

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Promoting integrated crop-livestock system in Idaho farming systems

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension is actively promoting the integrated crop-livestock system among agricultural professionals and farmers in Idaho to enhance sustainability and productivity.

The Situation

Idaho's agricultural community faces challenges in adopting sustainable practices that integrate crop and livestock systems. These challenges include limited knowledge of integrated crop-livestock system (ICLS) benefits, a lack of practical implementation strategies and varying levels of engagement among producers. To address these issues, the need for targeted educational initiatives that foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among agricultural professionals and farmers is paramount.

Our Response

In response to these challenges, a collaborative team of University of Idaho Extension educators launched the "Fostering Integrated Crop-Livestock System (ICLS) in Idaho Farming Systems" initiative. Supported by a \$3,000 Idaho SARE Professional Development Mini-Grant, the program reached over 60 participants through workshops and field days designed to enhance understanding and adoption of ICLS practices.

The program included a hybrid workshop focused on ICLS education for UI Extension agricultural professionals, featuring expert speakers covering livestock management, soil health, nutrient recycling, pest



Farmer and owner of McIntyre Pastures, Brad McIntyre, shares his experience with ICLS on the farm tour at Caldwell.

management, economics and practical implications shared by a farmer. A field day and on-farm tours were organized, allowing a local producer to showcase his successful ICLS implementations and share practical insights with agricultural professionals and growers.

Program Outcomes

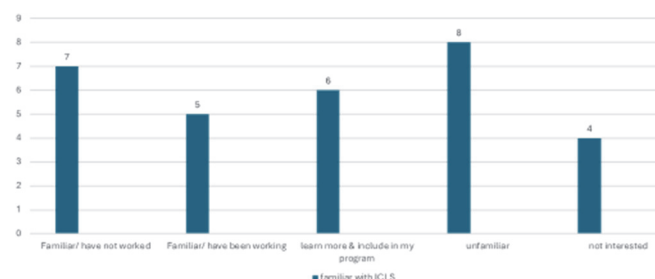
The project achieved the following impactful results: Knowledge Gained — Through ICLS education training and farm tours, over 60 participants, including UI Extension educators, other agricultural professionals, and local growers from Idaho and Oregon, increased their knowledge of integrating livestock into crop systems to improve soil health, nutrient cycling and pest management. Surveys showed a 75% increase in

knowledge regarding ICLS benefits and practical implementation strategies in Idaho.

Behavioral Changes — UI Extension educators applied their ICLS knowledge to outreach programs, encouraging growers to consider livestock integration. At least five UI Extension programs introduced the term ICLS in various county outreach programs. Two farmers initiated their interest by working on the economics of introducing livestock on their farms, with UI Extension educators and specialists serving as crucial links between research and practice.

Enhanced Collaboration — The ICLS farm tour at McIntyre Farms in Caldwell facilitated connections among farmers, Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel and community members, fostering a collaborative network dedicated to advancing ICLS adoption. Presentations from experienced ICLS practitioners helped attendees visualize the benefits, challenges and economic impacts of these systems in real-world settings. A post-workshop survey in which 26 of the 29 attendees responded showed that 90% are better prepared to implement practices presented in the workshops.

Knowledge of ICLS Practices Among Ag/Extension Professionals.



Outreach and Audience Reach — The program also fostered new partnerships between agricultural educators and growers, creating a collaborative network that

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supports sustainable agricultural practices across the region.

The interest generated through this initiative has been recognized at several key events, including the Idaho Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Summer Meeting (Albion), Western Region Chad Reid Professional Improvement Conference (Sandpoint), Parma Research and Extension Center Field Day (Parma), the WSARE Cultivating Agriculture Partnership Summit (Salt Lake City, Utah) and ASA-CSSA-SSSA Conference (San Antonio, Texas), which will contribute to long-term environmental, economic and social benefits for Idaho agriculture.

The Future

Building on the success of the ICLS initiative, future directions include conducting site-specific research to gather data on the unique benefits and barriers of ICLS adoption, facilitating continued engagement among agricultural professionals and producers, and developing educational resources based on farmer experiences. These efforts will help cultivate a sustainable, resilient agricultural community in Idaho, ensuring that ICLS practices are integrated effectively into farming systems.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

This initiative was made possible by support from the Idaho SARE Professional Development Mini-Grant and University of Idaho Extension. Their contributions are vital to advancing sustainable agriculture in Idaho and promoting a resilient and integrated approach to farming that aligns with both environmental and economic goals.

This program represents a strong step towards integrating livestock into Idaho cropping systems, advancing long-term agricultural sustainability across the state.