



# Livestock, Range & Watershed

Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Counties of San Luis Obispo and Monterey

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## Announcements

Please see the enclosed flyers for the Contemporary Issues on Oak Woodland Management Workshop August 17, 2006 and for the Protecting Your Home and Land from Wildfire: Practical Solutions to Improve Your Odds on August 25, 2006.

### Central Coast Oak Survey

*Ryan Cooper & Royce Larsen*

In March 2006, UC Cooperative Extension and Cal Poly teamed up to survey land owners about the knowledge and interest in oak woodland management. We sent out 2786 surveys to land owners with 100 acres or more in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. We received 450, about 16%, of the surveys back. Erin Rice, a student at Cal Poly, was in charge of the survey and summarized the results as part of his senior project. Some interesting facts from the survey showed some trends with education, county ordinances and demographics.

Over 92% of respondents said they had taken at least some college courses, and 74% had a degree. But over 84% of the degrees were in something other than natural resource related fields. Most of the degrees were in biology, business, education,

law, engineering or medicine. Over 44% of respondents had 0-5 years of experience managing oak woodlands, 48% did not have any experience in ranching or farming. Most of the respondents said they did not know where to obtain information on oak woodland management.

Most of the respondents, over 60%, were opposed to any county ordinance. These landowners feared the loss of private property rights, and felt that government should not interfere with management on private property. This is a very different result than that found by a survey mailed to random citizens of the county by Greenspace in 2003. Their survey found that 76% of voters from SLO county registration rolls, favored a county ordinance.

The demographics of ownership has been changing rapidly the last 20 years. Other research conducted by Lynn Huntsinger, UC Berkeley, found that ownership has seen larger ranches being subdivided into smaller properties whose owners do not make a living from their land. Our survey also showed that nearly 73% of landowners in the Central Coast make less than 25% of their income from their land. Of those who do make living from oak woodlands, ranching was identified as the most significant source of income. With the rapid change in demographics, other means are needed to keep large ranches intact. Conservation easements have gained in popularity as a means for landowners to receive financial gain without developing their ranch. These can be very helpful, but may not be for everyone. Our survey showed that 64% had poor to fair experience with conservations easements.

### A brief summary of the results are as follows:

-72% of responders earn less than 25% of their income from their land

- Those who earn >75% of their income from the land 69% of them have a college degree.
- Those who earn >75% of their income from the land 77% oppose an ordinance.
- Those who earn <25% of their income from the land 54% oppose an ordinance.
- 91% of responders do not market any oak products.

**-Five top issues in order:**

- ~Grazing
- ~Regeneration
- ~Fire & Fuels
- ~Rules and Regulations
- ~Forest Management

**Significant relationships and trends:**

- County influences % income from land (Most < MON, SLO, SB > Least).
- Education level declines with more income from land.
- Opposition towards oak ordinances increases with more income from land.
- Concern for forest management increases with less income from land.
- Concern for forest health increases with less income from the land.

If you would like to learn more about the survey and the key topics brought forth from the survey join us at the Contemporary Issues in Oak Woodland Management Workshop on August 17, 2006 in San Luis Obispo (see enclosed flier)

**UCD VET VIEWS  
CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S MAGAZINE  
JULY/AUGUST 2006**

*John Maas, D.V.M., M.S.  
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Extension Veterinarian  
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***Animal Identification: Where are we now?***

Three years ago I wrote in this column about the proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and many of the potential questions we had at that time. I thought this might be an opportune

time to revisit this issue and review some of the questions to see if we have come up with any answers. Also, there is developing technology that may help solve of the problems that have been identified and we can discuss its potential.

***Who pays for the program?***

This was the first question we posed three years ago and we still do not have a complete or clear answer at this time. It is obvious; however, that the initial cost of putting an electronic ID tag in calves as they leave the herd of origin will be borne by the cow/calf producer. The good news is that the cost of these tags has dropped appreciably in the last three years. In some herds the tag will be placed in the calf soon after birth and in other herds the tag will be put in at the sales yard soon after the animal leaves the herd of origin. Both extremes will be possible under the NAIS and with both the animal's ID will be linked to the herd of origin (premise number of herd of origin).

