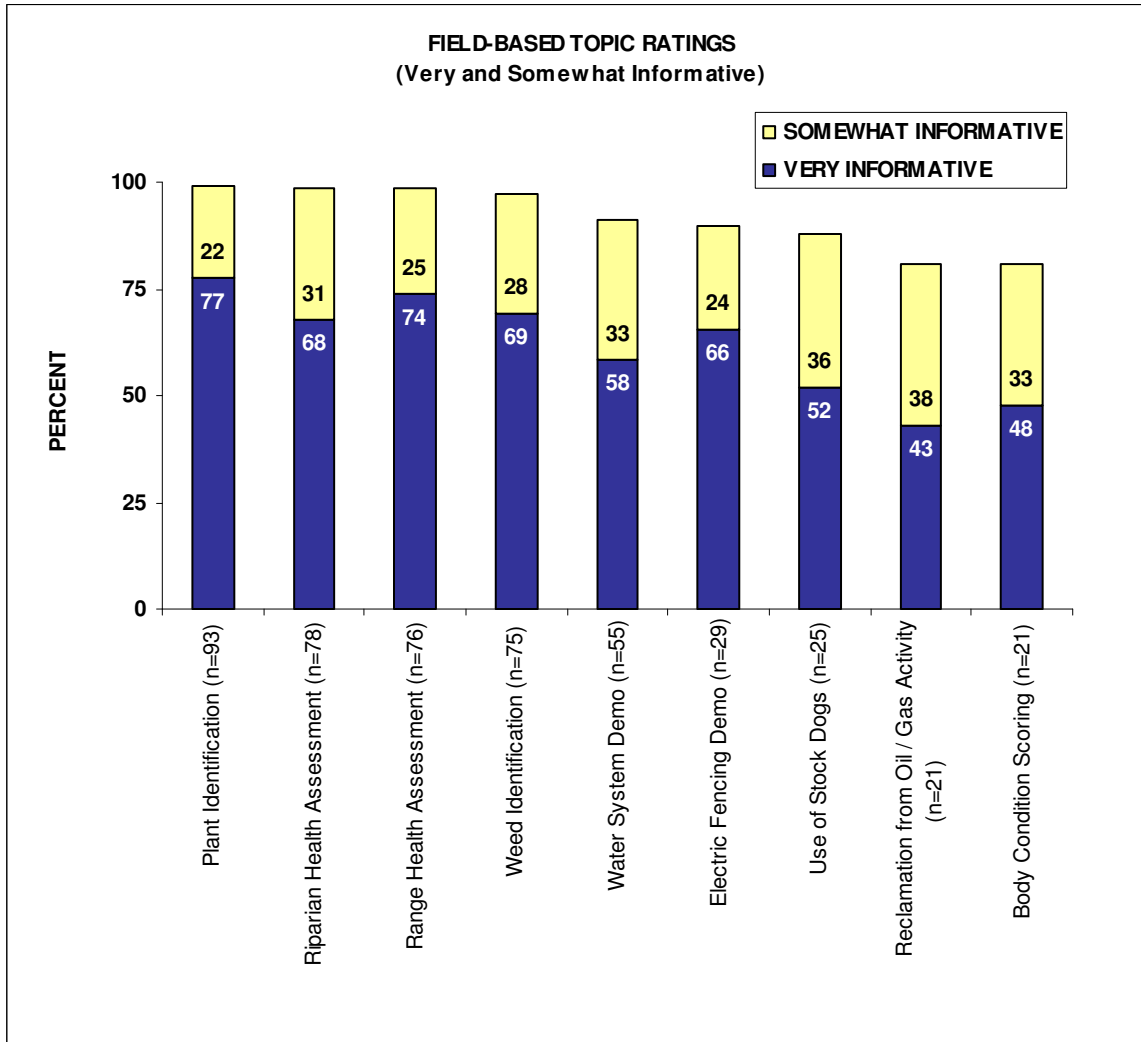
- Use of Stock Dogs (52%).
- Body Condition Scoring (48%)
- Reclamation from Oil / Gas Activity (43%).

These somewhat lower ratings may reflect that these topics are relatively recent topics added to School content and, while of general interest, may not be as applicable to every type of operation in which respondents were involved, i.e. not all respondents had cattle or natural resource extraction on their land.

A discussion of the role of some of these topics in practice change is provided later in this report.

**TABLE 10**  
**FIELD-BASED TOPICS RATINGS**  
(survey respondents, in descending order on "Very")

	<b>VERY INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>SOMEWHAT INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>NOT INFORMATIVE</b> %	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</b> %
Plant Identification (n=93)	77	22	0	1
	<b>99%</b>			
Range Health Assessment (n=78)	74	25	0	1
	<b>99%</b>			
Weed Identification (n=76)	69	28	1	1
	<b>98%</b>			
Riparian Health Assessment (n=75)	68	31	0	1
	<b>99%</b>			
Electric Fencing Demo (n=55)	66	24	7	3
	<b>90%</b>			
Water System Demo (n=29)	58	33	4	5
	<b>91%</b>			
Use of Stock Dogs (n=25)	52	36	4	8
	<b>88%</b>			
Body Condition Scoring (n=21)	48	33	10	10
	<b>80%</b>			
Reclamation from Oil / Gas Activity (n=21)	43	38	5	14
	<b>81%</b>			



**FIGURE 2**

### 3.4 VALUE OF FEMALE-ONLY PARTICIPATION

The School had come about as a result of past observations and delivery of pasture schools, stockmen's courses and similar events. The Local Committees recognized that few or no women attended those events, even though women are often actively involved in management and day-to-day operations of farms and ranches. The rationale for the School was, therefore, to try and engage this female producer audience in learning and management, which did not seem to be occurring at other training events.

One of the operating assumptions of the Local Committees in delivering the School has been, therefore, that it serve a niche of women agricultural producers who to date have not been served, or who have been poorly served, by range and riparian extension efforts in the province. A central characteristic of the School has been, therefore, that it is designed for and on behalf of the female producer.

This evaluation did not apply any framework based on social or education theory that might otherwise have thoroughly informed this assumption, in terms of whether women producers acquire and use management information in ways that are unique or different than the mechanisms used by men, or whether any learning mechanisms are facilitated by the design and delivery of this School. The evaluation simply asked respondents to comment on whether limiting School attendance to women only was a positive factor for them personally, and why or why not. Accordingly, observations on this matter that are provided in this evaluation report should be considered in a general light.

A large majority (82%) of interview and survey respondents answered Yes to indicate that having women attendees only was a positive factor for them personally. Only 6% indicated No (it was not a positive factor), with 12% indicating Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 11.

**TABLE 11**  
**WOMEN ATTENDEES ONLY AS A POSITIVE FACTOR**

Answer Options	Survey Response %	Survey Response #t
Yes	82	85
No	6	6
Not sure / don't know	12	13
	<i>answered question</i>	104
	<i>skipped question</i>	1

In support of these answers, nine interview respondents and 84 survey respondents described the attributes of women-only attendance. The comments reflect several of the viewpoints described about the value of the School, set out earlier in this report, but more broadly also included the following explanations in support of Yes answers.

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*Most Common Explanations*

- Female attendees can ask any question; can speak freely; there are fewer social conventions restricting conversation; and, for example, discussion is not monopolized by men
- Can network and learn about the diversity of rural women's experiences and contributions to agriculture including their influence and value; and share the "particularly female" perspective on rural, agricultural and/or family life. "Always good to do things separately, women have different outlooks and ideas. It was really enjoyable with talks with just women, most of those discussions are with my husband. It's nice to do something separate from my husband."
- More "comfortable"; can get closer to the presenter; and e.g. feel OK to be "crammed" in close quarters.

