

Range Beef Cow Symposium XX

Dec. 11-13, 2007 • Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex, Fort Collins, Colo.

Antagonisms and Protagonisms of Alternative Energy

by Troy Smith

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (Dec. 12, 2007) — During recent years, discussion of renewable energy sources often revolves around corn ethanol. However, Leanne Stevenson told Tuesday morning's Range Beef Cow Symposium audience that another answer is blowing in the wind.

Stevenson, manager of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources and Policy Division, said total wind energy used in the United States increased by 800% from 1989 to 2005. Preliminary data from the Energy Information suggests it increased by another 45% in 2006.

"Don't cuss the wind. It has value for more than just pumping water for cows," Stevenson said. "Wind power generation is increasing faster than any of the other alternative energy sources." The leasing of development rights to wind energy developers represents another way that landowners can diversify their ranching operations.

Stevenson encouraged producers to consider several factors, including whether they are located in an area that provides the right kind of wind at sustained speeds, before becoming involved in utility-scale wind energy projects. Other factors, she said, include the available market for wind energy, transmission access and capacity, environmental impact and community



► Leanne Stevenson

response. She advised ranchers to consider which factors might be antagonisms or protagonistisms before signing development rights over to developers.

Marketing options include negotiating with developers directly or through a "wind association" of several landowners representing a block of land identified as having good wind potential. The association can then entertain bids from developers.

Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture John Stulp said ranchers often are better



► John Stulp

off to work through a group. He advised producers to do their homework first, particularly since lease contracts usually are long-term agreements that may affect heirs or other subsequent owners of the property involved.

Stulp said the largest single factor limiting wind energy development may be the lack of high-voltage transmission lines to carry generated electricity to the large load centers. While many rural areas need more infrastructure for large-scale developments,

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Antagonisms and Protagonisms CONTINUED

he said, there is considerable opportunity for smaller, community-based wind generation projects.

“And there is growing opportunity for ranchers to improve profitability,” Stulp agreed. “Wind is a winner as an environmentally friendly renewable energy source. It uses no water, there are no carbon emissions and there is potential value in the sale of carbon credits.”

Range Beef Cow Symposium XX is hosted by the cooperative extension services and animal science departments of Colorado State University, South Dakota State University, the University of Wyoming and the University of Nebraska. The symposium is at the Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex, Fort Collins, Colo., Dec. 11-13. Additional coverage of the conference is available at www.rangebeefcow.com.



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