

**South Dakota Ag & Rural Leadership
Class VI
Rapid City Seminar #5 Report**

April 5-7, 2011

GSM: Tammy Basel & Shane Odegaard

Day 1, SDSU West River Ag Center

The South Dakota Ag & Rural Leadership class met April 5-7 for their Rapid City seminar. The first day was spent at the SDSU West River Ag Center.

The class heard from Dan Oedekoven, the director of the West River Ag Center. He told the class more about the center, which serves as a satellite for SDSU. Twenty-two people work out of the center serving in areas of animal science, range, agronomy, horticulture, economics, 4-H youth development, community development and student recruitment.

He introduced several of the specialists and told a little more about what they are able to do for producers. He also explained the long term goal of the ag center is to hold one or two year animal science classes in Rapid City.

After Dan Oedekoven, Dan Gee lead class discussion reviewing the previous seminars and what the class was able to apply to their daily lives since then.

From the Chamberlain seminar, Sal and Kari thought learning the different personality types helped them the most. They have to deal with various personalities on a daily basis in their work and it helps them understand other perspectives.

From the Brookings seminar, Tyler and JD took home Michael Brandewein's message that to truly listen to someone you have to be an active and conscience listener.

Noelle also applied Brandewein's repeat back method in Washington, D.C. and she said it was very helpful. Glen shared that everyday he implements WDISWILM (What Do I See When I Look at Myself).

From the Pierre session Olga and Susi learned that one person can have an impact. They can voice their concerns and were impressed that we can easily walk into committee hearings.

Olga took this knowledge and applied it in Washington D.C. where she approached the Thune and Johnson offices about helping her family receive their green cards. Now six weeks later they have their green cards!

Also from Washington, D.C., Mary Ellen made great contacts with her school class; Sal has been in communication with the Washington class; Noelle has overcome apprehension over flying; Rebecca is questioning who really is running our government – those who we elect or their staff members. JD was surprised the special interest groups were so focused on one topic and didn't know that

much about other topics that were similarly related. Mike commented that he learned people (who may not have a direct connection to ag) really are trying to change the ag industry; Connie says trips like this and other fly-ins should be done regularly to help put a “face” to agriculture. Danci added that facts can be skewed but a story can make all the difference and a “face” can help carry it through.

However with this story telling, Mary Ellen says it does sometimes come down to who has the best story and hopes we have media training in the future. Dan confirmed that the class will have more media training.

Roger Gates then spoke to the class on the goods and services that come from native grasslands and how they should be managed.

He offered four principles for us to take home.

1. Range monitoring is the most important factor in determining response of vegetation and animal weight gain.
2. Repeated, excessive utilization must be avoided.
3. Periodical seasonal deferment/rest can benefit different species groups.
4. Seek options for flexibility in grazing management. Don't get locked into a grazing system, which allows no flexibility to handle changed conditions.

After Roger, the class began conversation on this month's book *Ominvore's Dilemma*.

Lealand – We need to take responsibility for the choices we make. Have to respect the author for visiting the farms and operations he has. Appreciated the fairness and the research.

Sarah – Blood pressure rose a little, but then had to put herself as someone who didn't come from the farm. Perception is everything and she felt it gave people the wrong perception and would not recommend it to others.

Tyler – Went in with a perception of Michael Pollan. He says Pollan did a good job of storytelling and entertaining. He thinks there is a place in the market for all types of production. There are people who do not want to eat industrial raised beef but if they want to eat a grass fed steak all the better because they are still eating meat.

JD – Good read . . . discussion of corn . . . will the price hold?

Kari – Found Pollan open minded to go into three different areas to try and make his meal. Someone on the “edge” it would not be a good read for because the visuals can help them make the wrong decisions based on the book. She would recommend the book to ag people only.

Rebecca – Title really made her think. Enjoyed book but really was offended on some things (i.e. are farmers mentally or physically lazy?) It also made her look at what she was feeding her family.