*Moderately Common Explanations*

- Women attendees and presenters are not "belittled" by men who think "they know everything" already; the possibility is removed of feeling fearful or intimidated by not having sufficient or accurate knowledge that women stated they feel in mixed training/workshop settings.
- Socializing, camaraderie, fellowship and humour that is not possible at a mixed event. "No male-female thing going on, which I like – we get enough of that everywhere else, many of these activities are very male-oriented."

*Less Common Explanations*

- The "macho strength" element is not present, e.g. field instruction on dugouts/pumps was more effective because women don't/can't stand back and "watch the men" as they would if men were present.
- Presenters speak "to us not at us".

Comments from those respondents who answered No and Not Sure/Don't Know were very few in number and suggested that limiting attendance to women only was not so much a negative as it was "not an issue", or it was "on par" as to whether men participated, and that men can add their own perspective and knowledge to events of this type.

Accordingly, it appears that the operating assumption that limits attendance to women only is both necessary and appreciated, and respondents have provided no indication that it needs to change in terms of School design and delivery.

### **3.5 GENERAL**

General characteristics of the School such as facilities, setting, and food were not rated specifically in this evaluation. Only a few comments were offered by respondents on these factors, almost all indicating they were appropriate and well-received. A very small number of comments indicated minor dissatisfaction with these factors, and are set out later in this report.

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## 4. OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

### 4.1 RAISING AWARENESS

In addition to the values and benefits described generally about attendance at the School, discussed earlier in this report, both interview and survey respondents were asked to identify the one most important thing they learned as a result of attendance. A total of 98 respondents (nine interviewees and 87 survey respondents) identified learnings most important to them, as follows.

#### *Most Common Explanations*

- Evaluating range and riparian health, including how to properly manage grazing and use strategies to identify or rectify overgrazing, and/or to encourage efficient grazing.

#### *Moderately Common Explanations*

- Plant and weed identification.
- Importance of sustainable agriculture for the environment; protecting native grasslands; and to be land stewards.
- Cattle behaviour and handling.

#### *Less Common Explanations*

- The number of women involved in agriculture who deal with similar struggles in the industry and as members of a family business; the resiliency of women in these situations; difficulties of dealing with husbands on decisions and/or labour involved in implementing new strategies.
- Importance of water and riparian areas; dugout management.
- Financial considerations such as marketing strategies; increasing operational productivity; diversification; succession.
- The variety of landscapes and potential strategies for different situations; "more than one way" to look at a situation.
- Increased confidence; "looking after me".

### 4.2 ENHANCING DECISION-MAKING

One of the central concerns intended to be addressed by the School is that it enhance the ability of women producers to participate in management decisions in their operation, and to more confidently make management decisions on their own. Aspects of building this foundation of confidence include increasing the producer's knowledge, increasing her access to information sources, and increasing her ability to network with other women producers to learn from their experiences and challenges. Survey respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements addressing these three factors. See Table 12.



**TABLE 12**  
**ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES**

<b>Answer Options *</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b> %	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b> %	<b>DISAGREE</b> %	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</b> %	<b>Survey Response #</b>
It increased your KNOWLEDGE	71	27	2	0	93
It increased your access to/interest in OTHER SOURCES of management information	41	54	3	2	93
It gave you the OPPORTUNITY TO MEET other women with similar interests, experiences and/or challenges	68	32	0	0	94
<i>answered question</i>					<b>94</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>2</b>

\* options shown in survey order

100% of survey respondents reported that the School provided the opportunity to network with other women producers, with about two-thirds of those indicating Strongly Agree (68%), and about one-third indicating Somewhat Agree (32%). Given the explanations described earlier in this report about the open, comfortable and non-threatening setting of the School, this excellent result reinforces the quality of the unique setting that the School offers to women producers, in a venue enabling them to share interests and experiences. As one woman said it, "Knowledge is power".

Within this setting, the School also rated highly on learning, since 98% of survey respondents reported that attendance increased their knowledge, an essential requirement for informed decision-making. More than two-thirds indicated Strongly Agree (71%) and about one-quarter indicated Somewhat Agree (27%) on this question. Two percent Disagreed, primarily due to topics covering material they were already familiar with.

Almost all survey respondents (95%) indicated the School increased their access to or interest in other management resources. On this question, however, the strength of agreement was greater for Somewhat Agree (54%) than for Strongly Agree (41%). While still a very solid result, this suggests that a stronger component within the School that directs attendees to other, or additional, information will enhance the effectiveness of the School. These resources could range from individual mentors, print materials, on-line resources, other workshops, etc.

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When asked to rate four additional factors that can contribute to their ability to undertake or participate in management decisions, survey respondents were a bit more circumspect in that they were more likely to Somewhat Agree than Strongly Agree, compared to other survey questions. See Table 13.

Overall, however, greater than 80% of respondents agreed that the School:

- Provided ideas and strategies helping them to participate more effectively in joint management decisions (51% Strongly Agree and 40% Somewhat Agree).
- Increased the ability to convince others to consider management ideas learned at the School (38% Strongly Agree and 52% Somewhat Agree).
- Increased confidence in making management decisions on their own (26% Strongly Agree and 60% Somewhat Agree).
- Increased the ability to convince others to adopt management ideas learned at the School (24% Strongly Agree and 56% Somewhat Agree).

These are solid results, but they suggest that while the School is assisting significantly in developing key aspects of decision-making for women producers, the daily reality for many of the respondents is that they are not always, and will not be, the sole decision-maker in the operation; that traditionally they have not participated in decision-making at all; or they have done so to a modest degree.

Circumstances such as non-farming backgrounds; traditional roles for male family members (including marrying into farming operations with established decision-making patterns); off-farm jobs; child-rearing; and other family management responsibilities are all factors that influence, by choice or otherwise, the extent to which the female producer is able, or chooses, to participate more directly in decisions affecting the operation. A change in roles tend to occur as a process over time, and/or as family or operational circumstances evolve, in turn influenced by aging; widowhood; failing health of husbands; not having children; or having children who move away from the operation for other types of jobs and/or lives.

It is unlikely, therefore, that a full and complete modification to the decision-making of women producers is a realistic outcome for the School, except in the case of the relatively small (but growing) number of sole women producers. Therefore, focusing on the objective of enhancing the degree to which women producers wish to exercise their interest, intelligence, and information in the decision-making process, remains a realistic goal for the School and, accordingly, these evaluation results suggest that the School is going some distance to meet this need.

The contribution that the School can continue to make to the majority of attendees is to support and enhance ways to be involved in, or to enhance, the joint decision-making process, although it may be appropriate to consider a separate session offered to sole female operators (or all-female family operators) to provide more intense support and/or targeted guidance on overall management of an operation, including financial and succession planning, understanding the markets, dealing with male competitors and/or staff, and so on. A more detailed review of these potential School modifications is provided later in this report.

**TABLE 13  
INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING**

<b>Answer Options *</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b> %	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE</b> %	<b>DISAGREE</b> %	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</b> %	<b>Survey Response #</b>
It increased your confidence in making management decisions ON YOUR OWN	26	60	10	4	78
It provided you with ideas / strategies helping you to participate more effectively in JOINT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS	51	40	5	4	78
It increased your ability to convince others to CONSIDER management ideas you learned about	38	52	4	5	78
It increased your ability to convince others to ADOPT management ideas you learned about	24	56	8	12	76
				<i>answered question</i>	<b>79</b>
				<i>skipped question</i>	<b>17</b>

\* options shown in survey order

### **4.3 CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SEEING RESULTS**

#### **4.3.1 Contribution of Classroom Topics**

Both interview and survey respondents were asked whether any classroom topic had strongly influenced a management change in their operation. Across all respondents, just under one-third (30%) indicated Yes. While 20% indicated No, another 40% indicated that information provided in the classroom setting at the School had not yet influenced a practice change, but that it may do so in the near future. This means that close to three-quarters (70%) of respondents confirmed or anticipated practice change as a result of the School's classroom topics. Ten percent indicated Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 14.

