

Irrigated Perennial Legume Pastures for Dairy and Beef Production in the Intermountain West

Jennifer MacAdam

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beef cattle on pastures and marketing it within the western region to consumers interested in a leaner but still juicy and good-tasting product would create a more-sustainable alternative to conventional beef production.



The goal of this project is to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of beef production in Utah and the Mountain West region. This work addresses concerns that beef consumers have about the welfare of cattle finished in feedlots and the implications for their own health when feedlot cattle routinely consume subtherapeutic doses of antibiotics and hormones to promote growth or offset unhealthy feedlot conditions. This research project also addresses environmental and social justice issues, such as the feeding of grain to ruminants, where feed conversion rates are extremely poor, the soil erosion and nitrogen fertilization associated with this annual cereal grain production, the generation of greenhouse gases that accrue to agriculture from the transportation of cattle and grain to central feedlot locations on the Great Plains, the concentration of nutrient and antibiotic pollutants in the air and water close to feedlots; and the economic shift of profits from cattle largely raised by small producers in the West to feedlot owners and meat processors in other regions. Finishing