Jon M. – Yes, there were offensive things in the book but by thinking about what is on our plate it connects you with ag. By introduction the thought process of “Where does food come from” helps mentally connect the consumer with the farmer.

Danci – Absolutely brought to light that there are people that really don’t understand the food on their plate. We have the responsibility of the food and education of our story and food.

Ryan – Research may have been unobjective? Cherry picking research for the book?

Should this book and books like this be on our list? YES!

Other books to read, *Denialism* and *The Jungle* recommended by Dean Barry Dunn.

Possible Forum Topics for June and July Meetings

Farm Bill debate for June – focus on programs that work for us and our communities and what we think should be in the next Farm Bill.

On the Farm Bill committee will be: Susi, Rebecca, Danci, Chase and Ryan

The committee will decide how they contact us and what information they need from the class to proceed.

Tax Debate will be part of July seminar (estate tax, state income tax, land price). On the committee will be John S., JD, John M. Jon N. and Mike.

What is our class goal or mission? Topics considered.

1. Can we do a humanitarian mission while we are on our international trip?
 - Can it be done at home?
 - Steak dinners for troops
 - Ellsworth
2. Letter of recommendation from our group about the Farm Bill to our legislators.
3. Telling your ag story here in SD
 - Talking to our local classrooms on our own time and tie it to that classes curriculum.
 - Speaking to the rotary or commissioner groups.
 - Put yourself out there . . . facebook, blog, articles . . .
4. Fix the flag pole at the Shepard Elementary school.
 - Michelle has contacted June and they are checking on getting a new flag pole and flag.

Reporter: Codi Mills

Day 2, Military Affairs Day

On Wednesday, April 6th, 2011, SDARL Class VI participated in a “Military Affairs” day. They started the day off right with a great breakfast at the Howard Johnson Hotel. From there the group drove to Camp Rapid, which is the Headquarters for the South Dakota National Guard (both Air and Army Guard are represented there). Security was somewhat of an issue as we all had to present our South Dakota driver’s license and be checked off a roster in order to be allowed on base. This level of security has been in place as a result of 9/11 and is there to protect those that work there, as well as the citizens of South Dakota.

The class gathered at the briefing theater in the Duke Corning Armory located on the West side of the base and was welcomed to Camp Rapid by Master Sergeant Mickey Higgins, who is a key leader in the Recruiting and Retention Battalion. The Recruiting and Retention Battalion is responsible for recruiting new soldiers into open positions within the National Guard and also responsible for retaining those soldiers after their initial enlistment has come to an end. Master Sergeant Higgins introduced Major Steve Siemonsma who is the Legislative Liaison for the South Dakota National Guard. Maj. Siemonsma explained that his office is the link between the State and National Legislators and the Headquarters of the National Guard of South Dakota. Major Siemonsma spoke about the background of the National Guard and that it has been around for some 200 plus years. The strength of the Guard includes 3,370 on the Army side and 1,026 on the Air side spread out through 30 facilities in 28 communities within South Dakota. The job of the Guard is twofold, which is to aid the Governor of South Dakota for local emergencies or uprisings and on the Federal side to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Next we were introduced to Captain Allen Godsell who is the Officer in Charge of the Suriname Project. Suriname is a small country in the Northeast edge of South America and has been in a way “adopted” by the National Guard of the state of South Dakota. This is something that is done all over the US with each state having one (or more) countries they work with.

The special relationship between South Dakota and Suriname was established a few years back and is in place to help both countries understand each other and to become trusted allies in the future. Suriname is happy with its relationship with South Dakota but is complacent to further commence its relationship with the United States based on the US involvement in many other countries in the world and the details surrounding those conflicts.

The Class then met Master Sergeant Diane Rensch who led a tour of the Emergency Operations Center where Major Dirk explained the uses of the EOC and its relevancy in the world after 9/11 and also in its ability to improve the response time for local emergencies. Master Sergeant Rensch then took the class to the Weapons Training Facility where class members were able to participate in a “life like” firefight against enemy soldiers in an urban setting. Some of the simulator weapons used in the training facility were the M16 the M203 grenade launcher, and the SAW.