**TABLE 14**  
**CLASSROOM TOPICS LEADING TO PRACTICE CHANGE**

	%	#
Yes	30	27
No	20	18
No, but may do so in the near future	40	36
Not sure / don't know	10	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>90</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>15</b>

Some of the 27 respondents who answered Yes provided a general description of the type of change they have incorporated into their operation, many of which reflect a new understanding about controlling and/or limiting livestock access, such as:

- Rotating pastures, using smaller pastures, starting to graze later in the season, and putting fewer head per acre.
- Using electric fencing "for better use of feed".
- Placement of salt blocks.
- Protection of water sources such as springs.

Consequent improvement of forage and herd quality was also described due to:

- Using specific grazing techniques to eradicate weeds and less desirable grass species, and "improve the more desirable species chances of survival".
- Familiarizing calves with swathed green-feed which helps them wean better.
- More active observation of herd condition and awareness of indicators of animal stress.

The topics that contributed to these examples of management practices included:

- Grazing strategies (10 mentions).
- Grazing basics and principles (8 mentions).
- Herd and calf health (6 mentions).
- Livestock handling and behaviour (5 mentions).
- Grazing and biodiversity/wildlife (3 mentions).
- Riparian areas and management (3 mentions).

From the respondents who offered comments about what they learned from the classroom topics, contributions to learning included:

- Being able to identify overgrazing and understand which plants are undesirable.
- How to make better use of all grasses.
- Key principles of grazing management.
- To be proactive.
- That choice, options and solutions were available.
- Clarifying choices and building confidence in choices made or about to be made.
- That many women operate successfully in the industry, and set realistic goals.
- The importance of water.

Respondents also explained that the use of the classroom format in the School contributed to learning and to practice change because:

- Topics (such as fencing and animal handling) were addressed first in the classroom and later linked to "hands-on" work outside.
- Topics included practical examples of actions and/or solutions, e.g. dealing assertively with oil and gas companies.
- Different perspectives on similar topics were offered, including real examples of what not to do.
- Visual aides (videos, pictures) showed options.
- Lighter topics helped to dilute the "intensity of information".
- Speakers were friendly and presented information in an "easy-to-understand" manner that was simple and to the point.
- Take-home materials such as plant identification books were excellent and helped build confidence.

#### 4.3.2 Contribution of Field-Based Topics

Across all respondents, 30% reported Yes (they had made a management change as a result of the field-based topics). Forty percent of respondents indicated No Not Yet, i.e. that they may be able to make a management change in the near future. These results represent close to three-quarters (70%) of respondents confirming or anticipating practice change as a result of the School's field-based topics. Nineteen percent indicated No (they had made no change), and 11% indicated Not Sure/Don't Know. See Table 15.

**TABLE 15**  
**FIELD-BASED TOPICS LEADING TO PRACTICE CHANGE**  
**(all respondents)**

	%	#
Yes	30	27
No	19	17
No, but may do so in the near future	40	36
Not sure / don't know	11	10
<i>answered question</i>		<b>90</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>15</b>

Some of the 27 respondents who answered Yes provided a general description of the type of change they have incorporated into their operation, most of which (similarly to the impact of classroom topics) reflect an understanding about controlling and/or limiting livestock, such as:

- Reducing damage to riparian areas ("creeks, "wet areas" etc.) by restricting access, especially in the spring.
- Employing rotational grazing or other movement strategies such as using different pastures at different times.
- Incorporating swath grazing.
- Installing portable solar water units or other types of pumps.
- Using fencing/electric fencing to maximize potential of native grasses or to protect specific sites.

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Other practices adopted included:

- Taking a lead role or more active role in overseeing herd health.
- Conducting on-site range/riparian health assessments.
- Monitoring soil moisture and related changes in plant species.
- Being more proactive in dealing with oil and gas companies on their property.

The field-based topics that contributed to these examples of management practices included:

- Range health assessment (13 mentions).
- Plant identification (10 mentions).
- Weed identification (8 mentions).
- Body condition scoring (7 mentions).
- Riparian health assessment (6 mentions).
- Water system demo (5 mentions).
- Electric fencing demo (3 mentions).

From the respondents who offered comments about what they learned from the field-based topics, contributions to learning included:

- Understanding why a practice is used, e.g. it "gives you the reason";
- "Seeing the benefits".
- Realizing the health of animals and of rangelands, and "not going back to the old ways".
- Reaffirming what they had some understanding of already, or were doing already, and "we see that we are doing things right" and "I learned that the things that I had observed on my own over the years was actually right, and that gave me the confidence and energy to buck the system, and I prospered".
- Identifying types of plants, e.g. increasers vs. decreasers, and the need to address weeds, e.g. "the difference between forbs and grasses and the mix you should have generally – I didn't know anything like that".
- How to assess various aspects of the operation, i.e. "what and where to look *and* to eyeball... will give you different results".
- How sensitive some areas are and the importance of maintaining them/protecting them from livestock damage, and that more can be done in this regard.
- That some changes can be economical.
- "What not to do" – the "do's and don'ts".

Respondents also explained that the use of the field-based format in the School contributed to learning and to practice change because it was:

- "Hands on", "hands on", "hands on".
- Practical.
- Visual and comparative, down on your knees, "you see it"; it showed "live, real plants, then showed us in the book and even if you don't have the book at home, [it's] something that reminds me".
- Fun.
- Outside.
- Group-based with an appropriate number of participants and sufficient number of resource people available for questions.

- 
- Mostly women who were doing the demonstrations i.e. doing the "trouble-shooting", and "you can be feminine and intelligent in gum boots".
  - Delivered by presenters who "never once treated us disrespectfully" and "never got impatient".
  - Delivered by presenters who were "clearly well-informed".

#### **4.3.3 Potential for Future Management Change**

Of note is that among the 36 survey respondents who indicated they may be able to implement a management change in the near future due to learning about the School's classroom topics, 27 (51%) had only attended the School on one occasion. Among the 35 survey respondents who indicated they may be able to implement a change in the future due to learning about the field-based topics, 26 (42%) had only attended the School on one occasion.

This pattern suggests, first, that attendees left the School feeling motivated to change, but may require additional information, greater confidence, or additional time and/or resources at home to achieve a change – including, possibly, an opportunity to attend the School on a subsequent occasion. Second, this pattern is consistent with findings of previous Cows and Fish evaluations in which respondents communicated that change within their operations can be a process that occurs over a number of years, and not as an immediate result of exposure to the information provided through, in this case, the School. From an evaluation perspective, given the complexities of families and of the industry that evolve over time, and the many other sources of learning available to producers, it is important to remember when evaluating any initiative to match expected program outcomes (e.g. about a reasonable rate of anticipated change at the individual scale), to the length of time the program has been delivered to its intended audience(s).

#### **4.3.4 Seeing Results**

In terms of anticipating long-term benefits from acquiring new knowledge and decision-making abilities as a result of School attendance, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed they would be able to increase the environmental sustainability and the economic success/viability of their operation. See Table 16.

More than three-quarters of survey respondents agreed with the two statements, as follows:

- Able to make the operation more environmentally sustainable (32% Strongly Agree and 55% Somewhat Agree).
- Able to make the operation more economically successful/viable (23% Strongly Agree, 50% Somewhat Agree).

**TABLE 16  
INCREASING OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND VIABILITY**

<b>Answer Options*</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE %</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT AGREE 5</b>	<b>DISAGREE %</b>	<b>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW %</b>	<b>Survey Response #</b>
It increased your ability to make your operation more ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE	32	55	9	4	78
It increased your ability to make your operation more ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL / VIABLE	23	50	13	14	79
<i>answered question</i>					<b>79</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>17</b>

\* options shown in survey order

Remembering that over two-thirds (67%) of all respondents attended the School only one year, and that many arrived with modest amounts of knowledge of topics such as grazing management, riparian ecology and marketing, it is premature at this stage of development of the School to anticipate significant achievement of this type of long-term benefit arising from decisions or input provided by attendees, at the scale of their own individual operations. However, notable progress has been made in this regard, with about one-quarter of survey respondents Strongly Agreeing that they already foresee improvements to the sustainability, as well as to the economic strength, of their operations, as a result of School attendance.

