

Nov 3 @ 12: The bird and the herd: sage-grouse and the ranch-level economics of prescribed grazing on rangelands in the West

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With half of the remaining sage-grouse habitat understood to be on private land, government programs that incentivize rotational grazing and resting on rangelands have become increasingly popular over the last decade. Yet, little is known about the effect of these programs on the rancher's bottom line. This study used information from rancher focus groups and ecological site descriptions to parameterize profit-maximizing models of cow-calf ranching enterprises. Impacts were quantified by comparing models with and without these prescribed grazing practices. Results showed positive returns in specific cases given government financial support, but financial outcomes can be negative. Results vary according to geographic location, herd size, possible changes in harvest efficiency, and the size of privately owned rangeland.