

Grassland Award

Shapland Farms is this year's winner of the Grassland Award.

The purpose of the Grassland Award is to recognize an individual, organization or business providing exceptional service and support to the conservation, management and/or education of the grasslands of Kansas.

To be recognized for the award, the recipient must be working with, managing or supporting grasslands. The service and support to the conservation, management and/or education of Kansas grassland must be above and beyond that normally expected. The contributions of the recipient must have been provided over an extended period of time.

Shapland Farms' contribution to conserving the grasslands in Lane County include the management of 5 pastures or about 1000 acres west of Dighton, another 1000 acres east of Dighton, that is divided up in 3 pastures, as well as 3 quarters in the southern edge of the county. On these grasslands they had been managing about 300 cows, but due to drought conditions are now down to about 160. To conserve the grasslands they actively rotate their animals from pasture to pasture throughout the summer.

Eugene and his sons began their rotational grazing practices and improving on the grazing land they had when the drought really started to effect growing conditions a few years ago. They did not want to overgraze, yet they wanted to be profitable at the same time.

It was mentioned that one of the biggest challenges they have faced is the same all producers in the area have been up against and that is the ongoing drought, which limits what you can do with the grasslands. Eugene mentioned they had lost 5 wells over the last few years and now have to pipe the water in from other places.

Some of the benefits they have seen from the change in management practices that many people do not know about is, with rotation, carrying capacity is better, and you can help to eliminate some of the undesirable grasses and weeds.

Management going forward depends a lot on how much rain we get, so they will be playing things by ear according to water availability.

At this time, will you please welcome Eugene and sons of Shapland Farms, to accept the grassland award.