However, the moderately lower overall agreement on these questions relative to other questions in this evaluation may, alternately, reflect that it is simply too early to expect attendees to integrate and link the amount and variety of new information they were exposed to at the School, or to expect that they can apply it immediately or extensively, given the practical barriers to making or participating in decisions about their operation, as described elsewhere in this report.

It is important that this evaluation question be asked again once the Schools have been delivered over a longer period of time, and to assess the value of the School as expressed by one attendee: "This course gave me an all-round better business head."



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## 5. BARRIERS

Interview and survey respondents took the opportunity when answering several questions to offer comments about factors that directly or indirectly limit their ability to attend the School, to learn, to make decisions, and to make practice change. These barriers are summarized below.

### 5.1 ATTENDANCE

A broad range of ideas was articulated that help explain why women producers were limited in their ability to attend the School, initially or in subsequent years, thereby missing potential networking, learning, and information-gathering opportunities, as follows.

#### *Most Common Explanations*

- Lack of time/being busy, including a wide variety of responsibilities on the home front, specifically responsibilities for young children and/or older children on summer holiday, in combination with operation-related roles.
- Timing of School, since it conflicts variously with calving, haying, etc., on the operation, and/or other agricultural events in their communities (rodeos, shows, etc.)

#### *Moderately Common Explanations*

- Timing conflicts with off-farm employment (sometimes exacerbating the demands on the home front as indicated above).
- Lack of awareness that the School has been scheduled, e.g. perceived to be not advertised locally, or heard about it too late and School registration was already full.
- Lack of awareness about the benefits and relevance of School content.

#### *Less Common Explanations*

- Cost (usually in combination with time availability).
- Lack of confidence, experience and knowledge.
- School content was not new to the respondent, i.e. too basic, e.g. for those who felt they had a lot of experience or who had previous training.
- Don't know other women with whom to attend because there are so few female operators in their community; a feeling of isolation.
- Fear - "I am not totally confident roping and doctoring in the pasture" and "the electric fencing, we... kind of scared of it".

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## 5.2 PRACTICE CHANGE

Interestingly, cost was rarely mentioned as an inhibitor of practice change. Rather, the barriers to practice change related to the difficulties of operating in a male-dominated industry; making decisions and/or acting alone (for sole operators); and convincing family members about the value and relevance of what was learned at the School, explained as follows.

### *Most Common Explanations*

- Husbands don't see the value of School content, or disregard ideas, making it difficult to influence decisions after returning home.
- Husbands and/or other decision-makers in the operation are resistant to change and are not receptive to new information – "the family has old ideas".
- "GOM"! [Grumpy Old Man]

### *Less Common Explanations*

- Challenges/difficulties in dealing with male operators in their broader communities/business settings, i.e. "men don't like dealing with women decision-makers".
- Challenges in overcoming practices used by custom farmers and renters who follow established patterns.
- Need for additional information and/or resources.
- Cost of implementing changes.

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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Both interview and survey respondents offered several suggestions about how the School could be modified for greater effectiveness, typically in terms of its content and format. These suggestions are combined below, together with evaluator observations gleaned from the broader set of evaluation question responses. These should be considered in light of the overall very positive feedback received from respondents on virtually all aspects of the School.

### *Content*

To supplement and reinforce knowledge-building, and to enhance the female producer's abilities in overall management of their operation, several additional and expanded School topics are recommended. These reflect specific operational and technical information requirements, but also skills associated with meeting the challenges and barriers that respondents alluded to dealing with in their daily lives, including making a living and addressing the dynamics of working with others in a demanding industry.

- Strategies for joint partnership management (across generations, spouses and other partners), and relationship-building in business settings. "I'm married but alone in my enthusiasm... I need some partner skills."
- Time management skills; balancing/making choices.
- Addressing aging farm populations, by incorporating more/additional experienced women producers for guidance/mentoring, but also focusing on change management, including diversification, development of detailed marketing plans, and succession planning.
- Providing an introduction to rural life, for women from non-agricultural backgrounds who marry into operations, who are acreage owners, or who otherwise own or oversee land managed by others, to increase the women's acceptance locally and to reduce their potential for perceived management mistakes.

Topics suggested for addition to School content (or for expansion) were as follows.

- Managing for livestock other than cattle.
- Organic practices (although it should be recognized that some apparently more traditional producers indicated they do not find this of interest).
- Improving forage quality, including tame pasture management.
- Animal health and nutrition, including calving and "doctoring", and how to do so alone and safely.
- Water rights.

### *Format*

One of the most common challenges identified by School attendees related to time – both in terms of its limited availability that prevented them getting away from home for two days, and the scheduling of the School in the early summer. Given the field-based nature of the School, strongly reinforced here by respondent input that the hands-on opportunities offered them significant value and utility, it is not realistic to suggest that the timing of the School be changed from the early summer, when exercises such as plant identification are best carried out.

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However, it may be possible to address some of the hesitation on the part of potential attendees with other strategies that reduce the pressures associated with being away from home, such as the following.

- Be aware, and schedule around, major community events that occur locally in the summer, to avoid timing conflicts with rodeos, fairs, etc.
- For at least part of the School schedule, offer some type of separate children's learning component, nearby but supervised by reliable staff not involved in the School. Note that this may detract to some degree from the sense of "retreat" or "child-free zone" attractiveness for both the mothers and other attendees, remarked on by many respondents as one of the more positive aspects of "getting away".
- Offer the School in two formats, one with the traditional two-day format, and one with two separate days (possibly two consecutive Saturdays).
- Provide a sufficient number of Schools so that distance traveled from home is short, enabling attendees to return home in the evenings, if necessary.

Other potential modifications to the School to help increase participation and practice change include the following.

- Increase promotion of the School, and advertise early enough to allow arrangements to be made for time off work and/or away from home.
- Promote "bringing a friend" to reduce shyness, reduce travel costs, and build opportunities for continuing to share information and ideas after returning home.
- Incorporate break-out groups after some or all topic sessions to allow more time for questions, discussion/debriefing, to allow greater access to the presenter, and to reduce the impact of "information overload".
- Consider some group work or group discussions based on type of operation.
- Consider incorporating a new session, or incorporating an optional add-on day, in which husbands and/or children participate, to enhance the sense of joint decision-making by the family. This could also provide women attendees an enthusiastic on-site opportunity to showcase their new knowledge and motivation without feeling defensive, and without lack of support from presenters and other attendees. Making this something of a "fun" day may break down resistance to change and reinforce the value of contributions made by all members of family-run operations.
- Increase/continue to provide detailed take-home materials for future reference and for sharing with partners in decision-making. "Sometimes the ideas I learn at these Schools is not necessarily well-received by my husband, but by taking or giving him the material... he becomes more receptive to these ideas."
- Incorporate some type of mechanism to enable attendees to stay in touch post-School, and invite ideas for working together after attendance on information-sharing, marketing, advocacy, access to resources, and so on. "There is a wealth of knowledge in the industry. The challenge is accessing the knowledge and passing it on to others."
- Consider offering concurrent sessions that vary in level of detail, to meet the needs of newcomers and those of longer-term operators, and/or to address the needs of those operating in a family situation compared to those who are sole operators, since it "was kind of cool to make the connections with other female farmers in our area -- we get feeling kind of alone".

- Remembering the age of the typical attendee, provide options for accommodation that enable those who wish to camp or to share space to do so, while enabling others to have more private and quiet sleeping quarters. Where possible, identify and communicate group rates at local motels/hotels.
- Provide microphones or bullhorns, to assist those who are hard-of-hearing.
- For field trips, provide on-site bathrooms, and secure areas for valuables and extra clothing.
- Provide detailed maps to assist people not used to traveling or who are unfamiliar with the area where the School is being held.
- Hold the School in areas with cellular phone service, to enable employees to check in with their workplace (if desired) and parents to stay in touch with young children at home.

