

Activity 1

Self-Evaluation (PRE)

1. Describe one challenge or risk your operation faces due to drought

2. Describe one strategy you have taken in the past to cope with drought

3. Describe one opportunity you have during drought

4. List one thing you would like to share about drought today

5. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very) please circle your level of preparedness for the next drought

1

2

3

4

5

Activity 2:

Drought Scenarios and Implications

Handout: One for each facilitator, answer as a small group. Facilitators: Please record key points from all participants as you lead a free-flowing discussion on the following questions. If you do not make it to all of the questions, that's OK!

Discuss: What drought looks like here

1. How would you describe drought to someone who has never seen it here?
2. What happened as drought unfolded? Tell the story. When did it all begin? What are the key signs of drought on your ranch?
3. How were different parts of the ranch affected? (If needed...*Are there differences among areas on the ranch? How are waters affected? Body condition of livestock? paycheck?*)
4. What are the most important risks drought poses?
5. *What is the best-case scenario in drought? The worst case?*
6. *What happens in a multi-year drought?*
7. What were the differences between recent droughts? Timing? Heat? Winter Precipitation? Responses?
8. What are one or two “triggers” or signs you use to know you’re heading into drought on your ranch? When do those appear? (*might be: the drought monitor, condition of the range, types of plants, amount of forage, water levels in stock tanks, body condition of livestock, rain gauges*)
9. What are things outside your management that drought might impact? For example, wildfire, prices?

Afterwards, whole-group discussion 1) what happens/ drought impacts, 2) what happens in multi-year drought?/ tell me about the worst case scenario?, 3) What are signs of drought you use? (Graphically record)

Discuss: What drought management looks like here

1. Describe the management implications of a drought on your ranch. What do you normally do to respond? *Do you see your actions as proactive or more reacting as it comes?*
2. How do you know what to do?
3. What changes in terms of management in drought? (General question at first, then ask about specific areas if folks need more prompting)
 - a. Livestock water
 - b. Rangeland/pasture/hay resources
 - c. Irrigation resources
 - d. Cattle nutrition

- e. Other income sources
 - f. Labor/time and social aspects (neighboring etc)
 - g. Public lands use
 - h. Leasing pastures/CRP/other
 - i. Stocking rates: Early weaning, culling
 - j. Marketing
 - k. Wildlife management
4. Who do you talk to/trust to learn about what's happening in drought and why?
 5. How has drought management changed over the years on your place/this community? Are there any opportunities in drought? Something you've learned from past droughts? Lead in to next section: What would you like to improve upon for the next drought?

Afterwards: Facilitator: what are reactive practices? What are proactive practices? Where do you have the most flexibility to respond? What would you like to improve upon in the next drought? (Graphically record)

Activity 3:

Planning steps: Goals, strategies and triggers

Tips for writing good goals and objective

Goals are typically understood as statements about the overarching reality you would like to see.

Objectives are more specific measurable. Use the worksheet below to start thinking about your goals. Once you have your goal, you can start thinking about strategies (how do you get there?) and “triggers” (what signs do you use to prompt a change in management). Why? Thinking ahead to

strategies will help you be more prepared and less reactive when drought hits. Setting a predefined **trigger** may help reduce the stress involved in decisions, and help you make the best possible decisions given little information. Strategies and triggers will help you think about proactive actions, and when an action will take place.

Step 1: Set a general goal that motivates you. This can be a general statement about how you'd like the world to be or about how you'd like to react in drought.

Step 2: After you have a general goal you can get more specific. Start thinking about the following: “In the next drought, what would you”

- Expect to see...
- Like to see...
- Love to see...

Step 3: Strategies to reach each goal. Drought preparation and coping strategies include:

- Anticipate drought with conservative stocking rates
- Predicting drought/using weather tools
- Flexible stocking
 - a. Yearlings, dry cow grazing, replacement heifers
 - b. unique marketing approaches, different classes of livestock
- Movement across space to offset variability in time
 - a. Adaptive pasture movements across broader areas
 - b. Leasing pasture
- Sharing resources and information with neighbors
- Storage
 - a. Water
 - b. Forage
- Diversify: livestock, income sources
- Market-based strategies

Step 4: Define a trigger for action. When will you make a move or change, given you can't predict weather?

- E.g. “When forage drops below X lbs/ acre I will drop stocking rates by 40%”
 - a. Or “When stock tank in X pasture drops below 20% full, I know conditions are dry and will start to implement de stocking plan.”
- May include multiple levels of triggers e.g. “early warning” and “action” triggers

Step 1: Write a general goal (a general statement about how you would like the world to be):

Example: "Stay financially viable in drought"

Step 2: Break down your expectations for that goal

Given all the constraints and opportunities I would

A. Expect to see:

Example: "Cover operating loan in drought without outside income"

B. Like to see:

Example: "Reduce number of mother cows culled in dry years to less than 5%"

C. Love to see:

Example: "Turn a profit in a drought year."

Step 3: Identify strategies, triggers and monitoring needed to achieve your goal

Strategy or strategies	Trigger(s)	Monitoring/ info you will need
Example: Lower stocking rate (sell yearlings) to match forage supply and demand	Example: When rainfall is less than 75% of average by X date	Example: Current year rainfall data, 30-year average rainfall values, dates by which most precipitation comes historically

Self-Evaluation POST

1. Describe one impact or opportunity of drought you discussed with the group today
2. List one indicator of drought on your ranch:
3. List one resource from the drought management toolbox you heard about today:
4. List one drought management strategy you heard about today that was interesting:
5. What is the next step you will take to reach your own drought management goal(s)?