

New Landowners Boost Stewardship Skills

- Rural landownership in Texas by urban absentee and new landowners has been on the rise. These new landowners and managers have many questions about, and enthusiasm for, the land itself, natural resource stewardship, livestock and wildlife, and farm and ranch management.
- Few of these new landowners have any formal training or experience in the basics of the soil-plant-animal interface. But they bring a vast set of experiences from other walks of life and have a great desire to learn.

AgriLife Extension's Response

- The first Ranch Management University workshop was held in 2010, with the primary goal of providing urban absentee and new landowners and ranchers with basic information regarding resource management.
- The workshop brings together top educators from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service with affiliates in the Departments of Soil and Crop Sciences, Animal Science, Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, and Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University to provide landowners with a basic understanding of resource management and introduce them to educational

resources available through the land-grant university system.

- The four-day event features specialized workshops on a wide range of production topics, including fundamentals of soil and soil fertility, forage establishment, pasture management, stocking rates, grazing management, livestock selection and management, brush management, wildlife and fisheries habitat management, feral hog biology and control options, and recordkeeping.
- Since its inception, the program has had 534 participants, managing more than 567,000 acres of land, 19,000 head of cattle, 10 large wildlife species (deer, turkey, quail, etc.), and other livestock and wildlife.

Economic Impacts

- The economic benefits of Ranch Management University were measured in terms of the potential increase in net returns resulting from the adoption and implementation of the management practices taught in the workshop.
- Based on an evaluation conducted two years after workshop completion, participants estimated an economic benefit of \$37 per acre from participation in Ranch Management University, or \$5.2 million in total.