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**APPENDIX A  
SELECTED CENSUS DATA****1996**

The number of women farming alone rose 33% since the prior agricultural census, compared to less than 2% for men. Overall, 26% of operators were women and 74% were men. The average age of female operators was 46 years, and was 49 years for males, and together were aging as a group, following a similar trend across Canada's working population. About half of Alberta's operators work full-time or part-time off-farm. Overall, 43% of Alberta's farms were one-person operations. While women overall were less likely to be injured on the operation, more sole female operators were injured (3.9%) than females working with other operators (2.6%).

*(excerpted: [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd1422](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/sdd1422))*

**2006**

Of Alberta's 71,660 operators, 30% were women, up from 28% five years earlier. Nationally, 28% of farm operators were women. About 55% of all farm operators had an off-farm job or business in 2005, compared to 49% in 2000. The average age of farm operators continues to rise. The farmers who remain on Canadian farms had the highest median age of all occupations in the country. The average age of farmers in Canada was 51 years.

*(excerpted: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/alberta-eng.htm#r4>)*


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**APPENDIX B**  
***SURVEY INSTRUMENT***

# GRAZING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN / LADIES LIVESTOCK LESSONS

## Evaluation Survey

### **SOME BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS ON COMPLETING THIS SURVEY**

1. Please answer each question that applies to you by checking **ONE BOX ONLY**, unless indicated otherwise.
2. If you're not sure about the response to a question, please check the response that you are most comfortable with, or feel free to simply check the box labeled **"NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW"**.
3. There are 40 questions on the survey, some quite brief, and some longer. Not all will apply to your situation --  
  
in this case, watch for the instructions where you see the  symbol.
4. Depending on how many questions apply to you, it should take between 15 and 25 minutes to complete.
5. When you've completed your survey, please place it in the stamped envelope for return by mail.

**Taking the time to participate in this important survey is really appreciated.**

**THANK YOU ... on behalf of your local Organizing Committee.**





**PART 1**  
**A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR SITUATION ...**



***Producers, please begin here at Question #1.***



***If you attended the grazing school / livestock lessons event(s) in a capacity other than as a producer, please skip ahead and begin your survey at Question #7.***

1. Which one of the following best describes the **TYPE** of agricultural operation you are involved with?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Livestock only</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mixed farming</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Crops only</b>             | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Specialty</b>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> (please specify) |   |
- 

2. How many years have you been **PERSONALLY INVOLVED** in this operation?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>5 years or less</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>16 - 25 years</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>6 - 15 years</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>26 or more years</b> |

3. Which category best describes any **EMPLOYMENT** you personally have outside of the operation?

- Employed full-time off-farm**  
 **Employed part-time off-farm**  
 **Not employed off-farm**

4. What is the combined **TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES** owned by, and leased to, your operation?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>160 acres or less</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>2001 - 5000 acres</b>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>161 - 640 acres</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>5001 acres or more</b>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>641 - 2000 acres</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not sure / don't know</b> |



***If you do NOT HAVE LIVESTOCK please skip ahead to Question #7. Otherwise, please continue here at Question #5.***

5. What is the **HERD SIZE** managed in this operation?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>80 head or less</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>201 – 500 head</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>81 – 200 head</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>501 or more head</b> |

6. Which of the following best describes your **FEEDING OPERATION**?

- Mostly, you feed during the grazing season (with varying types of winter feeding)**  
 **Mostly, you feed by grazing and at a feedlot (backgrounding / finishing)**  
 **Mostly, you feed at a feedlot**  
 **Other** (please specify)
-

**PART 2**  
**YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE EVENT(S) ...**

7. **WHEN** did you attend the grazing school / livestock lessons event(s)?  
*Please choose all that apply.*

- |                               |                               |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2003 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2006 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure / |
| don't know                    |                               |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2004 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2007 |                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2005 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2008 |                                     |

8. Please describe the **PRIMARY REASON** you attended the **FIRST TIME**.



*If you attended only once, please skip ahead to Question #10.  
Otherwise, please continue here at Question #9.*

9. If you attended more than once, what was the **PRIMARY REASON YOU RETURNED?**

10. Overall, how would you rate the **VALUE** (to you) of attending?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very valuable     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not valuable          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat valuable | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure / don't know |

*Please expand on your response.*

11. Please describe the **ONE MOST IMPORTANT THING** you learned by attending.

12. How would you rate the **PRESENTERS** overall at the event(s), on each of the following characteristics?

	<u>VERY</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT</u>	<u>NOT AT ALL</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Enthusiastic</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Respectful</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Approachable</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Able to motivate</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Aware of the practicalities of managing an agricultural operation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Please say more about your response(s).*

13. What adjustments, if any, to the **PRESENTATION or TEACHING SETTING** do you think would make the event(s) of greater value to you?

14. Given that the events have been offered to **WOMEN ATTENDEES ONLY**, do you believe that having only women at the event(s) was a positive factor for you personally?

- Yes**
- No**
- Not sure / don't know**

15. Please describe in detail at least **ONE ASPECT** of the event(s) that you attended that you found interesting, different or otherwise unique **DUE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS BEING WOMEN.**

**PART 3**  
**CONNECTING PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING**

16. To what extent **DO YOU AGREE** that your attendance has contributed to the following aspects of **RAISING YOUR AWARENESS** about managing an agricultural operation?

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>
It increased your <b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It increased your access to / interest in <b>OTHER SOURCES</b> of management information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It gave you an <b>OPPORTUNITY TO MEET</b> other women with similar interests, experiences and / or challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



*If you attended the grazing school / livestock lessons event(s) in a capacity other than as a producer, please skip ahead to Question #19. Otherwise, continue here at Question #17.*

17. To what extent **DO YOU AGREE** that your attendance has affected the following aspects of your **DECISION-MAKING**?

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>
It increased your confidence in making management decisions <b>ON YOUR OWN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It gave you ideas / strategies helping you to participate more effectively in <b>JOINT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It increased your ability to convince others to <b>CONSIDER</b> ideas you learned about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It increased your ability to convince others to <b>ADOPT</b> ideas you learned about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. To what extent **DO YOU AGREE** that your attendance has contributed to the following **LONG-TERM BENEFITS**?

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>
It increased your ability to make your operation more <b>ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It increased your ability to make your operation more <b>ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL / VIABLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PART 4**  
**CONNECTING PARTICIPATION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ...**

19. Here is a list of **CORE CLASSROOM TOPICS** covered at recent events. Please indicate **HOW INFORMATIVE** each topic was to you. Please select only one answer for each topic.

*Note: if you don't recall the topic being presented at the event(s) you attended, just select the box that indicates you didn't receive that information.*

	<u>VERY INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>NOT INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>	<u>DON'T RECALL TOPIC</u>
Branding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics of the Grazing Season	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grazing and Biodiversity / Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grazing Basics / Principles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grazing Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herd / Calf Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
History of Grazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Livestock Handling / Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing Options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Market Outlook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riparian Areas and Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil Basics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wintering Site Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



*Non-producers, please skip ahead to Question #25.  
Producers, please continue here at Question #20.*

20. Have any of the **CLASSROOM TOPICS** listed above **STRONGLY INFLUENCED A MANAGEMENT CHANGE** in your operation?

- Yes                       No, but may do so in the near future  
 No                             Not sure / don't know



**If you DID NOT ANSWER YES on Question #20, please skip ahead to Question #25.**

**If you answered YES, please answer Questions #21 through Question #24, to tell the story about one specific management change that has been made as a result of your attendance.**

**21.** What **MANAGEMENT CHANGE** was made?

**22.** Please identify the topic(s) from the list above that **CONTRIBUTED MOST** to this change.

**23.** Please describe **SPECIFICALLY WHAT YOU LEARNED** that supported the change you made.

**24.** Please describe **HOW** the way the topic(s) was presented for you at the event, led to the management change you've described.