Class VI finished their visit to Camp Rapid with a facilities brief from the facilities manager Colonel Kit Cline. Colonel Cline spoke on the changes on the base and other changes going on in armories and facilities owned by the guard in many communities within the state. Changes on base are being made in order to house a battalion-sized element giving them living quarters, education facilities, medical facilities, and physical fitness opportunities while they train on Camp Rapid.

Ellsworth Air Force Base was next on the list. Ellsworth is home of the famous B-1 Bomber, one of the most effective and highly used bombers ever made. The class was bused to the air strip and escorted directly to a real B-1 Bomber parked on the runway, having returned from a mission very recently. The class was introduced to SSG Will Hatten, the crew chief in charge of the maintenance of this specific B-1. SSG Hatten gave a brief on the capabilities and intricacies of the bomber and then took turns with all classmates showing them the cockpit of this unbelievable aircraft. Several hours were spent in or near the bomber studying its massive engines, wing span, fuel holding structures, and bomb bays. It truly was a once in a lifetime experience enjoyed by all. Our tour of Ellsworth then landed members in front of SRA Brandon Dunphy, the SERE-survive, evade, resist, and escape trainer for Ellsworth Air Force Base. SRA Dunphy showed a short video clip of some of the training he does with the air crews in order to teach them how to survive and to escape should their plane go down in enemy territory. SRA Dunphy is a highly motivated, dedicated-to-the-core type of soldier who loves what he does for the armed forces. The afternoon on base ended with a bus tour around Ellsworth Air Force Base and a question and answer session with the tour guide.

Reporter: John Schallenkamp

Day 3, Thursday, April 7

The class awoke to another beautiful sunny sky for the last day of the Rapid City seminar. First speaker on the schedule was a very energetic sociology professor from the SD School of Mines and Technology, Dr. Sid Goss. Dr. Goss demonstrated and explained why each generation is different, described their core values and what they considered “normal” as they grew up. The Baby Boomers are those born between 1944 – 1960. Generation X’rs were born between 1960 – 1980. Millenials (or Generation Y) were born between 1980 – 2000.

As Baby Boomers age, retire and die it will be up to the following two generations to take their place in the workforce, which in and of itself will present interesting challenges. Of course another problem is going to be way less people trying to support a social security system paying out to way more people than are paying in. Medical care for an increasingly aging population is also obviously a huge challenge going forward.

An interesting class discussion ensued about differences members notice in their lives regarding generations and how they deal with them. Practical issues such as how to sell the idea of an opt out or school expansion were also discussed, and the

idea that you have to keep in mind who is voting and what their typical ideals would be. When people were born plays such a huge role in shaping why they believe what they do; we often tend to forget or downplay that.

The second hour of Dr. Goss's presentation focused on the demographics of South Dakota, the Midwest, and the United States with a focus on in and out migration numbers. Rural South Dakota, like many other midwestern states, is going to drastically change in the coming decades. The population will continue to dwindle for many years yet before it stabilizes. He explained how the university system has had to take a good look at those numbers and is trying to prepare for that, as well. What perhaps startled the class most was the fact that half of South Dakota's population live in six counties, the other half live in the other 60 counties!

Carson Engelskirger, Forest Programs Manager of the Black Hills Forest Resource Association (BHFRA), presented next on various issues facing the Black Hills National Forest. The BHFRA is a trade association made up of members of industries that utilize the resources of the Black Hills. There are multiple agencies (theirs, state, federal) trying to work together on a variety of issues. Carson explained the logging industry in the Black Hills and spent much time on the pine beetle, something most people don't fully recognize the devastation of. He also talked about the effects of fires in the forest.

Class VI members then spent some time talking about what they have learned from this seminar and what are some of the take home lessons.