***Who will keep track of the cattle movements and what will this cost?***

The answers to these questions are less clear. At the moment, the animal tracking (recording animal movements from one premise to another) part of the NAIS is not well defined. It is quite possible this function of the NAIS will be managed by the private sector and therefore, the various sectors of the industry may bare the up front costs. Cost-sharing with the USDA may occur as the various regulatory agencies (USDA and state animal health officials) need to access the private data base(s) to track animal movements for animal disease control purposes.

***Who will have access to the cattle tracking databases?***

The cattle industry and other animal production groups have made it very clear that only legitimate animal health officials (USDA and state animal health officials) should have access to these databases. It has become obvious that Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws are not compatible with these types of databases. While many solutions to this conundrum have been discussed, none have been finalized. At present it appears that these animal tracking databases will be secured for legitimate use only by animal health officials.

### ***What have we learned from the pilot projects?***

Many projects have been started or completed around the U.S. to answer the question, "How will this NAIS ID system really work?" Two things have become clear from the results of these pilot projects, (1) putting an electronic ID ear tag in cattle as they leave the herd of origin is relatively simple, (2) tracking all the movements of these animals through our system of commerce to the slaughter house (or death) is going to be a challenge.

### ***Is there newer technology that might help?***

One piece of technology caught my eye the other day and may be of tremendous value. A company called API is marketing an electronic (EID) tag that meets all the NAIS specifications and data can be "written" on the tag. Other EID tags can only be read (the 15 digit ID number is read electronically). These WriteTAGs™ can store data on the source (premise ID for herd of origin), age (date of birth), treatment, and visual ID number. The ability to record more data on these tags is already present. These WriteTAGs™ can be read or written to by a fairly inexpensive, hand-held device. With this type of technology it is possible for cattle to carry all their individual movement data in these tags. Therefore, large portions of the expensive data bases needed for tracking cattle currently may not be necessary for the NAIS to operate.

### ***What should I do?***

At this point I would encourage everyone to register their premises and obtain a premise ID number. This can be done easily and at no cost through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). You can obtain your premise ID on line at <http://www.californiaid.org>. This web site will allow you to obtain your unique premise number. Alternatively, you can call CDFA at (866) 325-5681 and speak with CDFA personnel directly. Additionally, you should begin to think about EID tags and how they could be implemented in your operation. The NAIS program may become mandatory by 2009, only 2.5 years from now.

### ***Where can I learn more?***

Your county livestock advisor has a wealth of information about this topic. The UC Cooperative Extension system in cooperation with CDFA has generated information on premise ID,

how ID technology works, the potential value of electronic record keeping, and emerging ID technologies. A number of county-based educational programs have been conducted in California and your advisor can tell you where the next meetings will be held. Additionally, there is a large amount of printed material on animal ID available from your livestock advisor. It is important to remember that the NAIS is only for animal disease control purposes. Animal ID for source verification, age verification, marketing alliances, country or origin labeling, and other purposes is not necessarily part of this program and will not become mandatory. Animal ID for those purposes will be strictly voluntary but could be an added value to the NAIS.

**Royce Larsen**

*Watershed/Natural Resource Advisor  
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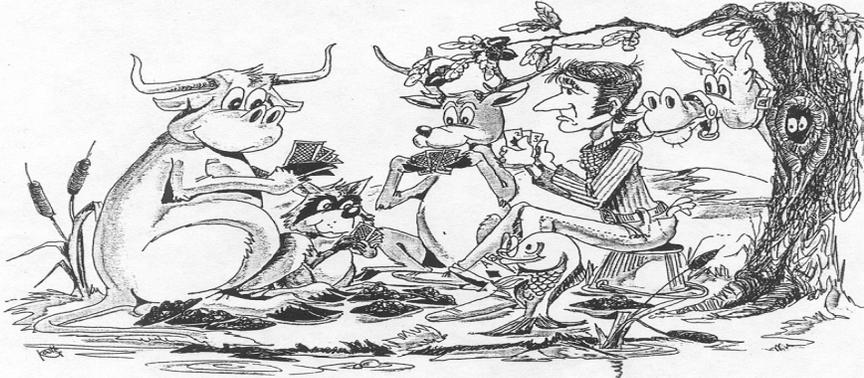
**Wayne Jensen**

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