25. Now, please think about the **OUTDOOR TOPICS** at the event(s), as listed below. Please indicate **HOW INFORMATIVE** each of these outdoor topics was to you.

	<u>VERY INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>SOMEWHAT INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>NOT INFORMATIVE</u>	<u>NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW</u>	<i>DON'T RECALL TOPIC</i>
Body Condition Scoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric Fencing Demo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant Identification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Range Health Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reclamation from Oil / Gas Activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riparian Health Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of Stock Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water System Demo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weed Identification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



*Non-producers, please skip ahead to Question #34.  
Producers, please continue here at Question #26.*

26. Have any of the **OUTDOOR TOPICS** listed above **STRONGLY INFLUENCED A MANAGEMENT CHANGE** in your operation?

- Yes                       No, but may do so in the near future  
 No                               Not sure / don't know



*If you DID NOT ANSWER YES, please skip ahead to Question #34.*

*If you answered YES, please continue here, to tell the story about one specific management change that has been made as a result of your attendance.*

27. What **MANAGEMENT CHANGE** was made?

28. Please identify the topic(s) from the list above that **CONTRIBUTED MOST** to this change.

29. Please describe **SPECIFICALLY WHAT YOU LEARNED** that supported the change you made.

30. Please describe **HOW** the way the topic(s) was presented for you at the event, led to the management change you've described.

**PART 5**  
**CHALLENGES TO DECISION-MAKING !**

***PLEASE CARRY ON... YOU'RE ALMOST DONE !***

31. **HOW OFTEN**, over time, have you considered / do you consider yourself to be an **ACTIVE DECISION-MAKER** in the management of your operation?

	<u>PRIOR TO ATTENDING</u>	<u>IMMEDIATELY AFTER ATTENDING</u>	<u>TODAY</u>	<u>IN THE FUTURE</u>
Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure / don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Please say more about your response(s).*



32. Please describe any factors that you feel **CURRENTLY LIMIT** your effective participation in management decisions affecting your operation.

33. What **INFORMATION** or **STRATEGIES** can future events provide that would help you to address the concern(s) you've just described?

**PART 6**  
**MOVING FORWARD !**

34. **HOW LIKELY** are you to attend a future event of this type?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very likely     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not likely            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure / don't know |

*Why or why not?*

35. **HOW LIKELY** are you to encourage other women to attend a future event of this type?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very likely     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not likely            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure / don't know |

*Why or why not?*

- 36.** Please indicate whether there are girls or women in your family, in each of the following age categories, who you feel may be interested in attending an age-appropriate grazing school type of event in the future.

*Skip ahead to Question #37 if there are no other females in your family.*

	<u>INTERESTED</u>	<u>NOT INTERESTED</u>
<b>6-10 years old</b> (e.g. young girls)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11-20 years old</b> (e.g. teens / young adults)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>21-40 years old</b> (e.g. younger operators, getting established)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>41-60 years old</b> (e.g. more mature or established, perhaps with grown families)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>61 years or older</b> (e.g. seniors, at or nearing retirement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Suggested topics or other comment?***

- 37.** You may know of **WOMEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY** who may have wanted, but were unable, to attend the event(s) in the past. Please describe any reasons you may be aware of, that have prevented them from attending so far.

**PLEASE PROCEED TO THE LAST PAGE  
FOR THE FINAL FEW QUESTIONS ...**



**PART 7**  
**AND JUST A LITTLE MORE ABOUT YOU !**

38. What **COUNTY or MD** is your primary residence located in?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. MD of Willow Creek, City of Edmonton, Red Deer County)  
*Please specify if outside of Alberta.*

39. What **YEAR** were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

40. Have you completed **SOME or ALL** of any type of **POST-SECONDARY** certificate, diploma or degree in any of these fields?

- Agriculture
  - Business / Commerce
  - Education
  - Engineering
  - Health Sciences / Services
  - Natural / Physical Sciences
  - Social Sciences
  - None of the above
  - Other (please specify)
- \_\_\_\_\_

**That's it !**

**You've shared some very valuable information that will be used to improve the Grazing School for Women / Ladies Livestock Lessons...**

**Thank you ! We look forward to receiving your survey in the return stamped envelope provided.**

***If you have any other comments, please use this space.***

**APPENDIX C**  
***INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT***



## 1. IDENTIFICATION

Name

Telephone

Time

2. WHEN did you attend the grazing school event(s)? Please choose ALL that apply.

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

Not sure / don't know

3. Please describe the PRIMARY REASON you attended the FIRST TIME.

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4. If you attended more than once, what was the PRIMARY REASON YOU RETURNED?

5. Overall, how would you rate the VALUE (to you) of attending?

Very valuable

Not valuable

Somewhat valuable

Not sure / don't know

PLEASE EXPAND ON YOUR RESPONSE.

6. Please describe the ONE MOST IMPORTANT thing you learned by attending.

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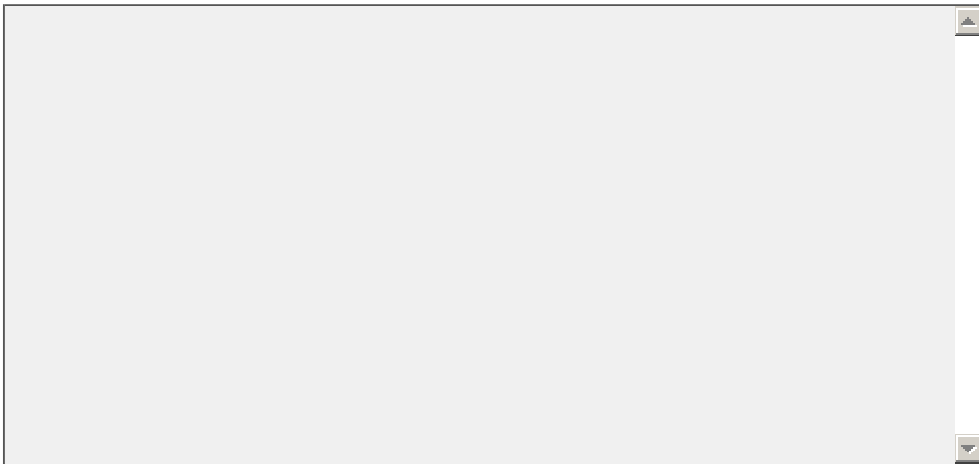
7. Given that the events have been offered to WOMEN ATTENDEES ONLY, do you believe that having only women at the event(s) was a positive factor for you personally?

Yes

No

Not sure / don't know

8. Please describe in detail at least ONE ASPECT of the event(s) that you found interesting, different or otherwise unique, DUE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS BEING WOMEN.





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9. I'm going to read a list of CORE CLASSROOM TOPICS covered at recent events, to refresh your memory, then ask you a series of questions about the impact the information may have had on you.

- Branding
- Economics of the Grazing Season
- Grazing and Biodiversity / Wildlife
- Grazing Basics / Principles
- Grazing Strategies
- Herd / Calf Health
- History of Grazing
- Livestock Handling / Behaviour
- Marketing Options
- Market Outlook
- Riparian Areas and Management
- Soil Basics
- Water Economics
- Women in Agriculture
- Water Quality
- Wintering Site Management

10. First, have any of those CLASSROOM TOPICS STRONGLY INFLUENCED A MANAGEMENT CHANGE in your operation?

Yes

No, but may do so in the near future

No

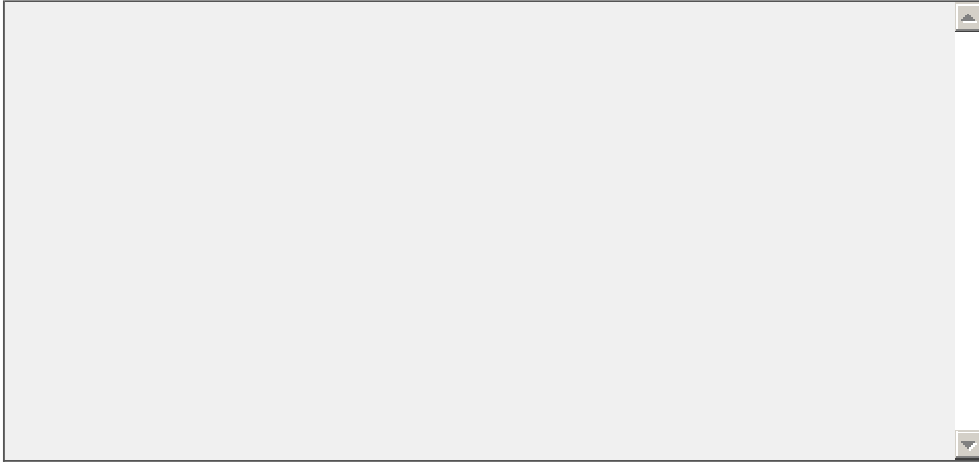
Not sure / don't know

## Copy of GSW Evaluation Interview 2008

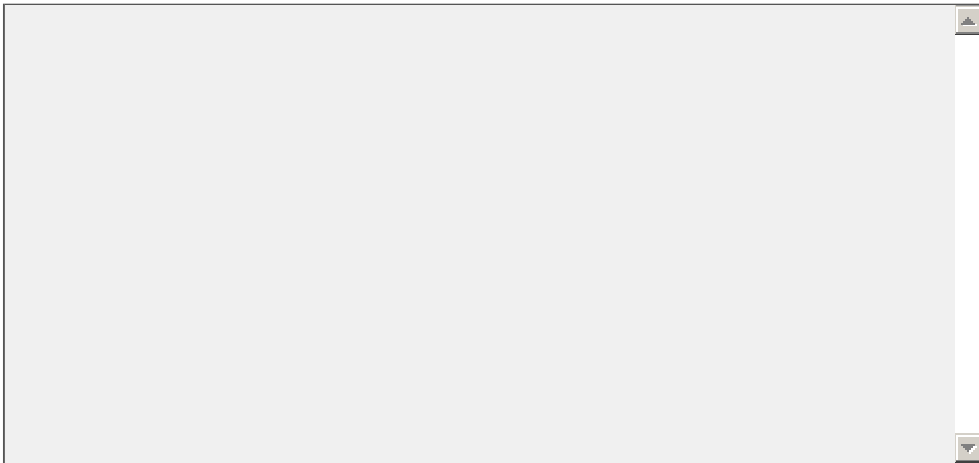
11. If you DID NOT ANSWER YES, skip to OUTDOOR TOPICS LIST.

If you answered YES, continue here.

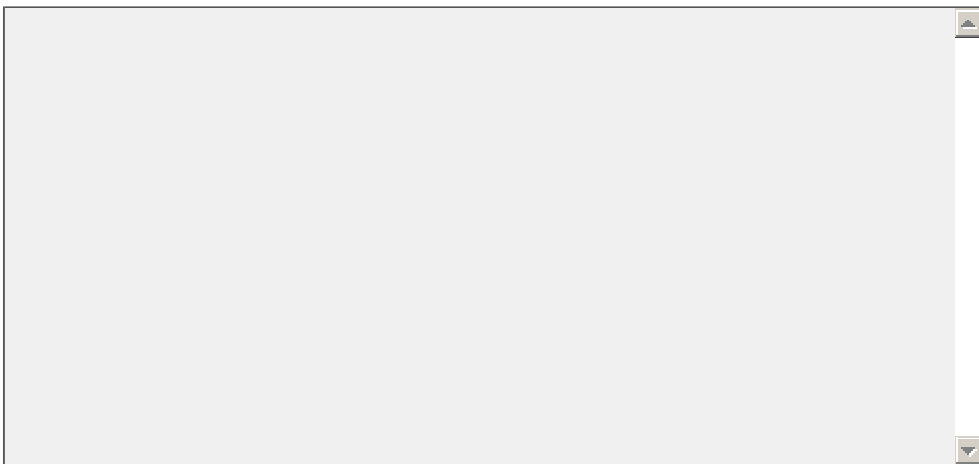
What MANAGEMENT CHANGE was made?



12. WHICH topic(s) from the list above CONTRIBUTED MOST to this change.



13. Please describe SPECIFICALLY WHAT YOU LEARNED that supported the change you made.



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14. HOW did the way the topic(s) was presented for you at the event, lead to the management change you've described?



15. Now, please think about the OUTDOOR TOPICS covered at events. I'll read the list of those topics and then ask you the same series of questions about them as for the CLASSROOM TOPICS.

- Body Condition Scoring
- Electric Fencing Demo
- Plant Identification
- Range Health Assessment
- Reclamation from Oil/Gas Activity
- Riparian Health Assessment
- Use of Stock Dogs
- Water System Demo
- Weed Identification

16. Have any of those OUTDOOR TOPICS STRONGLY INFLUENCED A MANAGEMENT CHANGE in your operation?

Yes

No, but may do so in the near future

No

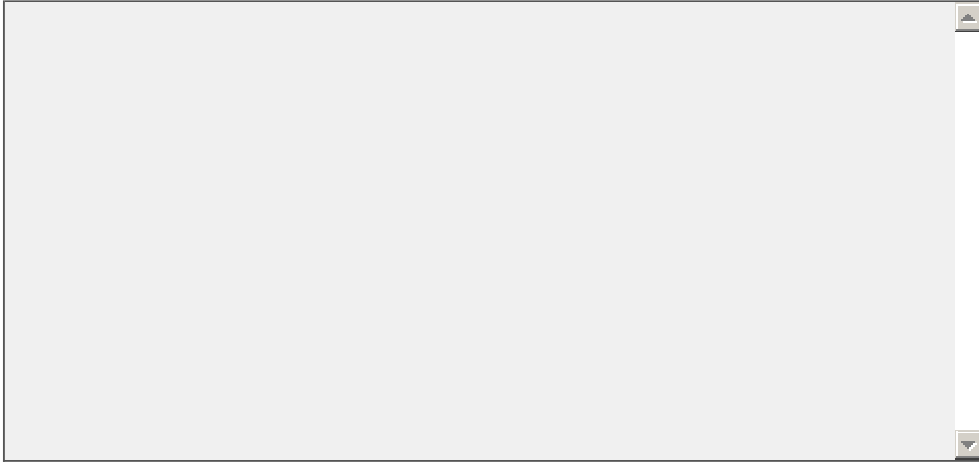
Not sure / don't know

## Copy of GSW Evaluation Interview 2008

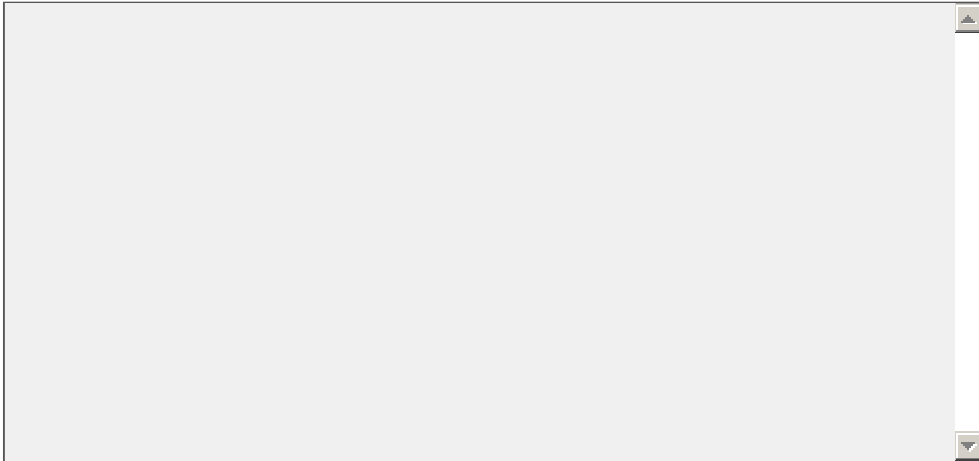
17. If you DID NOT ANSWER YES, please skip to ahead.

If you answered YES, please continue here.

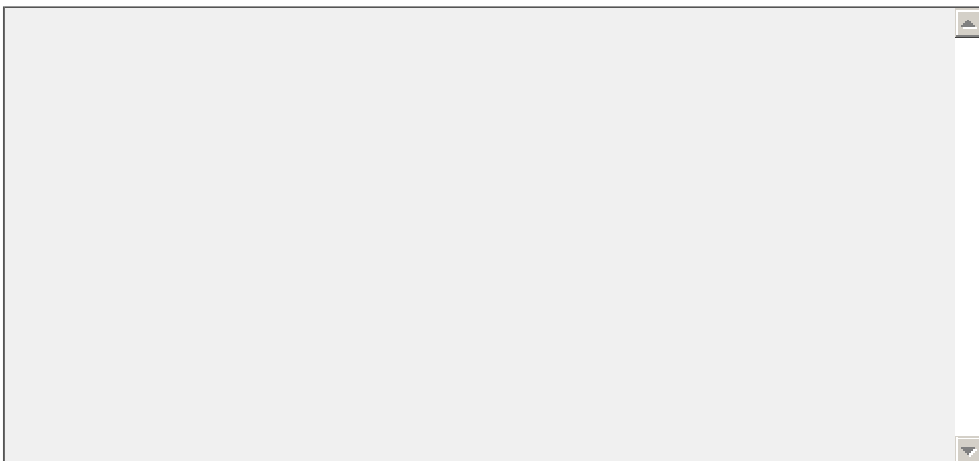
What MANAGEMENT CHANGE was made?



18. Which topic(s) from the list above CONTRIBUTED MOST to this change?



19. Please describe SPECIFICALLY WHAT YOU LEARNED that supported the change you made.

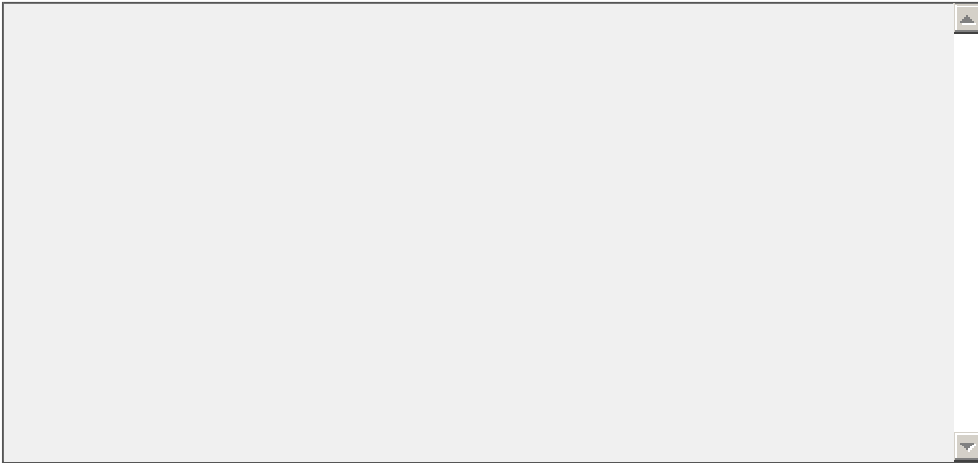


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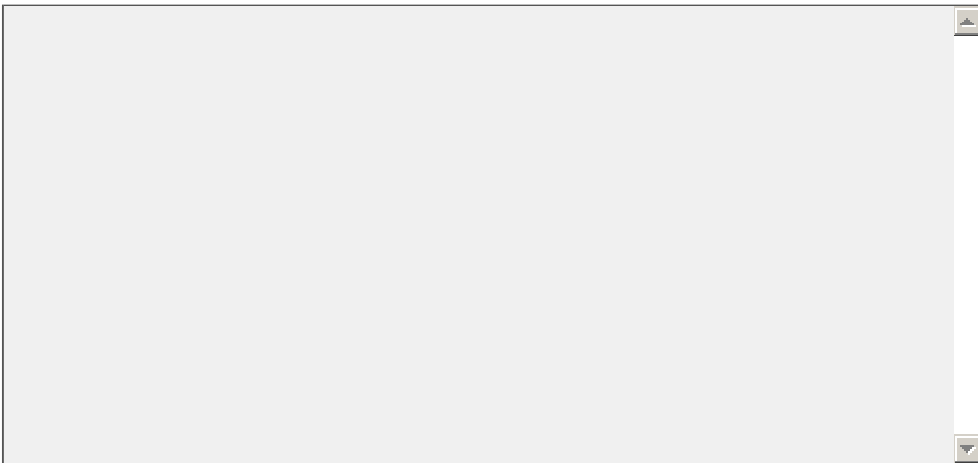
20. HOW did the way this topic was presented to you at the event lead to the management change you've described?

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21. Please describe any factors, if any, that you feel CURRENTLY LIMIT YOUR ABILITY to participate effectively in management decisions affecting your operation.

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22. WHAT INFORMATION or STRATEGIES can future events provide that would help you address the concern(s) you just described.

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23. You may know of WOMEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY who may have wanted, but were unable, to attend the event(s) in the past. Can you describe any reasons you may be aware of, that have prevented them from attending so far?

24. What COUNTY OR MD do you live in?  
(Please specify province if outside of Alberta.)

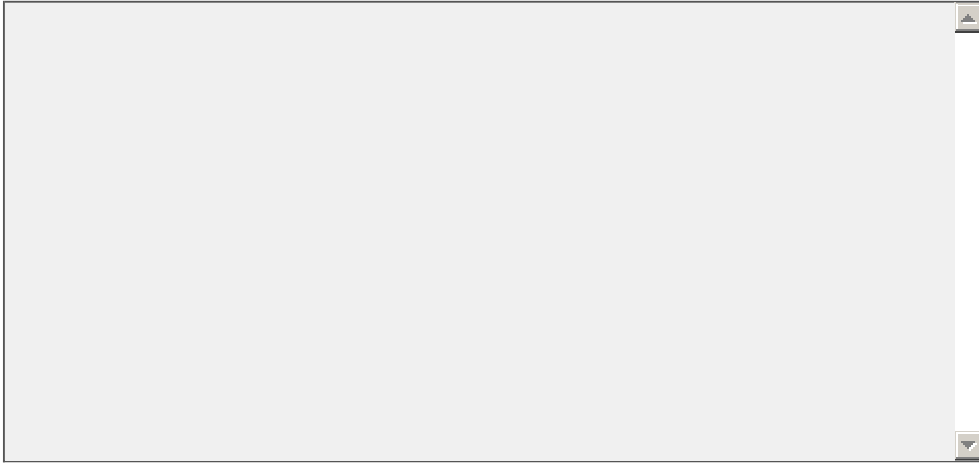
25. What year were you born?

26. Have you completed SOME OR ALL of any type of a POST-SECONDARY certificate, diploma or degree in any of these fields?

- Agriculture
- Business / Commerce
- Education
- Engineering
- Health Sciences / Services
- Natural / Physical Sciences
- Social Sciences
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

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27. Any other final comments?



28. Your Local Organizing Committee is organizing a draw for a gift to be given to one woman who participates in this evaluation.

If you'd like to include your name for the draw, would you provide me with your address? I will of course keep your name and address completely separate from what you've told me in your interview, to protect your identity.

